Hello everyone,

Some time ago I began to study The Annotated Erdnase which I found quite fascinating. However, I soon delayed my study of Erdnase and began reading the Card College volumes.

Now I’m ready to resume my study of "The Expert". My question is how does one properly study Erdnase? Should I start with the Legerdemain section or Card Table Artifice?

Are there certain moves that are best studied from other sources? Are there sleights that are too inferior? Any help would be greatly appreciated!

Roberto

The Expert At The Card Table is a singular book.

Start at page 1; progress to the back cover. Then...start at page 1 again. Repeat periodically for the rest of your life.

Cheers,

Lance
I agree with Lance on this one. Some books must be "lived with" over an extended period. This being said, I've seldom run across any essays on WHY Erdnase is a book worth studying--at least none with cogent, explanatory force.

THE ANNOTATED ERDNASE, by example, shows the fruits of various studies, providing interesting and useful marginalia and footnotes. But there is nothing equivalent to lit-crit books found in Literature.

Are you up for it, Lance? Darwin?

Anybody?

Onward...

Lance Pierce | 02/21/03 12:42 PM | link | filter

I'm probably not up to it, Jon. Darwin would indeed do a wonderful job with it, as would Steve Freeman or Persi. I'm sure Max would also (as is his usual style!) give us some great insights.

All I can say is that if the book is read and absorbed over a period of time, and if what it says is compared with one's own experience as he grows and learns, then it will reveal itself to be much more than a collection of techniques and artifices. Within the pages is embodied an entire philosophy of conduct and manner, a cogent and complete system of thinking about magic and its related fields. Far beyond the wonderful moves contained therein, what the book gives us is an approach, a style, and a guidebook toward really understanding not only the inner workings and mechanisms of sleight of hand, but its psychology and practice as well -- and because of this, much of what it has to say goes way beyond the field of card work alone. Sometimes it seems almost as though everything every great magician has said about performance and execution is already there in the pages of this book, concisely stated and well-phrased.

But of course you already knew all this! ;)

L-

Richard Kaufman | 02/21/03 03:01 PM | link | filter

mrmagik, don't waste your time with all of the oddball passes in the book. I have never seen a single person do an invisible SWE Shift or Open Shift. Never.

Jon Racherbaumer | 02/21/03 03:46 PM | link | filter

I agree with you, Lance, which makes the question of Erdnase's real identity that much
more puzzling; however, I think that David Alexander has taken this into account and may be closer to finding the REAL Erdnase.

Onward...

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**Jason England** | 02/21/03 05:21 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Richard Kaufman:

*mrmagik, don't waste your time with all of the oddball passes in the book. I have never seen a single person do an invisible SWE Shift or Open Shift. Never.*

Therefore they have nothing to teach? Hmmmm. I've never seen anyone do an invisible top change, should we throw that one out as well? Isaac Newton's PRINCIPIA was shown to be "wrong" by Einstein in the early 20th century. Does that make studying the PRINCIPIA a worthless endeavor? Of course not.

Obviously, I heartily disagree with Richard's position. Mrmagik, please, please spend some time on the SWE shift, and on the Open Shift. They both have loads of information in them, even if they ultimately never become "invisible". Erdnase himself admitted that the Open shift is imperfect, and in the "Artifice" section of the book stated that "The shift has yet to be invented ...that can be executed with the hands held stationary and not show that some maneuver has taken place, however cleverly it may be performed."

But I don’t think that these two admissions make the study of the SWE and the Open shifts a "waste of time". They just mean you have to practice and study them with goals other than complete invisibility in mind. Like maybe making a tiny little connection to our past masters, and the struggles they went through in trying to create the perfect shift? Just a thought.

Jason England

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**Richard Kaufman** | 02/21/03 06:54 PM | link | filter

You’ll find a sharp division in our field over whether some of the moves in Erdnase have any value or not. I have seen the best in the world do the SWE Shift, and not a single person has ever performed it where it was deceptive to me. Where, in other words, I didn’t SEE, actually see, that a pass occurred. Why waste time studying sleights that you’ll never use? No one really has enough time to study the sleights you WILL use in the depth they should be studied and practiced.

I might add that I’m pleased to have Jason England on this Forum. I had the pleasure of spending a few minutes with him at the Magic Castle last November (December?) and he did some very fine work. One thing in particular stands out, which you’ll all get to
see if the original credit sequence in the movie "Shade" is retained.

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**Steve V** | 02/21/03 08:23 PM  | link | filter

Am I the only one who believes Erdnase was a compilation of idea's put together by a handful of card workers rather than one super genius?  
Steve V

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**Jason England** | 02/21/03 10:24 PM  | link | filter

[QUOTEOriginally posted by Richard Kaufman:
[QB]You'll find a sharp division in our field over whether some of the moves in Erdnase have any value or not. I have seen the best in the world do the SWE Shift, and not a single person has ever performed it where it was deceptive to me.[QB]

Well, I agree with you that the passes are probably never going to be made fast enough to fool the eyes. But I just think there may be something to gain by studying them anyway.

I don't always measure the utility of a sleight by whether or not I "use" it in my work. And, I've learned to be careful about saying that something can't be done, just because it hasn't been done yet. There was a time when the center deal was thought impossible by a large segment of the top magicians of the day. Today, I could probably name at least 10 people that I know that can do a deceptive center deal.

Who knows, maybe mrmagick will be the one to get the SWE shift down under a 10th of a second or so. I think at that speed it would be a viable move indeed, although still an esoteric one.

Thank you for the compliments about my work Richard. You probably don't know it, but you're partly responsible for me being into magic. The SECRETS OF BROTHER JOHN HAMMAN was the first book I ever bought.

Jason

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**Guest** | 02/22/03 05:33 AM  | link | filter

Originally posted by Richard Kaufman:

mrmagik, don't waste your time with all of the oddball passes in the book. I have never seen a single person do an invisible SWE Shift or Open Shift. Never.

What about Freeman? Best,
Erdnase, hmmmmm.

I recently came upon a use for one of the aforementioned exotic shifts/passes, at least all those hours practicing weren’t completely squandered. Rather than write of it here, I think I’d rather fool you with it, at least for a moment or two -- should our paths cross and there’s the opportunity of course.

An unsolicited Tip:

Don’t overlook the other top palm, in spite of the fact that Vernon scorned it, and Ortiz chose silence.

Richard Kaufman | 02/22/03 09:04 AM | link | filter

I didn’t say anything about the palms in Erdnase: I know several top notch guys who use them all the time.
And, I didn’t say there were no uses for the SWE Shift, for example. Not only is Kenner’s "SWE Elevator" in Out of Control a good example of that, but Tom Franks has a lovely move using the SWE shift for a face-up card revelation.
I have seen Freeman do the move: visible.
I have seen Riser do the move: visible.
I have seen Miller do the move: visible.
I have seen Dingle do the move: less visible, but still visible.

Of course, if we go with the idea that the SWE Shift is a move designed for standup or platform use, then of course it would be done during a body turn. Then it WOULD most likely be invisible, and it’s a good shift for platform work because there’s no dip which would be visible from beneath.

David Alexander | 02/22/03 10:58 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by Steve V:
"Am I the only one who believes Erdnase was a compilation of idea’s put together by a handful of card workers rather than one super genius?"

Yes, Steve, probably. The "voice" one reads in the Artifice half of Erdnase is of a piece and comes from a writer who has had long practice at expressing himself through writing. The author is also highly skilled at problem solving and articulating his
solutions in a clear and unambiguous manner. There is no evidence of an editor at work. The work would be quite different if an editor had had a hand in it.

It is also important to realize that the book was written over a period of time, doubtless years, as Erdnase worked out the various problems he set for himself, gathered information from card sharps and hustlers by observation and trading, and set down his insights as they developed.

See my article in the January 2000 Genii for my take on the Erdnase mystery. Richard generously gave me the space I needed.

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**Lance Pierce** | 02/22/03 09:34 PM | link | filter

Yeah, I'm with Mr. Alexander. While Erdnase didn't claim that absolutely everything in the book was his, he did state that he claims "originality for the particular manner of accomplishing many of the manoeuvres [sic] described." This implies that while some sleights are cited as wholly original, those that aren't are likely original variations of existing sleights in his day. Erdnase demonstrated a habit of identifying those methods that were in common use at the time, such as the information he imparted on forcing, back-palming, and top changes. In fact, of the six two-handed transformations he describes, he unequivocally claims credit for only one.

We have to come to the most reasonable conclusions we can. In the section on Card Table Artifice, Erdnase writes, "...as certain artifices are first disclosed in this work, so will others remain private property as long as the originators are so disposed." This strongly indicates that the material he gives is for the most part his, but it also leaves open the possibility that some may have been methods in the public domain (as only certain artifices are being disclosed for the very first time). Further conviction is lent in the very next sentence, where he writes, "We betray no confidences in publishing this book, having only ourselves to thank for what we know." Its possible that by the words, "this work," and "this book," he means the section on Artifice, or it may mean the entire book, but either way, if we can take him at his word (and I'm not sure why we wouldn't), then the material is indeed original with him or are variations original with him -- with the exception of those he clearly identifies as being in common use at the time (i.e. the stock shuffle).

As improbable as it might seem to some, the unified "voice" that David speaks of...the writing style and manner...the tone of the overall work combined with the information imparted...it all supports the "super genius" theory more than others. I'm willing to accept the notion that Erdnase was, like some others before and after him, a prodigy, and one who had both the talent and insight to not only learn a craft, but change it forever.

Cheers,
Guest | 02/24/03 12:55 PM | link | filter

I realize that the passes in EATCT are not often seen and my comment regarding them wasn’t to be confused with my tip on the top palm.

While I know of several cardmen that use the top palm number one, I am not aware of anyone using number two. Some are not even aware that there are two. I attribute this to the fact that Vernon in print didn’t like it at all, and Ortiz doesn’t give it a so much as a mention. The fact that number two is at least as good as number one (for my use at least), either the fellas didn't understand it (highly unlikely perhaps), or, they felt it didn't warrant additional commentary. I disagree heartily with that second alternative and in Vernon's case at least, I truly think he misunderstood the move due to his abhorence of it in comparison to the first.

Richard Kaufman | 02/24/03 08:05 PM | link | filter

If I’m not mistaken, Earl Nelson uses the second top palm and does it beautifully. Actually, I might be remembering him performing a palm from the center with the deck is pivoted away from the hand. Can’t remember exactly, but he does it extremely well.

Guest | 02/24/03 10:38 PM | link | filter

During my study of Erdnase I have noticed one issue being tackled a number of times by the author(s). That being the elimination of space and movement during a secret action. I think the underlying motivation for the number and variety of sleights spirals out from that central theme. Every sleight is a lesson. You don't need to be able to perform an invisible SWE shift for the lesson to be valuable. It speaks of accomplishing the action in a small space. The one handed shift is the same lesson approached from a different angle. Each for an entirely different purpose. The one handed shift is described in the Card-table artifice section and the SWE in the Legerdemain section. Erdnase seems plagued by wasted movements the majority of sleights incorporated at that time. He is searching for answers, the same answers we seek today. Asking the question is the most important part.

Charlie Chang | 02/25/03 02:36 AM | link | filter

SW Erdnase’s book is more than a rite of passage for aspiring card workers. Almost every item in the book has been thoroughly thought out and presented in a clear,
concise manner.

Every sleight is mechanically beautiful by design and, more often than not, thoroughly practical and deceptive in practise.

There are exceptions, the most commonly mentioned being the SWE shift. There are very few places for this shift in modern conjuring but that does not mean that it should not be studied and its lessons learned.

Richard Kaufman is an advocate of invisible shifts. He is also one of the world’s finest exponent of this branch of our art. That said, an invisible shift is often quite different to an IMPERCEPTIBLE shift.

A pass, like a top change, was not originally conceived as a move to be stared at during its execution. Personally, I feel that the audience’s attention should never be directed towards the deck during a sleight.

Often an invisible pass is made under cover of another action - a cover. While the audience does not see the shift, they see the covering action. I am not saying this is bad I simply believe that a silent pass under proper misdirection is much, much better. Here the audience is aware of nothing. Strangely, this is the pass advocated by Malini, Vernon, Liepzig, Walton, Ramsay, Galloway and Hofzinser to name just a few.

The SWE Shift is not a cheating move. It is a conjuror’s shift (as clearly stated in the opening paragraph). It could easily be argued that this shift was designed for parlour magic rather than close up.

In actual fact, once the shift has been mastered, the shift has several uses, one of which is mentioned in Vernon’s Revelations.

Most important is the lesson to be learned from this shift. Perfecting its actions teaches a great deal. Performing this sleight well (either slowly or at speed) takes more than mere skill, it requires the student to UNDERSTAND the shift and learn it properly.

Erdnase is packed with great material for the card magician. The palms are excellent, the shifts intriguing and the effects are timeless.

Every time I return to this book I am drawn back into it’s pages like a miser opening his money box.

I say every student of card magic should have this book on his agenda (after Royal Road, Vernon’s Inner Secrets and Card College). As Lance Pierce stated, Erdnase is a life-long commitment.
Back to the SWE shift. RK says he has never seen this performed invisibly. I have. I watched this performed and never saw the packets exchange. This was during a lengthy session with a friend (a session stretched over several months as we explored Erdnase together). He got the action just right and it was great. Dare I say I even hit it a few times myself but damn if it isn’t elusive.

RK mentions several people who he saw do the shift and none were completely invisible. I too have seen many people attempt the shift and none were completely invisible unless they used a cover action (raising the hands, spreading the cards as the shift is made or ending with a different shaped deck at a different angle - all of which were great to see).

That said, I would like to point out that almost no one I have seen has performed the shift correctly - as described in the book. Everyone (including Steve Freeman on the Vernon tapes) has made some sort of adjustment and almost everyone STARTS IN THE WRONG POSITION.

So the chances are that while you may not have seen this shift performed invisibly you probably haven’t even seen it executed properly. All of which is moot since I believe it was never intended to be invisible, simply fast, silent and performed at the correct MOMENT.

End Rant.

Richard Kaufman | 02/25/03 09:24 AM | link | filter

A fine essay from Mr. Wilson, who demonstrated a very mean Spread Pass in Ohio. What I really want to add is that there is no reason to waste time learning sleights that you will probably never use. Few of us have enough time to practice the sleights we will use!

Spending time learning the SWE Shift and the Open Shift is not the BEST way you can spend your practice time: spending that same time learning a Riffle or Classic Pass, or The Diagonal Palm Shift, is time MUCH BETTER SPENT because you WILL use those sleights a LOT once you’ve mastered them.

End of MY rant. :)

Pete Biro | 02/25/03 10:48 AM | link | filter

Being a "shiftless" soul... I like crimps, corner shorts and resin (Koornwinder Kard Kontrol). Not to say that I don’t admire those shiftier than I, it is just something I never really got into.

It’s a whole different sport.
Fine sleight-of-hand card magic is like baseball is to football.

Is there anything in Erdnase to rival the Diagonal Palm Shift? In my (admittedly limited) time with EATCT I have not found anything so profoundly well constructed.

It almost defies understanding at first and is almost completely counter intuitive yet it is the most amazingly direct way to get a card out of the deck without tipping the steal.

An engineering marvel...

Also, does anyone use the Arthur Finley variant from the Vernon Chronicles?

Vernon taught me the Finley Variant--Vernon did it superbly. If I recall, the end result is entirely different since the card ends up in Gambler's Palm in the right hand rather than full palm in the left hand.

Actually, according to Volume I of *The Lost Inner Secrets*, the card goes into a full classic palm rather than a gamblers palm. In looking at the mechanics, I'm not sure how one would get the card into gamblers palm this will make an interesting exercise to try and solve

Many thanks to RP and Jay for their observations (as well as the rest, of course).

Cheers!

Lance :D

Lance, after that volume of the Vernon book appeared, I explained to Minch that the description did not jibe with what Vernon had shown me. I believe Stephen then described it with the gambler's palm (NOT COP!) in a subsequent volume in the series. Ah--I now recall that the sleight put the card into right-hand gambler's palm and that the right hand immediately moved to the left inner elbow to tug upward at the sleeve.
Richard, does this sound right?

I seem to recall Minch telling me that Mr. Finley had used a full classic palm but that Vernon used the Gambler’s palm which he considered a better concealment.

Another minor example of "The Vernon Touch" making a very good thing into a very great thing.

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**Sean Piper** | 02/26/03 01:50 AM | [link](#) | [filter]({})

Speaking of the SWE Shift...

Has anyone tried the Block Cover variation as mentioned by Chris Kenner in Out of Control?

Sound as though it would shade the move well, but having trouble figuring out the best finger positions. Any ideas?

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**Lance Pierce** | 02/26/03 05:57 AM | [link](#) | [filter]({})

Hi, Richard,

Well, I was having trouble figuring out how to avoid flashing the outer right corner of the card as it was taken into gambler’s palm, but I see where it can be done now. Knowing that in many circumstances where one is seated at a table Vernon preferred the gambler’s palm over the classic palm, this bit of finesse doesn’t surprise me!

Thanks,

Lance

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**Richard Kaufman** | 02/26/03 08:30 AM | [link](#) | [filter]({})

Incidentally, I saw Vernon do this when he was about 84. He fumbled he first few times since he hadn’t done it in many years, however he hit it the third or fourth time and it looked perfect. He did it perfectly several times after that. Finley’s handling is invisible and utterly disarming.

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**Lance Pierce** | 02/26/03 09:05 AM | [link](#) | [filter]({})

Regarding Erdnase, Richard Hatch pointed out to me once that many of the illustrations in the book carry Erdnase’s copyright statement right beneath the drawing, but many of them don’t. There doesn’t seem to be a discernable pattern as to
why some do and some don't, but all the drawings appear to be pretty close in style.

Coupling this with the information gleaned from the interview with the person who did the artwork for the book and how he expressed his surprise because he didn't remember drawing so many, does anyone have any theories to explain this? Did the artist draw all the pictures that don't bear the copyright statement, and was Erdnase also an excellent mimic with the pen who drew the remaining pictures and put his copyright claim on them?

Lance

Bill Mullins | 02/26/03 11:18 PM | link | filter

Has anyone tried to look up the copyright registrations for either the book or the illustrations at the Library of Congress? Might be some interesting information there (these forms were, for example, the first hard evidence that "Richard Bachman" was in fact Stephen King.

David Alexander | 02/27/03 12:40 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by Lance Pierce:
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Lance

My article covers this in one of the footnotes. All of the illustrations were traced from photographs, a job that would have taken a day or so. Otherwise, Marshall Smith (the artist) would have been with Erdnase for at least two weeks if he actually drew from life...assuming that Erdnase had all 101 poses planned out and that there were no errors or corrections. Otherwise, it would have taken longer... Smith remembered one meeting on a particularly cold day which I managed to pinpoint in December, 1901.
The cost of printing over 100 photographs was prohibitive and would have required a more expensive paper. The use of "cuts" or line drawings facilitated a much cheaper production.

My wife, a professional artist, agrees with this assessment as does Jim Steranko who has a bit of experience in the art business.

By the way, I've enlarged the drawings and discovered the cards to be both of poker and bridge-sized.

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David Alexander | 02/27/03 12:44 AM | link | filter

[QUOTE]Originally posted by Bill Mullins:

[QB]Has anyone tried to look up the copyright registrations for either the book or the illustrations at the Library of Congress? Might be some interesting information there (these forms were, for example, the first hard evidence that "Richard Bachman" was in fact Stephen King.[/QB-----------------

The copyright has been published and the pseudonym was used. The illustrations were not separately copyrighted.

The entire copyright business is significant for a number of reasons which I may reveal in a follow-up article once a bit more research has been completed.

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Richard Hatch | 02/27/03 08:38 AM | link | filter

Last March I spent several days at the Copyright Office in Washington researching this and other related things. It took more than a month after that and about $80 or so in fees to finally get a copy of all four pages of the original copyright application. The Whaley/Busby book only reproduces half of one page. Nothing earthshattering in the other pages, but you never know till you look! The front page identifies the author as being of "American" nationality and gives his address care of James McKinney, as does the page Busby reproduced. McKinney was a Chicago printer, so presumably did the printing for the author (this is an assumption. I happen to think it is pretty good one, however!). The copyright was filled out on February 15, 1902 and reached the copyright office just two days later on the 17th (they had good postal service in those days!). Since the application included a printed copy of the titlepage (this is the third page of the application), the book was clearly "in production" in mid-February. Two deposit copies (not one as stated by Whaley, who chides John Booth for saying there were two) were received at the copyright office on March 8th, so the book was coming back from the bindery by March 6th. "S. W. Erdnase" is not identified as a pseudonym on the application, nor in the copyright offices files. One mystery to me is how the author sold the book initially. He obviously had copies to sell in early March and his stated purpose in writing the book was that he "needed the money" (David Alexander believes this is purely literary irony. I don't read it that way.) The earliest known
advertisement for it is in the Sphinx in November 1902. (It is briefly mentioned in the September issue.) What was he doing with copies in the meantime? The first edition copy in the Houdini collection at the Library of Congress had been Adrian Plate’s copy, and written in Plate’s handwriting (at least I believe it to be Plate’s handwriting!) at the bottom of the titlepage it says “Sold by James McKinney and Company” and gives their Chicago address. How did Plate, in New York, know this? I assume he might have seen an advertisement for it in the non-magical press. I’m looking for such an ad. If anyone spots it, please let me know!

Incidentally, Jim Steranko does agree that the illustrations “could” have been traced from photos, but has not put all his “eggs” in that basket. He also sees evidence in the illustrations that they “could” have been the work of two different artists (or one who got better!). So I’d say the field is still open on that issue... The titlepage states that the illustrations were "drawn from life" by M. D. Smith, and Smith recalled doing so. That he was surprised that there were so many illustrations (101) is intriguing (he’d have guessed he did 20 or 30). But Gardner was interviewing him more than 40 years after the fact and it was clearly not an important job from his point of view. His grand-niece and nephew are going to be digging a box of his stuff out of storage this week to see what "Erdnase" materials he still had when he died. My guess is that he had the letters Martin Gardner wrote him and not much else, if that. But again, you don’t know till you check, so I’m looking forward to their report...

I did check to see if there had been a separate copyright application on the illustrations (about half bear a copyright statement, half don’t), but there was none...

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**Richard Kaufman** | 02/27/03 08:54 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Having drawn many thousands of illustrations by "tracing" from photographs, I can say that it would have been nearly impossible for Smith to have done 110 drawings in one day.

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**Guest** | 02/27/03 09:10 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I love the Erdnase info coming out. I hope this thread stays alive.

This may be an odd thought, but...

Maybe Erdnase took some of Smith’s illustrations, traced them, and combined them with some of Smith’s other illustrations, and voila(!) had a new illustration for the book that he didn’t have to pay for.

I think RK may have mentioned that Frank Garcia did something like this in his day, or was that A.I. Cragknarf?

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**David Alexander** | 02/27/03 09:26 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

[QUOTE]Originally posted by Richard Hatch:

He obviously had copies to sell in early March and his stated purpose in writing the book was that he "needed the money" (David Alexander believes this is purely literary
The printing end of project took several months, in the middle of winter, beginning early in December and concluding when the books were available to sell, apparently late February or early March. Since McKinney was not the publisher, his printing services were bought and paid for which meant the bill was paid in full before Erdnase took possession of the first run.

A three-month process to obtain a product that must then be advertised (possibly), sold and distributed, that must be paid for by the author is not a project someone undertakes because "they need the money." Publishing books, especially those with a niche market, is not a quick way to make money.

Erdnase, presumably with the requisite skills, could have found a game and made money. His comment is ironic, as in keeping with the persona evident in the Artifice section.

Plate could have found out about the book a number of ways, other than a magazine ad. People traveled, people talked to one another, etc. The book was not a secret, but was probably sold and distributed quietly before it was advertised to magicians.

The tracing of photos, at 5 minutes each, would have taken over 8 hours of continuous work. Given that Smith would have done these at his studio near McKinney's plant, the project could have done these over two or three days, with Smith delivering them either to Erdnase at his hotel (for approval) to McKinney's office where the work was approved. Smith did not remember prolonged contact with Erdnase, which drawing "from life" would have required.
What he remembered was meeting Erdnase in an unheated hotel room, "auditioning" for him by making some quick sketches. The photos were not "drawn from life," unless you stretch the definition to include photographs taken from life. That he got a bit better at the process as he progressed through the 101 illustrations should be readily apparent.

Lance Pierce | 02/27/03 09:37 AM | link | filter

It is all very intriguing, isn't it, John? And many thanks to Richard and David for adding their work here.

If Erdnase could replicate Marshall Smith's drawing style, then perhaps he did add his own illustrations to Smith's, and claim copyright only on those. On the other hand, as David stated, it's possible that Smith was able to quickly trace all the requisite drawings. If so, though, then why only attach a copyright statement to some and not others? Hmmm

Does anyone know how many copies of the book Erdnase ran in the first printing and perhaps subsequent others? Are there printer's records that would reveal this?

I don't have my copy of Expert with me at this moment, but I distinctly remember the copyright statement originating from Canada (The Department of Agriculture, to be exact, in London, Ontario). Does this precede or succeed the copyright filed in the U.S.? What do the Canadian records reveal?

Cheers,

Lance

David Alexander | 02/27/03 10:52 AM | link | filter

The copyright statement is misleading and somewhat nonsensical. The claim of copyright is made by "S.W. Erdnase," and then "Entered at Stationers' Hall, London."

At least one British researcher has looked and found nothing there.

Then, "Entered according to the Act of the Parliament of Congress.....in the Office of the Minister of Agriculture." It says nothing about "London, Ontario."

"Parliament of Congress" is nonsense. It is either "Act of Parliament," which would be in keeping with a British copyright, or "Act of Congress," which would be appropriate to an US copyright. What it says doesn't mean anything.

This suggests either someone who didn't know what they were doing - an amateur
publisher as Erdnase was - an incompetent at McKinney who typeset this after Erdnase had left and wasn't available to proof it (which also explains the technical errors in the text) - or someone trying to confuse the issue.

The book was copyrighted in the US, as Hatch and others have clearly shown...but the copyright page does not announce that. Since the US copyright forms were filled out using the pseudonym, there was no need for additional obfuscation.

As I have said before, had anyone tracked "Erdnase" back to McKinney, all they would have found, had McKinney talked at all, was their belief that it was a man named Andrews (an additional pseudonym I believe my candidate would have used) wrote the book. Sorry, we don't have a forwarding address for him.

It should also be pointed out that the Preface contradicts what Erdnase supposedly told Smith...that he was a "reformed gambler who had decided to go straight."

In his Preface Erdnase writes, "The hypocritical cant of reformed (?) gamblers, or whining, mealy-mouthed pretensions of piety, are not foisted as a justification for imparting the knowledge it contains." His "justification" for writing the book, his "primary motive" as he describes it, is "he needs the money."

This is highly unlikely as anyone who had ever been involved in the publishing business well knows. The book took years to research and write and the actual publishing process took several months, with all publishing services paid for in advance by Erdnase, to be followed by distribution and sales (details currently unknown) before any money would be realized. A minimum of four months if he had customers ready and waiting. Longer if he had to develop the market after the book was available. Hardly the actions of a someone who "needed the money."

There is no evidence that I am aware of that gives the number of copies printed in the first print run, or if the first run was the only print run. The plates were at McKinney and available for addition print runs, should the demand be there.

Common printing/publishing custom suggests for economy and a reasonable cost per unit, the first run was probably 250 to 500, but we don't know with any certainty. It could have been more...or less. Then there are the six or seven months between when the book was available to Erdnase and when it was made known publicly in the magic press of the day, another two before an ad appeared.

It may be that Erdnase sold/distributed the books he had planned on, that the book served whatever purpose he had in mind and that what was left could be sold to magicians. Part of the purpose of the magic section - written without the persona seen in the Artifice section - was camouflage, disguising the book's true purpose as a primer for cheating with cards. Indeed, years later, print run was seized by a vigorous sheriff for exactly that reason. In Erdnase's day, the First Amendment was not interpreted as
it is today and a pure primer on card cheating would be seen as an offense to public morals. Possibly the book was sold "under the counter" for a period of time before people saw that it was not going to attract much heat.

The book was equivalent to a $40 or $50 book today, so it wasn’t cheap....and we do not know if Erdnase sold them at list price or for more.

Lance Pierce | 02/27/03 11:43 AM | link | filter

I knew I shouldn’t have opened my trap until I went home and pulled down my copy. Thanks, David. At the risk of abusing the wonderful resource that is yourself, one more question for now...

Vernon told the story several times of how he first came to know of the book. He stated that his father, who worked in the patent & copyright office in Canada, came home one day and told him that they’d received a book on gambling (the Erdnase book), but that he felt Dai was too young to read such as yet. Vernon said that he badgered his father about the book to no avail, but that shortly after, he saw the book on display in a local store and acquired it.

I hope I’ve remembered this with some accuracy; I’m going back some years here from when I heard the story. It does imply that the book was indeed submitted for copyright in Canada and that it wasn’t so much "sold under the counter" (at least not where Vernon found it), but that it was carried rather openly.

In trying to piece together the mosaic of the book’s history, where does this information fit in?

Thanks,

Lance

Richard Kaufman | 02/27/03 12:17 PM | link | filter

David, I don’t believe the illustrations could have been drawn/traced in the brief time you’ve mentioned of five minutes each. Considering the detail and careful adherence to the anatomy of the hand, I would say at least 20 to 45 minutes each. And we’re assuming that he simply put ink to paper, rather than using pencil first and inking afterward. Or having to REdraw as many as 20% (or more!) because Smith wasn’t a magician and didn’t understand the importance of the exact position of every muscle, etc.

Earle Oakes also "traces" from photographs. He only produces five drawings a day!
Lance Pierce | 02/27/03 12:28 PM | link | filter

I do have to say that in looking at the illustrations, they don't appear as if they were traced, but have the look more of a freehand style...although Smith may have done his work freehand from photographs. Just conjecture, though...

Lance

CHRIS | 02/27/03 12:28 PM | link | filter

David,

there is one wrong reasoning in your post. If we assume that Erdnase was unexperienced in publishing, if it was his first book, then why is that inconsistent with his statement of "doing it for the money"?

To me it makes perfect sense. There are many who think that they can get rich writing a book. And then they find out that is far more difficult. So I can fully believe that Erdnase thought he could make a good amount of money doing the book, particularly if he had no prior experience in the publishing world.

Chris Wasshuber
preserving magic one book at a time.

Chris Aguilar | 02/27/03 12:31 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Richard Kaufman:
He only produces five drawings a day! [/QB]

Richard, Out of curiosity, how many Illustrations can you pump out a day?

When you’re in "the zone" of course. :)

Richard Hatch | 02/27/03 12:44 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by David Alexander: The copyright statement is misleading and somewhat nonsensical. The claim of copyright is made by "S.W. Erdnase," and then "Entered at Stationers' Hall, London."

At least one British researcher has looked and found nothing there.

Then, "Entered according to the Act of the Parliament of Congress.....in the Office of the Minister of Agriculture." It says nothing about "London, Ontario."
"Parliament of Congress" is nonsense. It is either "Act of Parliament," which would be in keeping with a British copyright, or "Act of Congress," which would be appropriate to an US copyright. What it says doesn't mean anything.

This suggests either someone who didn’t know what they were doing - an amateur publisher as Erdnase was - an incompetent at McKinney who typeset this after Erdnase had left and wasn’t available to proof it (which also explains the technical errors in the text) - or someone trying to confuse the issue.

I hate to admit that Busby is right about something on this topic, but he was right when he pointed out that the copyright statement in the first edition of Erdnase is an unusual triple copyright statement. The first line says: "Copyright, 1902, by S. W. Erdnase." This is, in fact, the US Copyright statement. Under this is a separating line and then the statement: "Entered at Stationer's Hall, London." This is the British copyright statement. Under this is another separating line, then it says: "Entered According to the Act of Parliament of Canada in the Year One Hundred Thousand and Two, by S. W. Erdnase, in the Office of the Minister of Agriculture." This is the Canadian Copyright statement. Even in the first edition, the word Canada is in broken type. Sometime, much, much later (possibly not till the 1930s), Frederick J. Drake and Company replaced the broken type for "Canada" with the word "Congress." This was not a mistake the author made. Whoever he was, he knew quite a bit about copyright law, as all three statements are correctly formatted. I know of no other book from the period, magic or otherwise, with this feature. He did follow through with the US Copyright (why?). He apparently did not follow through with the Canadian or British Copyrights (why not?). I think these facts tell us some important things about the author, though it is not clear exactly what.

The exact nature of the author's relationship with the printer McKinney is not known. McKinney was an alcoholic and one of his partners was a known gambler. To me it is not impossible to imagine that they undertook the project without requiring up front financing from a struggling author for a project they may have believed in themselves. We know now that they were selling copies themselves. Was this at the author’s request, or to pay off his debt? We just don’t know at this point. The fact that the author bothered to follow through with the US Copyright application, to me weakens his conjectured need for absolute anonymity, as does his use of the artist’s true name ("M. D. Smith") on the title page. Anyone with sufficient interest in 1902 could have gotten the copyright information, tracked down McKinney, tracked down Smith, and learned a great deal that is now lost to us. Certainly we would have learned exactly what he looked like, when and how often he met the artist (he had vivid recollection only of their initial meeting, but agreed that they must have met more than once. Indeed, he claimed that after making the sketches "from life" he would go to his studio to ink them in, returning them to the author for his approval...). How much Smith was paid, what bank was used for the check, what hotel they met in, what name he was registered under there, how many illustrations he did (and how), the exact nature of
the author's "relationship" to Louis Dalrymple, the political cartoonist, etc. etc. Enough
I would think, for a clever detective quickly to pinpoint the author, even if the latter
was dealing with McKinney and Smith under a second pseudonym (I don't happen to
believe he was, but I admit I don't really know!). I really don't understand why
someone demanding (as conjectured by David Alexander) total anonymity would
bother with the copyright application or place Smith's true name on the title page. I
happen to think the author likely did not require that high a degree of anonymity, and
that a simple reversal of his true name sufficed for his purposes. Indeed, he may have
been disappointed not only with poor sales on the first edition (I am guessing about
1,000 were done as they are much more common that the two hardback edition Drake
put out in 1905 and were available from Chicago magic shops as late as 1911 at half the
original price (which was still double Drake's hardback price, triple the Sear's catalog
price!)), but with the fact that no one tracked him down. I really think we won't
understand all the known facts until we know for sure who the author was...

Incidentally, for those interested, the facsimile of the first edition offered by
bookseller Michael Canick is finally out and is quite lovely. At $52 it is also rather
expensive, but I'm happy to have one (limited to 750 copies). Copies of the 1975 Powner
dition, which retains all the typographical features of the first edition, except for the
title page, are still widely available for under $10 at most dealers...

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**Guest | 02/27/03 12:44 PM**

One of the aspects about the illustrations that always concerned me is the fact that
Smith's recollections were offered many years after he did the work. It seems too
many suppositions & conclusions are based on these recollections, which could be
entirely erroneous. Consider this: the memory scientist & psychologist Jean Piaget had
vivid recollections of being kidnapped when he was 2. It turns out that this never
happened & was a story fabricated by his nurse. Even after Piaget learned the truth, he
still had distinct images of the supposed event.

This thread was started by someone asking about how to study Erdnase. While I'll post
a commercial message elsewhere, I'd like to encourage serious students to purchase
the facsimile edition that I'm distributing, if for no other reason than that the type &
illustrations were painstakingly restored & everything is 100% legible.

Best,
Michael

*-----------------------------*
* Michael Canick Booksellers, L.L.C.*
* 200 East 82nd Street, #3B*
* New York, NY 10028*
* Phone: (212) 585-2990*
* Fax: (212) 585-2986*
Richard Kaufman | 02/27/03 03:04 PM | link | filter

I have just received the facsimile first edition of Expert at the Card Table which is being distributed by Michael Canick and it is THE edition to have if you love this book. I do have a first edition and it looks virtually identical.

David Alexander | 02/27/03 04:52 PM | link | filter

I stand corrected on the first page...the copy I was looking at I thought to be a replication of the first edition, but it wasn’t.

About McKinney "publishing" the book. There is no evidence for that. The book was "Published by the Author," which means to me that it was bought and paid for by Erdnase. Otherwise, McKinney’s name would be on it for re-orders, credit, etc.

I've addressed the other questions in other locations and don't need to take up bandwidth covering old ground again.

It makes no sense to posit that Smith did some of the illustrations and Erdnase did others. If Erdnase had the ability, why bring Smith into the picture at all? Why didn't he do all the illustrations himself?

On speed, some artists are painstakingly slow while others aren’t. We have a friend who is a highly successful wildlife artist. He won the national duck stamp contest a few years ago. He was trained as an anatomical artist and is incredibly slow. My wife isn’t. See www.thealexanderstudio.com for my examples of her work. Click on the painting at the opening screen to see examples. The large oil painting of the pretty girl, which is not completely illustrated, is 36” x 72” and was completed in 40 hours of painting. The dress is velvet and looks like velvet in the painting.

The male head and shoulders was done in two 6 hour days, in time for his funeral. This is all freehand work. Pastels are faster..a few hours each.

Using a light table and a good photograph should take a a lot less time, a few minutes each.
My wife did the illustrations of James Randi’s public magic book. The line drawings did not take long at all, especially given good photographic reference, and the pencil portraits (poorly reproduced by the publisher) took about 45 minutes each, but they were done freehand, not traced.

If Smith had produced 5 drawings a day, he would have been on the project for 20 days...hardly a financially viable assignment to accept.

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**Guest** | 02/27/03 04:52 PM | link | filter

Thank you Richard Kaufman & Dick Hatch for your kind words about the Erdnase facsimile I’m distributing. One word about the price: since the books were so carefully crafted & indeed had to be returned & rebound (for additional cost) and since both the publisher & myself have put large resources into the project (both time & money), it is doubtful that either of us will make a profit even if the complete print run of 750 copies sells out.

Best,
Michael

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**Richard Hatch** | 02/27/03 09:17 PM | link | filter

One other aspect of the illustrations might be worth mentioning here. According to Mike Perovich, Vernon felt that the number of illustrations, 101, was not accidental. It was a popular way to advertise things (101 ways to clean house, 101 Dalmations, etc) and in fact, the author uses it on his title page to allow him to say "With over 100 drawings from life by M. D. Smith". Yeah, there are more than one hundred: one more! So Vernon’s thinking was that the author needed to get to that magic number for marketing reasons. It would be more likely he would get there by adding illustrations...
than by deleting them. If he went to Chicago with his manuscript and some of the illustrations, he would only need Smith to add the "20 or 30" he later recalled to get to the magic 101. Smith recalled that the author was not concerned with the drawing's artistic merits, just their accuracy. One way of interpreting this 40 year old memory would be the author telling Smith: "Make your illustrations match these." Of the 101 illustrations, 50 have a copyright statement as a caption. Roughly 2/3 of those in the card table artifice section are so captioned, only 11 of the 35 in the legerdemain section are. If one believes the copyright captions differentiate between two artists and those bearing it are the earlier ones, this makes sense if -- as many have speculated -- the legerdemain section was expanded later to facilitate marketing the book. All of this is merely conjecture at this point, of course. The author told Smith that he was somehow "related" to Louis Dalrymple, a famous political cartoonist of the day. My current favorite two artist theory has Dalrymple doing the "copyrighted" illustrations, but bailing out on the job before finishing it (he was wanted on spousal support charges. His first wife had not only divorced him with alimony, but he was not allowed to remarry or leave NY. He both left and remarried, so was pretty much on the run until his death apparently from venereal disease related delirium a few years later (1905). Anyway, it turns out Dalrymple was in Chicago at about the same time the book was nearing completion, though I haven't pinned down the dates, so this is not as outrageous a theory as it might first seem. But it does beggar the question of why Smith's name (which had no commercial value) and not Dalrymple's (in this scenario) was on the title page. Which brings us back to the degree that the author needed anonymity... Why not just make up an artist's name on the title page?

On the size of the job for Smith: We don't know how much he was paid, but it was enough for the author to have paid him by check, rather than cash, and for Smith to be hesitant about accepting the check from a relative stranger. Especially since it was the first (or one of the first) checks on the account (consistent with the author having only recently arrived in Chicago). But he did take the check, it did clear, and he never saw the author again. To my way of thinking, the use of a check implies a fairly sizeable job...

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Nathan | 02/27/03 10:23 PM | link | filter

Thanks to all you experts for some very interesting Erdnase discussion. I've become increasingly obsessed with this book over the past year. I have two comments that I hope you'll find intriguing.

First of all, here is some evidence that I've never seen mentioned before that the number of illustrations is somehow important. In the discussion of the second deal Erdnase says, "He need not bother about acquiring skill at blind shuffling, cutting stocking, or any of the other hundred and one ruses known to the profession." This is certainly a bit of irony.
Second, with regard to the comment that the author needs the money: Has anyone considered the possibility that Erdnase expected to receive money from a source other than the sales of the book? Perhaps Erdnase made a bet that he could pull off the greatest book publishing scam in magic history. He was certainly arrogant enough to believe he could pull something like this off. Furthermore, if he really was a gambler at heart then the bet itself would have been much more exciting than any actual money he made which explains why Erdnase wouldn’t just go find a game if he needed money. Consider this line from the introduction: ”He knows little of the real value of money, and as a rule is generous, careless and improvident. He loves the hazard rather than the stakes.” When Erdnase says he needed the money, he might mean that he couldn’t resist such a preposterous wager.

David Alexander | 02/28/03 09:05 AM | link | filter

I’m afraid this discussion is becoming rife with fantasy. Now Dalrymple is being brought in as a possible artistic contributor. This is in the same vein as the suggestion that Mark Twain was the ghost writer.

Best to remember Occam’s Razor and adhere to it.

David Alexander | 02/28/03 10:15 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by Richard Hatch:

**On the size of the job for Smith:** We don’t know how much he was paid, but it was enough for the author to have paid him by check, rather than cash, and for Smith to be hesitant about accepting the check from a relative stranger. Especially since it was the first (or one of the first) checks on the account (consistent with the author having only recently arrived in Chicago). But he did take the check, it did clear, and he never saw the author again. To my way of thinking, the use of a check implies a fairly sizeable job...

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The use of a check indicates the publisher (Erdnase) wanted proof of title, clear ownership of the material he was paying for. Establishing clear title is important for what happened later and a check is the best evidence.

It is also indirect evidence that McKinney had nothing to do with “publishing” the book since, as an established printer, they could have ordered the illustrations and paid for them directly. McKinney would have been known to Smith.

As it was, McKinney probably recommended Smith and Smith accepted the job on that referral. That it was a short job is also implied because Smith would not have accepted a long job, from a stranger, without some sort of downpayment. Who is going to work for a couple of weeks for a stranger - a reformed gambler who was met in a
cheap hotel - without a deposit? Please....

The job took a day or so - tracing the photos - the material was delivered and approved - the job paid for by a check which could be verified quickly by Smith by walking over to the bank and cashing it. If there was a problem, it could be resolved quickly since the book was in the early stages of production and the author/publisher was still around.

Bill Mullins | 02/28/03 10:20 AM | link | filter

If the book wasn’t published for money, then why was it published?

Not for vanity or to establish a name for the author, the pseudonym precludes that.

Not as a public service to protect the sheep from being fleeced -- it isn't written from that perspective, nor does it seem to have been marketed that way.

Perhaps Erdnase lost a bet to McKinney, and the manuscript was payment?

Any other ideas?

Also, Hatch says above that copyright wasn’t followed up in Canada -- has someone researched the Canadian copyright records? Are there significant early editions in other languages (and other countries whose copyright records should be checked)?

As far as Dalrymple doing some of the drawings -- can anyone say whether or not the style of Dalrymple is similar to that in the book? Samples of Dalrymple artwork:

http://www.relativelyyours.com/dalrympl ... rymple.htm

http://bugpowder.com/andy/e.dalrymple.html

http://www.graphicwitnes...s/pktower.jpg
http://www.bu.edu/ah/ah208/lecture4/1-40.jpg
http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/trm44.html

I don't think their styles are so similar that a claim that Dalrymple was a co-illustrator of EATCT makes sense.

Guest | 02/28/03 10:31 AM | link | filter

I think it is a bit unfair to lump the Louis Dalrymple theory with the Mark Twain theory. The illustrator, Marshall D. Smith, recalls the author telling him that he (the
author) was related to Dalrymple. I thought the Mark Twain theory came from Martin Gardner as it related to Milton Franklin Andrews. Gardner speculated that M.F. Andrews and Twain were friends for several reasons including the fact that they both lived in Hartford at the same time. According to Busby, even Gardner thought his own Mark Twain theory to be extremely unlikely.

If Marshall Smith is to be believed, then I don’t think discussing Dalrymple’s possible involvement with the book is rife with fantasy.

This is a very interesting thread, and I greatly enjoy reading the observations of Richard Hatch and David Alexander.

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**Richard Hatch** | 02/28/03 10:35 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I agree with David’s comment that the Dalrymple as second artist is as fantastic (and unlikely) an hypothesis as Martin Gardner’s "Mark Twain as ghostwriter" theory (and I flattered to be in Gardner’s company!). I suspect I’m having as much fun exploring it as Gardner did with the Twain theory. These things are fun to fantasize about, and one never knows where they might lead. I also agree wholeheartedly that Occam’s razor is a useful guide. As I apply it, Occam’s razor would lead us to look first for an "E. S. Andrews" about 40 years old, possibly related to Louis Dalrymple, slight in stature, who had lived in Chicago in the 1890s, went back to Chicago in the late fall of 1901 (to have the book published), and left not much later (likely about when the book dropped from $2 to $1 in February 1903: the explanation being that he dumped copies when he moved). Such a candidate exists: Edwin Sumner Andrews, born 1859, lived in Chicago from 1888 to 1895, moved back (from Denver, another gambling center) in October 1901, departed (for San Francisco, yet another gambling center) in February 1903, the very month that the Atlas Novelty Company at 295 Austin Ave dropped the price from $2 to $1 (only the second time the book was advertised in the Sphinx). E. S. Andrews’ address in Chicago (actually Oak Park): 195 Austin Ave, 8 blocks due south. Coincidence? Perhaps, but I think not. He wife’s maiden name was Seely, the same maiden name as Dalrymple’s mother. Coincidence? Perhaps. His nearest neighbor growing up in rural Minnesota was an Irish immigrant farmer named Patrick McKinney who had a son named James. The book’s printer was a James McKinney, the son of immigrant Irish whose older brother (whom he employed) was named Patrick. Coincidence? Almost certainly, but intriguing enough for me to want to explore further. Edwin Sumner Andrews as a "travelling agent" for the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad, which would have given him ample opportunity to observe (and participate in, if so inclined) card play. The one photo I have of him shows him to be the proper height range (judged relative to those around him...). Can I place a deck of cards in his hands. No. But he makes a heck of a circumstantial case, in my opinion...

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**Richard Hatch** | 02/28/03 10:48 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)
Dalrymple's style does not look anything like the illustrations in Erdnase, but I have five other books illustrated by Marshall D. Smith that don't look anything like the technical drawings he did for Erdnase either, so I don't discount the Dalrymple theory on those grounds. But I don't take it too seriously myself, either, just trying not to miss any possible clues by ignoring him entirely...

The Canadian copyright has been exhaustively researched, most recently by David Ben. The copyright was not applied for (it would have left a record even if the application was rejected, on moral grounds, for example). The British copyright has also been researched without bearing fruit. Possibly the author intended to file these applications, but never followed through. British copyright at that time required 5 deposit copies (for each of the national libraries). As far as I can tell, none of them currently has a first edition (most can be searched online), making it extremely unlikely he followed through with that application (owing perhaps to lack of funds). Possibly the triple copyright statement was just a bluff to scare off pirates, but then why bother even with the US Copyright?

Frederick J. Drake began selling first edition copies in 1903 and continued to sell them until he reprinted the book beginning in 1905 and continuing at least as late as 1934 (possibly 1937, when the plates were transferred to Frost Publishing Company). I have done extensive research on Drake and he appears extremely scrupulous in following the letter of the law. He had almost all his publication, regardless of subject matter or author, copyrighted in the name of "Frederick J. Drake and Company". I have examined the records of some of these in the copyright offices in Washington. He clearly knew and apparently followed the letter of the law. Erdnase is one of the few books (the are others, but not many, especially from this period) that he published without obtaining a transfer of the copyright. To me, that implies that he had made a financial arrangement with the author, either buying the book outright (then why not obtain the copyright, as was his practice?) or paying royalties. And it as Drake who first broke the news that the "S. W. Erdnase" read in reverse yields the author's name. In my application of Occam's razor, that carries some weight..

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**Randy DiMarco | 02/28/03 11:10 AM | link | filter**

If a copyright was never applied for in Canada, then the Vernon story about his father telling him that the book had been received at the copyright office would have to be false.

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**Richard Hatch | 02/28/03 11:13 AM | link | filter**

The Vernon story is a "false memory". David Ben has been able to identify the book his father brought home. It was not Erdnase, but another book on gambling from the period and is illustrated with photos. We may have to wait for David's Vernon biography to learn the details...
There are plenty of people who "remember" the announcement of the attack on Pearl Harbor coming in the middle of a baseball game when the season was over months earlier.

The evidence shows the book was author published. That's what it says in the front of the book. Author published means everything done to produce the book would have been bought and paid for by the author prior to the book appearing in printed form. McKinney was not a publisher. McKinney was a printer and binder. (Even Martin Gardner was confused on this point.)

The illustrations were paid for with a check, which suggests the printing and binding were also paid the same way. This is important if the author/publisher is traveling and needs copies sent here or there as instructions and a check could be mailed to McKinney and the orders fulfilled with minimal fuss. Checks also provided a paper trail for ownership should the need arise, which I believe it did.

My thoughts on this, which I've previously shared with Dick Hatch, follow:

McKinney was going down the drain, but continued to have the responsibility for Erdnase's printing plates and excess stock, material they couldn't legally dispose of. They had no way of contacting Erdnase, so what to do with his property as the business was deteriorating?

Without a shred of supporting evidence, Busby claims that in 1903 William J. Hilliar brokered a deal between M.F. Andrews and Frederick J. Drake, a Chicago publisher, for the rights, plates and unsold stock. However, if the real Erdnase was involved in the deal, as Busby claims, then Drake, like any prudent publisher, would have purchased or had the copyright transferred to his name. That didn't happen, which in and of itself is not a problem as royalties could have been paid by contract, but the actions by Drake subsequent to obtaining the Erdnase material suggest Drake had a less than benign motive, for, once in possession of the plates, he then advertised an edited version of Expert of 204 pages and 45 illustrations by Samuel Robert Erdnase in the United States Catalog: Books in America. Clearly, he did not own or have legal rights to the copyright because he listed the book under another author's name. He would not have done this if he owned the copyrights or had legal entitlement to the material. However, this book never was released. The conclusion one must make is that some how Erdnase learned of Drakes plan and forestalled it.

My conjecture is that the real Erdnase may have contacted McKinney for more books or somehow learned that the company was failing and that his material had been
transferred to Drake's care, with Drake continuing to sell Erdnase's book.

Erdnase hired a lawyer, to whom he presented the various cancelled checks, copyright forms, original manuscript, etc., easily proving his bona fides as the author and owner of the copyright.

A letter from the lawyer to Drake stops the whole Samuel Robert Erdnase business in its tracks. Drake was in possession of and selling material that wasn't his. This could lead to trouble, but the whole thing is put off as a misunderstanding—a favor to McKinney's misrepresentation by Hilliar, whatever, and the matter settled out of court. A lease agreement to use the plates and a royalty contract was signed with Drake paying monies to Erdnase/Andrews, probably through the same Chicago bank account set up to pay for the book.

Drake had dozens of titles and Expert would have been one of many, not worth any legal hassle especially when he was in violation of several state and federal statutes, with no way to win. Settling was the only solution.

Drake reprints the book with the copyright remaining in the name of Erdnase, royalties are paid and life goes on.

Then one day, the royalty checks are returned by the bank account closed no forwarding address. It isn't Drake's responsibility to chase authors and pay them royalties, so he just keeps tabs on what he owes and waits to hear from the author. He never does.

The year 1930 rolls around, important because that is the year the copyright comes up for renewal. No one renews it. Drake can't because he doesn't own it or have legal rights to it, otherwise he would have. Erdnase doesn't, because my candidate has, years earlier, dropped any interest he has in the project. It has served his psychological purposes and he has moved on with his life and to renew the copyright may risk exposure. There is no benefit for him to resurface.

So, in 1930, the book passes into public domain and, apparently, no one notices or cares because the market is handled by Drake and the production of another edition probably isn't financially viable, should anyone have taken notice of the books now public status.

Drake continues to sell the book until 1937, a period of time when Drake could argue that their author is legally dead seven years being the standard back then. Drake, for whatever reasons, sells the plates to Frost who probably assumed responsibility for paying the author or his heirs back royalties. Certainly it would have been prudent for Drake to have Frost assume liability.

This is, of course, conjecture, but it does explain the facts as we know them without
For anyone interested, here's an original Marshall D. Smith painting you can pick up for just $20,000:

http://showcase.goantiques.com/search/i...p?id=92899

Personally, I don't think it looks anymore like the work of the artist of Erdnase than the Darlymple cartoons posted earlier. My feeling (as a non-artist) is that the technical illustrations required by the artist could easily have been rendered to his satisfaction by any competent artist. Smith specifically recalled that the author was not interested in "artistic" qualities, just accuracy, leaving little room for artistic expression.

David Alexander, in his excellent post says:
"The evidence shows the book was author published. That's what it says in the front of the book."

True enough, and I agree with it, but it does raise the question of how much of what the mysterious author tells us we should take at face value. For example, on that same title page he tells us his name is "S. W. Erdnase" which we now know not to be true (it was, however, not obvious to readers at the time of publication). He also tells us that the illustration were drawn "from life" while Alexander claims they were traced from photographs. The copyright page claims copyright in Canada and the UK. Not true. The preface claims he wrote the book because he "needs the money". Alexander tells us this is simply irony, and that he was a man of independent means. My understanding is the Alexander's candidate's motive for writing the book was to exact private revenge on the gambling fraternity that had cheated him in his youth, but the author tells us he has "neither grievance against the fraternity nor sympathy for so called 'victims'" (p. 10). I'm sure other examples of such contradictions could be found. In fact, some people feel his statements that he both betrays "no confidences" yet proffers "the sum of our present knowledge" (p. 14) are inherently contradictory. I'm not so sure. My feeling is we should believe the author and other "witnesses" until forced by facts to do otherwise. I see no compelling reason not to believe that "S. W. Erdnase" is a lightly disguised version of his real name, that he was the publisher of his own book (I'm not sure anyone on the forum has challenged this claim, but since we don't know who the author was, it doesn't tell us a great deal about him. He gave his address on the copyright application c/o McKinney who, it turns out, was selling copies of the book, so the thought that McKinney himself might have authored the book is not entirely outrageous...), that the illustrations were drawn from life by M. D. Smith, and that he needed the money. Perhaps this post will be useful it points out that what we don't yet know about the author and his book greatly outweighs what we do know.

We don't know when, where and under what circumstances the book was written. Some believe it to have been written many years before it was finally published. I'm not among those, but it is possible. We don't know when the book was illustrated by Smith (Alexander's pinpointing of the date by comparing weather records with
Smith's recollection that he met the author on a bitter cold day is an ingenious approach, but it does assume that Smith met the author shortly before publication, i.e., in the winter of 1901. While that assumption is reasonable and one that I share, it is an assumption. Smith told Gardner he was about 25 when he did the job. He turned 29 in the winter of 1901. We don't know exactly where they met or how long the illustrating took or how much Smith was paid. We don't know the nature of the author/publisher's relation with McKinney, whom we assume printed the book (a reasonable assumption, but an assumption, nonetheless), so we don't know the terms they worked out. Nor do we know the nature of the relationship between the author and Frederick J. Drake, who began selling first editions at half price in 1903 and printing the book himself in 1905. We don't know how many first editions were printed or how they were distributed. We therefore don't know how well it sold and whether is satisfied the author's need for money or not. We don't know why the price was dropped from $2 to $1 in February 1903, less than a year after the book came of the presses. We don't know why the copyright was not transferred to Drake nor why it was not renewed in 1930. Finally, we don't know who wrote the book. Likely many of these questions will not be answerable until we do.

Richard Kaufman | 03/01/03 11:31 AM | link | filter

I'm afraid I must disagree with statements regarding the illustrations in "Expert at the Card Table" made by both my friends David and Richard. First, the drawings are extremely exacting, and almost perfectly reproduce the anatomy of the hand. These drawings simply could not have been done as quickly as David assumes. Each one looks as if it would have taken a minimum of 15 to 30 minutes. That's a minimum, and frankly I think and underestimate. Second, Richard states that any competent artist could have done the work. I must strongly dispute this: Even great artists often fail miserably when it comes to the hands. Here, we are not even talking about great art, and it has nothing to do with whether the artist is "reputable" or not. It has to do with someone who understands the anatomy of the hands and how it relates to the objects they hold. The illustrations in Erdnase are among the clearest ever drawn in our field. VERY FEW artists are capable of that.

Richard Hatch | 03/01/03 12:41 PM | link | filter

Richard, thanks for pointing this out. On the question of whether the illustrations were drawn "from life" or traced from photos, let me throw in the following, for others to correct me on as well: The final illustration, Fig. 101, shows the face of the Ace of Spades from a Bee brand deck. Thinking that this might help date the illustrations (since the designs change over time), I obtained a photocopy of the Bee design from that period (which turns out to have been stable over that period, so only set a lower bound on the illustrations). The actual design is significantly different from the one shown in the illustration,
suggesting to me that this illustration, at least (or that portion of it) was not traced, but rendered free hand...

Fig. 16 (page 47) shows two edges of the square board that Smith recalled the author demonstrated the moves on. The front edge of the deck runs parallel to the front of the board, so a traced photo should show the end of the deck parallel to the side of the board. It does not, again suggesting this was drawn freehand, and rather quickly at that. I asked Steranko to take a close look at the illustrations, to see if he could determine whether they showed evidence of having been traced from photos, rendered by two or more artists, and whether the author’s hands were large or small. His conclusions to all three issues were ambiguous. In the case of the size of the hand, some (fig. 79 for example) make the hand appear small while others (fig. 61) make it appear huge. I don't believe these discrepancies could be explained merely by saying that some poses used bridge sized cards and others poker size. It could be explained if they were drawn from life as stated on the titlepage by the author and later recalled by the illustrator. I don't know anything about the history of photography, so hope someone who does might see fit to comment on this, but my naive belief is that it would have been both much more expensive and much more time consuming to pose for the photographs (to get 101 usable ones would likely have required a fair number of more shots). Many of the poses would be awkward to hold for the cameras of the period (shots from below, above, etc. which required setting up a tripod, etc. etc.) If the author took the time and expense to have the photos taken and (as Alexander contents) was not concerned about turning a profit from the project, why not use them for the book, rather than spending additional time and expense to turn them into illustrations? Lang Neil’s photo illustrated book came out later in 1902 at the same price as Erdnase (of course, it was not self-published either!). Any experts on turn of the century photography care to enlighten us?

Bob Coyne | 03/01/03 02:40 PM | link | filter

The sleeves in the illustrations seem stylized rather than realistic. For example, many of them have a little curved line with a gap to indicate the connection between the length of the sleeve and the end of the sleeve (hard to explain verbally). Plus, the shirt extended out from the coat sleeve seems more uniform than it would be in real life. So my guess is that Smith either drew the sleeves from life in a quick stylized way, or alternatively, he fabricated them after the fact in the process of finishing/refining the illustrations.

Either way, that seems to me to be an argument against tracing. If he traced the pictures, I’d expect to see less stylized, more varied sleeves. And a similar argument for the hands themselves. I’d expect to see more profile of knuckles, for example, if it was traced (e.g., left hand in fig. 85).

Though I guess he could draw from pictures rather than tracing them which would account better for the reduction/simplification.
As something to look at when considering a "two artist" or "one artist who got better" theory, Steranko pointed out discrepancies in the rendition of the fingernails. Some are ovals and others are more realistically squared off. Naturally, one must compare the same fingers on the same hands for this to be relevant. Again, this seems like the kind of discrepancy more likely to occur if being drawn from life than traced from photos. Of course, it could also be explained by two different people posing for the illustrations, or one who got a serious manicure between sessions...

For a fascinating example of photos that were turned into illustrations, several incredible photos of Robert-Houdin performing cups and balls, card sleights, etc. are in the fantastic new books by Christian Fechner. Robert-Houdin had these taken and then turned into illustrations for his seminal text, Secrets of Conjuring and Magic. This was in the late 1860s, so perhaps the mysterious Erdnase did the same some 30 odd years later...

Originally posted by Nathan Becker:

First of all, here is some evidence that I've never seen mentioned before that the number of illustrations is somehow important. In the discussion of the second deal Erdnase says, "He need not bother about acquiring skill at blind shuffling, cutting stocking, or any of the other hundred and one ruses known to the profession." This is certainly a bit of irony.

Nathan is correct is citing the above reference to the term "one hundred and one" in the text as never having been mentioned in print prior to his posting. I had done a text search on a number of key words some months ago, using Chris Wasshuber's eBook version. My search on the word "hundred" turned up one other use of the phrase. In his discussion of ways to present the pre-arranged deck (p. 181) he says: "There are a hundred and one variations..." I think these two examples show the author’s fondness for the phrase and strengthen Vernon’s contention that the number of illustrations (101) was not accidental.

I had the opportunity of spending a good deal of the day in my car with Earle Oakes, and we discussed the issue of the drawings in Erdnase. His contention is similar to mine: they must have taken a minimum of at least 20 minutes each to draw, if not much longer. I have several other observations to make:
1) The illustrations almost uniformly depict someone with small chubby hands. Unless someone can find evidence that Smith always drew peoples’ hands looking small and chubby, we MUST assume Erdnase’s hands were small and chubby. (Note that Vernon had a smaller than average size hand; Steve Freeman has small hands; Howard Schwarzman has small hands: all three men could/can do virtually every sleight in the book.)

2) These illustrations could not have been sketched from life. It seems impossible to me that this degree of anatomical accuracy could have reproduced from quick sketches made from looking at Erdnase’s hands. My own experience forces me to assume that they have been traced from photographs.

3) The fact that there are two different “groups” of illustrations does not indicate to me that there are two different artists involved. It more strongly suggests that Smith did the drawings in two different batches, at least six months apart but as long as several years apart. I say this from experience: I illustrated "The Card Classics of Ken Krenzel" over a period of a year. The first batch of drawings differs substantially from the second batch, for which the photographs were taken about six months later. Very simple: my style changed. The style of every artist changes over time, even over just a few months, depending upon what is influencing his or her work. With a book that has as many extremely complex drawings as this ("complex" in the sense that the positions of the fingers and cards are vital), it would not be at all surprising if Smith did it in two batches.

4) The fact that "The Modern Conjurer" was one of the few (though not the only) books to use photographs during that period would suggest not just that it was more expensive to use photographs, but the prevailing opinion (which persists to this day) that illustrations are simply a BETTER way to explain this type of material. Besides, Erdnase may have felt that actual photographs of his hands might betray his identity. Either way, just because photos do not appear in the book is no reason to presume that the illustrations were not drawn from photographs.

5) The points about the sleeves and cuffs and table edges having nothing to do with anything. When making a drawing like this, frequently the edges of the table and the sleeves are not in view, or only partially in view, in the photograph. They can, and frequently are, "made up" by the artist. And you can see the difference in the line work when something has been traced from a photo and when it hasn’t--frankly, the fact that the cuffs or sleeves sometimes look spontaneously drawn strengthens, NOT weakens, the argument that the illustrations were traced from photographs.
Smith recalled the author as having small, soft hands (softer than a woman's), consistent with the above. This is important in the identity search, since Milton Franklin Andrews was known to have large hands. And, of course, he was 6'1.5" in his stocking feet, taller than Smith, who recalled looking down on the author, whom he recalled as being 5'6", perhaps smaller, not taller than 5'7" (Smith himself appears to be about 6' from a photo of him standing beside Paul Rosini and Martin Gardner which can be see in Chuck Romano's Paul Rosini book, HOUSE OF CARDS. Gardner was about 5'7" at that time. In fact, Smith told Gardner he was about the same size as Erdnase when Gardner first interviewed him. Gardner was unable to convince Smith that he might have met Milton Franklin Andrews, due to the height discrepancy.) Erdnase himself refers to the sizes of hands in several places. For example, after describing the difficult one-handed Erdnase shift (p. 101), he says: "We presume that the larger or longer the hand, the easier it will be for a beginner to accomplish this shift, but a very small hand can perform the action when the knack is once acquired." He seems to "know" about small hands, but must "presume" when it comes to large hands, suggesting his own hands are small, though this is open to interpretation. Vernon in REVELATIONS says of Erdnase's description of the classic pass (p. 96): "Erdnase's method for the two-handed shift is the only one in which tip of thumb is held at side of pack and it is decidedly more efficient especially if operator's hand is small." Suggesting again that Erdnase likely had small hands...Thanks to David Alexander for pointing these passages and their significance out to me.

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**Guest | 03/02/03 09:23 PM | link | filter**

I've thoroughly enjoyed reading this thread, the contributions have been varied and well thought-through/informed. Fascinating stuff.

Thanks.

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**Guest | 03/02/03 10:14 PM | link | filter**

I'd like to echo Eric's words. I started by asking on the proper way of studying Erdnase and got a whole lot more. Although the emphasis of this thread has been somewhat diluted, in reading these wonderful responses, I have found them to be inspirational and very interesting to say the least. Thanks everyone and keep 'em coming!

Roberto

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**Pete Biro | 03/03/03 11:25 AM | link | filter**

Does ANYONE have proof that Expert at the Card Table was NOT written by Walter B. Gibson? <GRD>
Originally posted by Pete Biro:

Does ANYONE have proof that Expert at the Card Table was NOT written by Walter B. Gibson? <GRD>

It’s very hard to prove a negative! That what gives Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny and Milton Franklin Andrews such staying power... ;)

Richard Kaufman | 03/03/03 12:13 PM | link | filter

How old was Gibson when Expert came out? Two?

Guest | 03/03/03 12:20 PM | link | filter

Erdnase was actually Charlier.

Richard Hatch | 03/03/03 12:23 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Richard Kaufman:

How old was Gibson when Expert came out? Two?

Hey, according to the new Fechner biography, Robert-Houdin was baptised several days before he was born (not a typo in Fechner's text, he points it out himself in an endnote), so I wouldn’t eliminate Gibson from the growing candidate list on age alone (though you’d think Smith would remember needing to change diapers between sketches!). Actually, Gibson was seven at the time. Probably not quite 5'6", though his hands likely would have been "small and soft". And he was from the East Coast. Oh wait, it was Gibson who told Gardner in 1947 to contact Edgar Pratt, which led to the Milton Franklin Andrews theory. And Gibson, ghost-writing for Radner, who gave the author's true name as "James Andrews". Clever smokescreens to hide his own involvement?

Richard Hatch | 03/03/03 12:45 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Hen Kvetch:

Erdnase was actually Charlier.

Ironically, Charlier is the only magician mentioned by name in Erdnase, and his name is misspelled at that: "This is known to conjurers as the "Charlies [sic] pass" and we presume was invented by the famous magician of that name." (p. 128). The move is used in a later trick and spelled properly, so this is just a typo, but could be used both to argue that Erdnase was not an active member of the magic fraternity (the whole legerdemain section has him standing outside it: Why do conjurers always use the
pass instead of blind shuffles? He is clearly well read on magic and probably came up with some of his great moves because he was not fraternising with magicians...) and that the book did not have an editor (who would have caught the discrepancy) as David Alexander argues persuasively. I also don't think the book had an editor, but I think it not so much due to his need for anonymity, but due to his need for money: he couldn't afford one. This is consistent with the cheap paper and binding, and the cheap hotel in which he met the artist.

Jonathan Townsend | 03/03/03 03:04 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Richard Hatch:
...not so much due to his need for anonymity, but due to his need for money: he couldn't afford one. This is consistent with the cheap paper and binding, and the cheap hotel in which he met the artist.

Hi Rich, I'm trying to read this thread and glean the back story as you and some others collect evidence. The money issue itself begs some questions.

Is E@CT to be interpreted like Nicolo Machavelli's work as intended to regain favor at some court or clique?

Did the author claim to be reformed? If so, why not get a church involved? If the work had a different tone and focus it might be framed as a 'how to save your money from evil people' type work.

If not, then there is money to be taken from the card table and not much motivation to write a compromising book. Even if one had students one might wish to protect the material by coding the text and limiting the illustrations to just what the student might have forgotten from the lessons given.

More puzzled than usual

-Jon

Guest | 03/03/03 03:15 PM | link | filter

The publisher of the Erdnase facsimile I'm distributing asked me to post his theory here concerning the illustrations in Erdnase. BTW, because the illustrations are so clear in this facsimile, the point he makes is more easily seen.

His theory is basically this: there were at least 3 artists illustrating Erdnase. Possibly Erdnase (to save money) or Smith (to save time) had a colleague or student do some of the work. The publisher cites 3 illustrations for his theory: On page 29, Fig. 1, the hands look anatomically correct and professionally rendered. On page 132, Fig. 68, the
hands look awkward & amateurishly rendered (compare especially how the base of the fingers meet the hand). Finally, on the facing page (p. 133, Fig. 69), the hands & cuffs seem quite different again. Also, a heart can clearly be seen drawn on the back of the lower hand! This apparently is a device that students use to get the proportions & shape of the hand correct. It is the only illustration in the whole book that has this heart shape visible.

Michael Canick

Richard Hatch | 03/03/03 03:25 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Michael Canick:

Finally, on the facing page (p. 133, Fig. 69), the hands & cuffs seem quite different again. Also, a heart can clearly be seen drawn on the back of the lower hand! This apparently is a device that students use to get the proportions & shape of the hand correct. It is the only illustration in the whole book that has this heart shape visible.

Gazzo seems to think the heart shape (which is edited out of some later reprints) is a significant clue to the author’s identity. He also thinks the fact that it occurs in Fig. 69 might be of importance. I don’t know how to interpret any of this. Gazzo also thinks that the final words of the book “no hocus pocus” are important. He first suggested to me the idea of using the Bee Ace design to try to date the book, but as noted earlier, it only put a lower bound of 1892 (when Bee brand was introduced, I believe, working from memory here) on that particular illustration. He thinks the book could have been written decades before being published and that the relative popularity of the games mentioned could also be used to date it...

Guest | 03/04/03 01:46 AM | link | filter

The really great thing about this thread is that I’m READING Erdnase again. Believe it or not, there are many among us who haven’t even read it! As Darwin Ortiz mentioned, “The work of art is always more important than the artist” (I’m quoting by memory, but its a good point.) It would be nice to see a discussion on the book itself, but really, what else could be said, other than: READ IT! It is a wonderful experience. Anyway, can’t John Edward find out who he was? Ha ha.

Seriously, if I was in a position to do so, I would gladly see to it that Richard Hatch and David Alexander receive a grant to continue their research. We’re getting close and closer it seems. Remember years ago (in The Phoenix?), it was mentioned triumphantly ”They mystery of Erdnase has been solved!” If they only knew...

And if Erdnase himself only knew the lasting influence he’d have!

Go forth now and read the book, if you haven’t done so, you’ll thank me.

Charlie Chang | 03/04/03 03:24 AM | link | filter
I just caught up on this thread and have just spent an hour going through it. Wow. I hope someone is recording a lot of this - it’s one of the best Internet threads I have ever seen on a magic site.

I am not qualified to offer a theory on Erdnase’s identity. I happen to subscribe to Richard Hatch’s excellent candidate but have been fascinated by all the potential Erdnase suspects put forward by David Alexander and Mr Hatch. I think we are very fortunate to have two passionate historians researching this mystery from different perspectives.

I have a theory that may answer a lot of questions about the drawings in Erdnase.

First of all, I think it would be important to learn the details of obtaining 101 photographs in the late 19th century. I assume it would be extremely expensive and quite difficult in itself. Not like buying a roll of film and dropping it at the one hour photo booth.

Assuming that obtaining 101 photographs would not prove to be prohibitive we should also consider the idea of someone going to such an expense only to have the photographs converted into drawings. At this stage in the life span of photography such an idea might seem extremely fanciful if not downright stupid.

Experts in the history of photography might be able to clarify this.

Now, if I was Mr Smith and I was required to draw from life, I find it quite unlikely that I would sit with my subject and complete each illustration in front of him.

It would be much smarter to perform quick sketches, outlining the position and size of the hands and cards. Such sketches can be completed in a matter of SECONDS.

Before you dismiss this, consider that such preliminary sketches were an accepted tool of the pre-photography artist.

Now look at the drawings in Erdnase. These are not real hands. Yes, they may accurately reflect the size and shape of the subject BUT these hands are fanciful - they are drawn, in my opinion, from the illustrator’s mind.

I think Smith sat with Erdnase and made dozens of quick sketches. Then, later, he used those sketches to create the illustrations, applying his understanding of the human hand to the positions shown in his initial drawings.

He could then return them to his employer by mail.

While I do not have Richard or Earl Oaks’ experience, I have illustrated several small
books and studied anatomy and life drawing at the Glasgow School Of Art.

I think that both Richard and Earl are approaching the problem from their position as excellent draughtsmen.

I believe Smith approached the task as an artist.

**Richard Hatch | 03/04/03 07:43 AM | link | filter**

Originally posted by R P Wilson:

*It would be much smarter to perform quick sketches, outlining the position and size of the hands and cards. Such sketches can be completed in a matter of SECONDS.*

*Before you dismiss this, consider that such preliminary sketches were an accepted tool of the pre-photography artist....*

*I think Smith sat with Erdnase and made dozens of quick sketches. Then, later, he used those sketches to create the illustrations, applying his understanding of the human hand to the positions shown in his initial drawings.*

In fact, this is EXACTLY the process described by Smith when interviewed by Martin Gardner in December 1946, some 45 years after the fact. He told Gardner he made sketches which the author approved. He then left the hotel room in which they met to return to his studio to ink them in. He did not recall tracing them from photographs, which I think he would have remembered. He was trained at the Chicago Art institute and doing extensive illustrating at this time (he later gave up this line of work in favor or oil painting, which paid him better). He recalled that his work at the time was for "cheap magazines", indicating that he likely did not command a high price for his services, consistent with the book's author having a profit motive (i.e., "needing the money"). What is strange about his recollection is that he was both surprised by the large number of illustrations (he'd have guessed he did 20-30 not 101) and that he did not recognize them. He claimed he did recognize the handwriting beneath them, i.e., "Fig. 1", "Fig. 2" etc. I find that very strange. Apparently Vernon was so disappointed with the artist's recollection (when interviewed in May 1947 at the SAM convention in Chicago some months after Gardner found him) that he expressed some doubt as to whether Smith had actually illustrated the book at all...

**Charlie Chang | 03/04/03 08:13 AM | link | filter**

This method for producing the illustrations could feasibly explain many things.

If Smith were working from sketches the quality of each drawing is bound to vary. Lets
say he did five drawings in each session. It is entirely likely that the quality of the drawings will not be constant. This could also be explained by the quality of his preliminary sketches.

There is also no way to determine the order in which he did the drawings. He may have started with illustration 69 - then 25 then 101 and so on.

It is also possible that the illustrations were not numbered by Smith at all. As an illustrator, I think it best to mark an illustration at the lower left corner of the paper. The drawing can then be labelled later when the book is being laid out. I seriously doubt that the illustrations were numbered by Smith the way they are in the book. This may be the work of McKinney or even Erdnase himself.

As to Smith's surprise that he did so many drawings - I think we can consider this as a minor issue. How many times have you mis-remembered an event or even a period from your past? This was no-doubt a novel job for Smith but by no means the highlight of his career. Why should he recall every detail 45 years later?

Maybe he was surprised that he had done so many drawings. This does not mean he did not do them.

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**Bob Coyne** | 03/04/03 08:43 AM | link | filter

I think the point relayed by Michael Canick, that there might have been multiple artists is plausible. Looking through them, a few groups jump out (to my eye). Specifically, I think figures 84, 85, 86, 87, and especially 88 seem of inferior quality. And 92, 93, 94, 97 also. Others look very well drawn with correct proportions.

Multiple artists would fit with Smith's recollection that there were many more than he remembered. It would also fit with Erdnase needing money. Perhaps he could only afford to have a limited number professionally illustrated (by Smith). For others he found less competent (and cheaper) help.

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**diagonalpalmshift** | 03/04/03 04:40 PM | link | filter

I know very little about drawing, and, honestly, when I looked at the illustrations I thought they were all better than I could do, and therefore thought all of them were good. However, maybe Mr. Erdnase only had Mr. Smith do the drawings he could not do himself because they were too difficult, or he wanted them to be very accurate. Perhaps he had worked on them prior to meeting or hiring Smith. Are the more difficult drawings consistently the better ones?

Also, I think Erdnase would have mentioned if he had additional artists work on the book, unless he put Mr. Smith's name in the book for purposes other than giving
Further, in the book he seems like a man who wanted to at least appear modest, since, after he named the S.W.E. Shift, he kind of downplays the use of his name in the title. This, in my mind, makes it possible that he might have worked on some of the illustrations himself without mentioning it. What would the price difference be if you had all the drawings done or just the ones that have been perceived as not as exceptional?

Regards,

Ricky Smith

Pete McCabe asks: Sorry if I missed this in this long and wonderful thread, but do some of our resident experts have any thoughts on the significance of the name of the S.W.E. Shift?

I'm thinking, for example, that if S.W. Erdnase were really E.S. Andrews, he might have chosen a different title that would reflect his real name better.

Just a thought. Thanks to everyone for posting the results of their labor here for all to share.

Pete

Bob Coyne asks: Pete McCabe asks: Sorry if I missed this in this long and wonderful thread, but do some of our resident experts have any thoughts on the significance of the name of the S.W.E. Shift?

David Alexander's fascinating and tantalizing theory (printed in Genii or Magic a couple years ago) is that S.W. Erdnase is really an anagram of real person named W.E. Sanders. Regarding the S.W.E. shift, "W.E.S." (Sander's initials) is what you get when you perform a shift on "S.W.E" (Erdnase's initials). The "S" packet gets shifted from the top (beginning) to the bottom (end). David also points out that Erdnase means "Earth nose" in German. Sanders was a mining engineer. Maybe a coincidence, or maybe a clever pseudonym that functions both as an anagram and a description. Anyway, it's been a while since I read it, but there were various other things that would link Sanders and Erdnase, but nothing conclusive I think. Apparently there are also diaries of Sanders in existence, but I don't know if anything in them supports the theory or not.
Hi, everyone

First of all, stay tuned for Martin Breese's upcoming CD-ROM release of the entire file of *The Magic Wand*. The very first issue (1910) begins a series by Professor Hoffmann analyzing moves in Erdnase (the Fleming/Gambler's Book Club edition has this material, too).

Richard Hatch and I have been discussing Erdnase in-depth recently and he suggested I share a few thoughts. I do NOT want to get into an endless debate and quibble about details...I'm just sharing some ideas.

I also do think it's important to check out as many avenues as possible, so Richard and everyone else should continue their leads and see what turns up.

One of my first comments to Richard, whose historical wisdom I greatly respect, was that my background is in investigative journalism and in historical research (plus 12 years as a full-time magician). A few rules I follow: 1. Use common sense and get the facts correct. 2. Without proof, theories are just speculation. 3. People's memories are not facts (just look how people inaccurately recall your magic feats to their friends).

The artwork: Erdnase most likely made many of the changes himself to Smith's artwork, altering some and perhaps composing others by tracing Smith's drawings and making necessary changes when he saw Smith got certain details wrong. Erdnase probably didn't have the money to have Smith redo them: he states up front he was publishing the book for the money and Smith said he met the guy in a cheap hotel room. If he did hire a second artist, it does look like the work of an amateur as pointed out.

Copyright notices: It looks like Erdnase inserted the notices mainly where he had room to do so. It appears that the layout was typeset, after which a paranoid Erdnase decided to insert copyright notices under the artwork, perhaps thinking the drawings weren't covered by the copyright at the beginning of the book. (This makes me think this man did not know much about the law.)

Erdnase's character: I would say this was a very bright fellow, a good, detailed writer. I believe he used a pseudonym because he feared retribution by crooked gamblers. (This was probably a rough time to mess with the livelihood of card sharps. Look how peeved the magic community was with the Masked Magician and multiply
exponentially.) I think this paranoia is reflected in the overkill with the book’s copyrights.

Magician or gambler: The book feels like it was written by a magician. I believe this person was an incredibly skillful and knowledgeable gambler but I think his knowledge of magic is just too great for a non-magician. Secondly, I feel that the text is TOO careful to point out shortcomings of "those conjurers"...it really feels to me like the author was taking great pains to pose as a gambler. His prose also feels like someone trying hard to give the impression of being erudite but amusing.

Publishing: I checked the first ad in *The Sphinx*, 1902 (as Richard Hatch points out below, it's mainly the text from the book's forward, ending with the author saying he's in it for the money...not a great way to lure buyers). My feeling is that sales were awful for the first few months, so he decided to sell some other way (as Richard indicates, through Vernelo, then Atlas).

Residence: I don't think it's easy to pinpoint anything about where this man lived. These were not the pioneer days of horse-pulled wagons. Look at the traveling schedules of performers in those days (Germain did 45 shows in 45 cities in 46 days): people were mobile and New York to Chicago trips were not impossible. The fact that he met Smith in a hotel room was probably not just for privacy, but because he was in fact from out of town.

The pseudonym: Erdnase was clever, but I don't think the name was too far from whatever name he started with. Andrew or Andrews was probably part of it. (I keep wondering about E.S. Burns, who owned Atlas...that E.S. is spooky.)

Smith's memory: I think it's not a good idea to put too much weight on Smith's recollections. This is very flimsy proof, and without an exact record of his conversations with Erdnase, I feel one must be very careful chasing leads or making assumptions based mainly on what Smith said.

Where to look: I would check anyone in magic who was a card expert at that time, as well as anything written about gambling. The only smoking gun I think we will find at this point are more writings by this person, who was an excellent writer and probably wrote more somewhere. A careful comparison of texts with the same phrasing and words would be a very convincing development.

Now, who's going to help me find out who Elbiquet was? If you read his book *Supplementary Magic*, you'll see that his presentational theories had a huge influence on Al Baker. (And he is probably not Louis Branson, who had a totally different writing style and an opposite outlook on magic, and was much, much less insightful.)
Originally posted by Richard Kaufman:

mrmagik, don't waste your time with all of the oddball passes in the book. I have never seen a single person do an invisible SWE Shift or Open Shift. Never.

I have the advantage of Mr. Kaufman, then, for I have actually SEEN Harry Riser do an invisible SWE shift. It was a long time ago. I saw him do it about a half dozen times. I didn’t believe he had actually done anything.

Richard Hatch | 03/05/03 12:36 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by Todd Karr:

Publishing: I checked the first ad in The Sphinx, 1902, and the author did not write very good copy, not focusing on the work's value to magicians, trying to be very florally about its contents, and then concluding by saying he's in it for the money...not a great way to lure buyers. My feeling is that sales were awful for the first few months, so he decided to sell through dealers, first Vernelo, then Atlas.

The first advertisement in THE SPHINX was in the November 1902 issue. It was simply the preface to the book, minus his statement about "needing the money". I agree that the advertisement was not a good one, but would blame that on the Vernelos, who were doing advertising, not the author of the book they were selling. I read the evidence very differently than Todd, but perhaps that is what makes the book a classic: we each see what we want to see in it!

Todd Karr | 03/05/03 12:42 AM | link | filter

The November 1902 ad ends with:

"But whatever the result may be, if it sells it will accomplish the primary motive of the author."

Richard Hatch | 03/05/03 02:19 AM | link | filter

The original last sentence of his preface to the book is:

"But it will not make the innocent vicious, or transform the pastime player into a professional; or make the fool wise, or curtail the annual crop of suckers; but whatever the result may be, if it sells it will accomplish the primary motive of the author, as he needs the money."

The Vernelo ad in the Sphinx is just his preface, minus the last phrase. I don't think the author intended his preface to be used as a stand-alone ad for the book, as the
Vernelos used it. He would probably have used something along the lines of his titlepage summary of the contents which may be viewed as his ad for the book:

"Embracing the whole calendar of slights [sic] that are employed by the gambler and conjurer, describing with detail and illustration every known expedient, manoeuvre and strategem [sic] of the expert card handler, with over one hundred drawings from life by M. D. Smith. Price $2.00"

I also happen to think the preface is a truly fine piece of writing.
And I think the author "needed the money"!

---

**Nathan** | 03/06/03 12:16 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Since the discussion has somewhat turned to the writing style in the book, here are some comments I have. Has anyone else considering these before?

The only blatant grammatically incorrect sentence I’ve found is in the Cull Shuffling section: "Lightning don’t strike in the same place often..." This sentence sounds so out of place that everytime I read it I wonder if Erdnase really wrote it.

I have heard about people comparing writing samples from diaries of suspected authors in a search for a match. Has anyone looked into the phrase "quick as a flash." It seems that Erdnase likes to use it to the point where it is almost overused. It may just be a common expression of the period, but given the elegance of Erdnase’s style I find it somewhat hard to believe that he would succumb to overuse of a catch-phrase of the day. Perhaps it could be a clue to his hometown (or region) dialect?

---

**Richard Hatch** | 03/06/03 03:13 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I had hoped to get Shakespearean scholar Don Foster interested in the Erdnase problem. He’s the fellow who unmasked Joe Klein as the anonymous author of PRIMARY COLORS. I sent him an email several years ago, never heard back. Then I read his terrific book, AUTHOR UNKNOWN: IN SEARCH OF ANONYMOUS and learned he gets hundreds of such requests each week... I had also falsely assumed (as many do) that he had some kind of computer program to compare styles and you could just dump in two samples and check for a match. But that is not what he does. I do recommend his book as it is highly entertaining and parallels the Erdnase identity search in many ways. Foster’s reputation suffered a slight setback recently as his early reputation was based on convincing scholars that an obscure 16th century funeral elegy by "W.S." was a previously unattributed work of William Shakespeare. Recent scholarship has shown someone else wrote it...

Bart Whaley when researching THE MAN WHO WAS ERDNASE took some kind of style matching software and compared the "style" of Erdnase to that of Milton
Franklin Andrews' confession/alibi letters and found a "match". He also compared the style of Erdnase to that of William Hilliar, their candidate as Milton's ghostwriter, and also found a match. To my way of thinking, that shows Hilliar could have "ghosted" the confession/alibi letters, which is patently ridiculous, and so the excercise proves nothing. In fairness to Whaley, this was done when such programs were light years removed from what they would be today. So he deserves credit for having made the attempt.

**Jeff Eline** | 03/06/03 11:36 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I have nothing to add to this conversation, except to say that it is fascinating! Thank you!

**Guest** | 03/06/03 03:46 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Regarding Nathan Becker's observation of an obviously ungrammatical phrase in Erdnase, I feel that this might have been an intentionally used colloquialism.

Regarding Dick Hatch's discussion of style-matching computer software, my understanding is that these programs are quite sophisticated. They look for grammatical patterns (e.g., how often does an author use adverbs? Where in a sentence do adverbs tend to occur? How many words apart (in range) are the adverb from the verb? Etc.) and compare these patterns in two or more writing samples.

Many years ago, I had a professor who used such a program to confirm his suspicion that Hemingway wrote one of his books earlier in his career than he claimed.

Is there someone on the Genii Forum who has access to such a program?

Michael Canick

**Guest** | 03/07/03 10:42 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Hi Michael Canick,
Are you suppling dealers with this edition of Erdnase? Just curious. And do you accept Paypal? It sounds like a nice thing to own, even for a minimalist like me.

**Guest** | 03/08/03 09:22 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Hi John (and any other interested party):

My agreement with the publisher prohibits me from selling discounted copies to dealers (although they may buy as many as they want for retail <g>) or from offering
Hi John (and any other interested party):

My agreement with the publisher prohibits me from selling discounted copies to dealers (although they may buy as many as they want for retail <g> ) or from offering discounts to anyone. Sorry.

We accept any type of payment (except shells) including major credit cards & PayPal, which can be sent to my e-mail addy below.

The price again is $52 + $5 P&H for domestic orders. For multiple copies & international orders, please contact me privately. In fact, I think it would be respectful to this topic discussion if any commercial inquiries be directed to me privately at my contact info below. You can find out more info on the book at our site or on the Genii Collector's Forum.

Best,
Michael

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* Michael Canick Booksellers, L.L.C.
* 200 East 82nd Street, #3B
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* Book Search Service & Appraisals in All Fields.
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****************************************

Guest | 03/08/03 09:32 AM | link | filter
or on the Genii Collector's Forum.

Best,
Michael

****************************************
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NCMarsh | 03/08/03 02:57 PM | link | filter

I'd like to first talk a bit about the question of the extent to which Erdnase was genuinely interested in magic, then the question of using computers to pinpoint authorship....

some comments on Erdnase:

Magician v. Gambler:
Some Observations:

- Erdnase cares about how magicians perform. He has thought, carefully, about how magic should be performed and passionately exhorts the learner to adopt certain practices.
- The sleights in his "Legerdemain" section are just as carefully and thoughtfully conceived as those designed primarily for the card table.
- He is familiar with the practices and methods of contemporary conjurers.
- *The Exclusive Coterie* is an highly entertaining presentation for an assembly. When delivered by someone who interprets the words well, it is an extremely entertaining piece for contemporary audiences (as Ricky Jay very convincingly proved in his first off-broadway show). I have seen very many magicians (including myself at one time) who have put little thought into the presentation of an
assembly; Erdnase presents a polished and interesting script carefully coordinated to the performer’s actions.

If he were merely tacking on a section on conjuring to increase the sales of his work, why put more thought into the content than many conjurers would? Why spend the time developing and finessing such powerful, groundbreaking sleights when they are utterly useless to one who’s exclusive interest is in card artifice at the gaming table? Was Erdnase a Magician? I think that Erdnase was, primarily, a lover of artistic card handling. I believe that he began as a gambler, but that a love for his tools outpaced in him the love of wager; he began to thoroughly explore the manipulation of playing cards...and this led him to experiment with the sleights and methods of conjurers and, perhaps, to begin to perform himself.

I think Erdnase was a sort of inverse Dai Vernon. Vernon was a magician whose love of deceptive and artistic card handling led him to explore and think about the methods of gamblers. Erdnase, to my mind, was a gambler whose love of deceptive and artistic card handling led him to explore and think about the methods of magicians... What think the experts?

some comments about attempts to quantify style:

The use of computer software to determine authorship seems highly suspect to me. Any such software depends upon postulates that are neither self-evident nor demonstrable, namely that:

- published works by the same author, in the same period, will always feature the same characteristics
- multiple authors will not have the same stylistic profile.

if the second postulate is false, and we can’t prove it’s not, then a mere stylistic match proves nothing. In a case like that of *Primary Colors* further verification is possible because the writer is a contemporary. With Erdnase, because no one is alive to admit authorship and the evidence of the act of writing the work are largely buried by time, we are dealing with a much more difficult proposition. In order to verify the results of any philological analysis we would need some new evidence external to the text; of course if we had such new evidence, then philological work would be moot...either way we see that without some new evidence external to the text itself, we will never be able to definitively assert that any candidate was Erdnase...we are engaging in an endeavor that will probably always remain speculative -- and I, for one, really love mystery... best,

nate.
I remember Jon Racherbaumer writing something, somewhere (Magic Magazine?) about an annotated Erdnase by Marlo. He was emphatic about saying that the book DID NOT exist. Would have been nice though. And BIG. Anyway, who among us today, would be qualified for the job of a third annotated Erdnase? Is there any such project in the works?

Another thing...Erdnase is a great book, and Vernon was a great magician. The book, all by itself is indeed wonderful. But for Vernon, it really spoke to him. He worked at getting it, and he just GOT it. We all have books that speak to us, better than others. For me, CLOSE-UP CARD MAGIC, is one such. Perhaps if any of us took the time to be as THOROUGH with our "speaking volumes" (Sorry David!), as Vernon was with his, we'd each have a better understanding of magic, as we see it, as what it is to us individually. Yeah, I know: as it happened Vernon "got" a really good one! Does this makes sense? Or is it a non point? I had good intentions when I started!

---

**Guest** | 03/10/03 06:22 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Actually, the book was "Revelations". It was given to Marlo, he wrote comments in the book, then the book was given to Vernon, where he too wrote comments. The person who was suppose to have the book passed away many years ago. The search for the holy grail continues...............

---

**Richard Kaufman** | 03/10/03 07:34 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Here's the story: a guy by the name of Chuck (think his last name was Stanfield--a nice guy) worked at Magic Inc. and had a huge collection of signed first editions. He bought a copy of "Revelations" when it was published and gave it to Marlo so he could write some comments in it, based upon Vernon's annotations. Marlo did this, belittling Vernon's additions. Chuck then gave the book to Vernon to sign, and to get his reaction to Marlo's jealous scribblings. Vernon wrote, "Ed, keep striving," or something along those lines.

Chuck died of AIDS years ago and Jay Marshall inherited his library. So, Jay Marshall now has the book.

---

**Dustin Stinett** | 03/10/03 09:20 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Originally posted by John Blaze:

**Anyway, who among us today, would be qualified for the job of a third annotated Erdnase?**

Off the top of my head I can think of four men who are eminently qualified. However, another quality these men share in common is that they would never, ever, consider it.

Dustin
Originally posted by Richard Kaufman:

Here's the story: a guy by the name of Chuck (think his last name was Stanfield--a nice guy) worked at Magic Inc. and had a huge collection of signed first editions. He bought a copy of "Revelations" when it was published and gave it to Marlo so he could write some comments in it, based upon Vernon's annotations. Marlo did this, belittling Vernon's additions. Chuck then gave the book to Vernon to sign, and to get his reaction to Marlo's jealous scribblings. Vernon wrote, "Ed, keep striving," or something along those lines. Chuck died of AIDS years ago and Jay Marshall inherited his library. So, Jay Marshall now has the book.

Chuck's last name was indeed Stanfield. Vernon wrote addenda to several of Marlo's comments. I believe the punchline was closer to, "Ed, keep up the good work."

The Standfield collection was sold, most of it piecemeal, so the owner of that double-annotated copy of Revelations is not necessarily Jay.

I have a COPY of the Marlo comments re REVELATIONS, comments which were not really annotations but short, negative remarks more accurately resembling snide marginalia.

REVELATIONS of course is better than the knee-jerk demeaning reactions that circulated when the book appeared. They more accurately reflected an almost unanimous disappointment of the book they imagined rather than sage or informed appraisals of the book that actually exists. This often happens when expectations are too unrealistically high in the first place.

I DO have a scattered collection of Marlo's true annotations, which would now make an interesting and very personal book. Right now it is not in book form, though.

EXPERT AT THE CARD TABLE, to me, is a curious book and the current interest in this work and its mysterious author or authors is even more curious. I also find it interesting that nobody talks about McDougal's "take" or his Erdnasian book anymore?

Comments?
Wonderful thread!
One point not touched on is Erdnase as teacher. Certainly the whole book demonstrates his ability in this area - but specifically in describing the Three Card Stock within Card Table Artifice, he says "Certain players whom we have instructed, can execute the stock with the greatest facility". And the three card stock has far more purpose for gambling than for magic. Whereas I can see no equivalent indication of teaching in the legerdemain section. So - he gave lessons in gambling technique, it would seem.

Does this lend weight to the argument he was a gambler? In the introduction to the artifice section, he says "some techniques will remain private property as long as the originators are so disposed" - highlighting that some gamblers were sharing their private techniques with him. Yet in the introduction to the Legerdemain section, he says "...as far as we can learn from the exhibitions and literature of conjurers, not one of them knows of" (a substitute for the pass), suggesting, if, he is reliant on literature, he is not so well aquainted with magicians - but then, later, when talking about the diagonal palm shift, he does refer to a move as being "well known to most conjurers" - which could indicate a familiarity with our breed...

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**Dave Egleston** | 03/14/03 09:31 PM | link | filter

To all contributers:

Thank you very much - This thread is conclusive proof - Best magic board on the net

Dave

(By the way Mr Alexander, I checked out your wife's drawings - She draws real good!!)

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**John Bodine** | 03/19/03 01:05 PM | link | filter

Regarding the illustrations, isn't it probably that Erdnase had already penned the majority if not entire contents of hte book and was seeking illustrations to clarify or strengthen certain points? If you agree that this was the case, isn't it possible that the description of a sleight or move could have been given to Smith for reference while he was illustrating. Alternatively, Smith could have done quick sketches and later inked them in. Upon receiving the final illustrations Erdnase accepted the work but then while laying up the art noticed that the illustrations did not exactly match the accompanying text. It wouldn't have been too difficult for him to trace an existing image with only minor adjustments.

This might explain why some of the images don't seem quite right while others are very perfect. It may also provide some clue as to why some images contain copyright statements while others do not.
Fantastic thread - thank you all.

John Bodine

P.S. Richard, I know I still owe you some pictures of potential residences for Edwin Sumner. I'll put the activity a bit higher on my list.

---

**Richard Hatch** | 03/20/03 08:00 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by John Bodine:

P.S. Richard, I know I still owe you some pictures of potential residences for Edwin Sumner. I'll put the activity a bit higher on my list.

Thanks, John. Looking forward to it. With luck this may allow us to get a better grip on E. S. Andrews' height, should the one known photograph show him in front of a residence that still exists. It's a longshot, but you never know. (Clearly he is "short" relative to the rest of his family in the photo, including his two adolescent children...) Is anyone interested in a post about Martin Gardner's pursuit of "James Andrews"? His correspondence with the Library of Congress on this topic in early 1947 has at least one surprising "revelation"...

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**Frank Yuen** | 03/20/03 09:54 AM | link | filter

Yes, please post it. This thread has probably been the one that I've enjoyed the most.

Frank Yuen

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**Richard Hatch** | 03/20/03 11:53 AM | link | filter

I'll try to dig out Gardner's correspondence later today and post this, rather than work from memory and get things wrong...

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**Richard Hatch** | 03/25/03 02:11 PM | link | filter

On December 10, 1946, Martin Gardner in Chicago wrote letters to Marshall D. Smith, Richard W. Hood (son of and successor to Edwin C. Hood, founder of H. C. Evans & Company, the Chicago based gambling supplier since 1892) and the Canadian Copyright office, asking all of them specific questions about S. W. Erdnase and his book. All responded promptly and only the Canadian copyright office yielded no information, other than the fact that they could find no record of copyright there. Smith responded just two days later and in his reply letter he wrote: I did the drawings for Mr. Erdnase whose name I had forgotten. When Gardner met Smith the very next
day, Gardners notes tell us: Before I [Gardner] mentioned Andrews as the name, he said that Erdnase didnt sound right, and he recalled it as a name with a W. When I said Andrews his face lighted up and he was sure that was it. Does not recall first name or initials. I think it worth noting that Smith did not independently recall the name as Andrews, though he strongly supported Gardners suggestion. Gardners interview with Smith and his subsequent correspondence yielded quite a bit of specific information regarding the books author, including a detailed physical description and the fact that he was somehow related to Louis Dalrymple, the famous political cartoonist of the period. He also recalled that he made pencil sketches of the authors hands, then took them home to ink them in after the author had OKd each sketch. He thought the job took him about two weeks, though he had specific memories of only their initial meeting.

Just a month later, on July 16th, 1947, Gardner wrote the Librarian of Congress for the first time about the book. In that letter he says: The authors real name was James Andrews. He obtained the pseudonym of S. W. Erdnase by spelling his real name backwards, including the last two letters of James.

In his reply some two months later (March 17th, 1947), Robert C. Gooch, Chief of the General Reference and Bibliography Division, after supplying the bibliographic information Gardner requested, writes: We are very interested to note that you have discovered evidence that this authors real name is James Andrews. Our Processing Department would be pleased to learn in what source this information may be found, in order to complete its records. In his detailed response of March 20, 1947, Gardner writes: Regarding the authors real name: In my research on Erdnase I located M. D. Smith, the artist who did the illustrations. He lives in Chicago, a hale and hearty man of about 80 [in fact, he 74 at the time -rh]. He remembered Erdnases real name (i.e. James Andrews). With this as a lead, I found a magazine article by James Andrews in Harpers Weekly, June 26, 1909, titled Confessions of a Fakir, which contains intrinsic material that establishes it beyond doubt as by the same author as the book on gambling methods. This article was reprinted in Conjurers Magazine in August 1949. Just two months later, in October 1949, Gardner found articles from 1905 detailing the lurid life and death of card cheat Milton Franklin Andrews, who had been described to him as Erdnase (without revealing his name) by Philadelphia magician, E. L. Pratt. Within a short period of time, Gardner abandoned the James Andrews theory in favor of Milton Franklin Andrews.

What surprised me in Gardners correspondence was the claim that he was led to the James Andrews theory by Marshall Smiths recollection. He met Smith in December 1946 and makes this claim in March 1947, though mentions the James Andrews name just one month after meeting Smith. He made no mention of James Andrews in his article THE MYSTERY OF ERDNASE published in the SAM Convention program in May 1947. James Andrews is mentioned in Vincent Starretts weekly Books Alive column in the Chicago Sunday Tribune of June 15th, 1947: For nearly half a century the identity of Erdnase remained a mystery; then the ingenious Mr. Gardner read the name backwards and produced E. S. Andrews. But who was E. S. Andrews? A later discovery by Mr. Gardner revealed him as James Andrews; the initials obtained by spelling the name in reverse were the last two letters of James. This final revelation
came too late for inclusion in Mr. Gardners article, The Mystery of Erdnase, and were revealed to me in a letter supplementing the printed revelation. The same article mentions Smith, but without crediting him with this revelation. It does credit Smith with the Louis Dalrymple clue, noting that Dalrymple was then [1902] a cartoonist and comic artist for the Chicago Tribune. (Incidentally, Smith acknowledged receiving a copy of the Tribune article from Gardner in his letter of June 24, 1947).

Alas, Gardners own recollection of this episode is now pretty dim (he is more than a decade older than Smith was back then and it was 55 years ago!). He now thinks it likely that he first found the article in Harpers Weekly, then asked Smith about the name James Andrews and got some kind of encouragement, though this is, of course, not what Gardner wrote to the Library of Congress at the time. And why did he omit the reference to James in the SAM Program? Surely not, as the Tribune article states, because he obtained it too late for inclusion. He had the information in January, the convention wasn’t till May.

Some of you may recall that I was once enthusiastic about a James Andrews candidate myself, specifically, James DeWitt Andrews, a Chicago attorney and writer of legal treatises. I remain interested in James DeWitt Andrews, but in trying to link him to Dalrymple, I stumbled across Edwin Sumner Andrews, whom I consider a more likely fit on circumstantial grounds. The most intriguing response to the MAGIC article (December 1999) I wrote on this topic (which included considerable information on James DeWitt Andrews) came from reader Michael DeMarco. He found the circumstantial case I made for JDA sufficiently compelling to search the first edition title page (which seems to be the Rosetta stone of this mystery) for the other missing letters of his name. Sure enough, there they are: the first letters of each line of the inverted pyramid subtitle are JAM DEWTT, missing only the letter I (no, they are not in that order!).

Pete McCabe | 03/25/03 04:32 PM | link | filter

If, as Dick suggests, the first edition title page is the Rosetta stone of this mystery, can someone post a link to a scan of this page?

Richard Hatch | 03/25/03 10:47 PM | link | filter

Michael Canick includes an image of the first edition titlepage in his write up of his facsimile edition: http://www.canick.com/erdnase.html

The second line of the title:

"Ruse And Subterfuge"

has been the source of much speculation. Steve Burton, Thomas Sawyer and more recently David Alexander have all considered it significant that reversing the first two words yields "And Ruse" = Andrews. Sawyer (and possibly Burton) pointed out that the
first and last letters of "Subterfuge", when also reversed yield "E. S."  David Alexander's reading of the titlepage "clues" is given in his excellent cover story feature in the January 2000 GENII.

Nathan | 03/25/03 11:48 PM | link | filter

Since I have access to a University library, I couldn't resist the temptation to look up the article by James Andrews in Harper's Weekly.

There are some interesting circumstantial similarities between Erdnase and James Andrews. They both seem to be interested in making money and they both have little sympathy for the victims. Also they both wrote literature exposing the detailed workings of their artifice. There is also a brief mention of card sharps in James Andrew's article which is either an indication of his lack of knowledge of card cheating or as a tease to all those card workers who might have tried to find Erdnase.

Somehow I doubt the card expert ended up as a fakir on Coney Island, but one thing is sort of intriguing. James Andrews claims to have made between $150 and $200 per night telling fortunes. I'm not sure what Erdnase would have been able to make in a card game in one night in those days, but I wonder if it might have been comparable money. It certainly involves significantly less risk. Might Erdnase have lost his nerve and turned towards a safer and equally profitable profession?

Richard Hatch | 03/26/03 07:55 AM | link | filter

Nathan, thanks for looking this up! Is the original a single oversized page? I assume Harper's does not include an "about the authors" page! In the CONJURORS' MAGAZINE reprint (August 1949), it is a single page, spread sideways across two of the magazine's 8.5 x 11 pages. Gardner's one page introductory piece accompanying the reprint points out that the James Andrews in the article described himself as a "blonde, blue-eyed, thin nervous American" which agreed with Marshall Smith's description. James Andrews also says "the spur of poverty drove me into prophecy" which agrees with Erdnase's "need for money" motivation for publishing THE EXPERT. Gardner says the writing style of the James Andrews story is "somewhat different" from THE EXPERT, but points out that this could be explained by the different audience being addressed or the possibility that THE EXPERT was ghostwritten. He does note the mention of the cardsharp and that both use the terms "patter" and "chicanery", and the device of a question mark in parenthesis. Gardner found a James J. Andrews listed as a clairvoyant in the 1909 New York directory, but no way of determining whether he was the author of the Harper's story. I would add that we don't know if the Harper's story was written as fact or fiction, or whether its author's true name is James Andrews. I personally don't think the story sounds anything like Erdnase.

Gardner also says in his introductory remarks that, while Marshall Smith "confirmed" that Erdnase's real name was Andrews, "Smith does not, however, recall Andrews' real
name." This, of course, directly contradicts what he wrote to the Library of Congress just four months after meeting Smith. If Smith did indeed independently recall the author's first name as "James", I would consider that extremely significant. Gardner would then have recognized that it explained the "E. S." and begun his search, leading to the Harper's article as claimed in the letter to the Library of Congress. But other than that letter, there is no suggestion that Smith did so. If Gardner was simply led to look for a James because the name ends in "ES", then one should also look for candidates named Charles, Wes, Les, Soames, Ames, etc. The same logic could extend the search to middle names ending in those letters, leading to an impossibly large field of candidates. Based on the US population of the time, the artist's description, the frequency of the last name Andrews, the popularity of male first names beginning with E (these statistics can be found online associated with the 1900 census) and an assumption regarding the frequency of middle names beginning with S, I at one time estimated there were no more than 24 white adult males named E. S. Andrews at the time of the book's publication. I have found a half dozen of them by searching census records. That one of them is the age and size (approximate) remembered by the author, possibly related to Dalrymple (which is how I found him), moved to Chicago late in 1901, left in February 1903 and was living just 9 blocks south of Atlas Novelty Co. which began distributing first edition copies at half price in February 1903 strikes me as rather remarkable if it is just a coincidence (as it may, indeed, be).

Richard Hatch | 03/26/03 10:12 PM | link | filter

If anyone wants a piece of original artwork by Erdnase's "relative" Louis Dalrymple, there is currently a drawing of his from Puck on ebay at the following link: http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?Vi ... 70138&rd=1

Guest | 03/27/03 03:18 PM | link | filter

For you hunters the 1880 US Census, which was, I believe, the first showing names, jobs, family members, etc. is on line. The British census from around the same time is also on line.

Steve V

Nathan | 03/27/03 11:02 PM | link | filter

Richard,
To answer your question, the Harper's Weekly that I looked at was an enormous poster size. It is being stored in the library's special collections so I had to have a librarian go back and pull it up for me. She was quite out breath when she luged the bound 1909 volume back with her! I felt a little guilty when she then showed me how I could just pull it up online.
Richard Hatch was kind enough to send a copy of the Harper's article to me and so far I see no significant similarity of style or usage that would indicate that Erdnase wrote it. As Gardner noted, though, this could simply mean that his article was heavily edited by the Harper's editors.

I was searching the web for uses of the expression "mealymouthed pretensions" and only came up with two matches, both Erdnase's preface. But one of them is on a site that describes itself as "a collection of primary texts of american anti-authoritarianism" and includes links to quotes by Mencken, Patrick Henry, Sam Adams, Abby Hoffman, Tecumsah, etc. I was surprised to see Erdnase in their company!
Here's the site:
http://www.crispinsartwell.com/americanliberties.htm

That is a fascinating view of Erdnase's words. Obviously he was not a fan of those behind the reform movement of the late 19th & early 20th centuries (whose design, for those of you out there not familiar with the movement, was to rid cities of the evils of gambling and the other vices normally associated with it) but to call that single sentence a "primary text" of anti-authoritarianism is quite a stretch indeed.

Wow, to be mentioned in the same sentence as any of the abovementioned social activists would be quite an honor for most people. Abby Hoffman was one of my heros during the early 70's, and tecumseh makes one heck of an engine (just kidding about that last one)

At the risk of polluting this thread with another "crazy theory", I want to suggest the following research tactic that to my knowledge has not yet been attempted. Regardless of how insane you think my idea is, the saving grace is the fact that it is completely testable by someone who has access to the appropriate resources (which I unfortunately do not).
Suppose for a moment that Erdnase's motive for disguising his identity was because he wanted to pull off the greatest trick in magic/gambling publishing history, but he wanted to eventually be discovered. Perhaps this is why he revealed the illustrator's real name. Maybe there is another clue that leads to additional information. Another really cryptic thing in the book is the copyright "Entered at Stationer's Hall, London..." According to what I've read in "Annotated Erdnase", the book was never copyrighted there so it seems strange to cite this copyright since the book actually was copyrighted in the US.

Perhaps, and I know this is pretty crazy, Erdnase wrote some autobiographical material and copyrighted it in England but never published it with the hopes that it would be discovered after "The Expert at the Card Table" reached its present day mysterious status. Thus, the thing to search for in Stationer's Hall is a book that was copyrighted in 1902 but never actually published. The US copyright office apparently received a couple of copies of Expert (at least according to what I've read in Annotated Erdnase), so presumably the office in London would have received a preprint of whatever informational book Erdnase might have submitted. Clearly Erdnase would not copyright such autobiographical material under the name S.W. Erdnase because he wouldn't want someone to accidentally stumble on it without solving the copyright page puzzle (if such a puzzle exists).

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**Temperance** | 04/30/03 04:00 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by R P Wilson:

That said, I would like to point out that almost no one I have seen has performed the shift correctly - as described in the book. Everyone (including Steve Freeman on the Vernon tapes) has made some sort of adjustment and almost everyone STARTS IN THE WRONG POSITION.

This is true, however as so much of the explanations in Erdnase have errors and a lot of the descriptions are somewhat ambiguous, who is to say that the method given for the S.W.E shift is actually correct? Just a thought.

--Euan

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**Leonard Hevia** | 05/11/03 09:03 PM | link | filter

This is a wonderful thread worthy of repeated study. I just received my copy of *Expert at the Card Table* from Michael Canick and will compare the information from these postings with my facsimile copy.

I believe only a serious historian of this text can answer Lance's question. I'm currently
wondering if Mike Caveney will republish Vernon's *Revelations*. Since Mr. Caveney is reviving out of print books from his catalog--and since this year is the 100th anniversary of this wonderful text--well—it's just a thought. :)

Guest | 05/12/03 01:39 PM | link | filter

Uh Oh, it looks like Erdnase is catching up with the five page three fly thread!

Charlie Chang | 05/12/03 03:39 PM | link | filter

I would like to correct Euan's above post. There are VERY FEW errors or omissions in the Erdnase text. It is my experience that everything is both well described and VERY WELL thought out.

While the descriptions are "economic" they include everything needed by the serious student to learn the moves.

As Dai Vernon wrote in his introduction to Revelations:

"Erdnase is at once logical and practical. Surely no one, before or since, has written so lucidly on the subject of card table artifice."

As someone once observed, students of Erdnase usually blame their difficulties on the text, rather than their inability to understand it.

Temperance | 05/12/03 04:04 PM | link | filter

Very few? Hrmm.

The slip cut is wrong, completely. Interestingly the same wrong technique is described in more card manipulations. Actually it's just the image in more card manipulations but it's still wrong.

There are several errors in the bottom deal description in that he changes which finger are meant to be doing the push out several times.

The over hand shuffle cull descriptions are ambiguous as to which cards are meant to be jogged.

The open shift is less than clear.

The first method for top palming is clearly wrong. Does anyone do this move with the left pinky in the position described in the text? (ie against the middle of the inner
That's just off the top of my head.

However I still think it's a brilliant book and well worth studying. In fact next to Roy Walton, Alex Elmsley and Bob Hummer's works it's my favourite book.

--Euan

Charlie Chang | 05/12/03 05:17 PM | link | filter

Euan,
I'm trying not to slam you here but what follows may read that way. I figure it's best to just say it and be done. Just my opinion on a subject close to my heart.

To begin with, you are correct about the bottom deal - partly. There is ONE error which mentions the second finger pushing out the bottom card instead of the third. Vernon mentions another paragraph earlier in the description which states that the second finger and thumb "do the work". Vernon believed that Erdnase meant to say "third finger and thumb", assuming he referred to the dealing action. The sentence immediately before this one, however, talks about the little finger and it's part in HOLDING the deck. I believe that he goes on to say that the second finger and thumb do all the work with regards to supporting the pack, NOT the dealing action. This is moot but either way it does not detract from the excellent description of the sleight. Hardly "several" errors as you suggest.

The Open Shift is VERY clear. You simply haven't read it clearly. To quote Vernon again:"This is an exceedingly difficult pass but its acquisition can be greatly facilitated by following Erdnase's EXACT instructions". I learned it from the book. It wasn't easy but the work is all there.

I have no problem with the overhand shuffle culls. They're complex but correct. Better methods have since appeared but I learned all of these for completeness. Never, ever, used them.

Erdnase's Top Palm (version one) is a perfect sleight. It is rarely used and has been varied to death but the original is still extremely well described and thought out. Mechanically, it's brilliant. Just because people don't do it, doesn't make it any less perfect.

The Slip Cut is completely CORRECT. The illustration exaggerates the middle part of the sleight but, in doing so, correctly conveys the action. Carrying the lower half forward under the top card is a DIFFERENT tabled slip cut. I have used the Erdnase cut for many years with no difficulty. In Revelations, Vernon mentions a complete blind
that is worth looking up (also correctly described). He also discusses the now standard version of the tabled slip-cut (where the lower packet is carried forward).

Euan, you need to understand that, when I first started visiting Roy Walton in his shop (almost twenty years ago), I took his advice and bought a paperback of Erdnase, had it trimmed to the edge of the text and have carried it in my pocket ever since. I have lived with this book, studied it, loved it, hated it and devoured it.

I still don't understand it like Roy Walton does. Or Gordon Bruce. Or Bruce Cervon. Or Howie Schwarzman (who I could spend hours discussing the book with). But I keep reading and keep getting rewarded.

Thinking the text is wrong simply because it is either alien (like the top palm) or difficult (like the open shift) suggests you need to reconsider whether it is really a favourite book after all.

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**Temperance** | 05/12/03 05:41 PM | link | filter

Hi Paul

Your post didn't come across as slamming me, just so's you know.

You really think the slip cut is correct? In the text you are told to hold the deck off the table by the ends. Slip the top card to the left as your right hand takes the top half to the right then drop the left portion on the table followed by the right. At least in the Dover reprint, perhaps it is different in the original text?

I've never seen anyone handle a slip cut this way.

Usually you have the deck on the table the bottom half is moved forward onto which the top card is slipped using the right index finger (if you're right handed). then the right hand comes back and picks up the remaining half and slaps it on top of the other half.

Or am I missing something?

I'm not trying to attack you or Erdnase here I'm just trying to point out that as there are some errors in the text. There is a distinct *possibility* that the description of the SWE shift is *perhaps* incorrect.

--Euan

PS Vernon also said that you shouldn't treat sleight descriptions as biblical but that you should try to understand what is going on and then adapt the technique so that it
fits how you handle cards (all hand sizes are different etc). I'm paraphrasing but you get the idea.

Charlie Chang | 05/12/03 07:15 PM | link | filter

Euan, the slip cut is a different action - follow the text and perform it with a distinct slapping action. straight to the table, no forward action.

Matthew Field | 05/13/03 04:37 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by R P Wilson:
when I first started visiting Roy Walton in his shop (almost twenty years ago), I took his advice and bought a paperback of Erdnase, had it trimmed to the edge of the text and have carried it in my pocket ever since. I have lived with this book, studied it, loved it, hated it and devoured it.

This thread is wonderful, and the small quote above from Paul Wilson is well worthy of any serious student's consideration. Along with Michael Canick's new facsimile of Erdnase, and among other versions of the book in my library, I have two copies of the inexpensive Dover paperback edition. One looks nice and neat. The other looks like it's been in the washing machine.

That's the copy I fold in half and stuff in the back pocket of my jeans when I'm going somewhere like a beach outing. While I find it difficult to actually work with a deck of cards on the beach, reading Erdnase is something I very much enjoy.

So reading that Roy Walton had suggested something like this to Paul, who took it to heart, resonated within me, and I post this to stir some students out there to do likewise.

Thanks, Paul.

Matt Field

CHRIS | 05/13/03 08:06 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by Matthew Field:
That's the copy I fold in half and stuff in the back pocket of my jeans when I'm going somewhere like a beach outing.

Another idea is to get the electronic version and print it out in small fonts. With a little tool like ClickBook one can even print out a small booklet (4 or 8 pages per sheet). And
when it’s torn up, just print out another one. Or print chapters separately. Then it might fit in your breast pocket. I don’t need to tell you where to get the electronic version ;) 

Chris Wasshuber
preserving magic one book at a time.

Dave Egleston | 05/13/03 03:19 PM | link | filter

Except you can’t read it on the beach!!!!!!! Too much glare!!

Dave

CHRIS | 05/13/03 03:46 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Dave Egleston:
Except you can’t read it on the beach!!!!!!! Too much glare!!

Dave, I wrote ‘print out’. When you print the ebook there is no glare. ;) Chris Wasshuber
preserving magic one book at a time.

Temperance | 05/14/03 07:26 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by R P Wilson:
Euan,
the slip cut is a different action - follow the text and perform it with a distinct slapping action. straight to the table, no forward action.

Yes it’s bad technique though. You do that in a game and you’re liable to get your kneecaps blown off. Re the open shift. Can anyone actually do this? There doesn’t seem to be any conceivable angle from which it can be viewed to make it even remotely deceptive.

--Euan

Charlie Chang | 05/15/03 04:06 AM | link | filter

I have no idea how to reply to this. I’m stunned.

Euan clearly thinks he knows more about it than the rest of us - including Erdnase.

Personally, I feel like I just tried to explain quantum mechanics to my dog.
For the record, I think the slip cut is excellent and the Open Shift is an excellent lesson in shift mechanics.

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**Temperance** | 05/15/03 06:40 AM | link | filter

Paul, the fact that I have an opinion outside of your own does not warrant your personal attacks. I would *very much* appreciate it if you did not refer to me as a 'dog' again. Thank you!

The open shift is impractical and unnatural in handling. There is no conceivable reason to hold the deck in the manner needed to execute it. Out of interest, how do you justify the unnatural grip when you perform this? Also where is the focus of viewing; perhaps from the right side using the back of the right hand as cover?

--Euan

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**Guest** | 05/15/03 09:53 AM | link | filter

Euan, come on, man, Mr. Wilson *didn’t* refer to you as a dog.

Teaching quantum physics to a dog would be a very *frustrating* experience. Mr. Wilson was simply using an analogy to voice his frustrations. Have a nice day! :)

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**Earle Oakes** | 06/09/03 03:36 PM | link | filter

Regarding the illustrations of THE EXPERT AT THE CARD TABLE. Because there are so many intricate finger positions and specific breaks in the deck, I believe M.D. Smith must have worked over photographs and not from life as I understand the term. While purely conjecture, Erdnase, in stating on the title page that the drawings were done "from life", I believe he could have been referring to photographs that were taken for Smith's use.

No matter, whether from life or photos the outstanding feature of Smith's drawings is that the hands and fingers express the action as well as the proper finger positions to accomplish the sleight described. Fig. 5, riffle shuffling and Fig. 10, squaring up the deck are just two handsome examples of Smith's accurate and expressive drawings. I don't mean style or technique.

The original drawings had to have been done at least 60% larger than the published work. All the cards have rounded corners and the lined card indications on the sides of the talons and deck are all there and accurately drawn which could only have been done at a much larger size than shown in the book.
To do 101 drawings (over photos) with the clean accurate detail that the Smith drawings have in less than 20 minutes per drawing would be difficult. I think working 8 hours a day for four days would be a reasonable estimate as to the time it would have taken Smith to do that number of drawings.

Technique aside, Smith, did wonderful expressive drawings for Erdnase. To draw hands so that they show the grace of the fingers and the beauty of the sleight is always the challenge to the illustrator of magic. M.D. Smith did an admirable job, no matter the time it may have taken to do the work or whether he worked from life or photographs.

This has been one of the most interesting threads to make the Forum.

Earle

Richard Hatch | 09/16/03 10:42 PM | link | filter

I have recently been encouraged to post publicly some previously unpublished critiques of THE MAN WHO WAS ERDNASE (TMWWE). Let me begin by saying that I truly consider TMWWE to be a fantastic book which every student of Erdnase should own and study. This discussion assumes you have the book and can look up the references in it. It may make little sense if you do not have access to a copy. The good news is that it is still in print and available at a reasonable price from several dealers including the publisher.

TMWWE is basically a chronicle of the life of Milton Franklin Andrews (MFA, 1872-1905) and a history of Erdnase (the book and the author), arguing persuasively that MFA was Erdnase. This theory was first published by Martin Gardner, who developed information supplied to him by Edgar Pratt, a magician originally from Providence, Rhode Island, but living in Philadelphia when Gardner corresponded with him (at the suggestion of Walter Gibson) beginning in 1947. Gardner later met him several times. Gardner’s evidence (on this and other Erdnase theories) was further developed by Jeff Busby and then Bart Whaley. Thus the book is credited to Bart Whaley (who did most of the writing and much of the background research) with Jeff Busby and Martin Gardner. In addition to his research, Gardner contributed a foreword and Busby, who published the book in 1991, contributed not only research but several important chapters.

Let me begin with one of the very first artifacts presented in the book: a frontispiece photo opposite the title page of a handsome young man from the turn of the century. The photo is captioned Milton Franklin Andrews. When Martin Gardner received his first copy of the book, he was struck by the photo, which he had never seen. His initial response was That’s not Milton! as it was so unlike the photos of MFA with which he was familiar. Indeed, Thomas Sawyer in his critique ERDNASE: ANOTHER VIEW
(possibly still available from Aladdin Books in Fullerton California) makes the same point. The morgue photo of MFA (p. 37) is clearly not the same man shown in the frontispiece photo (compare the shape of the noses: one is convex, one is concave, check the relative distances between the chin and lips, lips and eyes etc. Not the same man.). If the frontispiece photo is not MFA, who is it? One of the wonderful things about TMWWE is the extensive endnoting of source material. The first endnote in the book (p. 383) tells us that this photo, now in the collection of Howard Flint, is unique and still in the original photographers studio frame (Rose & Sands of Providence RI and NY) and that pencilled lightly on the back, likely in Edgar Pratts handwriting, it says Age 24 [corrected from 23], August 7, 1900. The photograph was purchased by Flint from Bob Little, who obtained it from Philadelphia magic dealer Mitchell (Mike) Kanter, who had obtained it, along with several other materials supposedly relating to MFA and Erdnase, from Pratt.

The first thing worth noting is that the photo is not unique. This was pointed out in T. A. Waters review of TMWWE in GENII, as he knew of the existence of at least one other copy. Flint had sold that copy to a well known magic personality and close friend of Waters, and Waters review implies that Busby/Whaley had knowledge of this. Bob Little did not know that he had sold Flint two photos stuck together, and it is likely that neither Kanter nor Pratt realized it as well. Since MFA was 27 on the date pencilled in on the photo, Whaley conjectures that it is likely a photo of MFA at age 24, given to Pratt when MFA was 27. Now Pratts correspondence and interviews with Gardner never claim that he knew MFA well, only that MFA was on friendly terms with Pratts childhood friends, the Taylor brothers and that what MFA showed them, the Taylor boys would share with Pratt (Pratts 4 letters to Gardner are reprinted in Darwin Ortizs wonderful ANNOTATED ERDNASE, also still in print and highly recommended to all interested in this topic). Why would Pratt even have a photo of MFA, whom he barely knew, and why would he keep it for nearly 50 years? Intrigued by this mystery, I went through the Providence city directories (available on microfilm at the Family History Library of the Mormon Church in Salt Lake City) covering a period of about 30 years researching Pratt, the Taylor brothers and, relevant to the case at hand, the Rose & Sands photography studio. Philip Rose founded the studio in the 1870s, at which time it was simply The Rose Studio. For one year, and one year only --1900-- he partnered with an ex-employee named Sands who had moved to NY and together they operated under the name Rose & Sands. By 1901, the partnership had broken up and The Rose Studio was back in business (Sands eventually moved back to Providence and opened a competing studio under his own name). This allows us to date the photos frame with some certainty as from 1900, and it seems most reasonable that the photo itself also dates from that period, as indicated by the pencilled notation. So who is it?

As it turns out, Edgar Pratt had an older brother William Pratt who turned 24 (from 23!) on August 6, 1900. I cannot prove, but would be willing to bet that the frontispiece photo of TMWWE is a photo of William Pratt, taken to commemorate his 24th birthday. Pratt told Gardner that his brother died a few years later, and it makes sense to me
that he would both have and hold onto a photo of his deceased brother for many years, selling it to Kanter only when poverty forced him to do so (Gardner tells us that Pratt was living in impoverished circumstances when they met).

One of the things Pratt sold Kanter, apparently on the same occasion (along with two letters from Gardner) was the copy of the AMERICAN WEEKLY article, THE MALTED MILK MURDERER published on May 20, 1945. This is reproduced on page 264 of TMWWE. Even with a strong magnifying glass, the article (which is missing several pieces) is difficult to read, but I have since been able to purchase several copies online. Everything Pratt told Gardner about MFA that can be verified is in that article, as are several things he told Gardner about MFA that are incorrect. Pratt, at that time, would not tell Gardner who Erdnase was. Later, when Gardner found the MFA murder/suicide story by following up on Pratts leads, and told Pratt that MFAs story had seen print several times (Pratt claimed to be protecting his friends identity to avoid scandalizing the Andrews family), Pratt claimed he did not know anything had ever been published on this topic—this just a few years after THE MALTED MILK MURDERER article. It is my belief that Pratt, whatever his relationship with MFA (I am inclined to believe he did not know him at all, from the many mistatements he made regarding him), knew about the Andrews=Erdnases real name theory (which was published in THE SPHINX by Leo Rullman in February 1929 as though it was already well known at that time) and conjectured that MFA was Erdnase based on the MALTED MILK MURDERER article. And perhaps he was correct in doing so: MFA remains the only candidate named Andrews who is known to have had some of the skills required of the books author (knowledge of card cheating methods and card tricks). The fact that he died in 1905 conveniently explains why the author who clearly took pride in his work never came forward to identify himself, once the book became a commercial success.

Gardner, even after cracking the MFA theory, remained skeptical because of Pratts strange behavior. But he followed up Pratts lead that James Harto had collaborated with the author and found independent evidence of this, which he found compelling. I have done considerable research on Harto, as well as on Hugh Johnston and Del Aldephia, who, along with Albertie Minkley, MFAs sister-in-law, are cited in TMWWE in support of the MFA theory. Should there be sufficient interest, I would be happy to post some of my findings on this board as time permits.

Dave Egleston | 09/16/03 11:22 PM | link | filter

Thanks Mr Hatch,

This is the stuff that fascinates - I don't believe there will ever be a time when this isn't interesting.

I'm ready for you to put out a book - I'll be one of the first to buy it
Yes, thanks to Richard Hatch!! This is fascinating information and research. I'd always wondered about the veracity of Pratt’s claims that he knew Erdnase and that Erdnase = MFA. If Pratt's statements are suspect (as RH research indicates), then the whole MFA theory becomes less credible. I’d love to hear about the new research on Harto (the hypothesized writer of the magic section).

It is especially nice of Dick to say that "I truly consider TMWWE to be a fantastic book which every student of Erdnase should own and study" considering the things that Busby has been saying about Dick in his occasional e-mail screed. It demonstrates what a gentleman Dick is. BTW, I like TMWWE too.

Hatch strikes again......thanks.

Wow, amazing stuff. Thanks for the post.

Brad "speaks without moving his lips" Henderson

Thanks, guys, I'll try to post some more information on this topic here soon. I think the information on Harto, Hugh Johnston, and Bertie Minkley should be of interest.

As far as a book goes, I don't yet feel there is sufficient compelling evidence for closure on this topic. Milton Franklin Andrews remains a "person of interest" to me, despite the glaring discrepancies between what we know about him and what we believe about the author. Other persons of interest are Wilbur Edgerton Sanders (see David Alexander's excellent GENII article, January 2000), Robert Frederick Foster (Jerry Sadowitz’s proposed ghostwriter of the book), James DeWitt Andrews (see my MAGIC
article, December 1999), and my favorite for the past 3 years, Edwin Sumner Andrews (mentioned in passing at the end of the MAGIC article and in some earlier posts here). I have pretty much lost interest in a Canadian riverboat captain named E. S. Andrews, a Michigan newspaper publisher named E. S. Andrews, and a British engineer named E. S. Andrews (first noted by Mike Perovich, who called his attention to Dai Vernon, who was enthusiastic...). I have recently become interested in William Symes Andrews (1847-1929), a American electrical engineer who wrote a book on Magic Squares, published in Chicago in 1908 by the Open Court publishing company, who also published Evans OLD AND NEW MAGIC. I had lost interest in him (he's much older than recalled by Marshall Smith, for one thing), but it was recently brought to my attention that Al Flosso seemed to think that he was Erdnase, which has made him worth another look, in my estimation... At this point, I think I'd have to call my book, THE MEN WHO WERE NOT ERDNASE (and a couple who might have been)!

Chris, not sure what Busby e-mail references you're talking about, but regardless, TMWWE is still THE essential book on this topic.

Chris Gillett | 09/20/03 02:15 PM | link | filter

"Chris, not sure what Busby e-mail references you're talking about"

Good.

Matthew Field | 09/20/03 02:35 PM | link | filter

Dick Hatch's research on Erdnase is absolutely fascinating -- many thanks, Dick, for posting it here.

As more tangible thanks, I'll be visiting www.magicbookshop.com to check out the great selection of new and used books you've got at H& R magic Books. I might recommend Pit Hartling's new "Card Fictions." He's one of the Flicking Fingers, and H&R is bringing the book to U.S. audiences. See the rave review by Eric Mead in the October Genii.

Matt Field

Richard Hatch | 10/15/03 11:59 PM | link | filter

Apologies for the delayed posting of more information relevant to TMWWE and its thesis that Milton Franklin Andrews (MFA) was Erdnase. Here's another installment:

Once Gardner had deduced that Edgar Pratt had been talking about Milton Franklin Andrews, he sought independent confirmation that MFA really was Erdnase.
Unfortunately, Alvin Andrews, MFAs older brother whom Gardner tracked down and interviewed in Hartford in 1949, knew nothing about the book, and had never heard of Pratt, the Taylor brothers or any possible relationship with cartoonist Louis Dalrymple. Gardner wrote Marshall Smith regarding MFA and found that virtually nothing the artist recalled about the author corresponded to what was known about MFA (wrong age, wrong height, etc etc. See earlier posts and the December 1999 MAGIC article). So Gardner returned to Philadelphia to press Pratt for more details. When Gardner showed Pratt the photostats of the newspaper accounts of MFAs dramatic demise, Pratt finally opened up to Gardner and admitted that he had been talking about MFA. Significantly, he said that he never heard MFA mention the book, and had only heard his high school chum George Taylor mention it once, in connection with a sleight Pratt had asked Taylor about, to which he responded, Thatll be in Andrews book. Pratt claimed subsequently to have recognized the move in Erdnase when the book came out, though he did not identify the move for Gardner. On this visit he told Gardner that he had heard (though he couldnt recall where) that Harto of Indianapolis supplied the magic section. Pratt thought Harto [James S. Harto a performer and magic dealer] hadnt known Andrews, but that the printer got in touch with Harto about adding this section. A few things are worth noting at this point: First, Pratt did not claim that Harto told him about his involvement with Erdnase, and second, Pratt claimed that Harts involvement was at the publishers insistence. Since the book was originally published by the author the latter claim seems suspect at worst and schizophrenic at best. In any case, Gardner pursued the Harto claim hoping to find the independent confirmation he sought. Unfortunately, Harto had died in 1933 and had apparently spent several years prior to that in a sanitarium. But Gardner was able to track down two Harto associates, Audley Dunham and Charles Maly, both of whom confirmed that Harto and Erdnase had some kind of relationship. Dunham had been an assistant to Harto and had worked in his magic shop. In response to a letter from Gardner, Dunham wrote: Yes, I have heard Jim Harto speak of Andrews he was referred to Jim by another magician the name of which I cannot recall at the present time [sic]. I spent many hours with Jim... and Jim referred to some part he helped on Erdnase. Dunham then talks about an auction of Hartos estate that he organized at which Waldo Logan of Chicago was the major purchaser. ...if I am not mistaken there was a letter in Waldos purchases from this magician to Jim in which some mention is made of Jim helping on Erdnase. Erdnase has never interested me much as I am not primarily a card man, there was however an original Erdnase in the effects and I also believe Waldo has that, or maybe J. Elder Blackledge got it I do not remember. He later goes on to say that Roltare Eggleston said something about Harto being connected with Erdnase. The rest of Dunhams letter does not mention Erdnase. Maly, another close friend of Harto, was first contacted at Gardners request by Francis Marshall. Marshall wrote Gardner that Maly told her that he had seen the Andrews notes and notebooks, etc. in Hartos possession, and that Harto and Andrews planned a 2nd volume to Expert at Cd Tble [sic]. Gardner wrote Maly care of Frances Marshall on March 28, 1951, outlining Pratts claims, though refering to MFA simply as a gambler named Andrews and asking if Maly could confirm them. Malys handwritten response was in the margins of Gardners letter: Your informer is correct - Jim Harto
did have contact with Andrews (Erdnase) or vice versa regarding a magic section in Erdnase's book, but I do not remember any of the details. In fact, Harto showed me two letters, as I recall, from Andrews. However, since that was over 25 years ago - yes, probably closer to 32 years ago, I cannot remember any part of the letters. I am quite sure though that up to the time of Harto's death these letters were in Harto's file. Maly apologized for not being able to provide more information and suggested that Gardner contact Audley Dunham...

These two confirmations of Harto's association with Erdnase bolstered Gardner's confidence in Pratt as a reliable source, leading him to reject Marshall Smith's conflicting testimony as mistaken. But I think it worth noting that neither Maly nor Dunham makes any reference to Milton Franklin Andrews, nor does either state that Harto authored the legerdemain section of Erdnase. Both confirm that Harto told many folks that he had collaborated with Andrews (Erdnase) on a project of some kind, a claim worthy of serious consideration. Time and interest permitting, I'll post some background next time on Harto that may have a bearing on this question.

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**Frank Yuen** | 10/16/03 06:22 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Hopefully you have the time because I'm certain you have the interest. Thanks for the update.

Frank Yuen

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**Grant McSorley** | 10/16/03 10:06 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Richard,

This has to be the best discussion on the forum. Everyone even slightly interested in Erdnase owes you a huge debt of gratitude for putting all this information here for us. Did anyone ever get to look at the letters that Waldo Logan won at auction?

Thanks,
Grant

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**Richard Hatch** | 10/16/03 01:47 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Thanks, guys. I'm having fun finally organizing this material, but it does take time so your patience (and encouragement) is appreciated...

Originally posted by Grant McSorley:

**Did anyone ever get to look at the letters that Waldo Logan won at auction?**
Alas, Gardner was unsuccessful tracking them down. Waldo Logan, whom Gardner had known in Chicago (as had Marshall Smith. In fact, Logan's mother had awarded Smith a prize for one of his paintings...) had moved by then, apparently to Florida, and Gardner was unsuccessful in his attempts to follow up. There is a chance the letters survive in someone's archive somewhere... I would also be very keen on examining the "original Erdnase" that Dunham refers to. I assume he means a first edition copy. If Harto did collaborate with Erdnase, one would think Harto's personal copy might give an indication of this... But Gardner's attempts to follow up leads to Blackledge did not bring results either. Also, it should be mentioned that Dunham destroyed many of Harto's documents before the auction, including original letters to Harto from Houdini, Kellar and others. Dunham was afraid he would catch some of Harto's lingering "Syph" germs from them, even though this was more than a decade after the latter's death!

Richard Hatch | 10/16/03 01:54 PM | link | filter

As a follow up to the above, I try to examine ANY copy I find out about of the first edition. Some have, in fact, yielded new information (for example, Houdini's copy, which is mentioned earlier in this forum). I currently know the whereabouts of nearly 50 first edition copies (including the exceptional one currently being auctioned on eBay!), and have had a chance to examine about a dozen of them. But I am anxious to learn the whereabouts of others (and examine them, when possible), so if you have or know the whereabouts of copies, feel free to email me privately at richard@magicbookshop.com

Surprisingly, the first edition seems to be the most common of the early hardback editions, more seeming to have survived than of the Drake hardbacks. Extrapolating backward, my current guess is that the print run of the first edition was likely close to 1,000 copies, of which probably about 100 survive today. But that's just a guess at this point...

Dustin Stinett | 10/16/03 11:39 PM | link | filter

This is a most incredible thread, and I hope it continues in earnest! Richards enthusiasm for this subject comes through in his writing, but folks, you should have seen him in action at the 2001 L.A. History Conference! He was a site to see!

For those of you who might be interested in discussing the contents of this amazing book, Forum member Philippe Noel has started a thread on it in the Book of the Month Forum. You can join in by clicking below!

Thanks!
Dustin

http://geniimagazine.com/forum/cgi-bin/...7; t=000013
Richard Hatch | 12/01/03 10:50 AM | link | filter

A painting by Marshall D. Smith, illustrator of Erdnase, is set to be sold at live auction by Treadway Galleries of Oak Park, Illinois next Sunday, December 7th. The painting can be viewed online at http://cgi.liveauctions.ebay.com/ws/eBay ... 2204907987 (if that doesn't work, do a search on www.ebay.com for "Marshall D Smith"). They think it will sell for between $2,000 and $3,000, with an opening bid of $750. Another Illinois art dealer has one of his paintings offered on sale for more than $20,000, so maybe it will!

Bill Mullins | 12/01/03 11:34 AM | link | filter

I've seen it mentioned a couple of times that Martin Gardner speculated that Mark Twain might have written Erdnase -- due to connections with Dalrymple??

Is this an anecdotal speculation? Where does it appear in print? In some of Gardner's writings? or was another writing quoting a statement made by Gardner?

Richard Hatch | 12/01/03 12:13 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Bill Mullins:

I've seen it mentioned a couple of times that Martin Gardner speculated that Mark Twain might have written Erdnase -- due to connections with Dalrymple??

Is this an anecdotal speculation? Where does it appear in print? In some of Gardner's writings? or was another writing quoting a statement made by Gardner?

Once the hints dropped by Edgar Pratt led Gardner to Milton Franklin Andrews (MFA), Bill Woodfield got copies of the Bay Area coverage of the latter's lurid end, which seemed like the OJ Simpson story of the day (November 1905). Included in this coverage were transcripts of two lengthy "confession/alibi" letters written by MFA to local newspapers (he confesses to having attempted to murder his Australian gambling partner, with whom he was caught attempting to perform "the spread" while sailing from Hawaii to San Francisco, but gives alibis regarding the other 3 murders police wanted to pin on him). Because these letters sounded so little like the prose of Erdnase, Woodfield suggested to Gardner that MFA (assumed now to be the author), must have had an editor or ghostwriter. Gardner, knowing that MFA had been raised in Hartford, made the connection to Mark Twain, a prominent Hartford resident after he achieved literary fame. Gardner found some stylistic similarities with Twain (the "club room" anecdote, for example), evidence that Twain had ghosted other works, and the fact that Twain was fond of billiards, at which MFA was a known hustler. He even got confirmation from a relative of Twain's named Cyril Clemens who edited a "Mark
Twain Journal" saying that one of Twain’s friends had told him (Cyril) that Twain had known MFA. But established Twain scholars informed Gardner that Cyril Clemens was not to be trusted on such matters and pointed out that Twain spent the entire period of possible collaboration with MFA (basically the decade prior to the turn of the 20th century) travelling in Europe rather than in Hartford. So Gardner stopped pursuing that line of inquiry, which he had always considered unlikely, though intriguing. All of the above may be found in Bart Whaley and Jeff Busby’s incredible THE MAN WHO WAS ERDNASE. Transcripts of the letters MFA wrote are included as Appendices. Those who favor MFA as author are prone to bring in ghostwriter/editors, but if MFA did not write the book, such a complication seems premature. David Alexander has persuasively argued from internal evidence that the self-published book did not have an editor. Busby conjectured that Bill Hilliar ghosted it, with the added complication of James Harto contributing the legerdemain section. Time permitting, both conjectures can be discussed at length in future postings.

Tabman | 12/01/03 05:54 PM | link | filter

this would make for a killer indie film!! all the ingredients are there plus the mystery. maybe shoot it from the perspective of all the suspected erdnase characters or from your (richard) perspective as a professor indiana jones type character looking for the truth. ill produce the sound track so now we need a script writer, producer, director, actors, crew, equipment, transportation, a psychic and of course lots of dinero.

Richard Hatch | 12/01/03 08:03 PM | link | filter

After the Erdnase mystery was covered on the front page of the Wall Street Journal three years ago, I was actually contacted by a documentary filmmaker about it. I gave him contact info for Martin Gardner and Jeff Busby as he mostly wanted to option the film rights for the MFA story and I didn’t feel I had any right to that material. I know he spoke with Martin, but later got the impression he never spoke with Jeff. In any case, as far as I know, no money changed hands and no film was made. I believe he tried to pitch it to the History Channel without success. I still hear from him occasionally. Several others have also expressed an interest, but the focus usually seems to be on the MFA story, since that is the most "romantic" and so, presumably, the most "marketable" version. Two years ago BBC radio did produce a 15 minute story on Erdnase featuring interviews with David Alexander, Bart Whaley, Roger Crosthwaite and Darwin Ortiz. Darwin was even featured performing the Erdnase color change on the radio!

Tabman | 12/01/03 10:37 PM | link | filter

im not surprised that there was some buzzing about it after the wsj story. color change on the radio!! thats a good one!!!! i guess ill get busy on the script. -=tabman
Richard Hatch | 12/07/03 02:36 PM | link | filter

Just a quick follow-up: The painting by Marshall D. Smith, illustrator of Erdnase, mentioned earlier in this thread, sold at live auction today in Oak Park, Illinois to an online bidder for $3,000 plus 22% online buyer's premium plus other charges (shipping, 3% credit card charges if he or she uses one) for a total cost of likely close to $3,750.00. For now, the painting may still be viewed at [http://cgi.liveauctions.ebay.com/ws/eBay ... 2204907987](http://cgi.liveauctions.ebay.com/ws/eBay ... 2204907987)

Todd Karr | 01/12/04 09:48 AM | link | filter

Hi, everyone

Very exciting developments on Erdnase.

I've uncovered information on a Midwest con-man named E. S. Andrews who seems to fit the bill of our man. The dates, locations, and character fit in place very well. I ran this past Richard Hatch, who feels it's definitely promising. I am following some of the leads and will of course share the details with everyone as soon as possible.

Matthew Field | 01/12/04 01:41 PM | link | filter

Todd -- Very exciting! How did everybody else miss this guy?

Matt Field

Richard Hatch | 01/12/04 02:41 PM | link | filter

Matt, wishing to "betray no confidences" limits what I can say at this time, but I believe it is safe for me to say that Todd’s new information is extremely promising. It appears to be a previously unknown "E. S. Andrews", who seems to be in about the right places at the right times in a most intriguing line of work. That he was not on anyone’s radar screen prior to now is not all that surprising given the difficulty in tracking the pool of candidates 100 years ago. What is more surprising (to me) is that such candidates are being found at all, at this late date! Todd has accessed a previously untapped resource and may have hit paydirt, but much work remains to be done and he is diligently pursuing it.

I spoke to Martin Gardner, now 89, this morning, and he is intrigued by the development as well.

Bob Farmer | 01/12/04 04:11 PM | link | filter
I am Erdnase.

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**Guest** | 01/12/04 04:39 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

NEWS FLASH!!!!!! After thumbing through old turn of the century newspapers in the Library of Congress I have just discovered mention of Erdanse's Wife, May. She was a performer, of all things she did card magic. Her full name was MAYONNAISE.....She did sandwich tricks.....Mike.... :p

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**Bill Mullins** | 01/12/04 04:47 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Bob Farmer isn't Erdnase. Bob Farmer is Spartacus.

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**Pete McCabe** | 01/12/04 11:31 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

No, I am Spartacus!

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**Guest** | 01/13/04 05:16 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Originally posted by Mike Walsh II:

*Her full name was MAYONNAISE.....She did sandwich tricks.*

I can't see this rumour spreading very far! :D

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**Todd Karr** | 01/14/04 02:22 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Hi, again

I've received a number of curious inquiries about the nature of the information I've dug up. Below are some of the relevant facts, which are all I'll reveal for now before I check other sources.

This person, E.S. Andrews, was reported in 1901 as perpetrating a rather sophisticated scam in a Midwest town before fleeing. His company's base is stated as Chicago.

In 1904, the same E.S. Andrews was arrested and tried for pulling the same con job in a different state.

While in jail during the court process, a reporter interviewed Andrews, who was stated to have used an assumed name prior to his arrest.

Andrews is described as a bright young man and his comments to the reporter are lengthy, eloquent, clever, and mention legal knowledge and a love of reading.
I am currently checking court records and other sources and will let everyone know more when the facts are in.

Jeff Eline | 01/14/04 02:59 PM | link | filter

Very interesting. Thanks for sharing.

AMCabral | 01/14/04 03:06 PM | link | filter

Her full name was MAYONNAISE....She did sandwich tricks.....Mike

Certainly a most jarring revelation....keep a lid on it, will you? -Tony

Anthony Brahams | 01/15/04 04:09 AM | link | filter

Fill in on this.

AMCabral | 01/15/04 06:15 AM | link | filter

Yes, by all means, Schedd's some light on this subject...

-T

Bill Mullins | 01/15/04 08:15 AM | link | filter

Hellman, let's get back on topic.

Guest | 01/18/04 10:52 PM | link | filter

Any more news on this exciting development?

Paul

Tabman | 01/19/04 09:27 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by Bob Farmer:
I am Erdnase.

yes you are and you would be perfect for the part of "the expert" in my film. -=tabman

Bill Mullins | 01/23/04 04:09 PM | link | filter
The first edition Erdnase at the recent Swann Galleries auction went for $900 plus 15% premium.

It was described as "London, 1902". Does that mean it was a British printing?

Guest | 01/23/04 05:29 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Bill Mullins:

The first edition Erdnase at the recent Swann Galleries auction went for $900 plus 15% premium.

It was described as "London, 1902". Does that mean it was a British printing?

There are no known British printings, but this is a common bibliographer's error. Mulholland made the same error, as did the bibliographers of Milbourne Christopher's Library. It is no doubt due to the confusing "triple copyright" statement (US, British and Canadian), which has led others to suspect it was a Canadian imprint (there have been two Canadian printings, but not the first edition). The first edition copy sold at Swann's was in decent condition, so the price seems to be dropping a bit, though prices were generally "down" on most items in this sale, which was attended by less than 25 onsite bidders, according to credible first hand reports...

Guest | 01/24/04 12:27 AM | link | filter

It is clear to me that this is the single finest thread on the internet. I hope this one continues moto perpetuo.

I now view this book with the same enthusiasm I had when I first started trying to decode the Seargent Pepper album cover.

Brian Marks | 01/24/04 11:34 AM | link | filter

If you take a look at the Zapruder film under the right lighting conditions, you can see a man with an umbrella doing an invisible SWE Shift. This proves Erdanse was the second gunmen behind the grassy knoll. He looks erily like Bob Farmer.

Richard Hatch | 06/19/04 10:12 AM | link | filter

Another Marshall D. Smith painting sold today at an auction and may be viewed online at the following link:

http://cgi.liveauctions.ebay.com/ws/eBay ... AMEWA%3AIT

It went for only $250 plus buyer's fees. Doesn't look to me anything like the Erdnase
illustrations (but then again, why should it?) and seems to be identified only by the artist's initials: MDS.

"who was S.W. Erdnace? Early on it was noticed that when this name is spelled backward it becomes E.S. Andrews. Half a century ago I was instrumental in tracking down the authors true identity. He was Milton Franklin Andrews (MFA), a native of Hartford, Conn., who left home as a youth to become one of the nations most successful card swindlers. A man with a violent temper and a fondness of prostitutes, he was wanted by the police as a prime suspect in the murder of Bessie Bouton, one of his many girlfriends, in Cold Springs, Colorado. In 1905, when the police finally located Andrews and broke into his apartment, he shot himself and the women then living with him. He was 33."

"We know that Andrews paid a Chicago publisher to publish his book in 1902. We also know that he paid a Chicago artist, Marshall D. Smith, to illustrate the book. I had the pleasure of locating the elderly Smith when he still lived in Chicago. He told me how, as a young man he had gone to Andrews' hotel room on a cold winter day to make pencil sketches of the gambler's hands as he held the cards above a felt-covered board that you see in some of the drawings. But who did Andrews pay to edit his manuscript? To this day the question remains unanswered. In "The Man Who Was Erdnase" Whaley gives excellent reasons for thinking it was William John Hilliar, an English magician who settled in America and who ghosted books by magicians T. Nelson Downs and Howard Thurston. Whether Andrews actually killed Bessie Bouton we shall never know. It is possible he was no more than a likely suspect. There is no doubt, however, that his short life was dangerous and tormented. He must have known that his book would be his only claim to undying fame. He was immensely proud of his skills and his original contributions to card work and, as he tells in his book, was frustrated by the necessity of keeping his talents hidden. Surely that was why he concealed his last name in so simple a way that it would be easy to discover. There is controversy over how much material Andrews omitted - secrets he preferred not to reveal - as well as the extent to which he may have knowingly given inferior methods. In some cases Smith's drawings are misleading. For instance, the illustration for the slip cut shows how not to perform this valuable move. The text itself does not support the picture. Nor does the text describe the best technique. As all card magicians should know, a slip cut is best made by pressing the index finger on the top card so that, when the bottom half of the deck is cut forward, the card slides with it to give the impression that the top half has been taken. Then the hand comes back to pick up the top half which has not moved, and place it on the bottom half."

From the Immortal words of Martin Gardner.
I know that most of us have read or already known this bit of info but i recently stumbled upon this interesting man/subject. So if anything i hope this helped.-KARDZ

**Bill Mullins** | 06/21/04 11:12 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

For those interested in primary source material:

"The Man Who Was Erdnase" has some information about the arrest of Milton Franklin Andrews, taken from contemporary newspaper reports. Those interested in seeing the originals should search here:

[UTAH Newspapers](#)

This is a project to digitize 19th and early 20th century Utah newspapers, in a searchable format.

See [HERE](#) for an example.

Searching on Juggler, conjurer, conjuror, magician, gambler, card sharp, etc. also leads to interesting articles.

**Bob Coyne** | 06/21/04 01:52 PM | [link](#) | [filter]

What happened to the new Erndase candidate (an E.S. Andrews) that Todd Karr uncovered? It sounded very promising!! But the last mention of that was in January. Anything new on it? Has it panned out?

**Bill Mullins** | 06/29/04 07:48 AM | [link](#) | [filter]


I am not wholly persuaded that M.F. Andrews was Erdnase. But (at least according to Whaley/Busby/Gardner) some of his relatives (who were laypeople in magic/gambling) and others (some of whom recognized the significance of "Expert") believed he had published a book. If that book wasn't "Expert", what was it? Since "The Man Who Was Erdnase" lays out the case that Erdnase was Andrews, it doesn't really pursue this line of inquiry -- has anyone else?
Hi, everyone. I've been waiting for court documents from the man I'm checking out. The wheels of research turn slowly sometimes.

Bill:

S.W. Erdnase: Another View, copyright 1991 by Thomas A. Sawyer.

Self-published, 67 pages, card covers, plastic spine. Addresses the conclusions of The Man Who Was Erdnase and the Andrews data from The Annotated Erdnase. I've seen it priced between $25 and $75. Aladdin Books used to stock it. They still have his other works.

From the introduction.
"If the present book does nothing more than encourage such further discussion on this matter, then it will have served a useful purpose"

More an open letter than a monograph, Mr. Sawyer details any inconsistencies or syllogisms he divines from those texts. He doesn't proffer counter arguments, but sensibly cautions against assumptions and leaps of faith.

The only new material is some wider context for the publishing efforts of the Frederick J. Drake company and bibliographic aid to dating early editions.

To borrow a phrase, food for thought and ground for further research, but it noticeably predates the readily available work of Richard Hatch, (Magic December 1999) David Alexander, (Genii January 2000) and the contributions to this forum.

Considering the price to content ratio, I suggest only the truly hardcore track it down.

Originally posted by Bill Mullins:
Burton Sperber's privately published periodical, A Real Miracle, reprints "The Story of Erdnase" by Wilford Hutchison and mentions "S. W. Erdnase, Another View" by someone named Sawyer. Who is Sawyer? Is either the original of the Hutchison book or the Sawyer book readily available? Is there any real new info in the Sawyer book?

I am not wholly persuaded that M.F. Andrews was Erdnase. But (at
least according to Whaley/Busby/Gardner) some of his relatives (who were laypeople in magic/gambling) and others (some of whom recognized the significance of "Expert") believed he had published a book. If that book wasn't "Expert", what was it? Since "The Man Who Was Erdnase" lays out the case that Erdnase was Andrews, it doesn't really pursue this line of inquiry -- has anyone else?

The Sperber reprint was done because the originals are so scarce. I believe there were only 12 copies of the original (I don't have my copy of the Sperber reprint handy, but it gives the bibliographic details and lists the whereabouts of known copies). The information in it is merely a summary of Martin Gardner's Milton Franklin Andrews (MFA) theory, as detailed in TRUE magazine in January 1958. The Sawyer monograph questions that theory, based on the evidence presented in Busbys THE MAN WHO WAS ERDNASE (TMWWE) and Ortz's ANNOTATED ERDNASE. Sawyer, a lawyer and conjuring bibliophile, concludes that the MFA theory, though plausible, remains unproved. He does not examine competing theories, as at the time there were none. Sawyer was first to point out that the frontispiece photo of MFA in TMWWE is not the same person shown in the morgue photo of MFA and that the photos of MFA on pages 10, 20, 21, 119, 129, and 144 of TMWWE are all versions (some touched up to show him clean shaven and with a goatee) of the same photo, not independent images. He also questions the testimony of Albertie Minkley, MFA's sister-in-law. TMWWE makes much of her recollections, in Chapter 15, A Case of Identity" (an imaginary cross examination of the principle players in the identity issue), where Whaley has her say: When that nice Mr. Jay Marshall showed me his copy of THE EXPERT I recognized it right away! Just like the ones in the big pile of copies of dear Milton's own brand new book that he kept in his room back in ought three [1903]. Keep in mind, this is an invented testimony, not an actual statement made by Mrs. Minkley. If accurate, it would constitute compelling evidence of MFAs authorship of the book. The actual facts are somewhat different: In early May 1956 Jay Marshall, after appearing on the annual Boston Magicale show, visited his parents in Chicopee, Massachusetts and took that opportunity to go to nearby Holyoke to see what he could dig up about MFA, who lived there with his in-laws for several years at the turn of the century. His visited the office of the HOLYOKE TRANSCRIPT-TELEGRAM and got the editors son interested in the story. A small notice appeared in the paper on May 10, 1956, Local Magician On Ed Sullivans TV Hour Sunday, and the article mentioned that Jay was trying to contact the family of MFA, a reputed card shark who may have written a book, a belief the truth of which Marshall is attempting to ascertain. As a result of the newspaper story, two family members got in touch. One, a niece of MFA, provided some information about what happened to his wife and daughter, but no information about his authorship. The other was Mrs. Oscar W. Minkley (Albertie Walsh), sister of MFAs wife. Donald Dwight, the editors son, wrote Jay on May 12, 1956, having spoken with Albertie. In addition to relating some family information, he says that Mrs. Minkley knew nothing about the book, but did say he was a college graduate (which turns out to be untrue) and did write books or pamphlets and gave magic exhibitions in the area. Before going to the next stage, keep in mind that Mrs. Minkley, age 71 in
1956, was attempting to recall events from more than 50 years earlier, prompted by a
newspaper article that specifically solicited information linking MFA to a book
popular among magicians and gamblers. Immediately after appearing on the Ed
Sullivan show on May 13th, Jay Marshall called her, but made no notes of his initial
conversation. However, after returning to Chicago, he did call Martin Gardner, whose
typewritten notes (misdated May 11, 1956) indicate Mrs. Minkleys memory had
improved somewhat since speaking with the editors son, as she apparently confirmed
that Andrews wrote the book and said that he also wrote sev. Pamphlets, privately
printed, sold to gamblers for large sums. Jay returned to the east coast to perform on
Gary Moores television show (his recollection of this in a letter written in December
1956 was that this was about a month later, but the Holyoke newspaper article
indicates he was to appear on Moores show on Monday, May 21st. Of course, it could
have been postponed or a later appearance) and took that opportunity to travel to
Holyoke to interview Mrs. Minkley. He did take notes of that conversation, and called
Gardner afterwards. Gardeners typewritten notes (misdated March 20, 1956) say that
the mss. he sold were probably typewritten by him, not printed. She looked at book [a
copy of Erdnase Jay brought with him], recalled pictures, but remembered book as
being thicker than it was. Recalled that he had many copies of it on hand. She repeated
that she thought he had been to college. Jay transcribed his notes of the interview in a
letter to Gardner dated December 12, 1956. Unfortunately, the surviving transcription
in Gardeners collection may be missing a second page or second letter (the one page
letter says continued at the bottom). Jay Marshall probably has his original notes,
which would be interesting to see, as the surviving transcription makes no mention of
the book or the manuscripts. It does say She insists he was a college grad which we
know now to be inaccurate. That is the extent of the documentation I have seen of Mrs.
Minkleys testimony on this subject (she does report anecdotes about his card tricks
and other family information, all given in TMWWE). There are a couple of very
curious features of her reaction to the copy of the book Jay showed her: She apparently
recognized the illustrations, but misremembered his book as being thicker. If Jay
showed her a first edition copy (as Gardner reports in an essay in THE ANNOTATED
ERDNASE), this memory could be explained by the passage of time, we tend to
misremember things we saw as a child as larger than they were. But in a 1990 phone
interview with Bart Whaley (see footnote 15 to page 303 of TMWWE), Jay recalled that
he had shown her the Fleming edition, surely the very thickest of all editions (Perhaps in
light of this, TMWWE interprets Gardners notes cited above as that she thought the
dition Jay had was thicker than the books MFA had. That was not Gardners
understanding, as shown by his essay, and his assumption that Jay had shown her a
first edition. The notes are open to either interpretation). Since she claimed to
recognize the illustrations, she must have looked at an open copy, indicating more
than passing acquaintance with the book. Does it strike anyone else as strange that she
wouldnt have looked at the title page and asked her brother-in-law who Erdnase was?
The name "ERDNASE" is clearly printed on the spine of the first edition as well. The
authors strange name, especially if MFA claimed to her to have written the book (she
never says he did), would surely have left an impression, I would think As Sawyer
points out, MFA may have had stacks of books, but were they THE EXPERT? Were
they books he wrote? Perhaps she saw a copy of MODERN MAGIC. To a laymansome fifty years laterhands manipulating cards might strike a memory chord, even if drawn in very different styles (Curiously, Marshall D. Smith, the named illustrator of the book, did NOT recognize the illustrations when Gardner first showed him a copy of the book! Some take this as evidence that he did not do them)

Heres how I see the Minkley testimony: She learns of Jay Marshalls interest in the Holyoke newspaper and contacts the paper. The first person who speaks to her about it reports that she knows nothing about the book, though she does confirm MFAs interest in magic, and that he wrote some manuscripts. She receives a long distance call (quite an exciting event for many in the 1950s!) from Jay Marshall, immediately after hed performed on ED SULLIVANS popular Sunday night television show, which shed likely watched, having read about it in the paper. That must have been quite exciting for her too, and she now confirms that her brother-in-law, MFA, wrote the book. When celebrity Jay Marshall takes a special trip from New York to Holyoke to interview her after appearing on the Gary Moore show, she does not disappoint him, claiming to recognize the books illustrations, if not its physical features, and offering numerous anecdotes about MFA. How seriously should this testimony that MFA actually wrote THE EXPERT be taken?

I personally find the non-affirmation of MFAs older brother Alvin much more troubling for the MFA theory. He was only too happy to meet with Gardner in the fall of 1949. Gardners notes do not show Alvin had ever heard about the book, though he knew quite a lot about MFAs gambling activites. Their relationship was so close that it was Alvin who advised MFA to go to Australia to avoid the police charges of murdering several people (Alvin did not believe him guilty). Gardner conjectures that MFA did not tell his family about the book because it might embarrass them. This would seem to fly in the face of the authors clear pride of accomplishment and strong sense of worth as expressed in the book (not to mention its conflict with the recollection of Albertie Minkley, cited above. If she is to be believed, he had no qualms about letting his in-laws know about the book). Would a known card cheat and pool hustler and an accused multiple murderer be embarrassed to tell his family about a book hed written? Gardner sent Alvin Andrews a copy of THE EXPERT with a lengthy letter dated November 7, 1949. Gardner says he is anxious to know if you think the writing sounds like Milton. He received no reply. Now, if someone sent me a copy of a book written by my late brother, whom the world believes to have been a serial killer, but whose book shows had a redeeming side, Id have surely acknowledged its receipt and commented on its voice! We dont know why Alvin didnt bother to respond (he didnt die for several more years), but possibly he wasnt convinced that MFA had anything to do with the book, and regarded Gardner as a bit of a crank for thinking so. Admittedly, that is pure conjecture on my part.

A final note: I sent Gardner a copy of Sawyers book (the second, revised and enlarged 87 page edition of 1997) and in his letter to me, dated 31 August 1999, he says: Thanks for your letter and the copy of the Sawyer book which I did not even know existed. He
raises good points, and I admit that the identity of Erdnase is still an open question, lacking in any positive documentary evidence that MF Andrews was the man. I would estimate my belief at about 80 percent. Pratt is the major link. I dont believe he lied. He was very reluctant to give me information about Andrews because he said it would be hard on his brother My views on Pratts reliability and motives can be found earlier in this thread.

Richard Lane | 06/30/04 03:47 PM | link | filter

Pratt & photographs: A curiosity.

The footnote to the nicest photograph of Andrews in the frontispiece to The Man Who Was Erdnase, mentions the rear notation, "Rose & Sands- Providence, R.I./ 234 5th Avenue." A bolster to the claim that Providence resident Ed Pratt received the photograph from Andrews.

Here's another fine example from the Rose & Sands studio.

http://www.gabrielleray.150m.com/Archiv ... quest.html

Interesting to note that the NY studio at 234 5th Avenue, was a block and a half from the Madison Square Club at 22 W. 26th. A short hop down to John Morrisey’s place at 5 W. 24th and not much further to the House With The Bronze Door at 33 W. 23rd. At least 2 other gambling joints existed in less than a five block radius, but those were by far the spiffiest, bar a carriage ride down to 818 Broadway.

In 1910, outside 234 5th Avenue, heiress Dorothy Arnold vanished into thin air, creating another infamous unsolved mystery. That place was jinxed.

Richard Hatch | 06/30/04 04:40 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Richard Lane:
Pratt & photographs: A curiosity.

The footnote to the nicest photograph of Andrews in the frontispiece to The Man Who Was Erdnase, mentions the rear notation, "Rose & Sands- Providence, R.I./ 234 5th Avenue." A bolster to the claim that Providence resident Ed Pratt received the photograph from Andrews.

On page 4 of this thread will be found my earlier posting on Pratt and the frontispiece photograph. As noted there, the Rose & Sands studio was only in exisance for one year, allowing us to date the photo (or at least, its frame!) with some certainty to 1900. Based on the notation (apparently in Pratt's handwriting) on the back of the photo
("Age 24 [Corrected from 23], August 7, 1900"), I am convinced this is a photo of Pratt’s brother William, who turned 24 the day before (coincidence?). Andrews, whose 2 other known photos differ markedly from this one, would have been 27 on that day. In my opinion, there is no credible evidence that Pratt even knew Andrews, since everything he told Gardner that was accurate (and some things that were not) were in the "Malted Milk Murderer" article in Pratt’s possession (unbeknownst to Gardner). I’ve been able to purchase several photos from this studio on eBay (though none of Andrews!).

**Pete Biro** | 06/30/04 06:33 PM | link | filter

Are you going to publish all these posts?

**Glenn Bishop** | 09/09/04 08:08 PM | link | filter

This is the best thread that I have read in a long time.

I do not feel that Erdnase was a card shark I feel that he was a magician. I have met card sharks in the past and they seem to know only a few moves...

These moves they do very well - but magicians seem to want to know more moves than a card shark. And card sharks really do not need to know a lot of moves just WHEN to do them in a game.

Expert at the card table is filled with moves. It is ground breaking and there has not been a book since that has done what Erdnase has done with his book.

Another thing in the magic section is that in the routines Erdnase has all sorts of bits of business in the routines. When he palms cards... Vernon points these little bits of business out in Revelations...

These bits of business can only be developed by performing the magic effects for people. In real time and under fire. This suggests to me that Erdnase was a performer.

As with his twelve card stock or fancy stock. It makes a great demonstration of fake card cheating but no real card cheat would ever cheat like that.

In the first few pages of the book he also talkes about how saloons used look outs. He could have been a look out for a saloon. And could have been around card players and card cheats for a long time.

Why would he write a book? I feel that it was promo and Erdnase was his stage name. Magicians use stage names but he was also re-inventing himself to become this other person that was the expert at the card table...
Micky McDoogle called himself "The Card Detective" and that was part of his promo. And so were the books he wrote.

My other feeling is that if Erdnase was a card cheat why would he need the money and write a book to get money?

If he was the card cheat of card cheats finding a game in 1902 would have not have been a hard thing to do. And I feel that if he needed the money he could have found someone to back him with a steak... If he was indeed the card cheat of card cheats that is.

He could also do three card monte. Three card monte is the fastest way to make a buck as far as con games go.

I learned Three card monte by reading Erdnase. And I also got tips later from Buddy Farnan and Dai Vernon himself.

Looking at the research that Whit Haydn has done on three card monte. And knowing about the game and watching people play it on the streets in Chicago. The MOB is an important part of the swindle.

Back in 1902 they used a mob and a script... Yet reading the three card monte routine in Erdnase there is no mention of using a Mob at all.

And that suggests to me that may have never done it on the streets. But the way that he writes about it it would make a great demonstration for an entertainer/card shark/magician to do to entertain during a show.

The book suggests to me that he was a magician and he was inventing a persona... As the expert at the card table. And the book could have been part of the promo.

Magicians write books and invent persona's to get publicity and to set themselves up as experts in a field. Scarne, McDoogle, Ortiz, Forte have all used books and video for this reason.

Selling the books and tapes makes a profit but not as much of a profit as a booking - being an expert in a field can get a lot more money because it sets them appart from the average magician that can do a few card tricks.

This is just a guess but in the first few pages of the book he talks about people that were employed by saloons to watch for card cheats. Could this book be part of him trying to set this up as a performing/consulting market?

And the add in the Sphinx for magician a second market and an attempt at quick cash?
**Todd Karr** | 09/10/04 11:04 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Quick update: I've obtained copies of the original court docket sheets for the case of con man E.S. Andrews and there's not much more there than the basic information I have already...not even a first or middle name! I may be posting some of my info on the Web soon, so stay tuned!

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**Glenn Bishop** | 09/10/04 11:12 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Thank you Todd Karr. I have found your posts very interesting reading...

I look forward to reading more...

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**Richard Hatch** | 09/30/04 11:41 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Originally posted by Glenn Bishop:

**Back in 1902 they used a mob and a script... Yet reading the three card monte routine in Erdnase there is no mention of using a Mob at all.**

Glenn, this is not quite accurate. On page 121 of the standard editions Erdnase writes about Monte: "In a confidence game, the corner of the Ace is turned by a "capper," who seizes an opportunity when the careless (?) dealer turns to expectorate, or on any pretext neglects his game for a moment." This seems a clear reference to the mob aspect of the "confidence" version of Monte. Erdnase does not advocate that one do this, merely states it as a matter of fact. Indeed, the entire Monte section seems out of place in the "card table artifice" section of the book, since he seems to be clearly presenting it as entertainment, commending it to the amateur as a source of much amusement. In that context, it seems more suited to the "Legerdemain" section though perhaps he is merely acknowledging its gambling origins by including it in the former section. In any case, I can find no instance of Erdnase recommending any sleight or move as something that has earned him money, but on several occasions he makes references to having been the victim of card cheats. Indeed, he admits in the introductory section that his interest in card manipulation stemmed from an awareness of having been cheated. As I read it, his passion for play was transformed into a passion for manipulation, i.e., his study of the latter cured him of his compulsion for the former. But that is strictly conjecture on my part. He makes fun of reformed gamblers in his famous preface ("The hypocritical cant of reformed (?) gamblers...") so it seems unlikely that he regarded himself as one. As you point out (and as does Darwin Ortiz in his ANNOTATED ERDNASE), if he were an unreformed gambler who needed money, he wouldn't write a book, he'd find a game... Tony Giorgio has pointed out numerous other instances in the text that argue against the author having been a practicing card cheat. This leads many to believe he was a
magician, but his tone in the legerdemain section is that of an outsider: he's read books on magic and studied the performances of magicians and wonders why they use the pass instead of blind shuffles, for example. The fact that book came off the press in early March 1902 and was not advertised in THE SPHINX (which was published in the same city as the book) until November of that year (it received a brief mention in the September issue) would suggest that he was not aware of how to reach that particular market for his book initially (the ad was placed by the Vernelos, publishers of the SPHINX, not by the author). So my best guess is that he was a student of both branches of card manipulation, but just an armchair practictioner of both. Perhaps he suffered from the failure of nerve he refers to on page 23. I expect most of these questions will be answered when we find out (if we do!) the author's true identity...

Glenn Bishop | 10/08/04 10:11 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by Richard Hatch:

Originally posted by Glenn Bishop:
[b]
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Guest | 10/08/04 10:00 PM | link | filter

Just wanted to clarify something that Glenn alluded to: Steve Forte is not a magician who invented a persona for his act; Steve would be the first to tell you that he's not an entertainer and has never tried to be. He has moves out the ying-yang but he's never considered himself a magician.

He is, however, the best cardshark I've ever met.

Guest | 10/09/04 12:22 AM | link | filter

Glenn Bishop is wrong about Erdnase and monte. Watching mobs in Chicago in the 1970's is interesting but not contemporaneous with Erdnase's experience. I would suggest Glenn reads "40 Year a Gambler on the Mississippi" by George Devol before he makes assessments regarding Erdnase's accuracy.
Buster Brown... To me it is not about being right or wrong when talking about the mystery of Erdnase. Richard has done some fantastic work on this subject. He is like someone digging at some tomb or old world dig - digging up the past and the mystery. Each bit of theory or idea that is uncovered is another step toward getting to the mystery.

I suggest you get Whit Haydn’s three card monte DVD from the School Of Scoundrels. This is the first DVD that shows how the mob works. And back in the 1900’s they did it this way.

There was open monte and closed monte.

Erdnase text on three card monte was one of the more interesting things that I found in the book. I feel by reading it that he did it as a demo. The same reason that he did the twelve card stack. A great demo. But I do not feel (Having played cards) that a card shark would do it that way.

I am not interested in being right or wrong. I am only interested in what we can bring to the table and try to find clue’s.

I think that Richard has done a fantastic job.

I have also posted in other threads on this subjects and If Erdnase was a card shark he may have used three card monte as an after game. To be done after the poker game was breaking up.

I have seen people cut to the high card as an after game. If a card shark could do this he could win back some lost money. Or use this to cheat and not have to cheat during the game.

But my thoughts on three card monte are that if you know three card monte it is one of the fastest money makeing games or cons that there ever was. Only cons like the thimble rig or the shell game do as well.

In fact it is often said about three card monte that it will make more money for the con man faster than any other game...

If Erdnase could do three card monte why would he need to cheat at the card table and "Need the Money" as the book said?
Again... It is not about being right or wrong it is about exploring the mystery and bringing ideas to the table to talk about!

Glenn Bishop | 10/09/04 09:31 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by emeprod:

*Just wanted to clarify something that Glenn alluded to: Steve Forte is not a magician who invented a persona for his act; Steve would be the first to tell you that he's not an entertainer and has never tried to be. He has moves out the ying-yang but he's never considered himself a magician.*

*He is, however, the best cardshark I've ever met.*

I have seen Steves work on video and I think that he is the best of the best. I don't know Steve Forte... And I have no idea how he makes his money. But he did make money on the video's that he did as John Scarne made money on the books that he wrote. And Darwin Ortiz makes money on the books and video's that he produces. Darwin is also one of the best and gets a good fee for a demo of card sharping expo as well as doing magic.

I have no idea if Steve Forte does demo of card sharp methods but if he does I would think that he is also getting top money for doing it...

To me a demo of card sharp methods is a show like a speaker. People work hard in these markets to show that they are at the top and they do this today by writing books and doing video's...

Perhaps this was the reason Erdnase wrote the book... Perhaps not but it is a theory and just another thing to look at in the mystery of Erdnase.

Guest | 10/09/04 09:42 AM | link | filter

I have great respect for Whit Haydn. Whit's a friend of mine. I haven't seen the DVD, but I have his book on monte, which is excellent. If the DVD shows a large mob, then that's fine. But I do think you need to read Devol's book which contains numerous accounts of working monte with one or two partners and sometimes alone.

I know Richard too, and I'm not sure why you kept mentioning him. For what it's worth, Richard and I corresponded on Erdnase in the late nineties, and I think his scholarship is excellent.

I agree, monte is lucrative. And you don't even have to be that good at it. Paul Wilson and I both witnessed a tourist lose $1400 cash outside Caesar's Palace about three
years ago, and I have watched (and photographed) monte mobs all over the world.

cheers

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**Guest** | 10/09/04 11:23 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Well, I just got done reading this thread, it has been quite interesting. Thanks to everyone who has contributed. Definitely given me some things to think about with regards to magicians/gambling, etc. Also, I just love reading history, or even speculation about history (but sssshhhhh, don’t tell my friends).

One thing about the last post got me, however. The tourist losing $1400! Funny, one of the things I’m studying/working on in magic the most is the psychological processes that go into everything, but one I haven’t been able to understand is gambling. It’s one of those tests Mithrandir refers too. For the last year now, I’ve been puzzled over gambling. You see, I got into a Casino for the first time when I was 17 years old, with nearly $700 bucks in my pocket. I played until I got kind of bored and left, down twenty bucks. Since then I’ve returned a few times, trying various Casino’s, etc with over a grand on me, just in case I got that bug. I mean I wanted to feel it, find it, understand it. No luck.

But hell, free booze, and shows, lol...

Seriously though, there is something there I’m having difficulty pinpointing, but I think it may be important to what we do, and maybe to the way this crazy world works...thoughts? I’ll let you know if I scrape up anything cogent...

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**Glenn Bishop** | 10/09/04 11:46 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Originally posted by Buster Brown:

I have great respect for Whit Haydn. Whit’s a friend of mine. I haven’t seen the DVD, but I have his book on monte, which is excellent. If the DVD shows a large mob, then that’s fine.

I agree, monte is lucrative. And you don’t even have to be that good at it. Paul Wilson and I both witnessed a tourist lose $1400 cash outside Caesar’s Palace about three years ago, and I have watched (and photographed) monte mobs all over the world. cheers

Ask Whit Haydn about it. I talked with him about Erdnase and three card monte in the close up Gallery at the Magic Castle...And what we talked about - is why I feel this way about Erdnase and three card monte. It is just a guess but it is just another guess or theory that we bring to the table.
By the way the book you mention is on my list...

Robert Allen | 10/09/04 11:51 AM | link | filter

I'm sure there are different reasons people enjoy gambling, just as there are different reasons people take recreational drugs. From my limited experience I will note that winning in a casino and winning in the stockmarket give you (or at least, me) precisely the same feeling of euphoria. Conversely, loosing at either gives a feeling of depression.

While I enjoyed gambling when I did it, being a relative cheapskate I would only play at games which gave me some chance of winning, or at least breaking even. For me gambling was a sort of role playing; getting comped, flashing the wad of money I never intended to actually gamble to the pit bosses, not to mention as you note the drinking, eating, etc. I got to play the role of someone who's respected because of their wealth and gambling skill. I think that's what a lot of people get out of it - role playing. Before going to Reno or Vegas (and even after coming back) I'd watch _Casino_ on DVD :).

Guest | 10/09/04 12:09 PM | link | filter

That is very interesting sir. I must admit that amongst my peers, and ranging out to a few years older, (not too sure about the older demographics, on this one), there is an increasing trend to "re-invent" oneself, whenever one feels like it, and a seeming lack of any notion that this might not be an ideal concept.

So, beyond "what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas", you're saying that people actually are experiencing a sort of real virtual reality or the chance to be someone, or at least play the part of someone they're not?

Looking at the money Casino's make, the idea that people desperately wish to not merely be entertained, but to shroud themselves in a cloak of fantasy if you will, well, I'd say it bodes well for our business. :D And is yet another proponent of creating an entire magical environment for someone, like a separate little dimension when we perform, instead of being mere tricks, or a puzzle. As they tell me Slydini did with his pins, where others failed...

Sorry for going off topic, and sorry if some of this stuff seems like stating the obvious. Sometimes little glitches in my thinking appear, and it is important to capitalize on them, (I think) in whatever area they were spawned from.

After all, I believe Erdnase tells us, "THE finished card expert considers nothing too trivial that in any way contributes to his success", though personally I picked that concept from the writings of Mr. Paul Chosse.
As Richard mentions, on P.121 Erdnase uses the word "expectorate". This is the exact same word the Devol uses in "Forty Years a Gambler on the Mississippi".

The coincidence seems to great for Erdnase to have been writing from his own Monte experience.

Originally posted by Larry Horowitz:

As Richard mentions, on P.121 Erdnase uses the word "expectorate". This is the exact same word the Devol uses in "Forty Years a Gambler on the Mississippi".

The coincidence seems to great for Erdnase to have been writing from his own Monte experience.

Larry, that's most interesting! Since several people have mentioned Devol's book (I believe Peter Studebaker even included it on his "top ten" list in one of his lecture notes), I thought I might point out that this 1887 classic is available as a 300 page paperback reprint from numerous sources for just $12.95 plus shipping (including H & R Magic Books [www.magicbookshop.com](http://www.magicbookshop.com)). Do a search on "Devol" and it will show up.

I might add that it appears as though the value of a second edition of "The Expert at the Card Table" is approximately $760. It's just such a shame that mid bid of $72 didn't win the auction. :)

It should be noted that if either Jason England (the winning bidder) or I (the underbidder) had not tried to "spike" this in the last few seconds, one of us would have
gotten it for just $107.50. Had neither of us bid, it would have sold for just $72...

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**CHRIS** | 10/10/04 07:57 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Richard Hatch:

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"Forty Years a Gambler on the Mississippi" can also be had electronically from Lybrary.com [http://www.lybrary.com/index.html?goto= ... mbler.html](http://www.lybrary.com/index.html?goto= ... mbler.html)

Chris Wasshuber
Lybrary.com preserving magic one book at a time.

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**Guest** | 10/10/04 08:30 PM | link | filter

Stuart,
Your question about understanding gambling/gamblers, is best discussed in another thread or elsewhere.
But you may want to read the works of Dr. Robert Custer and others who worked with compulsive/addictive gamblers.
I knew a number of those who worked in Vegas, who threw their salaries away each week, who would call you, a "normie"...someone who couldn't,(thankfully) understand the wishfull, delusional, magical thinking, that the reality of math, would somehow, stop for them. I knew high-ranking casino executives, whose business was to know how much revenue, the "games" would generate by the hour, but still took THEIR salaries and blow it each week, at the same games at the casino next door!

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**Todd Karr** | 11/14/04 10:57 AM | link | filter

Hi, everyone

I have decided to share my Erdnase research with the magic community in the hope that we all can join forces to pursue some of these leads I've uncovered on con man E. S. Andrews.

Go to [www.illusionata.com](http://www.illusionata.com) (this is the new Magical Past-Times site, which I'm now editing) to read about Andrews, see the news articles, and check the list of potential research topics that interested historians can try to chase.

As always, I'll stress that this may not be the man we're looking for. We haven't found
a deck of cards in his hands. But at least we may eliminate one more candidate if this proves to be yet another false lead.

I'll welcome emails from anyone making progress on these leads!

Thank you and best wishes,
Todd

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**Bill Mullins** | 11/14/04 05:07 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Todd’s new info is very interesting, and it’s great that he’s sharing it (as well as picking up Magic Past Times).

To follow up on one of his leads:
This site:  
has a number of scanned Colorado newspapers. No reference to Charles Brandon was found. There are too many references to “Andrews” (1600+ between 1900 and 1910) to say yet if any of them are relevant.

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**Todd Karr** | 11/15/04 06:42 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Thanks, Bill. The Colorado newspaper index is a promising resource...this is exactly the kind of pooling of efforts that I think will prove productive in tracking down Erdnase.

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**Don** | 11/15/04 08:03 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Todd, that was very, very interesting to read. Great research, it sounds a lot like it actually could be S W Andrews.

Gook luck.

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**Don** | 11/15/04 08:06 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

oops, i mean E S Andrews.

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**Todd Karr** | 11/16/04 08:32 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Thanks, Rage

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**Matthew Field** | 11/16/04 10:55 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)
Todd -- Phenominal! Many thanks for posting the results of your research, and for taking over the "Magical Past-Times" site.

Matt Field

**Todd Karr** | 11/16/04 01:54 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Matt, thanks. I hope this all helps advance the Erdnase search so we can give credit due to this unsung but outstanding author. As for MPT, I hope to honor Gary Hunt's legacy and do a good job with it, including other intriguing material soon.

**Brad Jeffers** | 11/16/04 11:41 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Todd, Very interesting material. Keep up the good work!
By the way, how is the Mickey MacDougall book coming along?

**Tommy** | 11/17/04 12:08 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Mr. Karr

Thank you.
A fine piece of work and very exciting theory. I hope you will get all the help you need.

Just thinking of the cuff. The gent was convicted so unless he won an appeal later he would have a criminal record. Did they not take photos and fingerprints in those days?
I think it unlikely that he would have been given a jail term if it was his first offence, but if he had then what prison would he most likely have gone to from the court where he was convicted? Prisons often keep very good records.
I do not suppose the gent was connected to Denver by any chance. I only ask that because a lot of pro con men were at that time.

**Todd Karr** | 11/17/04 10:26 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Brad: Thanks, and I don't have plans for a MacDougall book right now, although the card detective would definitely be fascinating.

Mr. Cooper: The surviving court records are scant from that period, and while I had hoped to get more from the Wisconsin police files, the docket sheets are all I was provided with. This is where we need someone to go there and check the records in person and see what actually still exists. I also agree that prison records might be helpful, and I hope some of our Wisconsin friends can help check this out.
You're right about a Denver connection. Check my article again at www.illusionata.com where the press states Andrews’ company is incorporated in Colorado. I hope business records still exist from that period!

Re Denver. This was a guess from me. I am from the UK and do not know my geography of the USA very well. However, Because of the Denver connection, your man might well have been a member of the Blonger mob. See here for a run down of these guys.  
http://www.blongerbros.com/gang/cast/underworld.asp

Your man describes himself as Businesslike and I cannot think of a word that could better describe the Erdnase work itself.
Businesslike Definitions:
Exhibiting methodical and systematic characteristics that would be useful in business
Not distracted by anything unrelated to the goal
Synonyms: earnest, efficient, purposeful
In the manner of one transacting business wisely and by right methods. ; practical and efficient.
Serious and purposeful.

Regards
COOPER

Cooper:

Exactly. And the Denver gang info is very interesting.

The National Endowment for the Humanities and the Library of Congress are about to digitize 30 million pages of American Newspapers. web page

Bill: That’s excellent news! It’s amazing what you can find hidden in old newspapers, and today’s search engines makes researching names a matter of a few seconds rather
than months.

**Todd Karr** | 11/22/04 03:56 PM | link | filter

Thanks, Glenn. I've already begun receiving a number of tips.

**Bob Farmer** | 11/22/04 06:47 PM | link | filter

Back when "Erdnase" registered his copyright in Canada, the registration was done at the Department of Agriculture (where, apparently, Vernon's father worked). As part of the application, a copy of the book had to be filed.

I figured the book and the application must still be somewhere. Canada eventually created a copyright office and a lot of the records have been shifted around.

However, I did find what appears to be an entry for an original edition (there are other entries for later editions and reprints):

First, go to amicus.collectionscanada.ca

Or go to the Canada website and find Library and Archives Canada.

Here's the info:

Amicus No. 14561855

LCCN numbers 76378049 //r952

LC Call No. GV1247.E66 1902

It seems to me that if this copy could be examined, along with the original registration, some clues might emerge.

**Bill Wheeler** | 11/22/04 09:51 PM | link | filter

I had trouble opening amicus.collectionscanada.ca but perhaps this link will help:

http://amicus.collectionscanada.ca/aawe ... &v=0&lvl=1

Noodling around on the above mentioned website, I found reference to S.R. Erdnase ... perhaps this is his brother.

Or maybe we should be looking for James Andrers. ;)}
Bob, the copy you cited in Amicus did not show up for me when I did a search of the "National Library Collections," only when I searched "The Entire Amicus Database," so my guess is that it is not a copy submitted for copyright purposes (since it should then be in the National Library Collections, correct?), but a first edition elsewhere in Canada. The Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library in Ontario has a first edition in the Art Latcham Magic Collection, so that might be the copy in question. Of course, I could be wrong and it would be most exciting if the Amicus reference is to a copy submitted by the author for copyright purposes. I would be very interested to learn of any other first editions in Canada, and elsewhere (my current count of first editions in public and private collections is well over 60 copies but I suspect I know of less than half the surviving copies at this point...). David Ben did recently check copyright submissions for the period in question (as have others before him) and found no record of the book having been submitted for copyright in Canada, despite the book's unusual, possibly unique triple copyright statement. The "Stationer's Hall, London" copyright also seems not have been submitted, though the American copyright forms and fees were filed properly and two deposit copies sent to the Library of Congress in early March 1902.

Bill, the "S. R. Erdnase" is a reference to "Samuel R. Erdnase" under which name the book's author is often referenced in bibliographies. This has been traced back to a 1904 catalog of Frederick J. Drake, prior to their first reprint of 1905. The catalog listing is curious in giving the incorrect number of pages (204 rather than 205) and illustrations (45 rather than 101), so it seems likely the "Samuel R." is a typo as well, though, of course, it could also be a clue of some kind!

Dredging up a few matters discussed earlier in this wonderful thread

David Alexander opines that EATCT could not have been written for money because of the up-front costs of publishing and the time delays in obtaining profit, and later suggests that the book cost $40-$50 in equivalent money in those days a high cost indeed. While I agree with Davids implication that Erdnase probably could have made his money more efficiently at cheating (assuming he was so good at cheating), given the high cost of the book, it is not out of the question that Erdnase could have initially expected a very tidy profit at the end of the day at sales of $2 per copy (although subsequent price reductions suggest that sales may not have been so good). Considering the poor quality of the first edition, I wouldnt be surprised if the cost to print and bind the book was less than a dime per copy yielding a huge profit margin, abnormally high even if the book was wholesaled.

David also wrote: The use of a check indicates the publisher (Erdnase) wanted proof of title, clear ownership of the material he was paying for. Establishing
clear title is important for what happened later and a check is the best evidence.

While we may never know why Erdnase used a check for payment to Smith (assuming Smith's recollection was correct, and leaving us to wonder why Erdnase would want to leave a paper trail), I disagree that a check is the best evidence. A receipt would have been just as good. Moreover, a simple check would indicate nothing more than payment for some sort of services not necessarily ownership of the drawings. While some artists do indeed sell ownership of their work, others merely sell the rights to use the artwork (i.e., they grant a license for certain purposes or a specified period of time) and retain ownership of their work.

David also wrote: **It is also indirect evidence that McKinney had nothing to do with "publishing" the book since, as an established printer, they could have ordered the illustrations and paid for them directly.**

To my mind, the act of commissioning and paying for the illustrations directly would be the hallmark of a publisher, not a printer.

There has been some discussion and opinions given about whether or not Erdnase was a magician or a gambler. Richard Hatch notes that Erdnase made reference to Charlier in EATCT. This reference does not conclusively prove anything, as Richard admits, but it does suggest (to me at least) that Erdnase was very familiar with the conjuring literature of the day. Either that, or Erdnase just happened upon the very few magic books published prior to 1902 which mention Charlier: Hoffmann's translation of Robert-Houdin's *Secrets of Conjuring and Magic* (1878), Hoffmann's *More Magic* (1889), and Charles Bertram's *Isn't it Wonderful?* (1896). What are the odds that a hard-core gambler would have read these few magic books to the exclusion of others, and somewhat carefully at that? And if Charlier was so obscure in conjuring circles, how well known could he have been outside of the conjuring fraternity? On the other hand, if J. N. Maskelyne's assessment is correct, then Charlier was a card sharp, for Maskelyne told Henry Ridgely Evans that he (Maskelyne) purchased a set of marked cards from Charlier in London in about 1873. So perhaps Erdnase was a gambler after all and knew of Charlier from Charlier's reputation as a cheat? I take credit for none of the foregoing. You will find all of this information and more in Eddie Dawes wonderful chapter on Charlier in Charles Bertram *The Court Conjurer* (1997), published by the Chief Genii himself. The mere fact that Erdnase knew about the extremely elusive and obscure Charlier seems to support the argument that Erdnase had more than a passing interest in and familiarity with magic.

In closing, these are just my thoughts. I'm not pretending to know anywhere near as much about EATCT and its mysterious author as David, Richard, and others who have contributed mightily to this thread.

Clay
Hi, everybody!

Clay said:

Maskelyne told Henry Ridgely Evans that he (Maskelyne) purchased a set of marked cards from Charlier in London in about 1873.

While my message can have nothing to do whatsoever with Erdnase, one of Charlier's marked cards pack is currently in The Magic Circle's museum, in London (UK)... I don't recall if this is the same deck bought by Maskelyne, but I do remember it is a very interesting deck indeed...Ok, that's is... going back lurking ;)

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Marco Pusterla - http://www.mpmagic.co.uk

Richard Hatch | 11/23/04 09:18 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by Magicam:

Either that, or Erdnase just happened upon the very few magic books published prior to 1902 which mention Charlier: Hoffmanns translation of Robert-Houdins Secrets of Conjuring and Magic (1878), Hoffmanns More Magic (1889), and Charles Bertrams Isn't it Wonderful? (1896).

I believe Charlier is also mentioned in Hoffmann's 1889 Tricks with Cards, though I don't have a copy I can check. He is mentioned by name in Howard Thurston's Card Tricks (1901) and more importantly in Roterberg's 1897 New Era Card Tricks, which was almost certainly a source and inspiration for Erdnase, as pointed out by Jeff Busby (Roterberg's book sold very well for the same $2 cover price). Erdnase mentions his interest in conjuring literature on page 126: "But so far as we can learn from the exhibitions and literature of conjurers...". In his first (and primary) mention of Charlier, Erdnase writes (p. 128): "This is known to conjurers as the "Charlies [sic] Pass," and we presume was invented by the famous magician of that name." I don't believe any other writer on conjuring at the time would have referred to Charlier as a "famous magician" and the fact that Erdnase misspells his name in this initial and primary reference (it is spelled correctly in a latter passing reference) suggests to me that he was not a magical "insider." It does not follow that he was necessarily a professional gambler, but his familiarity with that world does seem more intimate to me.

David Ben | 11/23/04 10:38 AM | link | filter

The original "The Expert At The Card Table" was never submitted for registration for
I have examined all entries bracketing the years in question - including those in the hand of Vernon's father. I have also had on going discussions with the National Archives and others regarding this issue as part of my research into the Vernon biography.

I do believe, however, that I have solved the riddle of how, why, when, where, etc Vernon first came across this book and the connection it had to his family. This will be explained in the book. (For those who are interested, I am about 75,000 words into a 180,000 word project.)

As for editions submitted to Canada, all books submitted to the Government of Canada at that time were eventually shipped to England and were destroyed accidentally in a fire.

_Terry Screen | 11/23/04 12:36 PM | link | filter_

I must say that I've found this whole topic absolutely fascinating, illuminating and a real live treasure hunt to boot.
It's given me a whole new perspective when reading EATCT.
My thanks to you all, and great job Mr. Karr with your contributions here and with Magical Past-Times.

Gotta get back to the book!

Regards . .

Terry.

_Tommy | 11/23/04 04:27 PM | link | filter_

Just a thought or two.

Kokomo, 1901 E S Andrews, Same scam, same name!
Oshkosh, 1904 E S Andrews, Same scam, same name!
The Chicago 1907 E S Andrews, Same scam, same name!

I find it strange that a conman would want to use the same false name over and again to play the same con trick. In other words why not use a different false name. After 1901, when his con comes to light, why not go to ground and emerge under a new false name, and after the 1904 conviction why carry on in the same name.

It tends to suggest to me, that it is not a false name. That E S Andrews was prepared to front this con. That is, he does it, confident, that he can beat the rap if arrested.
E S Andrews was indeed confident of winning the case in his jail house interview but was convicted. However if that conviction was quashed on appeal then it makes a bit of sense.

In that event his confidence in this legal loophole con might have grown and he would have carried on doing it. We do not know, do we, if he won an appeal. Also I note that there is no evidence that Tyler was convicted. I ask as I am not sure.

I am aware of conmen here in England who use their own name over and over, pulling a legal loophole con. Even though they are arrested time and again they, do not get convicted. These con games are similar in nature to the E S Andrews con; suffice to say that they are based on getting permission from the owner to take his goods or cash. It results in a civil case, rather than criminal one. They purposely use their real names because using a false name might be evidence of criminal intent.

Turning to another idea: E S Andrew appears well educated in business and might have gone to a business college. I do not know but perhaps there were few such Colleges at that time. One place I heard mentioned is Bryant & Stratton Business College. A long shot but maybe they have a student record. Or any education records might be worth a look as he sounds to me like a guy who had qualifications.

Regards

COOPER

PS Also why use this particular false name in reverse to write the S W Erdnase book. Again it suggests E S Andrews would have been his real name not a false one. What do you think, or have I got my facts wrong, sorry if that is so.
magician of that name." I don’t believe any other writer on conjuring at the time would have referred to Charlier as a "famous magician" and the fact that Erdnase misspells his name in this initial and primary reference (it is spelled correctly in a latter passing reference) suggests to me that he was not a magical "insider." It does not follow that he was necessarily a professional gambler, but his familiarity with that world does seem more intimate to me.

Richard, as you have had your head into this problem for years, your judgment is far better informed than mine. That said, given Erdnase’s penchant for misdirection, I do not find the one-time (intentional?) misspelling of Charlier’s name and the "famous magician" phrase as very hearty evidence that Erdnase was unfamiliar with magic and magicians of the day. Even with the additional books you cite, this subset of magic books mentioning Charlier is still quite small, although admittedly the titles you mention do incorporate the word "Card[s]" in their titles, thus perhaps making them more prominent to one casually reviewing a magic dealer catalog or a magic magazine. But what was Erdnase doing looking at such catalogs or magazines? And even if he never saw such publications, as insular as the magic community is, would it be unreasonable to guess that he had friends/associates who were quite familiar with the magic literature of the day (or at least its high points)? All in all, I can’t help but suspect that Erdnase was more familiar with magic than he admitted.

Clay

Richard Hatch | 11/24/04 08:28 AM | link | filter

It had previously been listed at $999 and failed to find a bidder.

Bob Farmer | 11/24/04 03:07 PM | link | filter

If you look closely, you can see the guy sitting down has a card palmed in his right hand.

Tommy | 11/24/04 04:00 PM | link | filter

Cool Ace of Spades door! I want one.

:cool:

Richard Hatch | 12/03/04 11:57 AM | link | filter
Another book illustrated by Marshall D. Smith, circa 1905, is currently on eBay. He is not identified as the artist in the posting, but several of the illustrations, including the cover illustration are shown. Here’s a link:
http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?Vi...Track=true

**Tommy** | 12/04/04 05:15 AM | link | filter

Was the first edition printed by "Letterpress"? For what it is worth. You can determine this by looking at the back of a printed page and looking for a kind of embossing, in particular look at the back of the illustrations. Letterpress is a relief printing process. I have a little experience with letterpress and I can say it is not easy to typeset a book without making a spelling mistake, even if you are a great speller. It is set up like mirror writing, that is it looks like a rubber stamp but it is lead type. I am not sure when type setting machines came about but small printers would set up the plate by hand as a rule and each and every letter is a separate piece of type. Also the illustrations would have been what are called Blocks and they can be expensive. Some years ago I had a small block made and it cost me 50 and there are over 100 in the Erdnase book. I am not sure when Litho printing came into use in the USA but that would have been much cheaper. The plates are made by a photographic process with litho and they are flat and leave no embossing.

PS I am saying it might not have been Erdnase that made the spelling mistake but the printer.

**Paul Gordon** | 12/27/04 11:58 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Lance Pierce: "Regarding Erdnase, Richard Hatch pointed out to me once that many of the illustrations in the book carry Erdnase's copyright statement right beneath the drawing, but many of them don’t. There doesn't seem to be a discernable pattern as to why some do and some don't, but all the drawings appear to be pretty close in style. Coupling this with the information gleaned from the interview with the person who did the artwork for the book and how he expressed his surprise because he didn’t remember drawing so many, does anyone have any theories to explain this? Did the artist draw all the pictures that don’t bear the copyright statement, and was Erdnase also an excellent mimic with the pen who drew the remaining pictures and put his copyright claim on them?"

Lance
I know I’m late in the day commenting on this, but: My ex-wife (artist) thought that there were three different styles of illustrations in the book. (I mentioned this to Richard Hatch when I met him in USA back in 1998/9.) The ‘copyrighted’ ones were possibly the originals and the others ‘style copies’ of those, but by two different hands. (My ex wife [Joyce] commented on the small detail; knuckles, creases etc.)

AND - I have a publishing theory (as I am a publisher): If the author(s) wanted to be anonymous, why choose Erdnase which is obviously Andrews spelt backward? Red herring!?

AND - How did he copyright it with a false name? The publisher AND the printer must have known something about him...NO publisher would publish a book by an unknown, for fear of ‘breach of copyright.’ Who paid the bills? Where did invoices go to?

I THINK that the publisher (Drake) must have been in on it; some kind of joke/scam? I, for one, would NEVER accept a manuscript from an unknown! ALSO - who would Drake pay the royalties/one-off fee to?

If you really wanted to be 100% anonymous, you’d have to NOT copyright/record it at all. And, you’d have to probably print it yourself! Hmm! Brings be back to Drake & McKinney...It makes you think.

MY THEORY is that the book is a ‘house’ piece of work; possibly a joke to get us all thinking! That, it did, alright...Yes, the revolutionary sleights are different - but, anyone could (and they do) publish esoteric moves that are never demonstrated in person.

TROUBLE is: If one scorns Erdnase, one gets vilified! Daft, really. People only want to believe what they want to believe. This is why we still have the Kennedy/Monroe stories/theories! How dull it would be if the TRUTH was that Oswald really did do it!

The book is NOT (I’ve searched) recorded at Kew Gardens (holding Stationers Hall material) in England, as also pointed out by the late Alan Kennaugh. That, I think, was another red-herring.

I LIKE the book, but I don't think it was written by a mysterious genius; certainly not Milton Andrews. I think it’s a complete red-herring...designed to accomplish EXACTLY what it has accomplished...

Any thoughts, anyone?

Paul Gordon
Originally posted by Paul Gordon:

I THINK that the publisher (Drake) must have been in on it; some kind of joke/scam? I, for one, would NEVER accept a manuscript from an unknown! ALSO - who would Drake pay the royalties/one-off fee to?

Just to clarify a bibliographic point: The first edition (March 1902) was not published by Drake, but--according to the title page--was "published by the author" whoever he may have been. Drake did not begin selling first edition copies until sometime in 1903 (at the reduced price of $1) and did not begin to issue its own editions until 1905 (initially at 50 cents in hardback and 25 cents in paperback). According to a Leo Rullman article in the Sphinx circa 1928, Drake claimed it had purchased the reprint rights outright and had never paid royalties nor had subsequent contact with the mysterious author. Which is not to say that Frederick J. Drake might not have known who the author was. He is, after all, the one who suggested to Sprong and/or Vernon that they read "S. W. Erdnase" in reverse. Of course, the "Mr. Andrews" Drake dealt with might not have been using his real name in his dealing with Drake or the presumed original printer McKinney (who was also selling copies of the book) or with Marshall D. Smith, the illustrator. Which makes sense if he did indeed wish to remain anonymous. I personally don't think he did require or desire such anonymity, as if he did, putting the real name "M. D. Smith" on the titlepage as illustrator, which added no value to the book, would have to be seen as a huge risk to his anonymity. The fact that it took more than 40 years for someone like Martin Gardner to think of tracking down Smith is an accident of history. Anyone could easily have done so early in 1902 and likely quickly tracked down the author based on Smith fresh recollections of when and where they met, which bank the check in payment for the illustrations was written on, the name he used, etc.

I saw a show on PBS where they have 'History Detectives'. Call 'em up and let them use their amazing resources to see what they can come up with. At minimum it should be interesting.

Steve V

If you really wanted to be 100% anonymous, you'd have to NOT copyright/record it at all.

I don't think the author would have required or desired "100%" anonymity. He simple didn't want his true name to appear on the cover of a book dealing with advantage play.
- a book that would most likely be read by people he had previously encountered, or may later encounter at the card table. In his dealings with Drake, Smith and others, he would have no need to use a pseudonym.

MY THEORY is that the book is a 'house' piece of work; possibly a joke to get us all thinking.

An interesting theory. Absurd - but interesting.

Jim Morton | 12/29/04 09:13 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by Steve V:
I saw a show on PBS where they have 'History Detectives'. Call 'em up and let them use their amazing resources to see what they can come up with. At minimum it should be interesting.

Steve V

Steve, I was thinking exactly the same thing.

Has anyone has checked the copyright? (I apologize if this has already been covered. This thread has gotten so substantial that I'm sure I've missed some salient points along the way.) Anyone can put the word "copyright" on a book. That doesn't mean that a copyright was ever actually filed.

Jim

Jim Maloney_dup | 12/29/04 09:26 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by Jim Morton:
Has anyone has checked the copyright? (I apologize if this has already been covered. This thread has gotten so substantial that I'm sure I've missed some salient points along the way.) Anyone can put the word "copyright" on a book. That doesn't mean that a copyright was ever actually filed.

All I could find when doing a quick search on the Copyright Office's website was the claim for the 1995 Dover edition.-Jim

Richard Hatch | 12/30/04 09:51 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Jim Morton:

Has anyone has checked the copyright? (I apologize if this has already been covered. This thread has gotten so substantial that I'm sure I've
missed some salient points along the way.) Anyone can put the word "copyright" on a book. That doesn't mean that a copyright was ever actually filed.

I believe this is covered earlier in the thread, so will just make a quick resume here:
The 4 page copyright application for the first edition was received at the US Copyright Office in mid-February 1902. The copyright holder is identified as the author, S. W. Erdnase, and his address is given c/o James McKinney and Company, printers in Chicago at their business address. The author's name is not identified as a pseudonym (it was not required to be so identified). He is listed as being an American national. Two deposit copies were received at the copyright office in early March (I believe March 8th), 1902, so the book was off the presses and presumably available for sale at that point. There was no recorded transfer or renewal of copyright, so the book became public domain 28 years later in 1930. Those who have checked in Canada and the UK have found no evidence that the work was submitted for copyright protection in either nation, despite the book's claims to have done so.

Richard Hatch | 01/13/05 02:18 PM | link | filter

Jason England just snagged a hard to find edition of Erdnase on eBay. Here's a link to it:
Card Secrets Exposed
This is one of several variants under this title published by Powner for K. C. Card Company. This one has 206 pages, page 206 being Paul Fleming's introduction to the Hoffmann section, even though that is omitted from this edition. That would date this circa 1945. In TMWWE (pp. 336-338), Jeff Busby refers to these variants, advertised by KC as early as 1939, as "fictional," implying they never existed, an indication of their scarcity.

Guest | 01/19/05 06:02 PM | link | filter

There have been numerous attempts to identify mysteries surrounding the book The Expert at the Card Table. Here are some personal observations on one of the greatest books on sleight of hand ever written. Some who read and post in this thread may find my observations of interest. I have some clues from the book that I have not found put forth before. Some of you may be able to expand on them.

The book was published in 1902. My opinion is that the work reflected in the book more closely resembles the kind of table work seen in the era of 1875, possibly a decade before or after, but around that time.

To paint a picture of the 1870s, one would see the era of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid on the western side of the United States. This was the time of Wyatt
Earp and the gunfight at the O.K. Coral. Basically the only areas where education was a standard was in the New York, Boston, and Baltimore areas. Therefore, it is my assertion that the author came from one of these areas or possibly Europe.

The author was very well educated. Some claim there was a ghostwriter. Maybe, but if the book was written by the author, he was very well educated. This may seem a bit in depth, but it is very important to the point I am going to make later on. This person probably associated with people much like himself- aristocrats. However, based on the book, I would say that the author was playing with cowboys, miners, farmers, a bar crowd, and prospectors- not people like himself. Again, these are some of the observations I have made through the clues I am going to submit later. You can take them for what they are worth.

M.D. Smith, the illustrator, recollected to Martin Gardener that the man he met in the Chicago hotel room brought with him a board which to place on his lap, and asked him to draw pictures from life. Other people suggested that Erdnase might have been the inventor of the close-up mat. When M.D. Smith illustrated, he didnt know what he was getting into, he just wanted to do a good job for what he was being paid for. M.D. Smith said to Martin Gardener that he recollected that he was asked to draw from life in a hotel room. I disagree with this. I think the illustrations came from photographs. Here is why- if you look at illustrations 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 44, 45, 56, 63, and 64, all have reflections. What I mean by this is that the hands were performing maneuvers for the photographer above a varnished tabletop. If it would have been a green board or mat, the illustrator would not have shown as great of detail as to show reflection. My assertion is that the illustrator drew based on photos of the operator working at a varnished type tabletop from a saloon, and not the type of tabletop one would find at an aristocrat hall or fancy banquet hotel.

The tabletops in saloons were fashioned to accommodate drinking. Therefore, if beer was spilled, it could be easily wiped up. Aristocrat society made their money in the hotels. The saloons encouraged an atmosphere to have people drinking, playing pool, and card games.

This is why Erdnase did not go into great detail about working with the riffle shuffle. Instead he worked with the working man overhand shuffle. On a table without felt, the cards were difficult to pick up from the table to utilize a riffle shuffle.

On page 24, Erdnase suggested that the best way to practice was to sit up straight at a card table, adjacent to a mirror with cards in hand. Once again, Erdnase mentions a card table. I would imagine that Erdnase was sitting at the card table, not with a close-up mat, performing the manipulations for a camera.

To be continued....
Stay tuned...
Amazing. I started this thread Feb. of 2003 and today, two years later, it is still alive and kickin!

I have totally enjoyed reading all of the responses on this thread and reading all of this great stuff rekindles the passion I have for this great book.

Thank you and please, keep them coming!

Roberto

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**Richard Hatch** | 02/11/05 09:22 AM | link | filter

Hi Roberto, thanks for starting this thread!

I'm currently (among other things!) trying to track the first identification of S. W. Erdnase = E. S. Andrews, i.e., who recognized this first and got the word out. I think most of us know of the Vernon story about learning from his friend J. C. Sprong in Chicago that publisher Frederick J. Drake had told Sprong the man's real name was Andrews. Vernon then pestered Drake to reveal more, but Drake would only tell him to read the name backwards. Versions of this are in both the Diaconis preface to REVELATIONS and Vernon's Genii column. Vernon's personal questioning of Drake seems to have been when Vernon was cutting silhouettes at the Chicago World's fair in the early 1930s, but Sprong's interaction with Drake was likely earlier. The bibliography in THE MAN WHO WAS ERDNASE says that Mickey MacDougal's 1939 GAMBLER'S DON'T GAMBLE may have been the first to publish the E. S. Andrews identification, but I have found three earlier published references, all in THE SPHINX, all by bookseller Leo Rullman. The earliest I have is November 1928. He does not announce it as though this is exciting news, so I assume it was not at the time, though it seems surprising that Vernon would not have known about it, were that the case, given his great interest in the book and its author. Does anyone know of earlier references?

A 1962 issue of THE MAGICAL BOOKIE makes reference to a first edition copy of Erdnase that has, "inscribed in longhand" on the second flyleaf "S. W. Erdnse = E. S. Andrews". It seems doubtful that this is a copy inscribed by the author, but I'd sure love to look at this copy! Anyone know its present whereabouts?

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**Bill Mullins** | 02/11/05 03:14 PM | link | filter

For what it's worth, the Chicago Daily Tribune reported between late Dec 1902 and Jan 1903 on the bankruptcy proceedings of one James McKinney. I don't know if this is the printer, but since the date falls between the initial release under the imprint of McKinney and subsequent sales by Drake, this may be relevant.
I've got enough info that someone who knows how to work the archives of the Chicago/Cook County court system could pull the file, probably.

Also, Todd Karr’s article of last November mentioned a Mr. Andrews who scammed while working for the Charles Branden Commercial Co. I've found another article where they were at work, in the Jan 31 1903 Davenport Iowa Daily Republican. Andrews is not mentioned in this one, but it is the same company, again up to no good.

The CBC was incorporated in Illinois on Dec 19, 1905. The Secretary of State of Illinois may have info from this act.

**Richard Hatch** | 02/11/05 10:05 PM | link | filter

Bill, great work! I think if you'll recheck the January 1903 Davenport reference that you kindly shared with me, you'll note that "Andrews" is mentioned and was, in fact, arrested there as well, though presumably released rather than held for trial, based on the report. But that may still yield an arrest record with more information on him...

The James McKinney in the bankruptcy petition of January 30th, 1903 is the printer, as his address is given as 73 Plymouth Place in Chicago, which was McKinney's address and the address used by Erdnase in registering the copyring in care of James McKinney. According to the bankruptcy petition, "an inventory of the property" was available for inspection. I wonder if such a document might still exist? It would be interesting to see if the inventory included copies of Erdnase (and how many!) and who bought the assets. It may not be a coincidence that the price of the book was dropped from $2 to $1 the following month and that Frederick J. Drake began advertising first edition copies later in 1903. (Drake’s own earliest known printing is dated 1905 and was supposedly made from the original first edition plates).

Anyone in Chicago who can track down the court records?

**Todd Karr** | 02/12/05 08:44 AM | link | filter

Bill: Many thanks for digging up this additional information on the Brandon Company scams!

**Guest** | 02/15/05 10:58 PM | link | filter

I find all this history of who Erdnase was fasinating and respect the guys doing the detective work as much as I respect Erdnase himself.

To me, even considering where to start is very daunting and way beyond my abilities, I take my hat off to you all and thank you for sharing your thoughts and findings.

while I do find this side of the book interesting and I am fasnated how it came to exist,
to me it remains secondary to the material itself.

For these reasons I am afraid I can offer nothing to the search. I would however like to argue (in a friendly way) Glenn Bishop's claims about the twelve card (fancy) stock being something that would never be used by a card cheat.

"As with his twelve card stock or fancy stock. It makes a great demonstration of fake card cheating but no real card cheat would ever cheat like that."

Glenn Bishop.

The variable number stock (titled twelve card stock for illustrative purposes) is very useful, how it is used and why it is wrote up like it is must be understood before a quote such as the one above is thrown out.

*We term this example a fancy stock, as it is very rarely that an opportunity occurs for selecting three sets of Four of a Kind; but the procedure is the same for two sets, or for sets of three, or pairs, or, in fact, for the stocking of any number of kind, with sleight variation in the calculation.*

Erdnase.

It is in the description of this stock that Erdnase takes the student away from the mimicking of taught examples and into the understanding of the procedure that is necessary for a card player to use it to full advantage.

It's not just a fake useless procedure used to accomplish this teaching though. If we look at the idea of using this stock with sets of three or two cards (or combinations of four's, three's and/or two's) we can see that the description of obtaining four is needed to gain the necessary understanding.

The sleight variation in the handling mentioned in the text is basic and is the first step to understanding the shuffle.

If using the shuffle to have three cards fall to the dealer (with three sets of three on top) the nine cards being run at the very start are changed to seven and the rest of the shuffle may be done the same. This means that the first card of the three will fall to the dealer's hand on the third round rather than the second as with the four card version.

If using the shuffle to have two cards fall to the dealer (with three sets of two on top) the nine cards being run originally are changed to five, this means that the first card of the two will fall to the dealer's hand on the fourth round rather than the second as with the four card version or the third round with three.

Thus; the shuffle can then be seen instantly as very useful to the true card cheat. He
gets his cards and has knowledge of plenty of the top cards (eight in the example in the book) after the deal and going into the draw without any need for markings or for glimpsing anything.

I'm sure the multiple possibilities of gaining this knowledge before and while getting involved in the draw can be seen from here.

Aspects such as; Erdnase's like of decks with no work put in, his dislike of cold decking, every single word of the stock and cull shuffling, the wonderful palms that were designed to work specifically following an overhand shuffle and with the purpose of holding out for the cut, and his understanding of just how useful the bottom deal is that make me believe strongly that Erdnase was nothing other than a card cheat of the highest order.

David.

Tommy | 03/02/05 09:04 PM | link | filter

Coterie.

This might be pure coincidence but I just wonder if this Coterie of confidence men and Exclusive Coterie is connected in some way. The use of this word Coterie which is not a word I read often and the connection with card cheating seems interesting, so thought I would put it up.

Denver Times July 14, 1901
BLONGER IN A STEW
Crack Bunco Man Will Be Rearrested Tomorrow.
HE WORKED A BRITISHER
But the Traveler Had "Brawses" on His Trunk and Sped Along After Blonger Had Been Made to Cough Up.
A new complaint will be filed tomorrow by the district attorney against Lou Blonger, the head of a coterie of confidence [men?]. Blonger was arrested last week on a complaint signed by George Ritter, who charged him with enticing him into a brace poker game and swindling him out of $300. Justice Rice was aroused from his slumbers at 2 o'clock by Ritter and an officer, and a warrant secured for Blonger.

Cooper

Bill Mullins | 03/04/05 09:23 PM | link | filter

Probably just a coincidence. "Coterie" is a word which, while not obsolete, has fallen from favor over the last hundred years.
A painting by Marshall D. Smith, illustrator of THE EXPERT, sold at auction today and can be viewed here: [Marshall D. Smith Painting](http://www.askart.com/adopt.asp)

Mr Hatch it seems from this that Marshall Smith is more well known to magicians than the Art World, they do not deem it worth a mention that Marshall Smith was the illustrator of the of the Erdnase book or are unaware of this fact. I do not know if this interests you but it seems they are looking for help for his biography. See below:

A Chicago and New Orleans painter known for street scenes, Marshall Smith exhibited in the 1930s at the Art Institute of Chicago. He was also a WPA artist.

In the interest of completeness:

The Charles Branden Commercial Co. is not mentioned in any volume of the Marvyn Scudder Manual of Extinct or Obsolete Companies, or the Robert D. Fisher Manual of Valuable and Worthless Securities.

Did anyone chase down the certificate of incorporation from the Illinois vaults?

Another book illustrated by Marshall D. Smith is currently on eBay. It is missing a page, but I assume all the Smith illustrations are there. Here's a link: [Marshall D Smith illustrated book on eBay](http://www.askart.com/adopt.asp)

Here's another book illustrated by Marshall D. Smith on eBay, showing some of his illustrations: [Jack Henderson Down South on eBay](http://www.askart.com/adopt.asp)

Warning: The cover illustration (by Smith) is no longer "politically correct" and might be offensive to some. Perhaps that is also why it is fetching such a high price, with
Here's another painting attributed to Marshall D. Smith being auctioned off tomorrow in Oak Park, Illinois:

Here's another painting attributed to Marshall D. Smith being auctioned off tomorrow in Oak Park, Illinois:

[Marshall D Smith Painting]
Opening bid of just $200...

It looks like the Smith painting only brought $225.

Eardnase, so who is he?

Originally posted by Brian Marks:

Eardnase, so who is he?

That would be Lobe Eardnase, a cousin of the illustrious author of Expert at the Card Table.

Author of "Expert at the Ear Surgeon's table"

Would it please be possible for someone to briefly rattle out the names of those already under the Erdnase spotlight? Ie who's already been looked at?

I have a name that so far fits the bill; dates, place, and he has a strong literary background. Like the aforementioned Andrews in this post however, no pack of cards found yet. Would really appreciate knowing if he's been targeted yet and/or dismissed as nothing.

Thank you.
Hello everyone, I’ve thoroughly enjoyed reading this topic thus far, and I’d like to add my thoughts:

I had the honor of meeting with Darwin Ortiz the day before yesterday and we had an interesting discussion about who Erdnase was. He informed me that the Chicago bank that issued M.D. Smith's check (for payment of the illustrations) was later bought out by a larger bank which today still maintains account information from 1902. The source that gave Ortiz this information, which he did not disclose to me, has not contacted Darwin with follow up information. Only a few legal formalities needed to take place before the account information could be given out, but that's the last Ortiz heard of the investigation.

I shared my theory to Darwin about Theodore Hardison possibly being Erdnase. The fact that Hardison’s manuscript "Poker" directly plagiarises phrases and illustrations from Expert at the Card Table is not my sole reason for this belief. "Poker" was self published by Hardison in 1914, around the time Erdnase couldn't be contacted anymore for his payments. (I believe Drake accepted payments at this point, but if you read this entire thread, I'm sure you'll discover who exactly pocketed the rest of the profits) Hardison added the spread, the strike second, and the greek deal, which many (including Vernon) suspect was purposely left out of Expert for certain reasons. I believe "Poker" was written partially as a sequel: another attempt to disclose the same information and make more money.

If "Poker" is read with the mindset of the author writing a sequel, and who thought he was treated unfairly in the profits of his first book, the text takes a new meaning:

"as the novice begins his career in the game, and is fortunate enough to enjoy a few good winnings, his natural ambition, as it is with all 'Young America' is to go higher"
- Theodor Hardison

Also I think it is interesting to note that the letters E-R-D-N-A-S-E can be found in the name "Theodore Hardison", which both I and Darwin believe to be a pseudonym.

be well,
Jeff Wessmiller

P.S. This is merely a theory that I’ve dreamt up. Anyone that can provide information that would prove me wrong would be appreciated, and probably help me sleep better at night.

Guest | 06/01/05 04:51 AM | link | filter

Hi Jeff great to read more from you - hope you’re in good health + whatnot. (Might make it down in August after all!)
I can't confess to having read Hardison's publication, and I must apologise for the following, only adding to more brainfood at night, but there are a number of inconsistencies:

Granted, the letters exist within his name, though as do T-H-O-D-O-H-R-I, with no apparent reason for them being left out. Does anyone here share the view that often the NAME is overstudied and analysed? It presumably wasn't meant as a puzzle/pseudo/century-long-brain-itch but rather a way to slyly take the heat off his real name (for his safety) without going crazy into word-games. Reversing a name seems pretty logical, certainly if it works and reads as well as "Erdnase" and not ... Zitro (actually pretty neat :D), Etrof, or what have you. Who spends such time and effort to write such a beautiful piece of work, only to then use a name that is in no way related? No doubt he'd brag about the book and show it to some close ones - he must have had some friends.

The fact that E.S.Andrews fits perfectly is often viewed as though it doesn't matter - like Gardner with M.F.Andrews - what's the point in assuming it's Andrews if you're going to ignore E and S and substitute two different ones?? There are several hundred E.S.Andrews available on online census records, each of them surely deserving more credit and time (since they match perfectly what we're looking for - the NAME) than names that simply contain SOME letters that match? This is no disrespect but it just beats me why people don't take such a solid lead more seriously.

Furthermore - why would Hardison write one book under a pseudo, only then to write a "sequel" under his real name, claiming no credit to the original? Could the paraphrasing not be simply because EATCT was a well-read book at the time with solid well-written material? Much as works published today cross-reference and quote from other writers' works?

Again, would appreciate thoughts on the "making money" comment since (I believe touched on earlier) is spending months writing a book really the best way to make money? Surely a man of his talent, requiring money, could find faster more effective methods?

None of this, again, is meant as disrespectful or hole-picking, just further angles on what we have. I'm awaiting replies from the people in the US I've contacted regarding the name I mentioned above - a little more information this way and I'll post it all up for public viewing here.

Nothing for certain by any means, but the name, place and date all fit pretty snug.

In thought,
D.
(PS the info is: E.S.Andrews (have precise forenames), born within 5 years of 1850 (have precise date), worked in NC* (have precise town) at about the turn of the century, and worked for a newspaper, rather high-up the pecking order).

*EDIT: Please forgive ignorant Brit - misread somewhere & was of the angle that Chicago was within NC. :whack: Still, he could've travelled...

Hi Drum (DMC), tried e-mailing you, but the e-mail address in your profile ain't working.

We never did meet up.....

Dave

Hey Dave -
You know was reading an email yesterday + meant to write...! <<Diluting interesting topic>> It's Drummond(REMOVE)Magic@Yahoo.co.uk. Travelling in Asia until August but definitely when back.

More information as of this morning - he was at age 27 a PRINTER. If he wanted to jump around legalities without leaving a trace, this might well allow for it. Mmmm it deepens.


"S. W. Erdnase was for half a century a name to conjure with. Since the 1902 publication of The Expert at the Card Table dozens of persons have attempted to penetrate the psuedonym which cloaked the identity of the author of this famous book which outlined the methods of professional gamblers.

It was not difficult to conclude that his name was Andrews but what was the given name? Who was he?
For 50 years Erdnase' Chicago publisher was plagued with inquiries, but always professed that his records failed to reveal the author's true identity.

Erdnase' book was, when published, a sensation among the ace-in-the-hole boys; and it has remained one of the great textbooks for gamblers and sleight-of-handsters. It was the first textbook to reveal the best methods of the second deal, the shift, the bottom deal, false cuts, and other subterfuges of the card cheats.

What was more important, the book was written with a curiously detached cynicism, rather well pointed up by the author's prefatory remarks.

In effect, Erdnase counseled that card cheats cheated no one but themselves.

He contended that the passion for play had seduced many a man who, had he spent the same wit and energy in earning an honest living, could have amassed a considerable fortune.

He had not written his book, he noted, for moralistic reasons. His book, "will not make the innocent vicious, or transform the pastime player into a professional; or make the fool wise or curtail the annual crop of suckers; but whatever the results may be, if it sells it will accomplish the primary motive of the author, as he needs the money."

Now, after half a century, it is claimed that Erdnase' identity has been learned.

His name is said to have been Milton C. Andrews, and he is thought to be buried in San Mateo County. Paradoxically, the disclosure has been made not through the efforts of his compatriots, the gamblers, but by two sleight-of-hand experts, Martin Gardner and Jay Marshall - to whom, cheating at cards is absolutely unthinkable."

From the same column, one week later (p. E-21)

"After 50 years, the story of the man who wrote The Expert at the Card Table is being pieced together, little by little.

"There was a Milton C. Andrews," writes An Old-Time Oaklander, "who was in the public prints around 1907. He was a professional gambler and super-crook, who gained the friendship of one Ellis, an Australian jockey on a voyage from Australia to San Francisco.

"Ellis had considerable coin of the realm which Andrews knew about. On arrival Andrews invited Ellis to his apartment in Berkeley where he beat him up and left him for dead; but Ellis recovered and later Andrews was traced by reason of the fact that he ate only health foods and was captured at a health food store in San Francisco." " 
My memory tells me that the Daily Knave in the Oakland Tribune was written by Fred Braue.

Braue was also using the pseudonym "Aunt Elsie" as he edited the children's page.

Before I was into magic I won a contest run by the Oakland Tribune and when I called and asked for "Aunt Elsie" a man answered, explaining that was a pseudonym and he was the editor, a Mr. Braue.

Small World, eh?

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Bill Mullins | 06/07/05 07:19 AM | link | filter

Did Braue have anything to do with Real Estate? There is a column in the Oakland Tribune called "Realty Review" written by him.

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Pete Biro | 06/07/05 09:34 AM | link | filter

Not that I know of... but you don't have to be "in" something to write about it... just be a good researcher and writer. Which Braue seems to have been.

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Bob Farmer | 06/07/05 01:00 PM | link | filter

According to an article which appeared in the Oakland paper, Braue did write real estate and business columns.

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Richard Hatch | 07/03/05 08:05 PM | link | filter

I realize this might more properly belong in the marketplace section, but frankly I thought this thread needed "bumping up" so am mentioning it here instead! I've just posted a copy of Martin Gardner's THE GARDNER-SMITH CORRESPONDENCE on eBay. This documents Gardner's first contact with Marshall D. Smith, Erdnase's illustrator, reproduces his notes from his initial interview with Smith, and their subsequent correspondence on this topic. It was a reading of this correspondence that lead me initially to question the Milton Franklin Andrews' theory, since Smith's eyewitness testimony, if credible, seemed to contradict that theory on several points (most notably MFA's age and height). Anyone interested in this topic should begin by reading Bart Whaley, Jeff Busby, and Martin Gardner's MAN WHO WAS ERDNASE, then follow up by reading Ortiz's ANNOTATED ERDNASE (which reproduces the Gardner-Pratt correspondence) and this booklet. Limited to only 250 numbered copies and published in 1999 (to preserve the correspondence and publicize our sale of the
original letters on eBay. It, along with Gardner's first edition EXPERT, signed on the title page by Smith, sold as a lot for more than $10,000 in early 2000), it recently went out of print and is starting to fetch high prices on eBay (about a week ago a copy sold there for $41). I've bundled this copy (#207) to a pristine copy of the K. C. Card Company edition of THE EXPERT, likely printed for KC by Frost Publishing in Chicago in the late 1930s (see listing for more bibliographic details). Here's a link to the auction for those wanting more details:

Gardner-Smith Correspondence on eBay

Glenn Bishop | 07/06/05 11:04 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by david walsh:
For these reasons I am afraid I can offer nothing to the search. I would however like to argue (in a friendly way) Glenn Bishops claims about the twelve card (fancy) stock being something that would never be used by a card cheat.

"As with his twelve card stock or fancy stock. It makes a great demonstration of fake card cheating but no real card cheat would ever cheat like that."

Aspects such as; Erdnase's like of decks with no work put in, his dislike of cold decking, every single word of the stock and cull shuffling, the wonderful palms that were designed to work specifically following an overhand shuffle and with the purpose of holding out for the cut, and his understanding of just how useful the bottom deal is that make me believe strongly that Erdnase was nothing other than a card cheat of the highest order.

David. [/QB]

To use the twelve card fancy stock in a five handed game of poker by a card cheat would involve getting four sets of three of a kind in order - at total of a twelve cards in order and controlling them as a slug - then getting the winning hand on the bottom - and doing some kind of a stocking of the wining hand on the bottom. Then deal out the cards having the dealer or the shark get the winning hand leaving the slug of twelve cards in sets of threes to be dealt on the draw. While a card game was in play!

I don't know but wouldn't easier if Erdnase just added the winning hand to the slug that was dealt on the draw - and use the false shuffle and false deals to keep control and deal the cards of choice on the draw? - If it were a real game!

Having the slug going from the lowest set of three of a kind to the highest would give Erdnase the strongest hand after the draw.
Also I do not feel that culling 3-4 sets of three of a kind while a game is in play is an easy thing to do for the lone poker cheat. This is why I feel that Erdnase was a magician - because the twelve card stock makes a great demonstration - and would sell his book. But to use it in a card game - there are better and easier methods for a card cheat to use to set up a cooler on a mark!

A cold deck - if he wanted this choice of hands as the cooler?

Now if Erdnase could do this and what you say. Why did he NEED the money?

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**Guest | 07/09/05 04:39 PM | link | filter**

Hi Glenn,

Its hard to tell but I think you may misunderstand the description of the stock in the book. Before I go into why, part of what makes me believe Erdnase was a cheat from reading this move in particular is in the following phrase:

"We term this example a fancy stock, as it is very rarely that an opportunity occurs for selecting three sets of Four of a Kind; but the procedure is the same for two sets, or for sets of three, or pairs, or, in fact, for the stocking of any number of kind, with sleight variation in the calculation."

In this I see the point being made that the opportunity to obtain this four of a kind being rare, but more so that he knows that the opportunity to do anything with it is also a rare event. On the surface I can see why someone would think that the move (if used directly as the example Erdnase uses to teach the move) would only be of use for a show of skill.

Erdnase says that he knows the event occurring to be in a position to do this is rare, he knows from card playing experience that getting three sets of four of a kind in order to the top of the deck isn't an easy feat. From his words about the procedure being done with lesser amounts of cards of kind I also believe he knew that being in the event to use such a thing is also rare.

The following is partly why I'm not sure you are getting the text right:

Its in your mention of the bottom of the deck in your last post; the bottom of the deck never comes into play.

For a moment Ill hypothetically assume it is to be done with three sets of four of a kind in the desired order and for five players, Ill also hypothetically assume they have been culled to the top in the desired position.
There is no need to get the winning hand (or any known cards) to the bottom, the idea is that all three sets of four sit on top of the deck, they are stocked in relation to the top and the winning hand is dealt to the dealer leaving the other two sets of four as the new top cards of the deck ready to do as the dealer pleases on the draw.

To take the move further than the books example; and Erdnase clearly knew this was possible. It would take a book of its own to cover the true possibilities of his stock shuffle:

To use the twelve card fancy stock in a five handed game (or any handed game) doesn’t necessarily mean culling (by whatever means) three sets of four of a kind to the top, there are many variations of sets of four, three, two, sets of three and two or even a large stock of no particular numbered sets.

This will come clearer as you read but the reason being is that the sets of two, three or four don’t even have to be of kind.

Imagine you gathered the cards ready for the deal memorising the order of the top eight cards of the deck.

You do the twelve card fancy stock and deal, you know none of the cards in the other players hands or in your own hand (until you look of course) but you do know the top eight cards of the deck before you go into the draw.

Many a successful card cheat has ruled out the need to stock and this is partly due to the need to cull ready to stock. They may use marked cards (edgework, pegs etc.) or glimpses to get the information they need and that this stock offers. So this stock used like I said above then offers this information with no need to glimpse and with no work in the deck.

Playing regularly, with no mechanics other than this shuffle, offers a massive advantage that couldn’t be beaten by straight play. If you add a second deal or if you were to add a cull it can of course be more powerful. Im sure the second deal speaks for itself, as for the cull, and for illustration purposes:

You cull four aces and have them as the lowest set of four in the twelve, the top two sets of four are just sets of four for the purpose of describing the move. They are in-fact eight totally random cards, these you memorise as in the previous example. You do the twelve card fancy stock getting four aces on the deal and also knowing the first eight cards going into the draw.

A card player reading the description of this stock can instantly see this advantage and can instantly see that the three sets of four is just the surface. Im pretty sure Erdnase (as a card player) would have known this when writing it.
Of course, if you are playing at a game where you can get away with dealing yourself four aces there is little need to know the draw cards. As Erdnase did with the stock in his book, I have only used it to illustrate the procedure.

The example before that one was of course one of actual use, as is the above one but with different cards, perhaps like the following:

On gathering the cards you see a five of hearts, a six of clubs and a seven of spades, all sitting nicely beside each other. Within the distance of the next nine cards is a four of clubs and an eight of diamonds (not necessarily beside each other), you just have to position the three beside each other to be part of the lowest set of four and remember the positions of the other two that lie within nine cards (above) and shuffle as though you are stocking twelve for three sets of four (or three sets of three if they are within six cards) and you get your five, six, seven on the deal and know the positions from the top of the deck for the other two cards of your straight.

As for a cold deck being a better and easier move, it certainly isn’t better and Erdnase states quite clearly his thoughts on that and the easier issue:

Of course an exchange may be made by sleight-of-hand, but the player who can accomplish this feat successfully is generally well versed in the higher orders of card-table artifice, and will dispense with such make-shifts as cold decks or any kind of prepared cards.

I agree with him.

If you read through the description again you will also find that there isn’t really any mention of setting up a cooler on a mark. The closest that comes to it is:

If the dealers set is the highest of the three it matters little to him how the draw is made, as none of the players can get a higher hand.

All it really says is that it’s a stock to get the dealers hand to the dealer and the other cards on top of the deck for the draw to do as suits the situation best.

I can easily see that with the mention of three sets of four of a kind at the start, and then with this statement at the end it could look to some that perhaps it is a shuffle to deal three people all four of a kinds or something similar.

As with the book itself; it is way deeper than just that, part of the beauty of every aspect of this book is what lies beneath its surface.

As for Erdnase needing the money, I don’t particularly take this seriously. It could be a sarcastic joke or something as mentioned by some. I even remember once when I
started to write a book, the amount of money I thought to be involved was massive compared to what I later found out to be the reality, it was a gradual decrease of expectation along the years of writing.

I dont think the statement can be one to be taken as proof that he wasnt a cheat.

Anyway, I think the devil wrote it, he must still be making money off it.

David.

O.K. Here is an odd thought, I really don't know if it warrents any merit.....

It has always been thought that the writing style and vocabulary used by the author has denoted an education and possibly finer upbringing. Yet, all gambling references in the book refer to Poker. I believe at the turn of the century Poker would have been considered a low-brow game.

Does it signify anything that there is no reference to cheating at Gin, Bridge, Pinnochle or any other game played with "x" dollars per point? Certainly, there are known stories of cardsharp's working the cruise ships traversing the Atlantic.

Hi Darren,

Dai Vernon has been noted for saying that it's all there in black and white. I don't know to what extent he took this, I'm sure some of the older members here who knew or met him would know more about his thoughts here.

There is the odd mistake that comes clear the more the book is studied, but other than that; when I read the book I see everything to be there in black and white. But with a book that (to me) has obviously been wrote by someone who practiced what he preached there has to be under the surface information, it can't not be there.

It would be impossible for an author of this work to put everything he knew about everything included on paper, especially when it comes to moves such as the cull and stock shuffles.

While I can see Dai Vernon's thinking behind it all being there; I can also see that it's only so much of what the author knew that is there. While reading between the lines may not be neccessary to learn the moves, it can certainly offer a fuller understanding of what is going on.
I suppose there are no two people the same, and different people will see different parts of any quality text in a different clearness, perhaps Dai Vernon just seen this stuff clearer than anyone else, and that wouldn't be surprising.

From any level; I believe the book deserves a massive respect and thought is well worth putting into it, so I do both.

Larry, at the turn of the century I have no idea what poker would have been considered as, either over here or in the States. Sorry to jump in and reply to your thought without knowing, perhaps if what you say is true there could be something in it.

First I have to add something here. The book really does reek of poker and draw poker at that. It can clearly be seen that the thinking behind the majority of the book is tackling problems that occur in draw. The cut and the draw have been thought out massively by whoever wrote this book.

It isn't the only game mentioned in the book though.

There is mention of Whist, Hearts, Poker, Cribbage, Euchre, Coon Can, Penukle, All Fours, Piquet and Euchre.

Back to your thought; as I said, I have no idea of how poker was looked upon at the time, the book is obviously not a quick throw together of moves worked out for the latest fad game though. We have read here that the book may have been written long before being published. Whether it was or not; the moves were definitely not freshly thrown together for a quick publication.

Perhaps you are right and draw poker was becoming low brow, maybe if this wasn't the case the book wouldn't have been published at that time.

I don't have a clue really, I was just interested in the possibility when I read your thought. Hopefully someone here knows more about the history of the game and can help out.

David.

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Richard Hatch | 07/10/05 05:47 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Larry Horowitz:
Yet, all gambling references in the book refer to Poker. I believe at the turn of the century Poker would have been considered a low-brow game.
Does it signify anything that there is no reference to cheating at Gin, Bridge, Pinochle or any other game played with "x" dollars per point?

Poker is referenced only four times (on pages 9, 70 and 115), and relatively in passing, whereas Euchre is more prominently featured (also mentioned four times, if one does not count the two section headings and the two table of contents reiterations). And the only game I know of that the author explicity admits to having played is Cassino (p.p. 116-117), at which he sheepishly admits to having had a "protracted run of 'hard luck'" which he only later learned was due to a "short deck." In addition to the games mentioned in the text as cited above by David Walsh (Whist, Hearts, Poker, Cribbage, Coon Can, Penukle, All Fours, Piquet and Euchre) the author mentions Faro three times on page 18 (though his earlier reference on page 14 to having "bucked the tiger voluntarily" is almost certainly an admission to having played that game as well) and, perhaps most famously, an entire section is devoted to three card monte, though that is hardly a real game! I do think it is instructive to examine the games mentioned and what they might tell us about the author. Some (Gazzo, for example) have attempted to use them to date the original manuscript (when were the games cited popular?) and perhaps fix the age of the author, but I am not aware of much success in that direction. I also think the writing style ought to tell us much about the author: the kind of works he read, perhaps his academic history and background. But I am not personally able to do much with that kind of literary "profiling." Although many have assumed that the style pre-supposes a higher education, I would point out that many fine writers of the period did not have such a background, Mark Twain being a prime example.

Guest | 07/10/05 06:34 PM | link | filter

There certainly is mention of many games in there, and I know no gamblers who know and play only a single game.

But even without specific mention of name I also see a massive draw poker influence in the work, but it could just be that out of all the games mentioned I only know that and hearts.

David.

Larry Horowitz | 07/10/05 07:43 PM | link | filter

It would appear that I am mistaken. Once again I shall read the book,(for the umpteenth time), and pay a little more attention.

David Alexander | 07/10/05 09:01 PM | link | filter

Larry wrote:O.K. Here is an odd thought, I really don't know if it warrents any merit....
It has always been thought that the writing style and vocabulary used by the author has denoted an education and possibly finer upbringing. Yet, all gambling references in the book refer to Poker. I believe at the turn of the century Poker would have been considered a low-brow game.

Larry,
I wrote an 8,000 word article, the cover story of the January 2000 Genii that profiles a candidate for the identity of Erdnase that takes this aspect into account in the creation of a profile. Clearly, the writer was university educated. He was also skilled in solving problems and articulating his solutions in writing, something that does not come easily or quickly, but with experience and practice.

While Mark Twain was a "fine writer," his was not the style of a university-educated writer. His was the style of a popular writer who learned his craft writing for newspapers of the day.

David Alexander

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Richard Hatch | 07/10/05 11:18 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by David Alexander:

**Clearly, the writer was university educated.**

I'm probably naive in thinking that such literary profiling is not as scientific as DNA matching. It seems to me that such profiling is, at best, probabilistic in nature, with the degree of probability unspecified ("Clearly" implies 100% certainty on this issue). Perhaps Mark Twain was not the best example, but there are many others. Joseph Conrad wrote in a very dense prose style without benefit of a college education and English was not his first or even his second language. Herman Melville left school at age 12 and certainly wrote sophisticated American prose. My point is simply that I do not believe we can know with certainty that the mysterious author "S. W. Erdnase" necessarily attended college. One might argue that it is likely, but to say that it is "certain" likely excludes some interesting candidates, including possibly the actual author. I highly recommend David's excellent GENII article to anyone interested in this topic, but I don't think that the profile developed there must be accepted uncritically. Here's an example of how I believe the profiling is based on probabilities rather than certainty: In that article, David argues that the author is college educated and therefore from a well-to-do family and therefore a Northerner, since the wealth of the South was destroyed during the Civil War. I apologize if I have oversimplified the argument, but I think that is essentially what is stated (please correct me if I am wrong!). If we turn that logic around, it implies that no one from the South went to college for several generations, which I find very hard to believe. Certainly one is more likely to sound college educated if one actually has the benefit of such an education,
but I think we all know people who sound better educated than they are and others who sound less sophisticated than their backgrounds would suggest. Con men, in particular (and I am not suggesting that the author necessarily was a con man!), are often able to pass themselves off as doctors, lawyers, even judges and surgeons, without any formal higher education at all (Frank Abagnale, of CATCH ME IF YOU CAN, being a recent example of the type). Personally, I find such profiling fascinating and a useful guide, but I do not yet find it compelling. In this specific case, I think it is not a question of whether the author was "well educated" (I would characterize all the authors cited as being "well educated", in my opinion), but how he came by that education: was he self taught, as the majority of his generation were, or did he have benefit of higher institutional education? I consider it still an "open" question. And though it is not likely entirely relevant here, I’m reminded of a quote attributed to Mark Twain:
"I have never let my schooling interfere with my education."

Pete Biro | 07/11/05 09:05 AM | link | filter

Perhaps S.W. wrote poorly but had an educated feller setting the type and editing? :)”

Jonathan Townsend | 07/11/05 09:32 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by Pete Biro:

Perhaps S.W. wrote poorly but had an educated feller setting the type and editing? :)

Pete, that approach makes more sense than searching for a single author for the text. Houdini and Downs were not the best of writers, yet who they were does come across in what is known of their writing. Likewise we have some of Karl Germain’s words in longhand to consider. I hold that "ERDNASE" is a composite work, with at least two components and perhaps more than a few hands in the writing. In some ways I find the work analogous to Mary Shelley's Frankenstein where the author purports to one agenda and identity ...

With a nod to Mr. Hatch above, I’d be surprised if a textual analysis could produce anything close to DNA type match/mismatch results with similar confidence levels.

Glenn Bishop | 07/11/05 09:51 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by david walsh:

Hi Glenn,

It’s hard to tell but I think you may misunderstand the description of the stock in the book.
The following is partly why I'm not sure you are getting the text right:

This will come clearer as you read but the reason being is that the sets of two, three or four don't even have to be of kind.

David.

First of all it is wrong to make these above assumptions about the text in Erdnase. Not only do I find it insulting but I also find it very closed minded. Have you ever used this 12 card fancy stock on a real game of cards? Have you ever played cards like draw poker or five card stud? I don't claim to be an expert at cards or magic.

But you might try and set up a safe game and try out the moves as I have. Because this is how I came to this idea toward the 12 card fancy stock in Erdnase. I still think it makes a great demonstration to sell the book. But I do not see Erdnase or any card shark using the 12 card fancy stock in any real game of cards. As with many moves in this book.

And I have met with a few advantage players and sessioned with them.

He doesn't expose the hop or the gamblers palm and the palming is only on the magician's FULL palm. I also feel that Erdnase might have been employed as a spotter in the gambling halls of his day and then decided to write a book to help him do lectures and perhaps make more money. If he was successful at that it is lost in time for now - until someone finds the clues.

Guest | 07/11/05 10:52 AM | link | filter

Glenn,

I can assure you no insult was meant, I'm not sure what it is that's insulted you, but none was meant in any part of what I said.

It's hard to tell from your quoting of my post what you refer to, this is because you have taken a few bits from here and there and quoted them together, and as a result misquoted me. I never put them in that order or in that relation, so again I'm not sure what has offended you.

All I have done is seen your first mention of the use of the shuffle (in February) and offered a change of thought from someone who knows otherwise. Then in your more recent description of using the stock it seems to me that you have read it wrong or don't understand it. Again I mean no insult or harm in anyway by saying this, I just mean (and meant) to offer help. Perhaps you do understand the example given in the book and it just hasn't come across that way in your post, it is possible but it doesn't look that way.
I can assure you that I understand the description exactly as written and I also understand the real world use of the shuffle to a fuller extent. I think I made this clear enough in my examples in my reply post. Perhaps if you do understand the move correctly you could take the time to check these out and see where I am coming from.

Perhaps you could read the Erdnase text again and see if perhaps I am right and you haven't picked it up correctly. Perhaps even do this and if you have understood it read your post again and see why it looks like you don't understand it to someone who does when reading it.

The bottom of the deck being in play is somewhere in particular that you should take note on when doing this.

I'm also glad you mention the full palm and the hop in the text. They are very related.

The palms have been designed to immediately follow on from an overhand shuffle, they flow so beautifully from the shuffle to the cut and to the cut replacement with the cards actually being palmed for such a very little time.

These palms have been designed specifically for one purpose only, to combat the cut.

There is mention of holding out during the deal, but even this is related. The palms flow from the shuffle to the cut and to the deal in perfect naturalness and complete economy.

If you run an overhand shuffle, even an honest one, and pause for an instant as the cards are about to be adjusted into dealing position and look where they are, they sit in perfect position for the bottom palm first method (preferably with addition from the final paragraph) to be done as they are moved to a dealing position. No cop or gamblers palm could be made this economical, natural and uniform with the honest counterpart for this use. If you look at the top palm first method you will also see the exact same, the timing of the palm is a little different but the action is the same, the honest adjustment from shuffle to dealers grip, the bottom palm under this cover and the top palm as the same all look identical, they flow and they fit in with the strictest of card table surroundings. Its details like this that make me believe that Erdnase wasn't just knowledgeable about cheats moves or even a run of the day cheat, the highest order is what I see.

Perhaps that's why there's no mention of the hop, with a system this good, there is no need to do one. I suppose thoughts like this can help the thinking if why what is and what isn't in the book is the way it is, but I don't think what's not in the book can be offered as proof that Erdnase wasn't a cheat. If everything was in there it would still be being wrote, I think what is in there is a better place to be looking, even if not to be finding out who wrote it, but for learning about the finer points of card handling and
In nothing I have said do I mean offence, there is something that I feel I have to say in relation to your last post though. That is in your reference to your safe games and your assumed questioning about me (someone you dont know from Adam).

I dont want to hear about your safe game set ups again, and I dont want to be asked questions of that nature and in that manner.

Sorry to be blunt there, but I feel just. Hopefully we can we live with that and carry on.

David.

Glenn Bishop | 07/11/05 11:43 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by david walsh:
Perhaps you could read the Erdnase text again and see if perhaps I am right and you havent picked it up correctly.
David. [/QB]

Moves in magic and theory are not a right or wrong issue with me. When a person learns from a book it is open to the interpretation of the reader. So to me there is little right or wrong in the written world and only things that are different. The right way to do a move in performance at the card table and in a magic show is the way that it works. I would say that what works in the application of the move is the right way to do it!

So basically if I have read your posting - is that YOU think I am wrong and Erdnase in both the moves of the 12 card stock and he WAS a card shark cheat. And Erdnase DID do the 12 card fancy stock at the card table.

I can live with that!

Guest | 07/11/05 12:10 PM | link | filter

"I would say that what works in the application of the move is the right way to do it!"

Glenn Bishop.

Taking the above quote into account and by your saying that the way you have read the move it doesn't work, it seems that we agree and you also think you are wrong, I'm glad we got that cleared up.

It's up to you of course, but perhaps you may like to study the move further and try to
interpret it in a different way, one that does work. I originally posted my thoughts on this for no other reason than that of helping, you are welcome to study these along with it if you wish.

David.

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Jonathan Townsend | 07/11/05 12:38 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Originally posted by Glenn Bishop:

...Moves in magic and theory are not a right or wrong issue with me. When a person learns from a book it is open to the interpretation of the reader. So to me there is little right or wrong in the written world and only things that are different. ...

Umberto Eco wrote two books on that issue. In the first he suggested that the reader play an active role in the process of learning from a work, as you implied. However, in the second book, *The Limits of Interpretation* he was more conservative in approach as text taken out of its original context has little to no meaning of itself. What may be sensible in one place may be of no utility in another.

Have folks considered the book with its sections reversed and a different introduction? What then if the card table were a selling point expanded and emphasized to attract a different audience?

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Glenn Bishop | 07/11/05 01:43 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Originally posted by david walsh:

Taking the above quote into account and by your saying that the way you have read the move it doesn't work, it seems that we agree and you also think you are wrong, I'm glad we got that cleared up.

David. [/QB]

No what I said was that I read the move learned it the way I learn things and then did it under fire and worked it out so it will work under fire - for me.

Originally posted by david walsh:

It's up to you of course, but perhaps you may like to study the move further and try to interpret it in a different way, one that does work. I originally posted my thoughts on this for no other reason than that of helping, you are welcome to study these along with it if you wish.

David. [/QB]
Not interested. I have my ways of doing things and they work and my audiences like them. And as I said I like to test things under fire.

Originally posted by david walsh:
I originally posted my thoughts on this for no other reason than that of helping, you are welcome to study these along with it if you wish.

David. [/QB]

No I don’t think so. If you were interested in just helping me you most likely would have sent me an e-mail. But it seems that you want to insult and slam me - my theory and profile of what I feel who Erdnase might have been - card shark or magician. And how he might of used his moves in a real game.

This is not the first time I have run into this kind of thing. Paul Chosse and I went at it in the cafe last year. And I quote "He said I would not know fast company if it passes by me".

Basically I do not care if people feel that I am wrong and they are right. If you want to insult - it doesn’t bother me at all. It is just one more voice in one more forum - doesn’t change my opinion and insulting others has little to do with any Erdnase Theory!

Temperance | 07/11/05 01:59 PM | link | filter

Get a grip Glenn. David’s not insulting you, he just disagrees with you, which is kind of the whole point of a discussion forum. If everyone agreed with each other it would just be a load of people saying "yes", "quite so!", "I agree entirely", "well said", etc.

Guest | 07/11/05 02:10 PM | link | filter

I don’t see any point in taking this any further Glenn, sorry for mentioning it.

It’s not my loss.

David.

Guest | 07/11/05 02:40 PM | link | filter

While I don’t want to comment on Erdnase as a card cheat vs. a magician, I do want to add that in my opinion Erdnase was not able to do every move in the book. The main spot of evidence comes from the bottom deal. The description of the bottom deal, in my opinion and others, is the most poorly described item in the book.

From what I can tell it is written from the perspective of someone who has not spent a
significant amount of time learning the deal. The latter part of the description adds amendments to the earlier portion of the description in a way that seems like the author decided that there was more to add after learning more about it. The lack of time spent learning the deal may also be the reason for the bottom deal having the most errors in the book. It is possible that he forgot to correct all of them after a further study of the deal.

The two lines of argument above reinforce each other. They are, however, speculative. The more convincing piece of evidence comes in comparing the bottom deal to holding out during the deal. Looking at the photograph, only the first finger is at the outer edge. The held out cards are likely to be dealt from the bottom during the draw. This would require a change of grip in the middle of the deal, a procedure that would not provide a consistent mode of play. While this would likely fly in many real games, it is contrary to Erdnase’s approach. My guess is that he learned the bottom deal and holding out during the deal from different sources. It is either possible that a) he never used the hold out during the deal or b) he never used either move. I am somewhat inclined to lean towards the latter conclusion, given the poor description of the bottom deal when compared to other items in the book.

I think the tendency to believe Erdnase could do and would possibly use everything derives from the modern magicians' ideal of the, what one friend calls, "super cheat". I don’t think there’s any need to believe that Erdnase could do every trick in his book. After all, even among modern experts, not all of them can do everything they publish.

Glenn Bishop | 07/11/05 03:35 PM | link | filter

Most of the cheats I have met have only know a few moves. Yet Erdnase is packed with moves and ideas - many of them I think were new at the time. Some were not.

If Erdnase was a cheat I tend to think he used the bottom deal. And Palmed and held out the needed cards to get past the cut.

Years ago in one of the copies of Erdnase I think he also talked about dealing thirds. I think I gave this copy away to someone but IF Erdnase could deal thirds that would have been also useful to get a hand.

The book I feel is written from the point of view of a lone card shark. That also is a mystery because I feel that it is much easier to get the money if you have others - or partners.

If Erdnase was a lone card shark - why would he want to work that hard?

Also life on the road for a lone card shark would be both rough and dangerous because
in those days it was very dangerous to travel alone - because of hwy men and the fact that it is also very expensive.

Having partners would be a safer way to travel in those days. That is if Erdnase did travel in his life as a card shark - that is if he was a card shark.

One more thing about the drawings and the theory that the may be drawn by more than one artist. If this theory is true I would suggest that Erdnase needed more drawings just before the book went to press. Perhaps he had a few done by a local artist.

Just some theory!

Guest | 07/11/05 04:15 PM | link | filter

Someone just mentioned that all the cheating books were about poker. Poker and blackjack more likely get the most gambling action maby rummy.

I have a book in my collection that I want to call your attention to. "Cheating at Bridge"

by Judson J. Cameron....1933....hard back 188 pages 23 photo plates. I bought it in 1996 in a second hand book store. Its not just a knockoff of Erdnase ........ Mike Walsh

Pete Biro | 07/11/05 04:23 PM | link | filter

Dai Vernon once told me (and another source said the same) that more crooks cheated and made more money hustling BRIDGE than Poker.

Pete Biro | 07/11/05 04:26 PM | link | filter

Not sure if I posted this before, but....

Persi took me into Ace Sport Works in NY City some time ago... and we waited while a guy was describing to the man behind the counter how he wanted a deck of cards
The counter man said he'd never heard of the setup and wanted to know what the game was. 

The guy said, "It's an old family game and I want to bust my uncles." 

Heheheh :eek:

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**Guest | 07/11/05 04:39 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)**

Pete...I heard but second hand that 30's-40's 

Ocean liners had very wealthy people who liked to 

play bridge...........Mike

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**Guest | 07/11/05 08:12 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)**

Originally posted by Pete Biro:  
**NOT sure if I posted this before, but....**

*Persi took me into Ace Sport Works in NY City some time ago... and we waited while a guy was describing to the man behind the counter how he wanted a deck of cards marked.*

*The counter man said he'd never heard of the setup and wanted to know what the game was.*

*The guy said, "It's an old family game and I want to bust my uncles."

Heheheh :eek:

Yes, you did mention, in **2003**, but in the **2003** version, the quote waa

"It's a game I play with my dad and his brothers!"

What happened to all those gaffed card makers Scarne wrote about, , anyway? The only place I know you can get good stuff is [Cards by Martin](#). I ask for entertainment purposes only, of course.
This is not the first time I have run into this kind of thing. Paul Chosse and I went at it in the cafe last year. And I quote "He said I would not know fast company if it passes by me". [David.][/QB][/QUOTE]

Glenn,

You are using my name to lend some sort of credence to whatever your position is. Please stop. You are quoting me incorrectly, and out of context. In addition you are bringing up old news that I thought we had put to bed long ago. Apparently you don’t feel the way you said you did in private e-mails to me. Please DO NOT use my name in your posts on this subject unless you’d like me to respond in detail...

Best, PSC

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 07/12/05 07:59 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by Pete Biro:

...Ace Sport Works in NY City some time ago...

As best I can recall, the place was on 12th street and fifth avenue. A nice short walk from Forbidden Planet and a great place to buy decks by the case. They may even remember the guy who would want a split case of Tally Ho’s, blue back circle and red back star design. They had dice and the card trimmers there too. Anyone know if the place still exists?

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**Glenn Bishop** | 07/12/05 10:26 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by pchosse:

**Originally posted by Glenn Bishop:**

[David.]

This is not the first time I have run into this kind of thing. Paul Chosse and I went at it in the cafe last year. And I quote "He said I would not know fast company if it passes by me".[/QB]

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**Richard Hatch** | 07/12/05 11:08 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Pete Biro:

**Perhaps S.W. wrote poorly but had an educated feller setting the type and editing? :)**

Hi Pete! It strikes me as extremely unlikely that a typesetter would be able to turn
something poorly written into a masterpiece. Indeed, David Alexander has convincingly argued (in his GENII article) that the textual errors (typographical and technical) are evidence of the lack of an editor. I would also argue that if we take his famous final statement in the preface that he published the book because he “needs the money” at face value (as I do, and I recognize that others do not!), then it seems unlikely that he could have afforded the luxury of a professional editor. Personally, I find the style sufficiently confident, compelling and consistent to favor the "lone writer" theory. I don’t believe anyone suggested the possibility of an editor until Milton Franklin Andrews was found wanting in the literary department, based on the surviving lengthy confession/alibi letters he wrote, though Edgar Pratt had suggested to Martin Gardner that James Harto had a hand in adding the legerdemain section. For many reasons, I’m skeptical of that claim, though I do accept the strong possibility of a relationship between Harto and the author of the book.

Glenn Bishop | 07/13/05 04:23 PM | link | filter

On page 23 he mentions his bottom deal as "Greatest Single Accomplishment" and then later on in the book page 52 he explains the bottom deal.

And it is not the best write up of a move in the book. Dai Vernon in Revelations mentions that this description is one of the few technical errors in the book.

I find that very interesting that the "Greatest Single Accomplishment" is explained that way in Erdnase text.

Guest | 07/13/05 04:57 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Darren Hart:
Glen

Please post where Vernon says that in Revalations. Thanks

Darren Hart

Better yet, what edition of Erdnase contains the "Third Deal"?

Guest | 07/13/05 05:39 PM | link | filter

I’m not sure "errors" are evidence of the lack fo an editor. There are plenty of magic books published with multiple editors that have more errors than Erdnase. I think it also depends on the editor’s background and approach. Most of the errors are finger positions, so it is likely that they would not be caught if the editor was not working through every item in the book.

The ease with which these errors could be missed is further supported by Diaconis’s
statement in Revelations that Vernon asked him to find the 3 technical errors in the book. Given that Vernon carefully and repeatedly studied the book and still missed two of the errors, it is plausible than an editor could have missed all 5, especially if he didn’t have a background in magic.

He doesn’t describe his bottom deal as the greatest accomplishment, but rather bottom dealing in general. He also, to the best of my knowledge never claims the method of bottom dealing as his own.

With regard to the bottom deal being his own, I would argue against it being his own. I previously drew attention to the nature of the description. I’ll add a few more notes on it. Erdnase comments "Like acquiring many other feats, a perfect understanding of the exact manner in which it is performed will avoid the principal difficulties." Erdnase is readily willing to comment on what he thinks is the best version and does not seem to be humble in laying claim to anything. The phrasing of the sentence quoted above makes it seem as if he is aware of only one method of bottom dealing. Contrast this with the second deal, where he provides two methods. I also find it odd that the only place in the book that Erdnase describes the so-called Erdnase grip is with the Bottom Deal and the first method of Second Dealing. He never provides any reason why this grip is superior in these cases. The fact that the second Second Deal uses a more typical grip without any explanation for the difference, I believe is indication that he is collecting material from different sources. The bottom deal and first second deal likely came from the same source. Given the inconsistency of the grip with the rest of the items in the book without any justification for the change (especially in light of the holding out while dealing (moving from all 4 fingers on the side to two on the front is a distinct shift), and no suggestion of an alternate method or the superiority of this method, I am inclined to believe that he did not use the bottom deal. (Note that I am not commenting on the validity of the grip but rather it being out of place in the context of the rest of the book.)

One might, however, say that he has bottom deal envy, given his praise of the move.

Oh and Paul I belive the third deal is in the same version that Vernon believe had photos.

---

Glenn Bishop | 07/13/05 05:55 PM | link | filter

About the third deal I am not sure because I have purchased and given away at least a hundred copies of the soft bound book Expert at the card table over the last 20 years. It is one of the books that I have given to many students of magic as a Christmas gift.

So I have only my memory to go on. I brought up that question in the magic caf and here is the link that might answer that question about the third deal Paul!
Glenn Bishop | 07/13/05 06:13 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Darren Hart:

Glen

**Please post where Vernon says that in Revalations. Thanks**

Darren Hart

Revelations Dai Vernon Wrote,

Few present day experts use or recommend the method of bottom dealing described by Erdnase; their chief objection being the position of the pack in the hand and the difficulty of concealing the movement of the third finger.

We may say, however, that the above grip is of constant utility to card men. When the cards are thus held, are spread between the hands easy, without discernible movement, to slip the bottom card along bottom of the fan - a move of constant utility. Further, properly executed, the deal can be incredibly deceptive. Aim for a "soft take" avoiding sharp actions associated with other approaches.

The technical description contains one of the books few errors. The third paragraph should begin, "The third finger and thumb do the work."

Guest | 07/13/05 06:48 PM | link | filter

Just another thing to add since Vernon's comments on the deal seem to be prominent in this thread at the moment. On the Revelations video series Vernon mentions that the Erdnase Deal is only good if you have large hands. In The Gardner-Smith correspondences, one of the details that Smith feels fairly sure about is that Erdnase's hands were not large in size. The deal was likely not well suited to his hand size.

And Darren it's on (of all pages) p. 52.

Glenn Bishop | 07/16/05 07:40 AM | link | filter

Someone paid money for an add for Expert at the card table in the sphinx magazine. Could any records of this transaction like a check or a record still exist in the sphinx office files?
And would the sphinx office files still exist in storage?

And could that lead to a clue as to who Erdnase was?

**Richard Hatch** | 07/16/05 08:58 AM | [link] [filter]

Originally posted by Glenn Bishop:  

Someone paid money for an add for Expert at the card table in the sphinx magazine. Could any records of this transaction like a check or a record still exist in the sphinx office files?

And would the sphinx office files still exist in storage?

And could that lead to a clue as to who Erdnase was?

The first mention of the book (which was available for sale in March 1902, the same month the first issue of THE SPHINX was published, in the same city, Chicago) is in the September 1902 issue, a single line mention by editor Wm. Hilliar (in his last issue as editor). He simply states that a book entitled THE EXPERT AT THE CARD TABLE was recently published (no mention of the author or place of publication) and that it contains some material of interest to magicians (hardly a strong editorial plug, as claimed by Busby/Whaley on the assumption that Hilliar helped edit the book, which came off the presses half a year earlier). The first known advertisement for the book is a quarter page ad in the November 1902 SPHINX which quotes the preface, omitting the famous final line about needing the money. This ad was placed by Vernelos, the Chicago magic store that published the SPHINX. The second ad for the book in THE SPHINX is in the March 1903 issue, a small ad that, for the first time, describes the contents, and offers the book at half price, just $1. This ad was placed by E. S. Burns (Emil Sorensen), owner of the Atlas Trick and Novelty Company. I do think this advertisement may offer some clue to the book’s provenance. It may be a coincidence, but Atlas was located at 295 Austin Ave, and a 41 year old travelling agent with the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad had been living just 9 blocks south on the same side of the same street for the previous year, and was transferred to San Francisco the month before the advertisement appeared. His wife shared the same maiden name (Seeley) as the mother of Louis Dalrymple (to whom the author told the illustrator he was related). His name? E. S. Andrews...

**Tabman** | 07/16/05 09:51 AM | [link] [filter]

Originally posted by Richard Hatch:  

It may be a coincidence, but Atlas was located at 295 Austin Ave, and a 41 year old travelling agent with the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad had been living just 9 blocks south on the same side of the same street ...
Great work Richard. Could you please post what kind of a job would a railroad agent do on the railroad?

Thank you in advance and thank you for the great work you have done in finding out who Erdnase was?

Hi Glenn. Hi Tabby. Thanks for your continued interest and input on this topic. First, this particular E. S. Andrews (Edwin Sumner Andrews, 1859-1922) is just one of a half dozen or more interesting candidates. He happens to be my personal favorite, but Todd Karr's con man (who appears to be a different fellow than this one, though that is not entirely clear), David Alexander's W. E. Sanders, Chicago attorney James Andrews, and Martin Gardner's Milton Franklin Andrews are all strong candidates for various reasons. Obviously, they didn't all write the book, possibly none of them did, so their strengths will in most (possibly all) cases prove to be coincidences once the case is definitively solved.

A railroad "travelling agent" is not a "travel agent." He is not selling tickets for travel on the train. Instead, he seems to have been a kind of "trouble shooter," visiting potential clients, soliciting business. Necessarily he would have spent a great deal of time traveling on the train to visit those clients. Naturally, that would have given him an opportunity to observe and even participate in card games, as well as practice his sleights on an "Erndnase" table, like the one you make, Tabby. At the time Edwin Sumner Andrews was living on Austin Ave in Oak Park, Illinois (Austin runs North-South and divides the enclave of Oak Park from Chicago. In other words, he was living on the Oak Park side of the street, Chicago was on the opposite side), he was actually the travelling agent for the C&NWRR based out of DeKalb, some 50 or so miles due west from him by rail. His home was just 1/3 of a block south of the Oak Park station for his RR, so he could have gotten to downtown Chicago (where the illustrator met him, and the printing was done) in about ten minutes by rail. David Alexander has pointed out (in his January 2000 GENII cover story) that the hotel room in which the author met the illustrator was apparently unheated in the wintertime, an unlikely situation even in a cheap Chicago hotel, implying that the author may not have been staying in that room, but merely using it to meet the illustrator. Makes sense if he lives just ten minutes away, but didn't want the illustrator to know that... This E. S. Andrews was living in Chicago from about 1887 till 1896. Richard Hood wrote Martin Gardner in 1946 that his father, Edwin C. Hood (founder of the famous H. C. Evans gambling supply company) knew the author of the book quite well when the author was living in Chicago in the mid-1890s. E. S. Andrews got promoted from clerk to travelling agent in 1896 and was transferred to Denver where he remained until October 1901. He was
then transferred to DeKalb, but lived in Oak Park with his father in law, an invalid
civil war veteran and railroad baggage handler, at the Austin Ave address. He was
himself a widower with two teenage children, a second wife (the former Dollie Seeley,
who had been head of stenography for a large Chicago company. Perhaps he dictated
the book to her?), and two aging parents in the same household. My guess is that he
needed the money! Arriving in Chicago in October 1901, he could have opened a bank
account (the artist said he was paid with a low numbered check on a large Chicago
bank), contacted the printer, met with the illustrator, and finished the manuscript in
time for submission to the copyright office in early March (the two copies of the book
were received at the Copyright Office in Washington on March 7th, 1902). The big
mystery to me, no matter who the author was, is how he distributed and advertised
the book. Until it enters the magic community some six months after having been
published, we know nothing about this. Surely he didn't wait that long to start selling
copies. My guess is that he took out classified ads using a PO Box in sporting men’s
publications, like the Police Gazette, but to date no such ad has been found. His move
to San Francisco in February 1903 neatly explains the drop in price on unsold copies
when he left town, if, in fact, Atlas was the distributor, rather than, for example,
Frederick J. Drake (from whom Atlas could have obtained them, rather than vice
versa). McKinney, the printer, went bankrupt in January 1903, and may also have had
unsold copies that someone (Drake?) obtained at that time. Perhaps court records of
the sale of McKinney’s assets exist that would clarify this... His death in California in
1922 would explain why the copyright was not renewed in 1930. But these could be
coincidences. He is the age remembered by the illustrator, and the one photo I have of
him indicates he is, unlike Milton Franklin Andrews, relatively short of stature, also as
recalled by the illustrator. But even though he seems a near perfect circumstantial
match, I have no evidence of writing ability (or the education it implies) nor can I put a
deck of cards in his hands, nor conclusively demonstrate his relationship to
Dalrymple. So I’d say the case is still wide open!

Glenn Bishop | 07/16/05 12:21 PM | link | filter

Richard I am so incredibly knocked over and excited by your information on Erdnase
that you have done and the stuff that you just posted. Thank you very much you have
really done some outstanding work on this and I really hope you do a book on it -
because I would buy it in a second.

Thank you for the more info on the railroad agent job.

But would that put him into contact with magicians to? Because according to contracts
I have of both my Dad and Jack Gwynne that the managers of the acts pushed the acts
not to drive cars but to ride the rails. In fact it is mentioned in some of the contracts I
have had in my files. This was quite a few years after Erdnase.

Did most of the acts of those days ride the rails too? Would this bring Mr. Andrews in
contact with magicians too as well as card sharks?

And would this job also most likely put him in many towns with the saloons and card games that he could have gone into because he had time on his hands?

Would that give him the education in cards to write this book?

Thanks again Richard - fantastic work on Erdnase!

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**Pete Biro | 07/16/05 01:42 PM | link | filter**

I think this thread should be published in a little book.

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**Bill Mullins | 07/16/05 03:14 PM | link | filter**

Originally posted by Pete Biro:

I think this thread should be published in a little book.

I think the author of the little book should be: O. R. Ibetep

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**Ryan Matney | 07/16/05 04:03 PM | link | filter**

Richard,

Is your man the only one that has a true backward spelling of S.W. Erdnase with no rearranging of letters as in other possible candidates that have been suggested?

That's a very strong circumstancial case. If you ever get him anywhere near a pack of cards I'd buy into your guy being the author.

---

**Richard Hatch | 07/16/05 04:35 PM | link | filter**

Originally posted by Ryan Matney:

Is your man the only one that has a true backward spelling of S.W. Erdnase with no rearranging of letters as in other possible candidates that have been suggested?

Ryan, there are several other E. S. Andrews candidates of interest. Todd Karr has found an E. S. Andrews (discussed elsewhere on this thread) who was pulling a collection agency scam in the midwest from about 1901-1907 I believe. A great source of information on him can be found at the following site: Is this Erdnase?

There are several other "E. S. Andrews" from the period that might be of interest, though the ones I have looked at tend eventually to develop "problems" as far as trying to identify them as Erdnase goes (wrong places at the wrong times, that kind of thing).
Initially I was quite fond of Chicago based attorney James Andrews (jamES ANDREWS also gives the author's name when you reverse it and drop a few letters). But my investigation of him led me to the more interesting E. S. Andrews outlined above. I think if any of the candidates could be closely linked to Dalrymple, that would be compelling evidence. Or if one's writing style was a close match to the author's...

David Alexander argues that the simple backwards rendering of the name is not a good match for someone as clever as the author, since it is too transparent, which led him to his more complex anagram candidate. W. E. Sanders. I would tend to agree if I were convinced that the author wanted total anonymity, but I'm not. If he did, putting the illustrator's real name (rather than a fake one or none at all) on the title page was surely a huge error in judgement. Anyone in 1902 could have tracked down and interviewed M. D. Smith and quickly gotten enough information to identify the author. The fact that no one did so until Martin Gardner tracked him down in 1946 (who knows how many clues he had forgotten in those 44 years!) is an accident of history, not proof of the author's desire for anonymity.

Incidentally, the earliest identification in print I have found that S. W. Erdnase = E. S. Andrews is a Leo Rullman column in THE SPHINX in November 1928.

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**Ryan Matney** | 07/16/05 05:46 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Thanks for the reply, Richard. I also don't believe the author wanted to remain anonymous for all eternity.

After all, how many magicians have you met that didn't want some credit for their own work (and maybe even the work of others)? It's not in card man's character to refuse credit entirely. ;-)

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**Guest** | 07/17/05 09:55 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I originally e-mailed this to Richard Hatch as I was uncertain about whether it did or did not deserve mention (or re-mention, as it is) in this thread. Having been encouraged by Mr. Hatch to post it, I am doing so, and hoping that this will prove useful to someone.

Erdnase makes the following observation in the bottom dealing chapter, paragraph right below fig 25 that: "Hoyle makes a point of instructing that a dealer should always keep the outer end of the deck, and the cards, as dealt, inclined towards the table."

It might be a noteworthy point, I haven't a clue what the availability was for that material which Erdnase points to (of Hoyle's). This HAS been brought up but not taken into account as far as dating and profiling are concerned, maybe because this means absolutely nothing.

Regardless, this is an excellent topic and I hope it will continue to grow.
Bill Mullins | 07/17/05 04:41 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Richard Hatch:
David Alexander argues that the simple backwards rendering of the name is not a good match for someone as clever as the author, since it is too transparent, which led him to his more complex anagram candidate. W. E. Sanders. [/QB]

I’m not wholly in agreement with this argument, because it only makes sense when going from "Erdnase" to "Sanders". But this is not what the author did -- he went from "Sanders" (or "Andrews") to "Erdnase". If the original author's name was E. S. Andrews (or JamES or CharlES or *** ES), then Erdnase makes sense -- simple reversal. But if the original author's name was W. E. Sanders (as is Alexander's candidate), then the "Erdnase" name is more contrived. Alexander solves this by pointing out that "Erdnase" translates from "Earth Nose" in German, and his Sanders had a mining background, but this still seems a stretch. I look forward to hearing more from David Alexander's analysis of Sanders' diaries, as he indicated in his Genii article.

Guest | 07/18/05 03:38 AM | link | filter

Andrei, I’ve also been curious about the "Hoyle/outer end inclined toward the table" addition in the bottom deal description.

To deal with the cards in this position at an average sized table in an average sized seat can be quite a strain on the fore-arm that holds the deck. Everyone's different of course; but for me (and in my hands) I have found this strain to come across unnatural in the way that anything straining tends to do.

I have found the bottom deal description to be my favourite part of the book, this is partly due to how hard the author found describing the move.

Regarding a previous comment about this being because he couldn't do it. I believe he could do it, I have sat down and struggled to describe technically challenging moves (that I can do fine) and came out with results that include mistakes such as wrong fingering positions (and other things) as a result of struggling with it.

The move was engineered to work in perfect consistency with the second deal (although there is a little hurdle needing tackled before this can be got) and with a top deal too. I believe that a person who thought this detail to be of massive importance had already used and experimented with many deals before getting to his final outcome.
it's thinking of someone who was very proficient at what he done.

I recon it's also obvious from the "Hoyle" comment that he never tilted the deck forward as he dealt. He mentions before it that he used a sleight up and down movement, I think he was maybe aware of some degree of finger flash in his own deal. It is possible, but also very hard to iradicate finger flash for the Erdnase bottom deal. I recon this is why he felt compelled to add the optional inclined positioning. I also recon he was fully aware that it may come accross a tad un-natural, perhaps that's why a name was attahced to it when in general names aren't attached to anything else in the book.

I'd also like to hear if anyone has any thoughts (or know's) about how this comment came to be, where it came from etc. I know nothing of Hoyle and have often wondered if this was a personal piece of advise offered when a finger flash was seen or even someing Erdnase had read elsewhere.

David.

Richard Hatch | 07/18/05 06:19 AM | link | filter

Can anyone reference an edition of Hoyle that contains the advice about keeping the outer end of the deck pointing down? I have checked several editions of Hoyle without success, including several edited by R. F. Foster, who some (Jerry Sadowitz and Peter Kane) believe helped edit THE EXPERT. Couldn't find the reference...

David Alexander | 07/22/05 10:27 AM | link | filter

[QUOTE]Originally posted by Richard Hatch:

David Alexander argues that the simple backwards rendering of the name is not a good match for someone as clever as the author, since it is too transparent, which led him to his more complex anagram candidate. W. E. Sanders. I would tend to agree if I were convinced that the author wanted total anonymity, but I'm not. If he did, putting the illustrator's real name (rather than a fake one or none at all) on the title page was surely a huge error in judgement. Anyone in 1902 could have tracked down and interviewed M. D. Smith and quickly gotten enough information to identify the author. The fact that no one did so until Martin Gardner tracked him down in 1946 (who knows how many clues he had forgotten in those 44 years!) is an accident of history, not proof of the author's desire for anonymity.

*******

I do not argue for Erdnases wanting total anonymity, as clearly, he didn't. Had he
wanted total anonymity he would have simply left the authors name blank or used by An Anonymous or Reformed Gambler. He did neither, but putting his name on the title page of the book in a disguised form was important, a way of demonstrating his superiority.

Putting Smiths name on the book was not an error. Should anyone have talked to Smith (who could easily have pointed them to McKinney) all they would have learned was that Erdnase doubtless used the name Andrews in his dealing with his printer and illustrator. His working name, E.S. Andrews, would be easily accepted by McKinney and Smith as legitimate, as would the pseudonym on the book, his working name spelled backwards. No one ever bothered to get past the first fake name. (My candidate was playing with anagrams of his name when he was a teenager.) As Mr. Andrews paid his bills, what did McKinney care? It was just another vanity job in a career of printing all sorts of things. For Smith, it was nothing special, a simply job he did quickly, collected his fee and moved on.

As I've said before and will state here, again, publishing a book is not a fast way to money. Ask anyone in the niche publishing business and they'll tell you. In this case, it was a several-month process from a manuscript that took a long time to compile and write, probably years.

McKinney was not the publisher, he was the printer. Consequently, the job would be paid in advance before McKinney did anything. The job would then be typeset using something similar to a Linotype machine, a process that would take time. (This was years before photo offset.) There would be a plate for every page and cuts for every illustration put into the plate. This would take time. A skilled Linotype operator being able to typeset a certain number of pages a day. Printing historians tell me ten to fifteen would be a reasonable estimate. Then there was proofing, either by McKinney or Erdnase, should he be around. The project, done over the holidays of 1901, took many weeks, presuming that McKinney worked it into his printing schedule on a timely basis. They didn't drop everything they were doing just to work on this one project.

And then there was the sales and distribution of the finished book. A mind like Erdnase, with his ability to analyze and describe, his clear education and sophistication, would not seem to be the type who would spend the money necessary to print a book without having an idea about what he would do with the book once it was in his hands. That the first mention of the book in the magic press of the day wasn't until many months later suggests that even though Erdnase was familiar with the magic of the day, the amateur magic scene was not his target audience. The use of a pseudonym would allow the author to sell the book himself, should he wish to, as something rare and privately printed. Magic has had a number of privately printed and circulated (and expensive) manuscripts floating around for years. Who knows how many copies of Expert were sold to real or wannabe card mechanics for well beyond the $2 cover price? (That cover price in 1902 dollars equates out to around $40
to $50 today. If Erdnase sold them directly, he wouldn’t have had to sell many to recoup his investment, but, at this point, we do not know how he disposed of the first print run, nor how many were in the first print run.)

No one was seriously looking for Erdnase until Martin Gardner stumbled on Smith forty-plus years after the fact. Anyone could have looked him up in Chicago prior to that. He was a long-time illustrator with plenty of credits, but no one bothered. Simply put, no one cared that much about who Erdnase was to put in the relatively minor effort to track down the illustrator to begin the quest.

Afterwards, people uncritically accepted what Gardner posited until recently when Gardners work was questioned. It is clear that several conclusions Gardner made are unsupported by the evidence. Essentially, Gardners thesis that Milton Franklin Andrews was Erdnase rests entirely on the assertions of a supposedly retired gambler named Pratt. I believe Dick Hatch has shown persuasively that Pratt simply fed Gardner nonsense and that Gardner ran with it without any supporting evidence or verification of Pratts claims. Indeed, the evidence strongly suggests that Pratt was never a gambler at all and that he was just an old man blowing smoke at Walter Gibson and Martin Gardner.

Jonathan Townsend | 07/22/05 11:05 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by David Alexander:

...A mind like Erdnases, with his ability to analyze and describe, his clear education and sophistication, would not seem to be the type who would spend the money necessary to print a book without having an idea about what he would do with the book once it was in his hands. ...

Projection, and ill founded conjecture there. A presentation of good research is easily tainted when the discussion shifts from the physical evidence to the mental imagery of the author. Not everyone imagines the same thing. I for one, imagine a temperance leader, probably female collecting gambling secrets from the strung out losers who have hit rock bottom and sharing some of their old ways as part of their recovery process. So many possibilities for good stories here. Perhaps Jerry Sadowitz got a time machine and decided to pull a prank. At least when we stick to the evidence we can agree about what is known and leave the conjecture to the storytellers. Right, Colonel Mustard, in the bar, with a deck of cards. ;)

Larry Horowitz | 07/22/05 02:18 PM | link | filter

Jonathan,

This is the second time either you or someone else has written about not using
conjecture in this discussion. I say without some conjecture, we have nothing to discuss.

We have to act as reasonable people discussing the evidence we have and where it may lead. The conjecture gives us further avenues for research.

I believe conjecture as to reasonable human actions can be made. If I yell FIRE in a theater, it's reasonable to think everyone will run out. You would imply that's an erronious assumption because there may be two or three people that day looking to commit suicide given the opportunity. They would run into the fire. Of course it "could" happen, but I wouldn't bet on it!

We may never reach a conclusion that exhausts all avenues. And we may never know for FACT the identity of the author. But this is still the best thread in magic.

David Alexander | 07/22/05 08:28 PM | link | filter

Well Jonathan, if you can read Erdnase and only come away seeing him as a frustrated female temperance worker, and not as a well-educated, analytical and experienced writer able to articulate his thoughts in an organized manner, I guess there's no point in further discussion with you.

And, of course, I do look forward to your in-depth research on this subject so we can see your skills at historical research.

Jonathan Townsend | 07/25/05 05:29 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by David Alexander:

Well Jonathan, if you can read Erdnase and only come away seeing him as a ... female ..., and not as a well-educated, analytical and experienced writer able to articulate his (sic) thoughts in an organized manner, I guess there's no point in further discussion with you....

I saw this late Saturday and held off on a retort in the hopes that we would see an edit to this post quoted above. I understand this subject is emotionally charged by those who venerate Vernon etc.

My post offered four or five options for the book's authorship. In previous posts I suggested other options. The option that seems to have irked is the one where a temperance leader, perhaps a woman, collected the stories and methods as part of a reformation cause. Sorry to see sexist attitudes are blinding some to the works of half our species. In retort I point out Mary Shelly's Modern Prometheus and suggest that until we have ONE author and ONE editor we are not well served by projecting our
prejudices into the past. Have we considered the author may have been black? How about a Chinese guy? When we filter the past through our prejudices we may wind up not learning what was but instead burying the good works of others under additional layers of denial.

It helps to stay open minded and look for clues. Yes I have studied the text. I’m working from the text, and curious about its origins. Hence my comments about moving sections around. I also support filtering out the highbrow language as editorial contribution. I feel the language inconsistent where the sleight descriptions which are, to my eyes, lacking in meter, flow and much detail. In seems to me that when one DOES a thing and wishes to describe what one DOES, one tends to use language of position, force and flow instead of external language of where things appear to be and how they appear to move.

I will refrain from pointing a finger at this community for it’s lack of similar attention to the provenance of works and lauding of those who have "borrowed", like Braue et al. How about some energy fixing up Expert Card Technique to show some lessons have been learned? ECT in particular is ripe for a cleanup as some of those who knew the ones whose material which was "borrowed" are still alive. In the mean time, please don’t ask for my respect regarding authorship and inventorship while condoning despicable acts and lauding those who have done and probably continue to do such things.

That said, let’s keep a focus on the book, and what is known of its provenance thanks to much laudable and significant research by some who want the pertinent facts and are treating this matter as an historical investigation.

[It took about a dozen edits to get this post sorted and polished. Can we expect much different of the book in question?]

**Richard Hatch** | 07/25/05 06:36 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by Jonathan Townsend:

The option that seems to have irked is the one where a temperance leader, perhaps a woman, collected the stories and methods as part of a reformation cause. Sorry to see sexist attitudes are blinding some to the works of half our species. In retort I point out Mary Shelly's *Modern Prometheus* and suggest that until we have ONE author and ONE editor we are not well served by projecting our prejudices into the past. Have we considered the author may have been black? How about a Chinese guy?

I would just point out that the illustrator, Marshall D. Smith, when interviewed by Martin Gardner some 40 plus years after the fact (Gardner described Smith’s
recollections as quite clear, however, despite his age and the passage of time) recalled meeting with a clean-shaven, slight, short (possibly as short as 5'5", not over 5'7"), middle aged (40-45 years old) white male with no hint of a foreign accent. Unless he met an imposter, I suggest this description serves as a useful guide for candidates. Even allowing for distortions due to the passage of time (perhaps he was slightly older or younger, shorter or taller, for example), it seems a stretch to think the artist might have been mistaken about the gender or race of his employer. That said, at least one theorist has argued that the fact that the artist recalled the author as short, slight, clean shaven and having hands "softer than any womans" could be explained if he was, in fact, dealing with a woman. I think that unlikely.

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**Bob Coyne** | 07/25/05 07:53 AM | [link](#) | [filter]

Jonathan Townsend wrote:

> Sorry to see sexist attitudes are blinding some to the works of half our species.

It's bad form (and close minded) to accuse people of being sexist just because they don't subscribe to your inane theory that Erdnase might have been a female temperance worker. It's also very presumptive to suggest that people are in "denial" about the possibility that Erdnase was black, chinese, or female. All the evidence and probabilities point toward him being a white male. Perhaps you're the one in denial.

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 07/25/05 08:13 AM | [link](#) | [filter]

Originally posted by Bob Coyne:

> ...your inane theory that Erdnase might have been a female temperance worker. ... All the evidence and probabilities point toward him being a white male. Perhaps you're the one in denial.

I thought the option (not testable so not a theory) about Jerry Sadowitz using a time machine was more inane. Then again, perhaps Mary Shelly was just a pen name for her husband? If it irks some that the author(s?) of a work might be unlike what they imagine... that speaks to who they are. Getting *ad-hominem* does not increase the general level of respect or admiration in the community. If you want to argue with me about something, fine. If you want to ask about my motivations or how I come to conclusions or how I find possibilities in context, also fine. Denial is an inner-world term and perhaps we can discuss that too though let's do that off this thread where the focus is a thing, a book in particular.

As to reading in general...sometimes it seems we have folks who missed the line about gilding gold and painting the lily, and want to hold gilding the lily as absurd.
Jonathan Townsend wrote: Getting ad-hominem does not increase the general level of respect or admiration in the community.

I couldn’t agree more. Your post characterized others as being sexist, close-minded, and in denial, not to mention the off-topic rant about Expert Card Technique. This thread has been one of the best on the forum. Why ruin it?

Originally posted by Bob Coyne:

Accusing me of less than positive intent and respect for my peers in magic is not gonna work here. Sure I’m a little playful with the textual studies. I hoped citing Borges and Eco would let folks know that I know. Then again I’m all for respecting history and those who DID the things we look back upon through the study of history. My interest is in finding out more about "erdnase". To that end I have taken some trouble to ponder the work and consider some options that may offer avenues to explore. All that magic and all those sleights. All from what we might call the school of hard knocks? All that wonderful writing and all at once? From where?

Am I writing to defend myself here? Nope. I can see that the ECT cleanup may be beyond some folks still. Till that project is done and published we have a black mark on our history and a faulty foundation/stepping stone for students. There (ECT) is a piece of history we can restore and admire when restored. That is the topic... connecting to our history. The process involved is one generation removed from the data needed to do the same for "expert". Yes, a plan of action and perhaps a training ground for the next generation of historians among us.

"Expert" is something that was neglected in its time. Did one person write "expert"? Surely the conjuring section would be harmless to sign as an author. Why then was it included in work without a proud author? A mystery, or at least a puzzle that sent me into the text for themes in content and style.

Any record of a book signing tour? Any diaries discussing authors parties and boasting? Any editor coming forth to discuss how they polished the book? Any "amended" copies of the book turned up with notes by students of the author? Any copies of the "artifice" section alone as a separate work distributed a few years before the book? A few questions about things that may have left traces in written or oral history.
btw, the suggestion that we should consider whether Erdnase might have been African American made me recall this passage from the introduction of Expert at the Card Table:

A colored attendant of a "club room," overhearing a discussion about running up two hands of poker, ventured the following interpolation: "Don't trouble 'bout no two han's Boss. Get yo' own han'. De suckah, he'll get a han' all right, suah!"

I think it's almost certain that Erdnase was a white male, and the above quote is compatible with that. But maybe it sheds light on the locations and types of club rooms where Erdnase worked? i.e., Were black attendants common in club rooms in all areas of the country?

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**Bill Mullins** | 07/26/05 03:24 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Carl Sagan said something like: "Extraordinary theories require extraordinary evidence".

Given what we "know" about Erdnase, any speculation that he wasn't a white male is extraordinary.

I put "know" in quotes, because a certain amount of figuring out who Erdnase was will be based on data that is not absolute. I agree with Richard above that the evidence is that he was a middle aged white man. But the evidence is the 40-year old memory of an old man. Is it reliable? Is any other "information" that we can obtain reliable? Either we are blue-sky speculating, or we are doing an historian's research. If we keep the two trains of thought separate, fine. But no historical data to date leads to a woman or a black/chinese man, and to reject the possibilities outright is entirely consistent with the data at hand. Such suggestions are only speculations at this point, and somewhat wild ones at that -- given the INFORMATION we do have.

If Jonathan or anyone else can come up with evidence to the contrary, so much the better, and it should be considered.

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**magicam** | 07/26/05 09:42 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Jonathan:

I've read many of your posts, here and elsewhere on the 'net, and perceive you as one who tries to provoke thought. That's almost always a good thing if offered on point (or thereabouts!) and in good faith.

If your point was to counsel against "runaway speculation" (as I would term it) in the course of research on Erdnase's identity, point taken. As Bill Mullins wrote, if you or
anyone else "can come up with evidence to the contrary, so much the better, and it should be considered." But in this case, I don't think there's been much (if any) truly wild speculation on this thread, at least from those who have given serious thought to the matters in question. Larry Horowitz hit the nail on the head, IMHO. Paraphrasing him, in matters unknown, without [reasonable] speculation, fewer ideas could be "vetted" or explored.

I've never perceived you as one who tries to "sabotage" or create stinky threads, so I give you the full benefit of the doubt and assume that you viewed your comments as relevant and worthy of consideration. But with all due respect and based on what has been written by folks whose opinions I give credence to, IMHO most of the identity options you offered, while perhaps theoretically possible, actually injected elements of "runaway speculation" into the conversation.

To echo others, this is one of the best threads I've ever read on the internet and I'd hate to see it stray off point, no matter how well intentioned the "sidebars" are.

Clay

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**Ryan Matney** | 07/27/05 12:36 AM | [link] | [filter]

Originally posted by Bob Coyne:

*btw, the suggestion that we should consider whether Erdnase might have been African American made me recall this passage from the introduction of Expert at the Card Table:*

_A colored attendant of a "club room," overhearing a discussion about running up two hands of poker, ventured the following interpolation: "Don't trouble 'bout no two han's Boss. Get yo' own han'. De suckah, he'll get a han' all right, suah!"

I think it's almost certain that Erdnase was a white male, and the above quote is compatible with that. But maybe it sheds light on the locations and types of club rooms where Erdnase worked? i.e., Were black attendants common in club rooms in all areas of the country?

It could provide insight into the types of clubs Erdnase worked. It could also say lot about why it's unlikely that the text in 1902 was written by a Chinese or Black man. And then, it could just be a joke and not a real story at all and to that end make it even more likely the author was white. It seems to me what Jonathan wants to discuss might have more place in a philosophy class than a converstaion on the man who was erdnase.

By the way, Jerry Sadowitz DOES have a time machine.
This thread is in another topic. I'm bringing part of the discussion here:

quote:
------------------------------------------------------------------------
---
Two years earlier, in 1900, Jamieson-Higgins also published JACK POTS, STORIES OF THE GREAT AMERICAN GAME by Eugene Edwards, an early classic on American Poker.
------------------------------------------------------------------------
---
Eugene Edwards / S.W. Erdnase

VERY close.... Curious, has this 'lead' been followed before?

The WORLDCAT internet database (mostly academic and research libraries) shows copies of the book in 12 libraries:

CA SOUTHWEST MUS, BRAUN RES LIBR CA UNIV OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES
DC LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
IL UNIV OF ILLINOIS
LA LOUISIANA STATE UNIV
LA TULANE UNIV COLL ANALYSIS
LA TULANE UNIV
MA BOSTON COLLEGE
NV UNIV OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS
OH OHIO STATE UNIV, THE
RI CRANSTON PUB LIBR
TX UNIV OF TEXAS, AUSTIN, HARRY RANSOM

and a microfilm edition at:
MI MICHIGAN STATE UNIV

The same author, Eugene Edwards, is also listed as having written:

Title: A million dollar jack pot:
and other poker stories /
Author(s): Edwards, Eugene.;
Illustrator: Morgan, Ike,;
Publication: Chicago : Jamieson-Higgins Co.,
Year: 1901
which may be a re-issue. [Note: Morgan also illustrated the first book.]

It is in two libraries:
IL UNIV OF ILLINOIS
OH OHIO STATE UNIV, THE

Title: Tom Custer's luck:
and other poker stories /
Author(s): Edwards, Eugene.; Morgan, Ike.; (Illustrator - ill.)
Corp Author(s): Jamieson-Higgins Company.; (Publisher - pbl)
Publication: Chicago : Jamieson-Higgins Co.,
Year: 1901

OH OHIO STATE UNIV, THE
AB UNIV OF ALBERTA

Title: Ante - I raise you ten:
stories of the great American game /
Author(s): Edwards, Eugene.
Illustrations: Ike Morgan
Publication: Chicago : Jamieson-Higgins,
Year: 1902, 1900

NV UNIV OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS
NY NEW YORK STATE HIST ASN

Ike Morgan was a fairly prolific illustrator. He did "The Woogle-Bug Book" by L. Frank Baum, which is in a common 1978 facsimile edition, for those who want to get a look at his style and compare it to Marshall Smith's.

Or, you could go here and look at an online copy of another book illustrated by Ike Morgan. [note that apparently H.M. Caldwell bought out Jamieson-Higgins for this version].

This page seems to imply that Jamieson Higgins was subsumed by Hurst & Co about 1903; I can find no books after 1903 that were listed as published by J-H, and they don't show up in newspaper databases after that date.

I found a 1901 ad for Jamieson-Higgins; one of their titles was "Fun with Magic" by Geo. Brunel.

Chicago IL census records for 1910 show a Eugene P. Edwards, at 754 Lincoln Park Blvd (probably a rooming house), age 47, occupation muddled but looks like "treasurer".
Gardner on Erdnase:

"On the Way to "Mathematical Games": Part I of an Interview with Martin Gardner" by Don Albers, _College Mathematics Journal_, 1 May 2005, Volume 36; Issue 3; p 178

I had an interesting experience recently with a magic book called The Expert at the Card Table by S. W. Erdnase. If you spell that backwards you get E. S. Andrews. The book is a classic and I had a first edition of the book that I bought for about five dollars when I was quite young. A couple months ago, Richard Hatch, who runs a magic rare book store in Texas, came out to see me to see if I had any books that he might want to buy and then resell. I had a copy of this first edition, which I mailed to him before he came out to see me. He got very excited and angry with me because I hadn't insured it. I didn't know it had any special value. So he put it up for auction, and the book sold for over $2,000, to his surprise and mine. I don't even know who bought it. But the early magic books are now quite rare.

$2,000?! Gardner's copy actually sold for over $10,000 (on eBay in February 2000, I believe). Probably just a measure of how little interest Gardner has in material things! And I wasn't "angry" with him for sending it to us uninsured, just rather surprised when it unexpectedly showed up one day in my mailbox, sent parcel post uninsured with a note suggesting we might want to sell it for him! I suggested to him that we sell it on eBay and explained what that involved, and he suggested perhaps it might be more interesting if sold with his correspondence with Marshall Smith and Edgar Pratt, and some of the other documents regarding his pursuit of this mystery. I agreed, and it was my own reading of those documents that stimulated my subsequent interest in the mystery.

Perhaps Gardner considered that $2000 was for the book and $8000 was for the other material.

What do you think, Richard? How much did the Marshall and Pratt letters contribute to the final price?
Originally posted by Brad Jeffers:

Perhaps Gardner considered that $2000 was for the book and $8000 was for the other material.

What do you think, Richard? How much did the Marshall and Pratt letters contribute to the final price?

Hard to say. His copy was in very poor condition, so aside from the provenance and Marshall D. Smith’s signature on the title page, I wouldn’t have appraised it for much. We did have an unsolicited pre-emptive offer of $3,500, I believe, for the book alone from a gambling collector, which we obviously declined. I don’t believe that collector actively participated in the online bidding. As is often the case on eBay, the high price was the result of a last minute “spike” by the unsuccessful underbidder. I think it is very difficult to assign an objective value to historical documents, such as the Pratt and Smith correspondence. The winning bidder was a television writer whom we had not previously heard of, nor have we since!

Bill Mullins 08/27/05 04:53 PM | link | filter

Just ran across a newspaper article from a couple of years ago, that indicates a movie about Erdnase may be in development.

‘Calendar Girls’ heralds new era of comedy; Nigel Reynolds
The Daily Telegraph 08-16-2003

[Nick] Barton [CEO of Harbour Pictures] says that he even has the playwright David Mamet involved in another idea - this time from the United States.

Harbour has bought the rights to a book, Erdnase, which is about a later 19th-century magician who was America’s Most Wanted serial killer.

Working as a consultant on the film, which is called Sleight of Hand, is the American magician and actor Ricky Jay. He is the husband of the line producer of Calendar Girls, Chrisann Verges, and is also a regular in Mamet films.

"Ricky has had discussions with David about writing the screenplay for Sleight of Hand and although nothing has been signed he has expressed real interest," says Barton.

Guest 09/28/05 04:42 AM | link | filter

Has anyone found anything on that Hoyle reference?
Andrei

**Guest** | **09/29/05 12:40 PM** | link | filter

I just finished reading the Genii issue featuring David Alexanders new light on the identity of Erdnase. It was a great read and had me convinced.

When can we expect a follow up feature? It has been five years now. I would be interested in reading about any further information Mr. Alexander may have collected.

I would also like to read Richard Hatchs most recent conclusion on the topic.

**Richard Hatch** | **10/21/05 02:08 PM** | link | filter

Thought I would mention that today is Martin Gardner's 91st birthday. I just spoke with him and he sounds very good. A few weeks ago Gary Plants gave him a lesson on the Plants Shuffle, about which he is enthusiastic.

**Ryan Matney** | **10/21/05 02:34 PM** | link | filter

Happy Birthday Mr. Gardner!

Karl Fulves just gave a rave to Gardner's new book of science experiments. Amazing he is still turning out work.

Richard, so Martin still meets/sessions with magicians?

**Richard Hatch** | **10/21/05 03:17 PM** | link | filter

Originally posted by Ryan Matney:

Richard, so Martin still meets/sessions with magicians?

Well, since he has moved to an assisted living center in Norman, Oklahoma (about 3 years ago), he has been visited by Jamy Ian Swiss, Bob White, Gary Plants, Randi (several times), Joshua Jay, and no doubt some others I don't know about. His dentist there, Dr. Tom Todd, is a magician. He's quite a private person, but seems to enjoy interacting with magicians on occasion. Magic is still an active and creative interest for him.

**Bill Mullins** | **11/07/05 02:10 AM** | link | filter
ERDNASE IN NON-MAGIC POP CULTURE

Modesty Blaise studies EACT by Erdnase in _Dead Man's Handle_ (by Peter O'Donnell, 1986). Darwin Ortiz points out in _The Annotated Erdnase_ that Scarne, Zingone, and Rosini discuss the "merits of the Erdnase one-hand shift" in _No Coffin for the Corpse_ (by Clayton Rawson, 1942). Amy Tan's _Saving Fish From Drowning_ (2005) has a character named E. S. Andrews, who uses card tricks to assert power over Burmese tribesmen.

Any other non-magic notices of Erdnase?

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**Tommy** | 11/19/05 01:58 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I just read this and I don't know why I mention it here, apart from the fact that I am a gambler and know the world of pro gamblers is small, most of us know each other, sort of.

Well I was just wondering if this diary mentions someone who might fit the bill. Also this guy Michael Carey might give us a tip or two on how to search for Erdnase, maybe. I know its a long shot but I told you I was a gambler. I think it would be appropriate to find Erdnace by chance. I would like read the diary of a gambler from the time of Erdnase in any event.

Are any of you guys from Alaska.

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**Bill Mullins** | 11/20/05 07:33 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Originally posted by COOPER:

*From 1901-1903, a gambler kept a diary of his activities in the mining camp of Rampart on the Yukon River.*

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[http://www.pressclub.alaskawriters.com/schedule_05.html](http://www.pressclub.alaskawriters.com/schedule_05.html)
With Erdnase, one is reluctant to rule out anything with certainty. But unless the gambler’s diary shows him to be in Chicago sometime in late 1901, or during 1902, it probably isn’t Erdnase. That would have been the time he was arranging to have his book published in Chicago. But it’s fun running these leads down, and I’m trying to find a copy of the article from the Anchorage Press that starts here that Michael Carey wrote, to see if it sheds further light. Who knows?

Bill Mullins | 11/21/05 12:08 PM | link | filter

The speaker in the above-mentioned talk, Michael Carey, was kind enough to send me a full copy of his article (which is more or less the same as the talk) on Billy Porter, the gambler who wrote the diary. It’s not likely that he was Erdnase, but there are some parallels that do make him intriguing. From his article:

Billy’s voice is mature, experienced and worldly. Nobody would expect a gambler and barman to be a moralist, and this one does not wrestle with moral issues or questions about human nature. . . . Billy seems to have spent at least a year in the Yukon Territory before settling in Alaska. Canadian border crossing records show William H. Porter entering the Yukon from Skagway April 24, 1899. He is not in the 1900 U.S. Census for Rampart, but a story in the Alaska Forum suggests he was in Rampart by the spring of 1900. . . . Billy says nothing [in his diary] about cheating . . . . The territorial laws of 1899 banning gambling never threatened Billy’s business, at least according to the diary. His card and dice games, including roulette, were played openly at The Reception. . . .

In reference to his business acumen

During late 1902, Billy’s interest in The Reception waned. It was easy to see why. In August, Billy and bartender Nelson compared their income and expenditures for the previous eight months. They found The Reception was losing money, a discovery that left Billy feeling "very much blue." Billy never explains why he lost money. Popular belief has it that selling liquor to frontier miners was a sure thing. Not at The Reception.

This is consistent with a person who "needs the money". Billy's story does not end well

On June 29, 1912 the Record Citizen reported a local jury found Billy Porter insane. He suffered delusions of grandeur, promising friends gifts of $500,000 or more from imaginary mining properties north of the Yukon River. . . . He was sent to the Mt. Tabor Asylum in Portland, Oregon (later Morningside), a private hospital that for more than 60 years held a federal contract to care for mentally-ill Alaskans. . . . Billy Porter died at the Mt. Tabor Asylum December 7, 1913. His death certificate says Billy, now
divorced, succumbed to "paralysis" and was buried in Multnomah Cemetery. A 1914 clipping Rex Fisher found in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner reported his death under the headline "Billy Porter Is No More," noting in a sub-head "Was Well Known and Popular In Fairbanks In The Earlier Days." The term "paralysis" could mean many things. Here's what it probably meant: syphilis.

Further research by Carey, after his article, revealed:

I now believe, in addition to what I wrote, that Billy Porter was born in Milwaukee in October 1862, the son of a vessel master who sailed the Great Lakes. Billy grew up in some affluence in the Milwaukee suburbs. I have him into the early 90s working and living in Milwaukee. He is an agent for several freight companies, including American Express. About 1895, he disappears. I believe he went to Calif and from Calif went to Alaska - or the Yukon, Canada - in the gold rush.

So he was from the midwest, he was literate and a writer, he was a gambler. His history could explain why Erdnase never reappeared after his book. But the timelines are wrong for a book to have been published in 1902 -- the only way they work is if the book and its illustrations were completed sometime in the 1890's, and then the publisher sat on it until 1902. And I can't find any way to scramble the letters of William H. Porter into S. W. Erdnase.If there is a lesson in Porter's story that informs Erdnase research, it is that there were a bunch of gamblers in the United States in 1900. Running them all down would not likely be a productive path to identifying Erdnase, although some subjects may be tantalizingly close.

Billy Porter's diary is now in the collection of the University of Alaska at Fairbanks: CATALOG ENTRY.

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**Tommy** | 11/21/05 08:14 PM | link | filter

Thanks very much Bill and thanks MR Carey.

The very thought of Erdnase, with his brilliant mind, ending up like that is not a pleasant one. I am happy it was not him now. But feel sad for poor old Billy.

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**Bill Mullins** | 11/27/05 05:59 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Richard Hatch:

*Can anyone reference an edition of Hoyle that contains the advice about keeping the outer end of the deck pointing down? I have checked several editions of Hoyle without success, including several edited by R. F. Foster, who some (Jerry Sadowitz and Peter Kane) believe helped edit THE EXPERT.*
From an article about Foster giving some talks on bridge at Bullock's Tea Room in Los Angeles (LA Times, 9/18/1927, p. 32):"EXPERT ON CARDS TO TALK HERE

Mr. Foster needs little exploitation as he is internationally known and followed by bridge students. He has written many books on card games, his "Complete Hoyle" having gained for him the title of "Father of Bridge." "Foster on Auction Bridge and "Foster's Bridge Tactics" have been widely read and followed . . .

Mr. Foster was secretary of the Knickerbocker Whist Club of New York for many years. He was also card editor of Vanity Fair. His articles in that magazine have been eagerly read by thousands of people monthly. He was also card editor of the New York Sun and Tribune for more than twenty years.

Mr. Foster's master of the science of cards comes from the endless analyzing of thousands of card hands until his deductions are proven to him conclusively.

His keen wit evidenced in his lectures is a delight to his hearers.

Mr. Foster observes cannily (being Scotch) that after learning to value a card hand, psychology plays a big part, in being able to read one's partner and opponents. . . .

The Pellman system for memory training and concentration was also in Mr. Foster's work. . .

He designed the marble work for the interior of the Congressional Library at Washington, D. C. He also designed the interior of the Chicago Public Library, and is in addition a writer, traveler and inventor."

I hadn't been aware until now that he had written about cards in Vanity Fair, or the NY Sun/Trib. Studies of his writings there may prove interesting, when compared to EACT. The comments about psychology, when dealing with opponents, and his wit, also seem relevant in the study of EACT.

I wonder what his inventions are -- I don't think you can search the Patent Office's database by name, that far back.

Here are articles, which I don't have copies of, about or by Foster:

**Title:** R. F. Foster  
**Personal Author:** BRADLEY, William Aspenwall  
**Journal Name:** American Magazine  
**Source:** American Magazine v. 69 (April 1910) p. 767-8  
**Publication Year:** 1910

**Title:** Hopeless case
In addition to numerous books about games and rules, he wrote a novel called "Cab No. 44" (1910), and non-fiction books "The coming faith: an answer to the eternal questions: whence? whither? and what for?" (1925); "Foster's rational method of recollection ... " (1906)

Richard Hatch | 11/27/05 07:19 PM | link | filter

Thanks, Bill. I hadn't seen that 1927 article, nor some of the others you cited. I do have CAB 44 which is not too hard to locate online, and also his COMING FAITH which includes the only photo of Foster that I've been able to find. I found a number of amazing (to me) coincidences in researching Foster that make him a "person of interest" in the author search: his expertise on gaming (his 1897 Hoyle with its sections on cheating are what lead Kane and Sadowitz to conjecture that he ghostwrote or edited THE EXPERT for Erdnase), his membership (off and on) in the Society of American Magicians, a book on "Word Circle Puzzles" he wrote, about a kind of circular crossword puzzle he invented. In the introduction he makes passing reference to a book written by someone under a pseudonym, with the author's true name only being revealed much later through the first letters of paragraphs in the book, or something along those lines. In CAB 44 one of the protagonists uses the name "Milton Fletcher" and is an Englishman who plays cards and billiards. Milton Franklin Andrews used the alias "Milton Franklin" and was a billiard playing cardshark who sometimes passed himself off as an Englishman... Foster claimed to have had an ex-journalist roommate in Texas at one point who was an expert bottom dealer. Foster was born and raised in Scotland, leaving open a possible relationship with the Dalrymple family (also from Scotland). And he was quite short and slight in stature, in line with the artist's recollection. But I do consider all of the above merely coincidences at this point. His writing does not strike me as sounding much like
Erdnase, and he points out in his 1897 Hoyle the blatant dishonesty of the house at Faro, whereas Erdnase denies it, taking the opposite view. It seems unlikely that he would have consorted with magicians, as he did, without revealing his hand in writing the book, given its iconic status by that time (the early 1930s). But I still consider him "a person of interest" and welcome any additional information on him. Thanks!

**Bill Mullins | 11/27/05 07:52 PM | link | filter**

Originally posted by Richard Hatch:

**But I still consider him "a person of interest" and welcome any additional information on him.**

Check your email for more . . .

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**Guest | 01/27/06 04:09 PM | link | filter**

I bought my copy of EACT in 1972, and it's been with me ever since. I began reading it over and over again long before the internet was about, and my opinions were formed without outside influence. I had, and have, always assumed the author to be a gambler, not a magician. The language he uses in the initial chapters prior to going into the sleights is one of a love for the taking of chance. It's a hard, if not impossible, love to fake. His language when speaking about the fact that gamblers love to gamble even more than they love to win is something that only a gambler would know how to put into words.

In light of the many pages on the internet, and in this thread, I'd have to say that I still believe him to be a gambler, but in the same sense that I play poker, study magic, and peruse magic history, I believe him to be a gambler who would have most probably had a love of magic and magicians, to the point of knowing one well enough to ask them to author the chapter on tricks. Taking out the tricks chapter, the hundreds of times I've read the rest of the book, it's always been one voice to me. I've never heard anybody else in the text. The wit, the insight, the clever twist of wordplay, the absolute love of cards.....It would have been great to sit down over a beer with this guy.

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**Richard Hatch | 02/08/06 10:53 AM | link | filter**

Late last night I stumbled across the earliest advertisement of EATCT outside the magic community known to me. It is a classified advertisement in the "Sporting" section of the NATIONAL POLICE GAZETTE issue of March 28, 1903. Here is the exact text of the six line ad:

"THE EXPERT AT THE CARD TABLE.
The greatest and most up-to-date book on winning out at cards. 204 [sic] pages; 101 illustrations. Price $1.00. Worth its weight in gold. List of contents free. ATLAS
A couple of points are worth noting: Clearly this is still a first edition of 1902, since the Drake editions did not come out until 1905. The wording is different than Atlas’ advertisements in THE SPHINX at this time, which began to run in the February 1903 issue. Both ads have the mistake of 204 pages. Both offer the book at half the cover price of $2. This ad clearly targets the would-be unethical player and it is at the top of a column advertising marked cards, loaded dice and other club room accessories. To me, this ad strengthens my suspicion that Atlas (owned by E. S. Burns, real name Emil Sorensen) somehow acquired a goodly supply of first edition copies at a very favorable price early in 1903. He was willing to increase his investment in them by paying for advertising in THE SPHINX (based, like he was, in Chicago) and NATIONAL POLICE GAZETTE (based in New York). As noted earlier in this thread, one possibility (the one I favor) is that he obtained copies from the author. There was an E. S. Andrews living on the same street, 8 blocks south of him, a traveling agent for the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, who transfered to San Francisco in February 1903 and may, therefore, have been motivated to unload a quantity of unsold books before moving. This is the same E. S. Andrews whose wife’s maiden name was Seely, the same maiden name as the mother of Louis Dalrymple, to whom the author said he was somehow related. But that scenario remains conjecture at this point. James McKinney went bankrupt in January 1903 and his assests may have included unsold copies of the book (he had been selling the book, though on what terms with the author is unknown). Gardner says the plates and unsold copies of the book were acquired by Frederick J. Drake, but I have not independently been able to confirm the details, though Drake was advertising first edition copies at $1 in its own publications beginning in 1903, prior to releasing it under their own imprint in 1905. So the fact that Atlas was at 295 Austin and an E. S. Andrews was living at 113 S. Austin may prove just another coincidence. Possibly Atlas obtained copies from Drake. Possibly vice versa. Burns sold his company and assets to Roterberg a short time after this, and Roterberg did wholesale first edition copies to other magic shops around the world, again indicating a goodly supply, which he continued to advertise as late as 1911.

Anyway, for me, one of the fundamental mysteries remains the early marketing of the book. Who was the author’s intended market and how did he attempt to reach them? I’m hoping that a still earlier advertisement for the book will help crack this case. If anyone knows of other advertisements from this period, please let us know (the first SPHINX mention of the book is in September 1902, first SPHINX advertisement in November 1902, first Atlas advertisement in the SPHINX in February 1903 with the price drop to $1 noted. MAHATMA and other magic periodicals begin to advertise the book at $1 at this point as well).

Guest | 03/21/06 10:40 AM | link | filter

I just want to say thanks to Richard as well, for perhaps making this the most interesting thread in all of magic.
Hi, everyone: I've posted my latest research on conman E. S. Andrews on Magical Past-Times.

See also the announcement of this new material in the Buzz section! Thanks!

I should start by saying that I know nothing about the subject outside of reading the book (which I am not well studied on) and reading the comments here. Thus you can take everything I say with a grain of salt, this is more a caution and collection of sense, hopefully common sense than thorough research.

First, I'd be interested in knowing what else Gazzo was interested in posting.

Second, I find it very likely that the book was not written, or at least not initially compiled within a period close to the publication. With most books, in my experience, they get pieced together over time. If you look at the works by Marlo as an example his notes over years were gradually gathered together and then published, but they took the form of notes initially. Thus, I find it highly likely that at least some of the book was written well before 1901. What wouldn't surprise me in the least is that it was written or at least drafted in some sort much earlier and then completed in a relatively short time period, possibly hastily. This might or might not fit with the objective of making money.

Third, I don't think the notion that it takes time and money to make money off a book necessarily dismisses the notion that one might make money by writing a book. On the contrary, I think there is a distinct lack of understanding regarding how much you make writing a book and how long it takes to produce. Likewise, I think that if the book was already mostly created and would simply require the assembly of various notes taken over a period of time the process would come much more quickly and the mindset of the author could easily be "I've got this all here, I might as well make some money off it, I could use the money".

Fourth, I don't think we can take the statement "if it sells it will accomplish the primary motive of the author, as he need the money" to be "I am in immient need of money. I'm speaking here from personal experience, I know several months before I need money that I will need money, at least in most cases. Say you had what is essentially a book you compiled and you lose your job. You are aware that you'll need to find a new source of income, thus you could consider writing the book which is nearly done anyway and releasing it, possibly to buy some time, possibly to start a new career aside from whatever you were doing before. There are any number of reasons you might "need the money", in fact it would be much like the possible actions
of Pratt suggested earlier in this thread. Namely, he had something at his disposal and he decided to make use of it at a time when he was "down on his luck" so to speak.

Fifth, I do not think this author fits the profile of someone who was in any way wealthy. Along these lines, I don't think it fits the profile of someone who is working a steady job that is reasonably profitable at the time. As I see it there are two possible motives behind the preface. First, a sort of honesty explained above. Second, total sarcasm. Perhaps it is just me, but I don't see someone who is comfortably off and not totally sarcastic writing this statement. Granted, you can't rule out the possibility, but for me personally, I deem it unlikely.

Sixth, I think one of the most interesting questions is "why did he write it?" I personally think the view that he was some kind of enthusiast (I'll get into this later), already had the material together and sought to benefit from it for the sake of convenience along with a need that was perhaps not imminent makes some of the best sense.

Seventh, regarding the authorship, I find the case for multiple authors very weak, though the possibility of multiple contributors quite another matter. The issue is in the style of writing, which I consider consistent enough to suggest a single author. (On the other hand, a separate author solely for the second section is another possibility, particularly with regard to the notion that one person wrote it, but someone else contributed the second section (or vice versa)). I find the single author theory quite plausible on the basis of the statements themselves "published by the author", a single title, and the statements within the preface referring to the writer. While these can all be faked I find it unlikely that they were. I even consider the second portion to come from the same author in part due to the familiarity with the material in both sections. Not impossible without it, but close cooperation would seem very necessary for the process to function. Adding a second author also complicates the process, makes the trail more messy, raises questions of crediting, of the illustrations from both parts etc. Ultimately then, I consider it most likely, nearly certain that we are talking about a single author (again, this says nothing for contributors).

Eighth, any book requires revision of the text and any revision can leave errors. I recently saw a book that went to press from a major publishing house that had an error on the cover which is a pretty big deal, so I don't think that the presence of errors does anything to indicate a lack of editors. Simply based on writing experience and examining the writing of other authors I find it highly likely that the author would have had someone else read over the book prior to publishing it. This is not the same as hiring an editor which is a completely different matter especially given the limited market of a book of this nature. Given either of the earlier stated motives I find the notion that a professional editor was hired highly suspect and unlikely.

Ninth, I don't subscribe to the "super cheat" theory at all. I don't think Erdnase profile fits that of a cheat very well. Having made this remark I'm not suggesting he didn't
gamble and I'm not suggesting he didn't cheat at one time or another, I am suggesting that he wasn't what I would consider a professional cheat, that he obtained his livelihood in this manner. I think often we tend to take either extreme and this may not be wise. There are simply too many reasons why portraying Erdnase as a professional cheat doesn't fit, one of the easiest is the question of money. If he needed money, this isn't a good way to get it, if he didn't need the money but he was a cheat then why did he write the book? Next, there is the issue of the content. In my view based on a wide range of experience and ideas, knowing a multitude of cheating techniques as well as magic techniques doesn't fit the profile of a professional cheater at all. Far more likely, he was a card enthusiast, little more and little less, by which I mean that he might have cheated on a couple of occasions (this could help to establish some experience), but not extensively and not professionally. Likewise, he was probably not a major magician of any sort though again it is possible, likely I would say, that he had performed some tricks from time to time. He is evidently familiar with magic material too familiar in my view not to have some association with magic, though I highly doubt this was in a full time professional position. In terms of cards I am nearly totally convinced that his interest was that of an enthusiast rather than a worker.

Some have argued for the perfection of the Erdnase methods. I disagree on two accounts. First, I simply don't agree the methods are the most expedient in many situations. Second, I don't think a lot of students accurately portray the work but rather elevate it to a status beyond what it is, reading a lot into it that isn't present. The text is notoriously absent of subtleties, the descriptions are really not terribly good (possibly a testament to the writing ability rather than the card handling ability, hard to say). Often I think we start working with material, modify it a little, then modify it some more and make it something good, then go back and say "you're supposed to do it this way", then credit the author who never said any such thing. I really don't think we can accurately do that and I am definitely not convinced that Erdnase was some superb and superbly brilliant card handler. Clearly he contributed a lot and worked a lot with cards, but beyond that I remain skeptical.

Tenth, I think the subject of Mr. Smith is most interesting in the puzzle. First, I don't think we should discount the possibility that he might not have illustrated it, but I find that possibility remote due primarily to the crediting at the beginning of the text and the fact that there is apparently no other illustrator by that name whom we are aware of. This brings us on to his account with which I am not intimately familiar, but I find several points particularly interesting and some almost useless. In the useless category, I'd start with the weather, it's too easy to blur together various memories and conjure memories here. I'd also question a number of details regarding the physical description among other things. The points I feel are most worth noting are those that would stand out. In other words, this individual did hundreds of jobs, what things will make this one different? The issue is that you are far more likely to remember unique experiences than familiar ones. With this in mind, the hands and focus on accuracy rather than artistic merit would be a good start. I find it unlikely that most of his other
clients were asking for either of these things so they are probably accurate. Now regarding photographs and the idea of tracing them, I find this so unlikely that I’d dismiss it almost entirely for a number of reasons. I consulted a relative who is an artist and has studied this sort of thing extensively. When I raised the issue with him he immediately stated that it would be a bad idea to trace photographs of the hands as it would give you an unnatural look, he talked about a “flat” look, he said sketching from photographs would be the way to go if you were to go from photographs. He assures me that the upper bound on how long it would take a skilled artist is 15 minutes per illustration, this is based on his own abilities and the abilities of many artists and instructors he knows. He gave me the example that one of his instructors for what he called “life drawing” gives 20 minute demos in which he will sketch a face or something similar and he is explaining the process as he goes, meaning he could do it quicker. When prompted he informed me that hands are slightly easier than the face but not a huge amount. He suggested it was unlikely that it would take longer than 15 minutes each, definitely no longer than 20, probably no less than 10 to get an extremely accurate depiction. Contrary to what others might state, the illustrations in the book are not particularly good or accurate. They serve the purpose but are certainly not exemplary for the most part. Given that the artist recollects doing sketches then going to ink them I find it unlikely that photographs were used. While it is possible that he might have used them, I find the accuracy of his memory on this point which would be somewhat different than usual, fairly accurate, so I’d say that you could all but dismiss the idea of there being photographs when you account for the artist’s testimony, the logistics, and the cost.

Next, I find the comment made by the individual that he was a reformed gambler quite interesting. As I mentioned earlier, I would suspect based on the work and a number of other considerations that he probably had contact with both the magic world and the gambling world, but was neither a professional cheat nor magician. I’d liken this in many senses to the fact that Walter Irving Scott dabbled in magic but would have been totally unknown within the world of magic. On the other hand, the likelihood that Erdnase was a gambler (note the difference between a gambler and a cheat) as quite another matter, most notably due to the testimonial of the artist. Again, this is something that would stand out, I doubt he meets any reformed gamblers in his regular cycle, and the interest in gambling and its lure comes across in the writing. The difference between being a gambler and a cheater also explains a difference in need for money, you can get money as a cheat, you can't necessarily as a gambler, you're just as likely to lose it. (I think you'll find that the preface heavily bolsters this viewpoint. "To all lovers of card games it should prove interesting, and as a basis of card entertainment it is practically inexhaustible...it may enable the skilled in deception to take a post-graduate course in the highest and most artistic breaches of his vocation." Note, we actually don’t know about those who are the deceivers, we assume they are cheats, they could be magicians, but that seems unlikely. However, note the statement regarding the "artistic branches of his vocation". Again, I assert very heavily that this was the interest of Erdnase himself, more of an artistic study than a practical one and the practical application only being related as it concerned the context for the artistic.
Simply stated, he was an enthusiast, his interest was sleight of hand with cards, as
with anyone he would have had interest and experience outside of that, but as the
material relates to him, this was the foundation and I think you'll find as you read the
book that this is the type of person who would write it, study it etc.)

Likewise, the recollection of the individual's name as "Andrews", coupled with other
evidence to suggest this is the case is quite likely accurate(note, we still have to explain
why he used the pseudonym, which makes for another interesting question).

I find many details of the setting for the meeting questionable. Unless the place was an
excessive dump in which case I think he would have remember it, or palatial, in which
case I think he would have remembered it, I doubt many details of the room can be
trusted. Likewise, I don't think we can really trust that the room wasn't heated or given
the normal treatment, whatever that was, for such a hotel. If there was ice on the
walls, he would have remembered, recalling that it was a little cold could have a lot to
do with personal feeling and not setting.

The presentation of a few tricks is interesting, again it implies the author's
involvement with magic.

One thing that stands out here. I find it unlikely that he lived nearby and rented a hotel
room to protect his identity. There are a number of reasons for this. First, any lack of
habitation in the room would have stood out (this isn't a strong argument). Second, he
said he would go ink it and then come back, presumably over a course of two weeks.
Now apparently he didn't go to various locations but continued to return to the hotel.
It's not like he would have called up a local number in Chicago to say "I'm done and
want to show you the pictures I can meet you in 2 hours" in those days. In other words,
it seems like Erdnase was probably spending his down time at the hotel, while if he
lived nearby he would have gone there when he wasn't meeting the artist. This just
doesn't fit, though it does cause us to wonder what exactly he was doing for those two
weeks while the pictures were being made. It is likely that he might have been working
on the book at the time, meeting with people etc. and setting up meetings with the
artist say at specific times (for example each evening). Frankly, again, for someone
who needs the money renting a hotel room for 2 weeks doesn't seem very economical,
again, why the big need to hide your identity like that, I'm sure there were other places
they could have met.

A couple notes here. The timeframe could be off, his apparent recollection was a
couple weeks but this is one of those points that is likely to get confused over 40 years,
it won't stand out in his mind, so it could have been much shorter. Another point I
don't think you can trust from someone who made thousands of illustrations in his
day is the number. A hundred might seem high, but I don't think we have sufficient
grounds to question it...with one exception. There is the question of the difference in
drawings (two or three sessions over several months as suggested by Mr. Kaufmann
really doesn't fit with the testimony) and more notably the placement of copyrights.
In regards to naming the apparent relative of Mr. Andrews. This would stand out, hence why he would remember it...with one exception, he could be confusing two separate instances, still, I think that connection seems like a good one.

Eleventh, the question I mentioned earlier, why the secrecy, why the pseudonym? The first option that comes up is the issue of perhaps being somewhat ashamed of the work, this might reflect well for a reformed gambler. Might have lost a lot of money gambling, reformed himself but found himself needing money and so decided to publish some material, but didn’t want others who knew of his gambling past to know that he was profiting from that side of things again. This is just one of the many possibilities, but I don’t think we should dismiss the possibility that there is a certain shame, that perhaps he doesn’t really want the work associated with his name. Of course this raises the question of why he would use Erdnase if Andrews was his name? I think this might be illustrated psychologically in a sort of dual feeling for the work. He is an enthusiast, thus he is clearly proud of his accomplishments. He is a reformed gambler, someone who might have had problems in the past and his shame doesn’t have to do with himself, but with how others (perhaps a wife or kids) might perceive it. Thus, he gets a sort of dual satisfaction, the easy association of the work, which is his passion, to his name, but at the same time distance for the sake of those who know him and might be disappointed in him. That’s the first possibility. The second is the Sanders reference cited by Mr. Alexander. I must admit, I don’t give Mr. Alexander’s suspect much credibility based purely on the name without even looking at any of the other details, until you mention that this guy was interested in anagrams, that to me changes everything. It can be something clever and fun to do, a puzzle of sorts, and maybe he wants his name associated with it, maybe he doesn’t. I think the big issue with a candidate like Mr. Alexander’s is "why did he write it?" Many of the earlier options make more sense. Then there are issues of a lack of professionalism within the dealings with the artist etc. At that point you’d also want to match a physical description, I can’t recall if Mr. Alexander did that or not. One thing a candidate that was playing around with anagrams has going for him aside from the possibilities of the name, is the curiosity. This was certainly a curious person who worked with cards enthusiastically and came up with the material. Not necessarily brilliant by any means, but curious, someone who would fiddle. There’d be a lot of holes left to fill, but that’s a possibility. Again, let’s ask, why not use your real name? As a gambler, you might not want to get the reputation of a cheat, so there is that possible reason for withholding your name. I’d be interested in hearing other theories. One more might be the association with the upper class, it wouldn’t be considered a high brow pursuit if you will. I think ultimately from what I can tell it boils down to potentially one of two things, possibly a combination. First, he was concerned about the public associating the work to him. Second, he wanted to make it a puzzle, something fun for him.

Twelfth, why didn’t he claim the money later on? Along those lines we have the issue of the attempted reprinting under a different name, why did it change? Here I find an interesting contradiction (note. I could be misunderstanding the situation so someone
can correct me if that's the case). If he is around and stops them from giving credit to a non-existant author, why wouldn't he also come forward to claim the money? At some point he didn't claim the money, there needs to be an explanation for that. Looking back to my earlier profiling, I'd suggest, either the monies are so little that they aren't worth the trouble, or he no longer needs the money. Again, think back to the earlier profile I did of someone who is not primarily a cheater or a magician, he is perhaps down on his luck and tries to make some money selling this book, probably without much success, he moves on, he finds another source of income, he no longer needs the money so he doesn't worry about it much. Alternatively, he moves away, there isn't a lot of money anyway, and collecting is too much trouble. Third, he dies or is otherwise unable to collect (prison etc.) It would help me greatly if someone to clarify when it was that he apparently stopped collecting the money and most significantly, whether it was before or after the attempted printing under another name. If it was after, there isn't a huge problem, if it was before, we have a huge problem to address.

Twelfth, this is another point regarding his character, again, I am hugely advocating that he was mainly a card enthusiast, maybe a gambler, maybe not, almost certainly not a cheat, almost certainly not a professional magician, but also someone who is acquainted with cheating and someone who is acquainted with magic. I'd like to quote from the introduction "Some of us are too timid to risk a dollar". Interesting reference here, a seeming inclusion of himself, maybe just a literary device, maybe not. He apparently contradicts the statement later on by saying he was cheated, then again, that could be one of the rare occasions he took the risk. To further support this assertion we have the statement "Some one has remarked that there is but one pleasure in life greater than winning..." Again, note that he isn't making this claim but attributing it to someone else, almost as though it was explained to him.

I find references in the next paragraph interesting as well, starting with the reference to the colored attendant in the "club room" (note the quotations, speaking as though it might not be much of a club room) and also the reference to poker. An interesting question here, the colored man's statement was "Don't trouble 'bout no two hen's, Boss." My question is, who is he talking to? It could be a fabricated story, but it doesn't sound that way to me. It could have been passed down or related to Erdnase, but I have to wonder, was it something said to him? Was it something he overheard? If so, who was the statement being made to? I think this whole situation is worth some investigation, the idea of that setting, the game, the attendant etc. Another interesting reference here is to the stock exchange, and the comment about manipulation vs. speculation, is this a statement of experience or observation? What kind of person would say this? Also, there is the statement "so to make both ends meet", I find this interesting, I was always under the impression that it's "ends meat". Another point here, "and incidentally a good living". This makes me question upper class origins for our author as I find it unlikely that he'd consider cheating as providing a good living. By the standards of the middle class, perhaps, but by the standards of the upper class? No. Honestly, in this situation, in this paragraph he sounds to me like an observer not a practitioner.
Again, the next paragraph might change things, maybe observation, maybe not. I'll go on to quote a larger section from the next paragraph that may shed more light:

"We have not been impelled to our task by the qualms of a guilty conscience, nor through the hope of reforming the world. Man cannot change his temperament, and few cards to control it."

Depending on whether you read this as an observation or a personal sentiment changes everything.

"We have neither grievance against the fraternity nor sympathy for so called "victims"."

Again, clearly some kind of experience, but is it one of observation or involvement?

"A varied experience has impressed us with the belief that all men who play for any considerable stakes are looking for the best of it."

Again, interesting comment on the "varied experience".

"though we sorrowfully admit that our own early knowledge was acquired at the usual excessive cost to the uninitiated".

So he lost money, the question becomes, what followed?

"as in this case the entire conduct must be in perfect harmony with the usual procedure of the game. The slightest action that appears irregular, the least effort to distract attention, or the first unnatural movement, will create suspicion..."

This is an interesting statement, simply because it seems a bit romantic to me. Romantic the way magicians romanticize the world of card cheats.

Obviously by later accounts he has had some experience, but again, it largely appears romantic, more like Vernon's pursuit of the field I think than someone whose profession is the question...or at least that is how I read it and judge it based on the circumstantial evidence. I'd further bolster this viewpoint by statements like "the expert professional disdains their assistance...", not to say that the statements don't have some validity, but rather it comes across as the pursuit of the romantic. Likewise for some later comments.

Fourteenth, is the issue of not renewing the patent, why not? Several possibilities. One, he didn't know he had to or should. Certainly he wouldn't have received any notice due to an address that wasn't valid anymore. Second, he was dead. Third, he didn't care. It's a question worth asking though...then again. I'm not sure how much an
explanation would benefit us.

Fifteenth is the interesting question of the market for the book. Honestly, I don’t think he particularly had one. I think it makes more sense from most perspectives that he wanted to sell it to whoever would buy it. He saw an opening (he remarks on the lack of books on the subject), he had seen the sales of other books by reformed gamblers, he hoped to do the same, he might not have had much of a concept of the marketing necessary. The issue of the advertising in Sphinx also has another side to it. True, no matter what, he had the books for some time before the ads came out (possibly at the suggestion of a magician friend?), but you should account for the delay between the time when the ads were submitted and when the publication came out. As everyone should know, you typically have a month or so, sometimes more, lag time. Either way, the question is interesting, what did he plan and what did he do? Selling to gambling houses might have been one avenue he intended to pursue. Another possibility is that he became otherwise occupied and unable to promote the book for a couple months after the publication. Ultimately, it doesn’t sound like he was a marketing genius. I think this point would be very telling.

Sixteenth, the question of this character in terms of education. I am not at all convinced or even persuaded that he was university educated, I see little reason to believe that. No reason to suggest that it isn’t the case, simply no reason to suggest that it must be the case. He is clearly intelligent. The book is mostly quite appealing, well written, and concise. This doesn’t necessarily imply any special education though so it’s an uncertainty. I’d point out that an author can write within a persona, other writings don’t have to match this one in style.

Seventeenth, this is the interesting question of people who apparently knew Erdnase. Apparently, someone was introduced to Erdnase after a performance, I’d be interested in knowing more about that. Granted, it proves nothing, it could be a joke, but it is worth looking into, partially for a physical description, partially in terms of the timeline, which is quite important. There was also that magic shop owner or whoever it was that was mentioned. How did they meet? What was their association? Could it be that they met after the writing of the initial book and the planned sequel was an idea put forward at that time? Just random ideas.

Once again returning to the illustrations, I must disagree that they are so incredibly accurate, a quick look for example at the pinky in figure 2 indicates otherwise. In talking with an artist about the subject they said for anyone who is good proportions etc. are a non-issue. Now, this serves little point except perhaps that another artist, perhaps Erdnase himself, was involved, as well as the reality that we might glorify the work more than it deserves. Alternatively, this might be more evidence of a relatively short period being necessary for the sketching, again, ideas.

Something of note is the organization, which is quite good, methodical at worst I’d say. which might tell something about the character of the author.
Finally, I don't accept the conman theory very strongly, simply because I don't buy the character as fitting into that mold. The author doesn't strike me as a con man. This is purely speculation of course, but I think part of the issue revolves around the question of money, he doesn't strike me as someone who is thus motivated and thus running around pulling cons to gain said money. Likewise, I don't buy that he was of the upper class due to his viewpoint on the sums involved and on the money when he refers to purchases etc. Added to this is the apparent company he kept, middle class seems much more logical. However, on the subject of the con man, if that was his primarily occupation it might explain some of the need for money and inability to gain it quickly in other means, it also might explain a methodical approach to some extent.

I feel the Andrews connection is pretty strong, only in rare occasions like the Alexander case would I consider otherwise and even then, skeptically, I also would be very likely to dismiss any reference to andrews without the E. S. without some kind of strong explanation, hence doubt in the Milton Franklin case, but these are of course merely ideas, musings and conjecture, hardly hard analysis born of constant research. I do repeat though, I'd be interested in hearing what more Gazzo has to say on the subject.

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**Guest | 08/14/06 01:01 PM | link | filter**

Originally posted by Todd Karr:

*Hi, everyone: I've posted my latest research on conman E. S. Andrews on [Magical Past-Times](http://www.decoder.net/magicalpast-times/)*

*See also the announcement of this new material in the Buzz section!*  
*Thanks!*

**THIS PAGE** with a listing of the Charles Brandon Commercial Co., from an 1899 Denver city directory may be of some interest to those following Todd Karr's research. [Note: there is no listing for Charles Brandon or his company in the 1910 Denver city directory.]

**THIS PAGE**, from the same directory, may be of even greater interest.

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**Guest | 08/14/06 01:13 PM | link | filter**

I was reading Drey's comments until I got to:

*First, I don't think we should discount the possibility that he [Marshall Smith] might not have illustrated it*  

*We should completely discount the possibility that Marshall Smith did not illustrate*
EATCT. If we can't trust the first hand account of someone who remembers the event, then we can't trust any data at all, and there is no sense in trying to do anything other than read the book.

Guest | 08/14/06 08:04 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Bill Mullins:

**THIS PAGE, from the same directory, may be of even greater interest.**

Bill, thanks for posting this. It not only shows Edwin S. Andrews, the C&NW Travelling Agent who I've been tracking in Denver (he was there from roughly 1895-October 1901... I don't have my detailed notes in front of me), but also another "E. S. Andrews" who is listed as a "collr" which I am guessing is "collector" and therefore possibly Todd's candidate. His address, 1750 Stout, is likely a boarding house and might be so listed in the directory. Also, since this is the 1899 Directory, perhaps he was still there for the 1900 census would would give us more information on him...

Guest | 08/14/06 09:04 PM | link | filter

There is an Edwin S. Andrews listed in the 1900 Federal Census living in Denver. He is 41 years old. He lists his occupation as a traveling agent for the Railroad. It also shows him to be married with several children. In addition it states they he has been married for 17 years.

Guest | 08/14/06 09:40 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Dan Mindo:

There is an Edwin S. Andrews listed in the 1900 Federal Census living in Denver. He is 41 years old. He lists his occupation as a traveling agent for the Railroad. It also shows him to be married with several children. In addition it states they he has been married for 17 years.

Yes, that is Edwin Sumner Andrews (1859-1922, I believe, not looking at my notes). I have tracked him in all the available census records, city directories (Chicago pre 1895, Denver 1895-1901, Oak Park, Ill 1902, San Francisco and other California cities thereafter) and train records I have been able to find and have a very good time line on him. He makes a very nice circumstantial fit to the author's profile: right age, approximately correct stature, moves to Chicago in the late fall of 1901, leave in February of 1903 when the price on the book was cut in half by Atlas Novelty Company just a few blocks north of his Oak Park residence, his wife's maiden name (Seely) the same as Dalrymple's mother's maiden name, etc... You'll find much information on him in earlier postings on this thread. But the case in his favor remains entirely circumstantial at this point...
Originally posted by Richard Hatch:

Bill, thanks for posting this. It not only shows Edwin S. Andrews, the C&NW Travelling Agent who I’ve been tracking in Denver (he was there from roughly 1895-October 1901... I don’t have my detailed notes in front of me), but also another "E. S. Andrews" who is listed as a "collr" which I am guessing is "collector" and therefore possibly Todd’s candidate.

Page 97 of the directory is a list of abbreviations, and yes, "collr" is collector.

His address, 1750 Stout, is likely a boarding house and might be so listed in the directory.

The Sanborn Fire Insurance MAP for 1903 shows a hotel ("hotel office", I believe it says, probably for the St. Nicholas Hotel) at that address. It must have been a residence hotel. Note that the Albany Hotel is at the southwest end of the block. Edwin Andrews resided there in 1898, according to the CITY DIRECTORY for that year (Karr’s E. S. Andrews is not on the scene, if it was in fact him.) Likewise 1897. Neither is there in 1896.

In 1896, neither is there. In the 1900 listing, Edwin still lives on Lafayette, and E.S. is not listed.

Charles Brandon’s collection agency/company shows up only in the 1899 directory. He’s not in 1898 at all, and in 1900 there is a Charles Brandon listed as a teamster. No way to tell if it’s the same guy.

In 1901, Edwin S. is still there, still living on Lafayette. No Charles Brandon as an individual or a company.

In 1903, neither Edwin S. nor E. S. Andrews is listed, but there is a "Brandon Loan and Collection Co."

Also, since this is the 1899 Directory, perhaps he was still there for the 1900 census would would give us more information on him...

Edwin S. Andrews (Hatch’s candidate) is listed in the 1900 CENSUS as being at 1750 Stout, on the corner of 18th and Stout. This is the same address, the office of the St. Nicholas Hotel, that E. S. Andrews (who may be Karr’s candidate) lived at just a year earlier.
If there weren't completely separate listings for Edwin S. and E.S. Andrews in the 1899 city directory, you could make a reasonable case that Hatch's candidate and Karr's candidate were the same person -- the coincidences of geography in 1897 - 1900 Denver are just too strong. But it is possible that the St. Nicholas and the Albany Hotels are both managed out of 1750 Stout, and share a common business address.

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**Guest | 08/23/06 08:38 AM | link | filter**

Originally posted by Richard Hatch:

*Richard Hood wrote Martin Gardner in 1946 that his father, Edwin C. Hood (founder of the famous H. C. Evans gambling supply company) knew the author of the book quite well when the author was living in Chicago in the mid-1890s.*

Was there a real person, H. C. Evans? Or is Edwin C. Hood <=> H. C. Andrews a reversal-pseudonym, a la Erdnase?

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**Guest | 08/23/06 02:32 PM | link | filter**

Bill, according to Whaley's MAN WHO WAS ERDNASE, there was no individual named "H. C. Evans" involved with this firm, that was the name that Edwin C. Hood
chose for his gambling supply business, using the same initials as his own, but reversed. If Hood and Erdnase were intimates, as claimed by son Richard, perhaps Hood's reversal inspired Erdnase's search for an appropriate pseudonym. Certainly it indicates that such reversals and wordplay were not unknown in that industry.

I have to date only been able to obtain one other McKinney publication, a children's book issued the same year as THE EXPERT. It was printed, not published, by McKinney. I have no indication that McKinney ever acted as a publisher (with financial interest in, or editorial control over a publication), rather than a printer. Which is not to say that he might not have taken some work on special terms to help a friend, rather than requiring full payment in advance or upon completion. We know that his partner Wm. Galloway had an interest in gambling and kept a copy of the book (now in the Jay Marshall collection). Edwin S. Andrews grew up on a farm in Minnesota where his nearest neighbor was an Irish immigrant named Patrick McKinney and the printer was the son of Irish immigrants with a brother named Patrick McKinney who worked for him. But I think that is likely a coincidence...

Guest | 08/23/06 03:23 PM | link | filter

I have long wondered, but wondered again since reading "The Vernon Touch" and seeing Vernons statements about his father bringing home a copy of EATCT but telling Vernon he was to young to read it how Vernon could have such specific memories about the event and still folks can't find any record of the Canadian copyright for the book.

Vernon states that when he saw it in a bookshop window, he knew right away what it was and that he had to have it.

Knowing what it was also supports his memories of having seen it when his father showed it to him.

Many researchers have looked (most recently a lengthy search by David Ben) for any hint of this copyright being registered with what was then the Ministry of Agriculture, but none have found the slightest footprint of Erdnase.

Vernons memories are very specific, and are twofold, his father bringing the copy home, and he himself seeing a copy in a bookstore window and knowing what it was.

I wonder if Vernon was influenced and his memory clouded over time by the implied Canadian copyright in the front of the book, or if perhaps a piece of paper containing the handwriting of Erdnase sits, undiscovered or perhaps misfiled somewhere in Ottawa.

Being in Canada, and perhaps not so inclined to conceal his identity, he may have even used his real name........naaahhhhh!

I'm sure Chris has already looked but I sure hope somebody is going over Jay
Marshall's collection with a fine tooth comb for things Erdnase prior to even thinking about selling any of it, perhaps for something even Jay didn't know he had. It might be that it's from someplace just like Jay's archives that we'll get our next clue.

Guest | 09/17/06 11:26 PM | link | filter

this is the best forum on the net ever. relating to anything. period.

Guest | 09/17/06 11:44 PM | link | filter

Drey wrote:

Fourteenth, is the issue of not renewing the patent, why not? Several possibilities. One, he didn't know he had to or should. Certainly he wouldn't have received any notice due to an address that wasn't valid anymore. Second, he was dead. Third, he didn't care. It's a question worth asking though...then again, I'm not sure how much an explanation would benefit us.

The book was copyrighted, not patented. There is a big difference. The government does not send you a notice to tell you when your copyright has expired. You are expected to take care of those details, yourself. All of this is spelled out in the forms that you fill out when you file for a copyright.

Guest | 09/18/06 02:05 AM | link | filter

could vernon seeing eatct in a shop window not have been a second hand shop?

Guest | 09/18/06 04:10 PM | link | filter

In David Bens book about Vernon he says that the book that Vernons father mentioned was not Erdnase but another book on gambling that was illustrated with photos. That would explain why the copywrite for Erdnase isn't in the records, may not have been copywrited in Canada.
Steve V

Guest | 09/24/06 06:09 PM | link | filter

A nice first edition copy of Erdnase just sold on eBay for $2,677.87. Here's a link: Erdnase First Edition on eBay
This may be a record for a copy without other features (such as Vernon signatures, etc.).
I think that everybody (including myself) is guessing what Vernon might have seen in the window.

Although false memories are commonplace as we all get older, Vernon told this story more than once during his life, and pretty much told it the same way each time.

I tend to agree with Ben's (and others) assessment that it likely wasn't EATCT that Vernon saw that day, although I have nothing beyond a gut feeling to back that thought up.

The latest auction for a first edition copy just ended at $3400.

The latest auction for a first edition copy just ended at $3400.

Anyone asking Vernon's Son about this?

I wonder if anybody can comment on Gazzo's thoughts regarding Fig.69, and the heart shape on the back of the hand. (or Gazzo if you happen by!)

Specifically, what does Gazzo think it might mean or indicate, and why does he think "69" has importance here as well.
It occurs to me that in fact, very few people could have seen the heart in question. Having read Dick Hatch’s post mentioning Gazzo’s thoughts earlier in this thread, I looked in my Powner edition, no heart.....I looked in my KC Card edition, no heart.......I looked in my Drake paperback edition, no heart. I find the heart in my Canick 2002 edition, which faithfully re-creates the first edition. From what I can see, this only leaves the Drake hardcovers in Green (with the hands), the Plum cloth cover, and the Blue cloth cover that the heart could possibly be seen in. And in the first edition of course.

When exactly does the heart disappear from the book?

I have to tell you, looking at that heart gave me the chills. It’s probably the most completely out of place element in the entire book. A heart, plain as day on the back of a gambler’s hand. I would be inclined to agree that it means something beyond a drawing aid.

For folks who have any of the Drake hardcovers above, can you confirm if the heart is in your edition?

Also, I don’t have a Flemming paperback edition. If anybody does, could you look and see if the heart is in any of those editions?

I say again, I get chills looking at Fig.69 and the heart on the hand. It’s a shame more folks can’t get a look at it, I’m sure it would drum up even more thoughts as to what it could possibly mean.

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**Guest** | 11/23/06 11:11 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

silverking,

I cannot comment on the heart, other than to say that it is indeed striking. It is also one of the reasons that I would recommend the facsimile edition of EATCT to anyone that is really curious about the identity of Erdnase. There are so many details that are either unintelligible or completely missing from many of the later editions. I was shocked at how much better the quality actually was when I first opened my copy.

Also, I realize that the Erdnase being a pseudonym for Milton Frankly Andrews has already been brought to question many times; however, while reading from "The Man that was Erdnase" over the past week, there was one particular fact missing from Busby’s book that struck me as being particularly important. Erdnase has often been credited with being the first person to utilize a close-up pad. Not only did M.D. Smith confirm this (I believe this is correct, but I do not have most of the Erdnase research here with me), but the pad/table is shown in many of the drawings within EATCT. Yet,
I cannot find a single source that describes Milton Franklin Andrews using a similar pad or table.

It could have been a detail that was simply overlooked by many of Andrew's acquaintances, but I still think it is interesting to note.

Guest | 11/24/06 06:50 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by daniel1113:
Erdnase has often been credited with being the first person to utilize a close-up pad. Not only did M.D. Smith confirm this (I believe this is correct, but I do not have most of the Erdnase research here with me), but the pad/table is shown in many of the drawings within EATCT. Yet, I cannot find a single source that describes Milton Franklin Andrews using a similar pad or table.

A close-up pad is a magician's tool, not a gambler's. If you could find reference to him using a close-up pad, that would be strong evidence that he was a magician. But if you found explicit evidence that he practiced conjuring, that would be a much stronger argument for him being Erdnase than the other arguments offered to date.

Larry Horowitz | 11/24/06 11:01 PM | link | filter

While I have always believed our author was a magician, gamblers were known to travel the trains with portable card tables, which could be rested on the knees of players. These could very much resemble close-up pads.

Guest | 11/25/06 04:27 AM | link | filter

As a devoted fan of Martin Gardner, I was most disappointed in the book about Erdnase. Martin had a distinctive and beautifully lucid writing style that disappeared in that book. You know what they say about any animal designed by a committe. For what it is worth, my Dad who was probably more familiar with Erdnase than anyone alive, never believed for a moment that his lifelong hero and idol was a common criminal and murderer.

Guest | 11/25/06 09:42 AM | link | filter

I think Dai has many today who would agree with his assessment that Milton Franklin Andrews and Erdnase were two different people.

From the pen of Andrews:
"When I was a little boy in knee pants I read dime novels the same as most crazy little
boys do with the result that I committed a few thefts to raise money to go west and be a cowboy and hunt buffaloes"

From the pen of Erdnase:
"We betray no confidences in the publishing of this book, having only ourselves to thank for what we know. Our tuition was received in the cold school of experience. We've started in with the trusting nature of a fledgling and a calm assurance born of overweening faith in our own potency"

The known writings of Andrews are almost to a word simplistic examples of mundane thoughts.
The known writings of Erdnase aren't.


Guest | 11/25/06 10:18 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by silverking:
...The known writings of Andrews are almost to a word simplistic examples of mundane thoughts.
The known writings of Erdnase aren't.

Interesting assessment. Would you offer a quote or citation from the known "Andrews"?


Guest | 11/25/06 11:35 AM | link | filter

A question to David Alexander: You published an very interesting article a number of years ago on a new candidate for Erdnase -- W. E. Sanders. But I haven't heard anything more about him since. Do you still believe he is the most viable candidate? Have you or anyone else uncovered any more evidence in his favor?


Guest | 11/25/06 11:36 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by Jonathan Townsend:

Originally posted by silverking:
[b]...The known writings of Andrews are almost to a word simplistic examples of mundane thoughts.
The known writings of Erdnase aren't.

Interesting assessment. Would you offer a quote or citation from the known "Andrews"? [/b]


Guest | 11/25/06 01:14 PM | link | filter
Originally posted by David Alexander:
The entire case that Andrews was Erdnase rests on the word of a supposed retired gambler, Pratt. Nothing else. The argument is circular.

Exactly. Although the book is interesting and informative regarding MFA and his supposed crimes, the link to Erdnase is very weak, and completely non-existent with the removal of Pratt's questionable statements.

Originally posted by Bob Coyne:
A question to David Alexander: You published an very interesting article a number of years ago on a new candidate for Erdnase -- W. E. Sanders. But I haven't heard anything more about him since. Do you still believe he is the most viable candidate? Have you or anyone else uncovered any more evidence in his favor?

I believe that my profile, done as an excercise in deductive logic and using the book and observations of Smith the illustrator, still stands as a reasonable description of the person who was Erdnase. Most importantly, the person who wrote the book was an educated person and an experienced writer who had a practiced writing "voice." The task was to find a candidate that fit the profile without changing the profile. That I believe I did.

The intelligence behind the writer's words belie the idea that a simple reversal of his name would shield his identity, so I do not accept the proposition that Erdnase is someone named "Andrews," although I believe that since my candidate played with anagrams when he was a child, it is well-within the realm of possibility that he used "Andrews" and a way of concealing his identity when dealing with the printer and those who bought the book, a way of protecting his prominent Montana family. Using "Andrews" on checks and the reversal of the name on the book would have been readily accepted by the printer and Smith and would have stopped anyone cold from finding out who he really was should inquiries have been made.

In the interim, I have developed other circumstantial evidence that supports my candidate - why no one in the magic community ever heard of him, etc. I even located his step-grandson and learned the two reasons why he was not doing card tricks for anyone.

And one other tidbit...my candidate's family was related to Louis Dalrymple the famous cartoonist, part of the conversation that Marshall Smith recalled having with Erdnase on that cold winter day in December, 1901.

The problem with historical research is that those unfamiliar with the work demand a "smoking gun," when, often, all that is in hand or ever will be in hand, is a most-likely
scenario, a persuasive circumstantial case that goes beyond a number of interesting coincidences.

Due to demands on my time I have not finished my research and probably won’t for a few more years but, to date, I have as yet to see any other candidate that I find more likely or persuasive than mine, although I am more than willing to be persuaded by evidence.

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Guest | 11/25/06 10:23 PM | link | filter

David, where and when was the article under discussion published in which you discuss your candidate?
I don’t have it and after reading your last post, I want it!

Jon, as David pointed out, the quote I used was from the Busby and crew book TMWWE.

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Guest | 11/26/06 12:11 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by silverking:
David, where and when was the article under discussion published in which you discuss your candidate?
I don’t have it and after reading your last post, I want it!

Cover story of the January 2000 GENII (volume 63, issue 1). An excellent and thought provoking article!

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Richard Kaufman | 11/26/06 08:27 AM | link | filter

Call the Genii office: six bucks.

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Guest | 11/26/06 12:18 PM | link | filter

The article grew out of a presentation I made at the 1999 Los Angeles Conference on Magic History. Richard asked for it, so I expanded it with the information I had at the time. I think it came in somewhere between 7,500 and 8,000 words.

I did not dwell on Milton Franklin Andrews as Erdnase because I think Dick Hatch’s research has thoroughly demolished that idea, notwithstanding that there was NO evidence other than Pratt’s claim that MFA was Erdnase. From what I recall, Dick learned that it was unlikely that Pratt was what he claimed he was, so we’re left with a case of an old man “pumping up his resume,” so to speak.
What I never understood was the inability of the writers of The Man Who Was Erdnase to recognize the circularity of their argument, which seems painfully obvious.

Guest | 11/26/06 01:15 PM | link | filter

How about the idea that Andrews itself was the false name used by the writer and he just played off the false name and his real name is nothing simular to either Andrews or Erdnase?
Steve V

Guest | 11/26/06 01:54 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Steve V:

How about the idea that Andrews itself was the false name used by the writer and he just played off the false name and his real name is nothing simular to either Andrews or Erdnase?
Steve V

If I understand your post, Steve, that was my point. While "S.W. Erdnase" is "E.S. Andrews" backwards, it is also an anagram of "W.E. Sanders," my candidate. Erdnase clearly wanted his identity hidden, so he used a false name, but if he wanted to remain anonymous, he would have used the pen name, by "A Refored Gambler," or some such. He didn't.

Using the name "Andrews" on his checks, after pointing out the reversal of his name on the book to the printer, allowed him to work at a distance with the printer or anyone else, paying by check. Since it was around the Holidays, it seems unlikely he would have stayed in Chicago for the full typsetting of the book since that would take too long as it was set on a Monotype or Linotype machine.

If I recall correctly, the book wasn't copyrighted until February of the next year, a process that required two copies of the finished, bound book. Certainly not a project that was done in a hurry.

Of course, his real identity could not be penetrated because those people only knew him as "Andrews."

I don't believe anyone connected with the book's production knew who Erdnase really was, nor would they probably have cared since it was just another job, a guy paying to have a book printed, a vanity production.

It was probably not the first time something like that had happened at McKinney's shop. It still happens today. Most printers don't pay that much attention and just do the job and cash the check.
The Wikipedia entry on Erdnase has the following line, which was news to me:
"Research for an upcoming documentary has uncovered correspondence between noted physicists and authors Stanley Wesley Stratton and Robert Andrews Millikan on the subject of conjuring and crooked gambling. In 1896 Stratton suggested a textbook on the subject. Further evidence suggests that Millikan and Stratton hired Professor Hoffman to write the book based (partly) on notes they provided."

Sounds extremely farfetched and a likely hoax to me, but does anyone know anything more regarding this claim?

The great problem with the Wikipedia is that anyone can post anything to it and not give citations. All entries should be viewed with a careful eye.

First off, where is the evidence that either, or both, were amateur magicians?

Second, what is the evidence to support this claim? It isn't footnoted or cited, supposedly discovered by unnamed people for an upcoming "documentary" that has no reference.

If those two world-famous men (Stratton became president of M.I.T.) did this, who was their source for the material? And who was the guy paying McKinney and Smith for their work? Prof Hoffmann in disguise, all the way from England to hire a small-time printer to print a book under a false name? Please!

This is nonsense on it's face.

David Alexander writes: In the interim, I have developed other circumstantial evidence that supports my candidate - why no one in the magic community ever heard of him, etc. I even located his step-grandson and learned the two reasons why he was not doing card tricks for anyone.

That sounds very intriguing. Any chance you'll be revealing any of that new evidence any time soon? :-)

I don't have your article in front of me now, but I think you mentioned that there was more to go through in his diaries. Have you found any passages which sound like Erdnase? i.e. similarities in writing style and "voice" between Sanders and Erdnase?
Bob,

I hate to be coy about this, but I’m not in a position to reveal much detail just yet. I want to nail down a few things before I publish again.

The great problem is that old records, especially social records, simply don’t exist. My candidate was at Columbia School of Mines and belonged to a fraternity. There doesn’t seem to be any record of their social activities extant, although I haven’t gone through every edition of the Columbia school newspaper, if it still exists. It would be fantastic if there was a line in a campus newspaper about how everyone enjoyed "Willie's card tricks," which would nail it down for me.

German was a required course for mining engineers. Thomas Sawyer pointed out in his notes on Erdnase that "Erde-nase" means "Earth Nose" in German. Earth nose...mining engineer? It would be a major find to learn if there was an informal group of guys who called themselves the "Erde-nases."

Examining the papers of his fellow graduates from that year might reveal some vital information, but I do not have the time at the moment to follow that research thread.

When my biographical subject, Gene Roddenberry, was a student at Los Angeles City College in the late 1930s, he was president of a small service club, The Archons. That name would reappear decades in the future in a Star Trek story, The Return of the Archons. I only learned about it by accident when I found a single piece of paper that indicated Gene was a member and that the club existed at all. So, strange things can happen in a man's life.

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Originally posted by Richard Hatch:
The Wikipedia entry on Erdnase has the following line, which was news to me:
"Research for an upcoming documentary has uncovered correspondence between noted physicists and authors Stanley Wesley Stratton and Robert Andrews Millikan on the subject of conjuring and crooked gambling. In 1896 Stratton suggested a textbook on the subject. Further evidence suggests that Millikan and Stratton hired Professor Hoffman to write the book based (partly) on notes they provided."

Sounds extremely farfetched and a likely hoax to me, but does anyone know anything more regarding this claim?
First of all, his name is Samuel Wesley Stratton. Millikan's papers are at the Caltech Archives in Pasadena. There is a published, online finding aid [HERE](#). Stratton only appears once, in a folder of messages congratulating him on being awarded the Nobel Prize in physics.

Stratton's papers are at MIT, but there doesn't seem to be a finding aid available.

I can't find a reference to either of them having an interest in magic, card tricks, or gambling.

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**Guest** | 11/27/06 05:58 AM | link | filter

Thanks, Bill. Certainly sounds like a hoax posting to me. I'm guessing someone did a title search on "Wesley Andrews" (since "wES ANDREWS" reverses to "S. W. ERDNASEw) and found the physics textbook they co-authored in 1898 while both were at the University of Chicago and came up with this. Certainly the purported Hoffmann involvement is easily dismissed based on his own later published commentary on the book and the numerous stylistic differences between Erdnase and the many Hoffmann books, especially when the same sleights are discussed. But IF there is contemporary correspondence between the two physicists on such a topic, then the fact that both were in Chicago during the period just prior to the book's publication there in 1902 (Stratton appears to have left shortly after 1900, Millikan remained there for many years), would make them "persons of interest" on this topic.

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**Guest** | 11/27/06 06:07 AM | link | filter

Sometimes, it is better to not find out how a trick was done. An absolute mystery is better remembered than finding out it was just a thread stetched across the stage. In this respect it may be better that the mystery of Erdnase never be solved. This whole thread shows how hard many of you have worked to solve this puzzle. If his true identity were known, it would be relegated to a subject of less interest. There used to be an old radio show named "I Love a Mystery." No one loves a mystery better than magicians.

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**Guest** | 11/27/06 07:23 AM | link | filter

How much effort was expended to seek out the author back around 1920?

Wondering as this would be when the book was getting popular and the author was likely still alive to appreciate any such attention.

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**Jim Maloney** | dup1 | 11/27/06 08:27 AM | link | filter
Originally posted by Jonathan Townsend:

**How much effort was expended to seek out the author back around 1920?**

*Wondering as this would be when the book was getting popular and the author was likely still alive to appreciate any such attention.*

I’m digging through some of the magazines now, Jon. I’ll let you know what I find. I did come across this in The Magic Wand for January 1911: "To the Editor of THE MAGIC WAND.*

DEAR SIR,-Professor Hoffmanns articles, "Some Useful Card Sleights," which deal with Mr. S. W. Erdnases book, "The Expert at the Card Table" are very interesting. I have studied the book at some length, and I quite agree with the Professor, that Mr. Erdnases knowledge of card manipulation must be extensive and peculiar. Cannot Mr. Erdnase be prevailed upon to write another book on the subject? I am sure it would be greatly appreciated by the ever growing multitude of wielders of the wand.

Yours, etc.,
R. H. TOWNSEND.
Peshawar, India.*

Have any relatives in India, Jon? ;)

In other news, the English magician Graham Adams seems to have spent a lot of time studying the book, even releasing a limited amount (six copies) of his own notes entitled "Erdnase -- His Book" around 1930 or so. It doesn't seem as if he spent much time tracking down the author, though.

The November 1928 Sphinx notes the reversal of the name, and the February 1929 issues includes this note in "The Books of Yesterday" by Leo Rullman:

"The most mysterious figure in the realm of magical literature, whose one contribution to the subject is still, after twenty five years, one of the classics, is S. W. Erdnase, author of "The Expert at the Card Table." No other work, in my opinion, packs so much concrete information, of use to the manipulator of cards, as this little volume. Who was S. W. Erdnase? Very little practical information concerning him is available. The magicians do not know him. The publishers of the hook have not been in touch with him for many years, as the copyright was purchased outright, and no royalties figured in the transaction. It has been said that his real name was E. S. Andrews, which in reverse order produces the pen-name under which he wrote. Whether he was an American is not known. However, it may be noted that while he copyrighted the book in England and Canada, the holder of the American copyright is the firm of Frederick J. Drake & Company, of Chicago. The following quotation from
the preface of his book merely serves to emphasize the mystery surrounding the man whose identity has been so closely guarded: ...

-Jim

Guest | 11/27/06 11:16 AM | link | filter

There are also some of Stratton's papers (correspondence, a file regarding his appointment as a professor) in archives of the Univ. of Chicago (in the collection of William Rainey Harper). There are also some letters from Millikan in the same collection.

Guest | 11/27/06 02:57 PM | link | filter

[The November 1928 Sphinx notes the reversal of the name, and the February 1929 issues includes this note in "The Books of Yesterday" by Leo Rullman:

"The most mysterious figure in the realm of magical literature, whose one contribution to the subject is still, after twenty five years, one of the classics, is S. W. Erdnase, author of "The Expert at the Card Table." No other work, in my opinion, packs so much concrete information, of use to the manipulator of cards, as this little volume. Who was S. W. Erdnase? Very little practical information concerning him is available. The magicians do not know him. The publishers of the hook have not been in touch with him for many years, as the copyright was purchased outright, and no royalties figured in the transaction. It has been said that his real name was E. S. Andrews, which in reverse order produces the pen-name under which he wrote. Whether he was an American is not known. However, it may be noted that while he coyprighted the book in England and Canada, the holder of the American copyright is the firm of Frederick J. Drake & Company, of Chicago. The following quotation from the preface of his book merely serves to emphasize the mystery surrounding the man whose identity has been so closely guarded: ...

This is a good example of bad or no research being used to sound authoratative. Rullman claims the copyright was purchased outright by Drake "with no royalties involved," but gives no citation or source for this supposed fact. If Drake told him this, he was lying. In any event, this is not correct. While Drake published the book, he did NOT own the copyright. How can I be so sure? Because when the copyright came up for renewal in 1930, Drake did not renew it.

Drake apparently tried once, early on, to copyright the book under a different name - "Robert Erdnase" - and had to back off that for some undetermined reason. Perhaps he
got a letter from the real Erdnase or his lawyer suggesting that stealing a copyright wasn't such a good idea.

In any event, Drake's actions indicate that he did not own the copyright so when 1930 turned to 1931, the New Year saw Erdnase's work pass into the public domain....although Drake was probably not anxious to advertise this fact.

Interesting to note that Drake waited seven years before selling the plates to the next publisher, the plates being the only thing Drake had to sell.

And on the two physicists and their book, this is wrong in so many ways, but before I would spend 90 seconds on this nonsense someone would have to show me that they were amateur magicians in the first place. Again, no source for the claim is cited, which makes me suspicious in the first place.

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**Guest | 11/29/06 02:53 AM | link | filter**

Originally posted by silverking:

**From what I can see, this only leaves the Drake hardcovers in Green (with the hands), the Plum cloth cover, and the Blue cloth cover that the heart could possibly be seen in.**

I have the Drake plum cover and the Drake blue cover, and the heart is in neither of them. It's in the Dover edition though (!?)

---

**Guest | 11/29/06 04:04 AM | link | filter**

Originally posted by willmorton:

**Originally posted by silverking:**

[b]
*From what I can see, this only leaves the Drake hardcovers in Green (with the hands), the Plum cloth cover, and the Blue cloth cover that the heart could possibly be seen in.*

I have the Drake plum cover and the Drake blue cover, and the heart is in neither of them. It's in the Dover edition though (!?)[/b]

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**Guest | 11/29/06 07:03 PM | link | filter**

Originally posted by Bob Walder:

I have the Powner edition dated 1944 - the heart is clearly visible

Bob
That’s interesting Bob, your 1944 version would be only two years after Powner got their hands on the plates. My 1975 Powner edition (the last Powner) has no heart. I’ve got a few more Powner editions from varying years coming my way from recent purchases, I’ll be interested in seeing exactly when Powner took the heart out.

It could be quite a chore determining where the heart shows up and where it’s been removed.

As an aside, after much searching I finally got my hands on an edition of "The Gardner-Smith Correspondence".
It’s my opinion that when all of the letters are read in context, and combined with thoughts about the phone conversations, this book actually strengthens the thought that Milton Franklin Andrews certainly wasn’t Erdnase.

It’s obvious when reading the letters that Gardner really wants Smith to make a match, and that Smith (who appears to be quite an amicable fellow) would dearly like to oblige Gardner, but simply can’t bring himself to.
His memories DON’T read like those of an old man trying desperately to please his interviewer, but those of somebody who is quite sharp, and is simply remembering something from decades ago.

The single biggest surprise in reading this book of letters and thoughts (and one that hasn't been mentioned elsewhere that I’ve seen) is that M.D. Smith appears not to have been beyond demonstrating his ability to sling an unsolicited racial slur, it was surprising to read.

I must admit that seeing for the first time the actual line in the facsimile of Smiths letter to Gardner where he says for the first time that he in fact did do the illustrations for "The Expert at the Card" Table caused me to read it a few times with a smile on my face.......I can only imagine how Gardner felt when he first read it.

It took me over a year of constant searching to find a copy of "The Gardner-Smith Correspondence", and it was certainly worth while making the effort.
In an edition of 250 the struggle seemed just to find somebody who had one, let alone one for sale!

Richard Kaufman | 11/30/06 03:35 PM | link | filter

Okay, I’ve just finished cleaning up this thread.
DEREK, please don’t post here again.

Guest | 11/30/06 04:43 PM | link | filter
OK Richard this your show and I am outta here.

**Guest** | 11/30/06 08:10 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Thank you, Richard.

**Guest** | 12/01/06 02:02 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I'm an ignoramous in these matters, but it does seem to me that if the author really was W.E Saunders, he would be much more likely to pick the plausible anagram E.S. Andrews as his pen name than the weird looking S.W. Erdnase. You'd need to find quite compelling evidence of the use of the use of "Earth nose" to make that theory compelling. IMO.

**Guest** | 12/01/06 04:01 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Originally posted by DomT:

I'm an ignoramous in these matters, but it does seem to me that if the author really was W.E Saunders, he would be much more likely to pick the plausible anagram E.S. Andrews as his pen name than the weird looking S.W. Erdnase. You'd need to find quite compelling evidence of the use of the use of "Earth nose" to make that theory compelling. IMO.

I've often thought that too. The simple reversal of letters is only obvious when it's pointed out, and it fits so well that it seems more plausible than the idea of a partial anagram of W.E. Saunders (the "u" would have been easy enough to fit in - Erdnause would have been no more bizarre than Erdnase). The "Erde + Nase" = "Earth Nose" idea also seems far-fetched to me. I've never come across the term in German, though maybe we'd need to ask a native speaker who knows the mining industry.

**Guest** | 12/01/06 06:07 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

David's candidate is a W. E. Sanders (not Saunders), so the anagram is exact (no "u" to drop). He explains the psychological profile behind the preference for Erdnase over Andrews on the title page in his excellent GENII cover story.

**Guest** | 12/02/06 02:41 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Sorry, the misspelling is my fault - clearly such an ignoramous that I can't copy a name over without making a mistake.

**Guest** | 12/08/06 12:45 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)
Having finally got my hands on David Alexanders Genii article on his hunt for Erdnase only a few days after getting both the Gardner/Smith letters and (finally) a copy of "S.W. Erdnase—Another View" I’m pleasantly drowning in all things Erdnase.

David’s article threw me for a loop, it reads like a novel you can’t put down. I can only imagine seeing both David and Dick at the Magic History Conference where this was first presented. Apparently the room was absolutely entranced, and the two presentations were so powerful that there wasn’t anything with enough "oomph" to actually follow them, the day ending after their breathtaking presentations. According to the report in Genii of those presentations, they were the strongest of the conference....and that was the year they did "The Mascot Moth"!

Between Dick’s Magic Magazine article, and "Erdnase—Another View"....and then reading the Gardner-Smith letters for myself, that done after comparing the Milton Franklin writings in "The Man Who Was Erdnase" with those of the the man we DO know to be Erdnase in EATCT, I’m now firmly in the camp that rejects Milton Franklin as even a potential candidate.

What I find amazing is how the circumstantial evidence surrounding both David and Dick’s two (different) candidates can be so strong as to potentially steer an Erdnase hunter happily down the road of either candidate.

As I looked at the two pictures of W.E. Sanders in Davids Genii article, one taken at a young age, and one quite a bit older, I must admit that I wondered if I was finally looking into the eyes of the master himself.

Richard Kaufman | 12/08/06 01:46 PM | link | filter

None of the supporters of any candidate can put a deck of cards into his hands. Until that’s done, I’m not convinced of ANY of the candidates brought forth so far.

Guest | 12/08/06 03:16 PM | link | filter

Our Mr. Erdnase might have made it extremely difficult to place a deck of cards in his hands. Following his own advice, he may not have demonstrated even the slightest skill with a deck of cards in front of another person.

But I completely agree that this IS a story first and foremost about playing cards, demanding the protagonist actually be shown to be holding them in his hands, preferably demonstrating capabilities of a sort that would be worthy of comment from somebody present at the time.
Originally posted by Richard Kaufman:

**None of the supporters of any candidate can put a deck of cards into his hands. Until that's done, I'm not convinced of ANY of the candidates brought forth so far.**

It is very easy to put a deck of cards in the hands of Milton Franklin Andrews. The fact that he was a known card cheat with the last name Andrews living at the time the book was published and deceased shortly thereafter (explaining why he never revealed himself publicly as the author) are the primary strengths of his candidacy. I still consider him viable, myself, though he is far from my favorite, for reasons outlined earlier in this thread and elsewehere.

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**Richard Kaufman** | 12/08/06 05:55 PM | link | filter

Obviously my statement excluded Milton Franklin Andrews since he was a known card cheat. I was referring to the parade of new possibilities.

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**Guest** | 12/18/06 07:24 PM | link | filter

I am so apologize. May be this is not interesting or somebody know before. Time to time I read how peoples interesting when first time appeared information about Erdnase. I find "Bibliographies of works on playing cards and gaming" 1905 and on number 488 we can find Erdnase. May be this is first bibliography.

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**Guest** | 12/19/06 01:31 PM | link | filter

A clarification - I don't believe that the German play on words, "erde-nase" (earth nose) is a mining term. It could have been an in-joke amongst the mining students at the School of Mines when my candidate was attending Columbia in the 1880s.

Second, I don't understand why Dick still consideres MFA viable, given his telling demonstration at the 1999 LA Magic History Conference where he had two people stand...one the size that Marshall Smith remembered and the other the size that MFA was. The disparity in size was striking. As Dick pointed out at the time, it would be hard to make that sort of mistake.

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**Guest** | 12/19/06 09:42 PM | link | filter

Please, mr. David Alexander. I understand that my opinion means nothing, but looks like experiment should be little another. Peoples should recall what was length of man what they meet 40 years ago. Compare two peoples what stay close very much easy. Easy say what difference on size, but if you ask full length, you will be surprise on how
differ be numbers. (I know lady who suppose Tom Cruise 180 sm.) Also, do not forget, most time they sat on chears and made pictures. If Erdnase sat on big chear and Smith on little, on brain of paintist can be not correct supposition.

I am so apologize if this opinion not interesting.

Guest | 12/19/06 10:52 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by David Alexander:
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I do consider Milton Franklin Andrews a viable candidate for Erdnase. While the fact that he was not the size recalled by artist M. D. Smith when interviewed by Martin Gardner 45 years after the fact was the key feature in making me question that theory, it relies entirely on the memory of the artist at an advanced age many years later. I happen to believe Smith's memory was pretty good, but I have to admit, I don't really have an independent way to judge his memory. If we accept Smith's claim that he was the book's artist (and I do, but not everyone does... Vernon questioned it after interviewing Smith in Chicago, as he found his recall of the job disappointing), and his recollection that the man he met was the author (Smith himself conjectured that perhaps he had met someone other than the author, when confronted with the height discrepancy, but he dismissed the likelihood of that, as do I) and that that man was in the 5' 5" to 5' 7" range, or at least shorter, rather than taller, than Smith, then we can conclusively rule out MFA. Personally, I think Smith did illustrate the book, did meet the author and his recollection as recorded by Gardner strikes me as both clear and honest. Which is one of many reasons I think MFA was likely not the author. And as Smith is our most credible eyewitness of the author, I give his testimony a lot of weight, so I favor a short man with sharp features, small hands and in the 40 to 45 year range. But I am not in a position to state conclusively that Smith might not have been mistaken on the height issue, or the other things he recalled. Which leave the door open to MFA and many others. To date, MFA is the only known card cheat from the period to have been proposed, and for many that and the fact that his name was Andrews carries a lot of weight. It doesn't convince me, but I am unwilling to dismiss him entirely.

Guest | 12/20/06 12:06 AM | link | filter

I do consider Milton Franklin Andrews a viable candidate for Erdnase. While the fact that he was not the size recalled by artist M. D. Smith when interviewed by
Martin Gardner 45 years after the fact was the key feature in making me question that theory, it relies entirely on the memory of the artist at an advanced age many years later. I happen to believe Smith's memory was pretty good, but I have to admit, I don't really have an independent way to judge his memory. If we accept Smith's claim that he was the book's artist (and I do, but not everyone does... Vernon questioned it after interviewing Smith in Chicago, as he found his recall of the job disappointing), and his recollection that the man he met was the author (Smith himself conjectured that perhaps he had met someone other than the author, when confronted with the height discrepancy, but he dismissed the likelihood of that, as do I) and that that man was in the 5' 5" to 5' 7" range, or at least shorter, rather than taller, than Smith, then we can conclusively rule out MFA. Personally, I think Smith did illustrate the book, did meet the author and his recollection as recorded by Gardner strikes me as both clear and honest. Which is one of many reasons I think MFA was likely not the author. And as Smith is our most credible eyewitness of the author, I give his testimony a lot of weight, so I favor a short man with sharp features, small hands and in the 40 to 45 year range. But I am not in a position to state conclusively that Smith might not have been mistaken on the height issue, or the other things he recalled. Which leave the door open to MFA and many others. To date, MFA is the only known card cheat from the period to have been proposed, and for many that and the fact that his name was Andrews carries a lot of weight. It doesn't convince me, but I am unwilling to dismiss him entirely. /[QB][/QUOTE]

Smith's memory was good enough to remember a cold snap that happened on the day he met Erdnase, a day I was able to determine by examining weather records. It wasn't that cold a month before or a month after, so I think I pinpointed the day. For me, that validates Smith's memory as being accurate.

Second, this was a simple job that did not require much of Smith's time as the pictures were traced from photos, not drawn from life. The logistics of Smith drawing them from life don't work out and I won't go into the details here, but as my wife is an accomplished artist and has illustrated two magic books, she understands the process as do I.

Had Smith drawn exclusively from life, it would have been a two-week job, easily. He didn't remember that and doubtless recognized what he'd done when Vernon and Gardner showed him the book, but by them Martin Gardner had pronounced him the "Dean of Magic Book Illustrators" or some such title.

It is also important to remember than no one who interviewed Smith was a trained historian, a trained interviewer and I suspect that Smith, who originally thought he'd drawn 30 or so pictures, realized that he'd traced photos when he saw the book and simply didn't want to disappoint these men who were being so nice to him by explaining what he'd really done.

Vernon could only have been disappointed because Smith, the only person we believe...
with a high degree of confidence actually met and talked with Erdnase, didn't
remember much, because as I've explained earlier, there really wasn't much to
remember.

He met a client, demonstrated some of his work to establish his level of skill, was
shown a few effects by the man, charmed by him you might say (as befitting someone
used to working with employees or hired hands) a personal connection was made with
Erdnase claiming to be related to Dalyrmple. A price agreed, a deadline doubtless set,
and the deal was made.

It was a nothing job for Smith, a day or so doing the tracing with a light box, and he
was on to other things. He probably delivered the finished drawings to be turned into
cuts and the photos to the printer a day or so later. His office wasn't that far away. He
may or may not have ever seen Erdnase again. Apparently he did not remember
having to do anything over.

I believe that Erdnase may have used the name Andrews as an acceptable ruse to hide
his identity from his illustrator and his printer since the reversal of his name into
Erdnase would be understood to be an acceptable pseudonym.

The fact that we have a large sample of MFAs writing easily eliminates him from
consideration as Erdnase since anyone with experience writing and editing will
quickly see that MFA was incapable of writing up to the level that Erdnase exhibits.
For that, and several other reasons that you yourself have uncovered, MFA should be
ignored as any further consideration of him only muddies the waters.

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Guest | 12/20/06 09:47 AM | link | filter

Let me preface this by saying that I too believe M. D. Smith to have had quite a good
memory and am guided by his recollections in evaluating possible candidates. Having
said that, let me play "devil's advocate" in defense of the Milton Franklin Andrews
theory:

Originally posted by David Alexander:

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happened on the day he met Erdnase, a day I was able to determine
by examining weather records. It wasn’t that cold a month before or
a month after, so I think I pinpointed the day. For me, that validates
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Smith recalled that it was "a bitter cold winter day," not necessarily the only such day,
when he first met Erdnase in an unheated Chicago hotel room. He did not describe it as
a cold snap. Assuming the illustrations were prepared in the winter of 1901/1902 (an
assumption with which I have no problem, but an assumption none-the-less), I believe you searched the weather records and identified the only day in December 1901 fitting the "bitter cold" description that month by Chicago standards and then argued that must have been the date on which Smith met Erdnase. I consider that proof of your ingenuity in investigating this case, rather than a validation of Smith's memory. Smith thought the hotel was on the SE corner of Congress and State, but there does not seem to have been a hotel at that location then (He was more certain that it was on the east side of State Street, and there are several good candidates in the neighborhood at that time). He thought he did about 30 illustrations, there are 101 in the book as published (possibly even more were done and not all used...). He did not recognize the illustrations, but claimed to recognize his handwriting under them ("Fig. 1", "Fig. 2"...). He agreed he must have met with the author at his hotel on several occasions, but only had vivid recollections of the first, and getting the check in payment later. He could not recall either the amount of the check or the bank it was written on (other than recalling that it was a large Chicago Bank). He did not recall the man's name as "Andrews" until prompted by Gardner. I don't bring these up to argue that his memory was bad, why should he remember those things 45 years later? I'm grateful for the things he did recall and willing, at this point, to accept them at face value. But I am also willing to concede that his recollection at an advanced age, many years after the fact, could be wrong. That is what Gardner ultimately concluded when faced with the discrepancies between the artist's recollection and the MFA facts (age, height, etc.). Again, playing devil's advocate: Smith recalled meeting a clean shaven man with fair hair. The published photo of W. E. Sanders as a youth shows him clean shaven with fair hair, but the published adult photo in your GENII article shows him with a large black beard (head covered by a hat). Obviously he could easily have been clean shaven rather than bearded when meeting with Smith, and certainly there are fair haired men with black beards, but if it turns out that W. E. Sanders as an adult was always bearded and/or had dark hair, does that rule him out as a candidate, or simply call into question Smith's memory on that point?

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As mentioned earlier in this thread, I asked Steranko, who certainly knows a thing or two about illustrating and card handling, to examine the illustrations and weigh in with an opinion on several points (multiple artists theories, size of hands, drawn from life versus from photos) and he was unable to conclude that the illustrations were traced from photos. In fact, he pointed out the difficulty and expense (and time
needed) at that time to have 101 technical photos made. I concede the possibility that Smith may have worked from photos, but he did not recall (or admit to) doing so, and the book’s title page specifically states "drawn from life". If he did trace them from photos, then it goes to the question of Smith’s memory or honesty or both. If he didn’t recall that detail or prevaricated about it, why should we believe him on the issue of height, age or room temperature?

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I agree that when I read the confession/alibi letters that MFA wrote, I have a hard time hearing the voice of Erdnase. Others (and not just Busby and Whaley) do hear hear that voice, reflected in his use of such terms as "expert". But most of those in the MFA camp seem to feel a need, given MFA’s lack of education and those letters, to bring in an "editor." Busby proposed Bill Hilliar, Jerry Sadowitz R. F. Foster. I think it premature to bring in an editor at all at this stage, indeed, I consider it unlikely that a self-published book by an author "needing the money" (David, I realize we disagree on whether that statement is accurate or merely ironic) would have had an editor/ghostwriter. But I would also point out that the confession/alibi letters were written for a very different audience, under very different conditions, than the book. MFA was being hunted by the police on multiple murder charges. He confesses to the attempted murder of his Australian gambling partner, who he claimed had attempted to rape his girlfriend, then provides alibis for the other murders of which he was accused, including that of his own longtime consort. He is willing to negotiate surrender with the police under certain (rather strange!) conditions. I think such a letter, written in haste, under unbelievable pressure, possibly under the influence of illness (mental or otherwise) and/or drugs could reflect a very different voice than a technical treatise on card manipulation written under very different circumstances for a very different audience several years earlier, possibly by the same man. Unlikely, perhaps, but hardly impossible.

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**For that, and several other reasons that you yourself have uncovered, MFA should be ignored as any further consideration of him only muddies the waters.**

Milton Franklin Andrews was the first credible candidate to have been proposed for Erdnase and was for many years the only such candidate. For that, and other reasons, I consider him the "benchmark" candidate against whom others should be judged. I confess that I like several others much better at the moment, but absent conclusive
evidence one way or the other, I am willing to concede that MFA is not only "viable" but the "candidate to beat" in the search for the truth on this issue.

Guest | 12/20/06 11:45 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by Stepanov Oleg:

I am so apologize. May be this is not interesting or somebody know before. Time to time I read how peoples interesting when first time appeared information about Erdnase. I find "Bibliographies of works on playing cards and gaming" 1905 and on number 488 we can find Erdnase. May be this is first bibliography.

Oleg, thank you for this interesting early citation. Is that Jesse Frederic’s Bibliography? Does it give any publication details on the book, such as date and place of publication? Thanks!

Guest | 12/20/06 12:09 PM | link | filter

Dick Hatch wrote: Let me preface this by saying that I too believe M. D. Smith to have had quite a good memory and am guided by his recollections in evaluating possible candidates. Having said that, let me play "devil’s advocate" in defense of the Milton Franklin Andrews theory:

quote:

______________________________

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David Alexander in italics -

I searched the weather records for the month before and the month after. The date I pinpointed was the only bitter cold day, a decided cold snap. Smith was a Chicagoan who had experienced Chicago
winters. I took him at his word and found the day. Since the book was copyrighted the following February, that is about the time the book would have begun production, given the holidays and the speed at which a Linotype operator can create plates and cuts can be made. This was not photo offset, but a far slower process. Back when I was actively investigating this I spoke with a printing museum who gave me a time frame on making the book.

Smith thought the hotel was on the SE corner of Congress and State, but there does not seem to have been a hotel at that location then (He was more certain that it was on the east side of State Street, and there are several good candidates in the neighborhood at that time). He thought he did about 30 illustrations, there are 101 in the book as published (possibly even more were done and not all used...). He did not recognize the illustrations, but claimed to recognize his handwriting under them ("Fig. 1", "Fig. 2"...).

Smith did not recognize his drawings because they were not his normal work. They were traced from photographs.

He agreed he must have met with the author at his hotel on several occasions, but only had vivid recollections of the first, and getting the check in payment later. He could not recall either the amount of the check or the bank it was written on (other than recalling that it was a large Chicago Bank). He did not recall the man's name as "Andrews" until prompted by Gardner.

Here we have a major problem in that none of the people interviewing Smith were professional (or even experienced) interviewers. I was not present. You were not present, but we do know that Gardner and Vernon were anxious about getting information, or more accurately, validating their own ideas about Erdnase. Lawyers call it leading the witness.

Vernon had an opinion about Erdnase, but Martin Gardner had a specific candidate. Certainly Gardners letters to Smith over the years pushing him to remember Erdnase as taller give evidence that Martin had an agenda that he wanted Smith to validate. It is to Smiths credit that he only moved up an inch over the years and after several letters. Gardner was hardly an unbiased investigator. I've conducted hundreds of interviews and well know the dangers in inserting information into a question and how quickly people can pick up on what the interviewer wants to hear.

I don't bring these up to argue that his memory was bad, why should he remember those things 45 years later? I'm grateful for the things he did recall and willing, at this point, to accept them at face value. But I am also willing to concede that his recollection at an advanced age, many years after the fact, could be wrong. That is what Gardner ultimately concluded when faced with the discrepancies between the artist's recollection and the MFA facts (age, height, etc.).

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black beard (head covered by a hat).

*My source has no date for the photo of the bearded Sanders. As he worked in mining camps all over the West, the beard is to be expected. And, if he normally grew a beard while working the camps and shaved it off when he went to Chicago, if many who saw him during his work saw a man with a beard, shaving it would have provided an extra layer of disguise and anonymity.*

Obviously he could easily have been clean shaven rather than bearded when meeting with Smith, and certainly there are fair haired men with black beards, but if it turns out that W. E. Sanders as an adult was always bearded and/or had dark hair, does that rule him out as a candidate, or simply call into question Smith's memory on that point?

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*I have traded emails with Jim on this. Like most books, this was probably an on-going project done over several years. The photos would have been taken over time, not all at once, as the book was probably written a section at a time. I believe I have evidence that strongly suggests the reference photos were taken at different times, but that's something for another day.*

I concede the possibility that Smith may have worked from photos, but he did not recall (or admit to) doing so

As I pointed out earlier, Smith would not have admitted to such a pedestrian operation since these nice, enthusiastic men were paying him so much attention and Gardner had anointed him Dean of Magic Illustrators. Why disappoint them? Smith almost certainly had to know was the truth, especially since he did not recognize his own work when he saw it. That would seem to me strong evidence that he did not draw the figures from life, regardless of what the book claims.

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Needing the money is the author being self-depricating, and is part of his writing "voice." Self-publishing a book in those days was time-consuming and expensive. It was a project of several months, not including the time actually spent writing it, which probably involved years. I've pointed out elsewhere other ways Erdnase could have made more money faster had he actually been a reformed gambler. The book was written for other reasons, made clear I think, by Erdnase in the early pages of the book.

But I would also point out that the confession/alibi letters were written for a very different audience, under very different conditions, than the book. MFA was being hunted by the police on multiple murder charges. He confesses to the attempted murder of his Australian gambling partner, who he claimed had attempted to rape his girlfriend, then provides alibis for the other murders of which he was accused, including that of his own longtime consort. He is willing to negotiate surrender with the police under certain (rather strange!) conditions. I think such a letter, written in haste, under unbelievable pressure, possibly under the influence of illness (mental or otherwise) and/or drugs could reflect a very different voice than a technical treatise on card manipulation written under very different circumstances for a very different audience several years earlier, possibly by the same man. Unlikely, perhaps, but hardly impossible.

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Sorry, but as evidence you yourself have uncovered, Milton Franklin Andrews was never a credible candidate and is not the candidate to beat. The entire argument for him being Erdnase rests on the word of an alleged retired gambler that you have discredited. Martin Gardner's work in this was sloppy. Martin never followed through to validate what he was told. He accepted Pratt's word on the matter uncritically and without question, hardly indicative of the man who said, Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.

Further, Gardner ended up arguing with the one person we believe actually met Erdnase when that person's memory failed to support what Gardner believed.

MFA was the only candidate for many years because people accepted Martin Gardner's argument from authority and did not examine it critically. Both you and I have demonstrated that Gardner's work was sloppy and without merit in this matter. Simply put, Andrews was Erdnase because Gardner accepted Pratt's word that he was. The argument is circular as many others have recognized. Early on in my investigation I climbed off the Milton Franklin Andrews Merry-Go-Round. The argument is circular and a waste of time to pursue.

Guest | 12/20/06 01:41 PM | link | filter

David, Smith remembered he met Erdnase on "a bitter cold day." You found such a day. I don't see how that validates Smith's memory, since it provides no independent verification that they met on that day. Had Smith said they met on the only cold day in December 1901, then finding that there was in fact only one such day would lend weight to his recollection, but that's not what he said. I don't doubt that they did meet on a bitter cold day, by the way, and I do find your pinpointing such a day ingenious. But I don't see how that argues strongly in favor of Smith's powers of recollection. (On the other hand, details such as the fact that Smith kept on his overcoat in the hotel room, while Erdnase did not, do strike me as good evidence of both his recall and the fact that it was cold when they met). If they did indeed meet in the winter of 1901 (and I suspect they did), then your use of weather records to pinpoint the date is admirable, but I don't think it proves much about Smith's recollection.

Originally posted by David Alexander:
Vernon had an opinion about Erdnase, but Martin Gardner had a specific candidate.

At the time Gardner tracked down Smith in December 1946, he had no specific candidate in mind. Shortly after meeting Smith he came up with a "James Andrews" who wrote an article about a fortunetelling con (later reprinted in CONJURERS MAGAZINE). According to a letter Gardner wrote the Canadian copyright office early in 1947, Smith had "recalled" the author's true name as "James Andrews." Alas, the latter claim is not reflected in their surviving correspondence nor in Gardner's current recollection of what happened 60 years ago. I suspect Gardner recognized that "James Andrews" reverses to S. W. Erdnasemaj", found the article and saw some stylistic similarities to Erdnase (pointed out in the Conjurers article) and coaxed the "recollection" out of Smith. But if Smith did independently recall the author's name as "James Andrews", I would find that hard to ignore. Only several years after meeting and interviewing Smith did Gardner develop the Milton Franklin Andrews theory and return to question Smith in correspondence about it.

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The fact that Pratt's testimony on MFA is not credible does not invalidate that theory. If, as I believe, Pratt did not know MFA personally (as he claimed he did), then he and not Gardner should be given credit for developing the MFA theory. The theory could still be true, though it loses the weight of the testimony of a supposed colleague (Pratt), who claimed to have known him personally and been told about his book before it was published. Gardner himself was very skeptical of Pratt's claims and it was only after he obtained what he believed to be independent validation of them that he accepted Pratt's claims (Pratt was the first to tell Gardner of Harto's claimed involvement with Erdnase, which two Harto associates then validated to Gardner's satisfaction... I personally take Harto's claimed association with Erdnase seriously, though I am skeptical of Pratt's claim that Harto contributed material to THE EXPERT. Regardless, the Harto connection does not validate the MFA theory, but it did render Pratt's testimony credible for Gardner).

Originally posted by David Alexander:
MFA was the only candidate for many years because people accepted Martin Gardners argument from authority and did not examine it critically. Both you and I have demonstrated that Gardners work was sloppy and without merit in this matter.

I'll agree with the first sentence above, but must take strong exception to the second. Gardner is the pioneering figure in the tiny field of Erdnase research and deserves a huge amount of credit and respect. He was the only person even to think of looking for the artist, whose name had been on the titlepage since 1902. His interviews with Smith produced information which I consider fundamental. He researched and wrote the first detailed account of the book's early publishing history, pinpointing McKinney as the printer. Were it not for Gardner's work, there would likely be little interest in this topic today. For all that, and much more, I am extremely grateful.

Guest | 12/20/06 02:21 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Richard Hatch:
Oleg, thank you for this interesting early citation. Is that Jesse Frederic's Bibliography? Does it give any publication details on the book, such as date and place of publication? Thanks!

Dear mr. Richard Hatch.

Yes, this is Jessel Frederic's Bibliography. Information only name, 1902 and "Canada copyright". If you wish I can send you image of this page.
BTW. From first number of 2007 year's magazine "Casino Games" will be published my translation of Erdnase with my comments. This is first time in Russia. So, now I bacame one of "The Man Who Translate Erdnase". :-))))) I still remember I promised for your collection my book, when it will be published. But from magazine publications we just check my translation on errors. Unfortunatelly our problems not like on "Star Wars" by Hatch-Alexander. Our problems little low level like "What mean Erdnase when wrote Cassino and Casino"? :-)

Guest | 12/20/06 02:45 PM | link | filter

Oleg, thanks (please call me Dick). Congratulations on your pending translation. I would very much like a copy for my collection. Can I purchase the magazine version in the meantime? If so, let me know how best to do so.
Also, if you can send a scan of the Jessel entry, it would be most welcome. Thanks!

Guest | 12/20/06 04:11 PM | link | filter

When I talked to Gardner many years ago he insisted that McKinney was the publisher. I had to argue several minutes to correct him, that McKinney was never the publisher, only the printer. He didn't seem to understand that.
Gardner also, according to you, after you explained your research, dropped his confidence in MFA being Erdnase from 90% to 60% and then, because neither of us came up with anything “new,” according to what you told me, raised it back to 90%. That didn’t make any sense to me then and it doesn’t now. What you learned did not suddenly evaporate or become invalid.

You write:
The fact that Pratt’s testimony on MFA is not credible does not invalidate that theory. If, as I believe, Pratt did not know MFA personally (as he claimed he did), then he and not Gardner should be given credit for developing the MFA theory. The theory could still be true, though it loses the weight of the testimony of a supposed colleague (Pratt), who claimed to have known him personally and been told about his book before it was published. Gardner himself was very skeptical of Pratt’s claims and it was only after he obtained what he believed to be independent validation of them that he accepted Pratt’s claims (Pratt was the first to tell Gardner of Harto’s claimed involvement with Erdnase, which two Harto associates then validated to Gardner’s satisfaction... I personally take Harto’s claimed association with Erdnase seriously, though I am skeptical of Pratt’s claim that Harto contributed material to THE EXPERT. Regardless, the Harto connection does not validate the MFA theory, but it did render Pratt’s testimony credible for Gardner).

I don’t find that reasonable at all. The fact that Harto may have claimed to various people that he was the one who wrote the magic section of Expert means nothing and I am unaware of any evidence other than what some people claimed Harto claimed. If this was echoed to Gardner by Pratt, it, in no way validates what Pratt may have claimed about Andrews.

In historical research, weight is given to likelyhoods, what is more likely than some other theory. Not all theories have equal weight or equal likelyhood of being correct. I think just looking at the material you’ve developed, not counting in what I think is a more likely theory of who Erdnase was and a candidate that fills that theory, you, on your own, have rendered the theory that Milton Franklin Andrews being Erdnase Highly Unlikely.

It is reasonable to believe that the book was being made ready for publication in December, 1901 because it was copyrighted in early 1902, a process that required two bound and printed copies of the book be submitted with the application.

The day Smith remembered would be unlikely to have happened much earlier, but if necessary, I suppose I, or you if you’re so curious, could pull the weather records for June, 1901 through December, and examine them to see if there was another really cold day earlier than the one I found. I think I examined November 1901 and January, 1902, although it’s been a while since I looked at my notes and everything is packed for
I reasonably figured that the illustrations were done within a reasonable time frame with Erdnase getting them ready while or just before the book was being typeset, a process that would have taken a couple of weeks. Unfortunately, we do not know McKinney’s work load at the time and where in his printing queue the book would have been placed. Once the illustrations were delivered by Smith, cuts would have been made to insert into the appropriate pages. This also would have taken time. I don’t believe McKinney’s was a large shop.

It seems reasonable to assume the book was printed and bound not much later than January, 1902 and two copies and the copyright application were duly sent off. Perhaps it was all sent off a bit earlier as we do not know the backlog at the copyright office and how long it would have taken for the application to have been processed. If longer to process and grant copyright, it pushes the date back to late December, making my date more likely. That Smith remembered the weather of the day and then the cold hotel room (not an unheated hotel as Gardner later wrote), keeping his coat on during his interaction with Erdnase all works to validate what he remembered.

Originally posted by David Alexander:

The fact that Harto may have claimed to various people that he was the one who wrote the magic section of Expert means nothing and I am unaware of any evidence other than what some people claimed Harto claimed. If this was echoed to Gardner by Pratt, it, in no way validates what Pratt may have claimed about Andrews.

I have not found any credible evidence that Harto made such a claim. Pratt is the only one who claims that, and he was both confused (claiming it was added at the publisher’s insistence, rather a strange claim on a self-published book) and untrustworthy on other points. So I don’t take that claim very seriously. But two individuals who knew Harto very well both confirmed that he had dealings with Erdnase, though neither is explicit on the nature of those dealings. One thought he saw correspondence between Harto and Erdnase, the other recalled seeing a notebook for a proposed sequel. Neither said that Harto claimed to have written the legerdemain section, only Pratt makes that claim. I have no problem at all with Harto having had some contact with Erdnase. Clearly Harto claimed to have had such contact and I have no basis on which to deny it. I would consider it a plus if a credible candidate could be shown to have had contact with Harto. None of the current candidates currently fall in that category, but I still consider it an open question. Regardless, it has no bearing the MFA issue, other than it being the detail than convinced Gardner of Pratt’s bona fides.
MFA is an unlikely candidate, but I think Richard's point is that he can't be excluded. (Although I do agree, being unlikely, he is not the best path to follow).

Just because Smith said it was a bitter cold day, doesn't mean it was the coldest day that year. It's entirely possible that the hotel room was colder than he was used to it being indoors (if he kept his coat on) and that was what influenced his comment (an emotional memory) rather than the actual temperature outside.

On the issue of illustrations: The claim that he wouldn't want to disappoint Gardner and Vernon by saying they were drawn from photographs is incredibly hypothetical. If it were true, why then did Smith claim he didn't remember doing all the illustrations if he really wanted to keep the image Gardner and Vernon had of him?

David or Richard, maybe you can answer this one:
Was "Drawn from Life" a phrase that would increase sales of a book at the time? If not, why would it be included if photos were used?

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**Guest | 12/20/06 05:51 PM | link | filter**

Originally posted by Aaron Lee Shields:

**David or Richard, maybe you can answer this one:**
Was "Drawn from Life" a phrase that would increase sales of a book at the time? If not, why would it be included if photos were used?

Aaron, I think that is an excellent point. I don't understand why the author would say "Drawn from life" on the title page if they were not, nor do I see why he would mention the artist's name on the titlepage, if he were obsessively concerned with maintaining anonymity, as David argues. Neither the method of illustrating nor the artist's identity would seem to have any bearing on sales of the book. Of course, David argues that sales were not the author's primary motivation (because David does not believe that he needed the money), but I still don't understand why he would add that statement to the titlepage: "Over One Hundred Drawings from Life by M. D. Smith."

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**Guest | 12/20/06 06:10 PM | link | filter**

Originally posted by Aaron Lee Shields:

**On the issue of illustrations:** The claim that he wouldn't want to disappoint Gardner and Vernon by saying they were drawn from photographs is incredibly hypothetical. If it were true, why then did Smith claim he didn't remember doing all the illustrations if he really wanted to keep the image Gardner and Vernon had of him?
David or Richard, maybe you can answer this one:
Was "Drawn from Life" a phrase that would increase sales of a book at the time? If not, why would it be included if photos were used?

We do not know in what order Smith made his comments to Vernon, Gardner and the others when they met him. He may have made a simple observation of a job he’d done 40+ years before, before he saw the book, the illustrations and the number he did. Then he saw the book and realized what he said and had to follow through with it. I don’t think he deliberately lied, just that he may have said things to keep his hosts happy. The problem is, none of the participants were trained in interview techniques and could have lead Smith in their questioning. I don’t think it "incredibly hypothetical," just in line with how people are and what they do.

It was obviously important to Vernon, Gardner and the others and Smith was an old man who was getting incredible recognition for an inconsequential job he did in the early part of his career.

Re: "Drawn from Life" - you could make a stretch that drawing from a photo is drawing from "life." It certainly wouldn’t be the first magic book to stretch a claim.

I have no way of proving, but think it likely that Erdnase showed up with photos and learned from McKinney that the cost of printing photos would be prohibitive and that they would not necessarily print that clearly, given the quality of the paper he chose to print on. So, far less expensive were line drawings made from the photographs that could be turned into cuts. Who was to argue that they weren’t "from life," since no one knew who Erdnase was and it probably added to the preceived value of the book.

I don’t believe Harto ever communicated with Erdnase.

I will grant the possibility of Harto saying to friends that he was "in contact" with Erdnase to build himself up because people do that. They pump up resumes, they inflate experience, people do a variety of things to make themselves look more important.

I just heard a Broadway star make mention that over the years she’s figured that something like 50,000 people must have been in her theater on opening night because that’s how many have come up to her over the years and told her how much they enjoyed her show and, of course, they always add that they were there on opening night.

Guest | 12/20/06 06:24 PM | link | filter

With regards to the hotel room, I like David’s printed theory that Erdnase was actually staying in ANOTHER room in the hotel, and, with his stuff all laid out, clothes,
personal posessions, maybe books and personal papers.....he simply went down to the front desk and asked for another room in which to meet Smith, this to keep his privacy and maintain the masquarade that confounds us to this day.

If the room had been unbooked for a few days the heat would have been off (hotels STILL do this today) and being an old boiler system even after being turned back on probably would have taken the better part of the day to heat the room back up.

Smith remembering the cold hotel room is SO vertical in it's scope (it's such a FINE point) that it's hard for me not to give hiim full credit for the accuracy of the memory. Of course if you accept that the cold hotel room memory could might be that accurate, then you may have to make the next step to thinking that his memories of that day as they were shared with Gardner stand a chance of ALL being quite accurate.

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**Guest | 12/20/06 06:24 PM | link | filter**

Originally posted by Richard Hatch:

... but I still don't understand why he would add that statement to the titlepage: "Over One Hundred Drawings from Life by M. D. Smith."

I don't either. Then again, it doesn't strike me as blatantly odd. In fact, to my eyes and ears the "from Life" phrase has a nice ring to it. Do we know that Erdnase was competely responsible for titling the book and designing the title page? (perhaps he was.) Is this phrasing typical for illustrated books of that period? Or is it somewhat unique? Many have complimented Erdnase for his writing skills, so maybe this was just a well turned phrase for simply informing the reader of the illustrated nature of the book? Clay

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**Guest | 12/20/06 06:31 PM | link | filter**

Originally posted by Richard Hatch:

QUOTE]Aaron, I think that is an excellent point. I don't understand why the author would say "Drawn from life" on the title page if they were not, nor do I see why he would mention the artist's name on the titlepage, if he were obsessively concerned with maintaining anonymity, as David argues. Neither the method of illustrating nor the artist's identity would seem to have any bearing on sales of the book. Of course, David argues that sales were not the author's primary motivation (because David does not believe that he needed the money), but I still don't understand why he would add that statement to the titlepage: "Over One Hundred Drawings from Life by M. D. Smith." [/QB]

Good grief! Smith's name on the book would have no effect on the annonymity of the author because if someone sought out Smith way back then, what could he tell them?
He would give them the name he was given which was almost certainly NOT Erdnase's real name. Same for McKinney, the printer. They knew Erdnase as probably a guy who used the name "Andrews" since it reverses so nicely to the pseudonym on the book, but this was a self-published book and they were paid in advance. What did they care who the author really was, if they even bothered to ask themselves that question? The checks cleared. The bills were paid so they did the job. Like any other printer I’ve ever known, that was the end of it as far as they were concerned. It was just another customer in a long line of customers. We see the book as special because we’re interested in the subject. Obviously, neither the printer nor the illustrator were. Just another day at the office as far as they were concerned.

Dick, you cannot make the statement, "Neither the method of illustrating nor the artist's identity would seem to have any bearing on sales of the book," since neither you nor I nor anyone knows how many books were printed by McKinney for the author, how many books were sold, who the original market was, how that market was reached, or how many were sold in the months before the first ad appeared in the magic press...unless you've uncovered information that you haven't published.

Saying the drawings were "made from life" as well as the name of the artist adds authenticity to the book and would almost certainly help sales. I would have thought that self-evident. It's called "hype."

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Guest | 12/20/06 07:18 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by David Alexander:

**Smith's name on the book would have no effect on the anonymity of the author because if someone sought out Smith way back then, what could he tell them?**

Given how good Smith's recollection seems to have been 45 years after the fact, I'm guessing an interviewer of Smith in 1902 (when his name appeared in the book, and Smith was listed in the Chicago directories as an artist) could have elicited much additional useful information including but hardly limited to:1. The name and dates they met at the hotel2. The bank on which the check was drawn 3. The name used by the author 4. An accurate physical portrait 5. A precise recollection of the nature of the author's claimed relationship with Dalrymple

And that's just for starters. Who knows how much additional information he could have provided? I think it would not have been nearly as difficult then to have tracked the author as it is now.

The book was copyrighted c/o McKinney and McKinney was selling copies of the book,
so had an ongoing relationship of some kind with the author and could likely have also provided much useful information.

Your claim that the author likely used the alias "Andrews" with McKinney seems based on your profile that has the author requiring absolute anonymity. I'm not at all convinced that he did and I think his use of the artist's real name (which had no commercial value) supports that view. Why not put illustrated by R.Hatch or D. Alexander or someone completely fictitious?

I personally find the simple "E. S. Andrews" reversal a completely satisfying solution, and several attractive candidates with that name have been investigated, including at least one who was the age recalled by the artist, who arrived in Chicago just a few months before the book was published there (though he had lived there earlier, as recalled by Edwin Hood's son), had a wife whose maiden name was the same as Dalymple's mother's, stayed in Chicago during the initial sales period of the book, and moved out of state the very month the book was "remaindered" (in this case, dropped in price from $2 to $1) by a company living on the same street, indeed the same side of the street, just few blocks north of him. All possibly coincidental, but just as possibly the foundation of a good circumstantial case.

I don't know how many copies of the book were printed in its first edition, but I am currently tracking nearly 80 copies and it is certain there are a fair number floating around that I don't yet know about, and given the cheap paper and binding, equally certain that a good number have not survived. So I would guess (and that's all it is admittedly) an initial print run of 500, possibly more. Possibly some were printed but not bound, a fairly common practice at the time I believe.

I do think a key question that remains unanswered is the author's intended market for the book and the efforts he took to reach it. The author's preface suggests it was intended to be of interest "to all lovers of card games," quite a large market, then as now. Did he advertise it to that community? If so, when and how? I'm optimistic that he did something to advertise it that will provide further clues to his identity.

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**Guest | 12/20/06 07:33 PM | link | filter**

Originally posted by David Alexander:

**Saying the drawings were "made from life" as well as the name of the artist adds authenticity to the book and would almost certainly help sales. I would have thought that self-evident. It's called "hype."**

It's not "hype" if it is true, as I and I suspect more than a few others believe. If the author had gone to the great expense and effort to bring 101 or more photos with him to Chicago, why not advertise and benefit from his use of the technology by saying: "with over 100 drawings accurately traced from precise photos of the author's hands,"
for example? Why is "drawn from life," if untrue, a more compelling sales pitch? Illustrations "drawn from life" would be less accurate, and in a technical work of this nature, less appealing, I would think. And I see absolutely no reason to include the illustrator's true name on the book, especially if anonymity was desired. Smith himself never even saw the book until Gardner showed it to him 45 years later, and he's probably one of the few at the time who would have recognized his name and purchased a copy on that basis. Incidentally, Smith did not recall getting "paid in advance." He recalled getting a check when the work was completed, and he hesitated to take it, not knowing if the stranger's check would clear. But it did and he never saw him again.

Guest | 12/20/06 07:46 PM | link | filter

FWIW, between "drawn from life" and "with over 100 drawings accurately traced from precise photos of the author's hands," for me it's an easy vote for the former!

Guest | 12/20/06 07:58 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Magicam:

FWIW, between "drawn from life" and "with over 100 drawings accurately traced from precise photos of the author's hands," for me it's an easy vote for the former!

Actually, Clay, I'll concede that rhetorical point, but I suspect Erdnase could have made it sound more appealing, if true! Paul Fleming in his introduction to the Fleming edition of Maskelyne and Devant's OUR MAGIC argues for the superiority of the "illustrations made, with infinite patience, by Jeanne McLavy, from halftone prints which often failed to reveal details mentioned in the text." Again, I suspect Erdnase could have said it much better... Also, I think the relative novelty at the time of the author's claimed (by David) use of the photographs could easily have been made a "selling point".

Guest | 12/20/06 09:44 PM | link | filter

[QUOTE]Originally posted by Richard Hatch:

Given how good Smith's recollection seems to have been 45 years after the fact, I'm guessing an interviewer of Smith in 1902 (when his name appeared in the book, and Smith was listed in the Chicago directories as an artist) could have elicited much additional useful information including but hardly limited to:
1. The name and dates they met at the hotel
2. The bank on which the check was drawn
3. The name used by the author
4. An accurate physical portrait
5. A precise recollection of the nature of the author's claimed relationship with
Presuming that the author had not cautioned the artist and the printer not to talk about him, or that they would talk to you in the first place, you would have found the following:

1 A false name at the hotel that would have lead you nowhere.

2 A bank that would probably not give you any information about one of their depositors. If you did manage to penetrate bank discretion (highly unlikely) the account would almost certainly be under his false name that again would tell you nothing. Statement could be left to be picked up by him or sent to some city c/o General Delivery. End of trail.

3 The name used by the author which was almost certainly a false name. If not, why the "artifice, ruse and subterfuge" on the title page?

4 An accurate physical portrait of a man with no name in a country of 75 million people, and if my candidate, a man whose associates probably knew with a beard for much of the year. /I

[I]5 A relationship that may or may not have been real used to establish rapport with the artist.

And that’s just for starters. Who knows how much additional information he could have provided? I think it would not have been nearly as difficult then to have tracked the author as it is now.

The book was copyrighted c/o McKinney and McKinney was selling copies of the book, so had an ongoing relationship of some kind with the author and could likely have also provided much useful information.

As Ive written before, the author paid by check so that his business could be conducted by mail, managing sales and such by long distance, making it unnecessary for him to spend time with McKinney.

You claim the use of the artists real name had no commercial value, but how do you know? Thats just an opinion. Erdnase obviously had a different opinion because Smith’s name is on the fly title. Smith may have cut the price for his work if he was given credit and forgot all about it. Erdnase was an amateur publisher, so who knows what went into his decision making processes? Why does the book have two titles? I think the fly title has a message that you ignore.

Your claim that the author likely used the alias "Andrews" with McKinney seems based on your profile that has the author requiring absolute anonymity.
You misstate my position...again. As I’ve always said, Dick, I do not believe the author required "absolute anonymity." If he had, then "By An Anonymous Gambler" would have hidden his identity forever. As I’ve said many times, his name is on the book if you care to look for it.

I believe the author probably used the name "Andrews" because as a simple anagram of "S.W. Erdnase" it would have been readily accepted by the artist, author, bank manager, whoever he came into contact with.

I’m not at all convinced that he did and I think his use of the artist’s real name (which had no commercial value) supports that view. Why not put illustrated by R.Hatch or D. Alexander or someone completely fictitious?

I personally find the simple "E. S. Andrews" reversal a completely satisfying solution, and several attractive candidates with that name have been investigated, including at least one who was the age recalled by the artist, who arrived in Chicago just a few months before the book was published there (though he had lived there earlier, as recalled by Edwin Hood’s son), had a wife whose maiden name was the same as Dalymple’s mother’s, stayed in Chicago during the intial sales period of the book, and moved out of state the very month the book was "remaindered" (in this case, dropped in price from $2 to $1) by a company living on the same street, indeed the same side of the street, just few blocks north of him. All possibly coincidental, but just as possibly the foundation of a good circumstantial case.

Lots of other people have accepted the simple answer and gone down blind alleys. A man named Andrews (one of the most common names in the US) living in the neighborhood is proof of nothing. If he lived nearby, there would be no need to pay by check as that was fairly unusual for the time. He would have paid cash. Also, I see no evidence presented that this individual has the requisite education to write like Erdnase or the requisite time to develop the material in the book. Was the book truly remaindered or did that company simply acquire a small supply for one reason or another?

By the way, I’ve learned that my candidates family is related to the Dalrymple family through an uncle, or so I was informed a few years ago by someone off a genealogy bulletin board.

I don’t know how many copies of the book were printed in its first edition, but I am currently tracking nearly 80 copies and it is certain there are a fair number floating around that I don’t yet know about, and given the cheap paper and binding, equally certain that a good number have not survived. So I would guess (and that’s all it is admittedly) an initial print run of 500, possibly more. Possibly some were printed but not bound, a fairly common practice at the time I believe.

Five hundred copies is just a guess. It may be accurate or it may be way under or way over. How many runs were made? We don’t know. How many copies went into paper drives during WW I and WW II? We don’t know. We do know that the book was a pulpy book and not meant to last. I fail to
I do think a key question that remains unanswered is the author's intended market for the book and the efforts he took to reach it. The author's preface suggests it was intended to be of interest "to all lovers of card games," quite a large market, then as now. Did he advertise it to that community? If so, when and how? I'm optimistic that he did something to advertise it that will provide further clues to his identity.

I think further research into how the book was marketed is a good direction to go.

Guest | 12/20/06 10:08 PM | [link] [filter]

I fail to see what determining the number of surviving copies will tell you.
[/QB]

I don't think it's a huge stretch to wonder out loud if one of the surviving copies, whereabouts currently unknown might not have a salutation from the author. Perhaps to a friend, perhaps in the author's actual name. It doesn't even have to be a salutation from the author, it could just as easily be a note written by the buyer to himself..."purchased from W.E. Sanders, March, 1902.

That's just me dreaming out loud, but it's probably worth knowing where all the first editions are located, who owns them, and what might be written in them, if anything.

Guest | 12/20/06 10:26 PM | [link] [filter]

Originally posted by David Alexander:
I fail to see what determining the number of surviving copies will tell you.

I'm tracking first edition copies for several reasons: 1. It puts a lower bound on the number of printed copies. Obviously, if I know of 80 surviving copies, he must have had at least that many printed. Likely considerably more. How many more is a guess, as I stated. But having some idea of how many copies were initially printed would give some indication of his ambitions for the book, which I would consider useful and interesting information. 2. In tracking and inspecting first edition copies (the only copies with a direct link to the author), I'm hopeful that additional clues about his identity will be revealed. I wouldn't be surprised if a copy inscribed by the author didn't surface at some point, and I would find that quite interesting. I know of the existence of one copy that has the name "E. S. Andrews" inscribed on the titlepage. But I don't know the current whereabouts of that copy, and so have not had a chance to examine it. I would be interested to compare that handwriting to the writing samples of Erdnase candidates, though I recognize the name may very well have been added by someone other than the author at a much later date. It was only by inspecting one of
several first edition copies at the Library of Congress that I learned that McKinney was a direct source of copies (in this case, the copy sold to Adrian Plate in New York). That was new information to me. How did Plate, in New York, learn that copies were available from McKinney, in Chicago? I don't know, but I'm optimistic that someday we may.

3. It's a fun hobby!

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Guest | 12/20/06 11:17 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by David Alexander:

A man named Andrews (one of the most common names in the US) living in the neighborhood is proof of nothing.

I agree it proves nothing and believe I clearly stated that it could just be an odd coincidence, but I would like to point out that Andrews is NOT one of the most common names in the US, and I don’t believe it ever has been. In the 1990 census, it ranks as the 183rd most common last name, with only an estimated 134,298 people in the U.S. having that last name at that time. In a country of nearly 250 million people (at that time), that’s not many named Andrews. I thought this had been discussed earlier in the thread, but wasn’t able to locate it if it has. At one time I had the 1900 census information on the number of people in the US named Andrews. Looking at the frequency of male first names that began with the letter E, and an estimate of the popularity of the middle initial S (probably the most fudged factor in my equation!), I estimated that there were likely something on the order of two dozen white adult males named E. S. Andrews in the US in 1900. The fact that two years later, at the exact moment needed, one of them was living in Chicago (well, technically, across the street from Chicago, on the Oak Park side of Austin Ave), with the same age as recalled by Smith, with a wife possibly related to Dalrymple, less than a mile from and on the same street as the Atlas Novelty Company (the rather obscure slum magic dealer who first offered the book to the magic community at half price the very month he got transferred to California), and that he worked as a travelling agent for the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, a job that would have allowed him ample opportunity to develop the skills displayed by the author were he so inclined... well, it struck me as pretty darn interesting. Can I put a deck of cards in his hands? Nope, not yet. Can I show he has the voice of the book? Nope, not yet. But I personally find the circumstantial case for him pretty compelling, though I am admittedly biased by the way I stumbled across him and then developed the information I have on him. I consider Todd Karr's E. S. Andrews pretty interesting, too, though at this stage, still pretty undeveloped in terms of details regarding him. But definitely a promising "person of interest". And I find W. E. Sanders pretty interesting, too.

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Guest | 12/21/06 12:20 AM | link | filter

HERE is a page from H. C. Evans' 1929 catalog, offering EATCT.
Guest | 12/21/06 05:28 PM | link | filter

When I made mention of inscriptions inside the front cover of a first edition I was simply repeating something Dick had mentioned to me on the telephone one day.

It's Dick's original thought, NOT mine.

Guest | 01/11/07 03:09 AM | link | filter

I'm wanting to order some back-issues of Genii, and wondered if anyone can tell me any issues which have Erdnase features in (David Alexander's articles for instance). Also, any other decent gambling related features. Thanks!

Pete Biro | 01/11/07 10:22 AM | link | filter

Dave/Richard: I wish you two had been on the O.J. Simpson prosecuting team!

Guest | 01/11/07 11:54 AM | link | filter

Originally posted by willmorton:
I'm wanting to order some back-issues of Genii, and wondered if anyone can tell me any issues which have Erdnase features in (David Alexander's articles for instance).

David's excellent article is the cover feature of the January 2000 issue (vol. 63:1). Available from the Genii offices and other dealers (I know we like to keep copies in stock at H & R!).

Guest | 01/13/07 07:41 PM | link | filter

There's an elusive first edition of "Expert at the Card Table" on the Random Treasures auction right now.

I guess of note is that it's had a bit of work done to it, although it has original cover boards but new endpapers.

It's currently at $440.00.

http://www.randomtreasuresauctions.com/...RowStart=1

Guest | 01/16/07 08:02 PM | link | filter

http://www.themagiccafe.com/forums/view...=2&start=0
On that thread near the bottom is a post by Jason England, he talks about a copy of
expert at the card table with a picture of Erdnase, he's posted an image too on the post,
do you guys think this could be the actual photo?
Guest | 01/16/07 09:02 PM | link | filter
No, but I have a bridge in Brooklyn that I need to sell fast. Email me for details. ;)
Guest | 01/23/07 12:09 AM | link | filter
they also say on that thread that vernon meet him, and /or hoffinger!! I was under the
impresion that j england knew what he was talking about.
Guest | 01/23/07 02:38 AM | link | filter
Jason posted that with his tongue planted firmly in his cheek.
Guest | 01/26/07 05:54 AM | link | filter
Cardsharping and forgery are things that one can easily associate with a conman.
They are things that he might learn in his career. Indeed I can state, as fact, that: a
conman, a cardsharp and a forger can be just one person and own a legit printing
business as a front. Printing machinery is large and needs be hidden if one is using it to
forge documents and the best way to hide it, is in plain sight, as a legit a printers.
Based of my experience, it would not surprise me to find, that the printer, who printed
the book, was Erdnase himself. I dont know but has the printer been eliminated from
the enquiry?
Guest | 01/27/07 01:50 PM | link | filter
Thanks in part largely to this thread, I just received my first copy of EATCT. I thumbed
through it trying to decide if I was going to treat it like I typically do magic books and
pick out the pieces I want to learn or go through it in great detail like the many
previously listed card masters.
In flipping through the pages and taking an initial pass at a number of the moves... I
began to wonder if the 'from life' quote has been completely skewed into the large
debate as to whether they were drawn free-hand or traced from photos. Perhaps all
the mystery writer was saying is that it is possible in real life and he was able to do all
of the moves with the precise execution that they are described with. As far as I am
concerned, some of these appear to be fantasy. ;)


An interesting factoid that gives a flavor of Chicago in Erdnase's time...from The Big Con by Professor David W. Maurer:

"It has been estimated by one informant that in Chicago alone in 1898 there were, to his personal knowledge, more than two hundred ropers working for five permanent and protected monte stores alone; there were hundreds more roping against unprotected stores which ran 'on the sneak,' while the railroad lines running into Chicago were infested with mitt mobs. And similar conditions prevailed in New Orleans, San Francisco, New York City -- in fact, in any city which was a railroad center."

It was a very different world than today.

Originally posted by silverking:
[QB] There’s an elusive first edition of "Expert at the Card Table" on the Random Treasures auction right now.

I guess of note is that it’s had a bit of work done to it, although it has original cover boards but new endpapers.

It's currently at $440.00.

Hello silverking, Does that lower the value of the book?

Regards,

Kevin

Originally posted by Kevin Baker:

Originally posted by silverking:
[QB] There’s an elusive first edition of "Expert at the Card Table" on the Random Treasures auction right now.

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It's currently at $440.00.

Hello silverking, Does that lower the value of the book?

Regards,

Kevin

Kevin, in principle, any deviation from new mint condition will influence the value. In some cases, such as an interesting signature of historic import, it might increase the value, but in this case the noted deviations would be considered blemishes by most collectors, I think. That said, the book just sold for $2988 plus 20% buyer's premium, for a combined total of $3585 plus tax and shipping if relevant, indicating how desirable first editions of this work have become.

__________________________

**Kevin Baker** | 02/03/07 10:22 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Thanks Richard. It appears this book has become far more desirable and valuable in the recent past.

Regards,

Kevin

__________________________

**Guest** | 02/22/07 10:50 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

All I have been able to glean from Richard Hatch’s research is this:

While some people, such as John Fisher and the people at Bloomsbury’s, believe that Edward S. Andrews was the "real" S.W. Erdnase, others believe that Edwin S. Andrews is a much more viable candidate.

In other words, to paraphrase an answer given on an examination by an elementary school student, S.W. Erdnase was not E.S. Andrews, but another person of the same name.

__________________________

**Guest** | 02/23/07 12:44 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Please, I am very much apologize. I have questions on book of Erdnase, but I do not know where I can ask it. The problem, my questions can be not clever. This is not history of subject. Probably this is my bad understanding of English. If somebody know another place on this Forum where I can ask such questions, I will be happy to move post. But I suppose some of
questions can be solved many years before by group of peoples who interesting this book?

On LEGERDEMAIN section, on chapter SHIFTS and paragraph "The S.W.E. Shift" we can read:

"With the deck face up it makes an instantaneous "transformation," and the position of the deck permits the operator to get a glimpse of the index without being observed."

Please, what it means? I understand first part. I understand second part. But I do not understand ",". If parts connected should be "glimpse with the deck face up". Or second part should be like "and, when the deck still face down, the position of the deck permits the operator to get a glimpse of the index without being observed."

On same place but "The Longitudinal Shift":

Now the deck is ready for the shift, but the right hand may be withdrawn without disclosing the break at the inner corner, or the fact that the little finger runs between the packets. The left thumb and finger hold the packets firmly together and the deck could not have a more innocent appearance.

Which "finger" means on second sentence? Little finger from first sentence or this is just typo and should be "fingers"? For me this is important because on my language "little finger" only one word and this is not finger (like thumb on English).

Please, I am apologize for strange questions.

---

**Guest** | 03/01/07 10:29 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

NB: The Bloomsbury auction of John Fisher items has just added a notice stating that the copy of Erdnase in their first lot (with the very scarce Graham Adams manuscript on Erdnase) is NOT a first edition, though they don't specify further which edition. Obviously this makes a huge difference in the value of this lot. I'm hoping to get more information, but it may be too late to post before the sale actually ends. Here's a link: [Erdnase lot in John Fisher Auction](#)

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**Guest** | 03/01/07 06:43 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

So what eventually happened, I must admit I had no idea what was going on with that auction software. It appears as if somebody got it for a couple of hundred bucks, although that doesn't make sense because each item in the lot was worth more than that. Anybody?
I couldn’t get the live auction to work like it normally does (truly live). I didn’t even notice the second part of the auction - the non-first edition copy of EATCT. If I had seen that, I may have bid on that item... not bad for ~$250.

Even if it was the Drake plum or blue cover, it was certainly worth more than a couple of hundred dollars.
I don’t think anybody even got a bid in. It started off a few days ago with a "1" beside the number of bidders, and finished up with the same "1" beside the number of bidders.

Potentially two of the three items could have been worth $500.00 (or much, much more!) each.
I tried to bid and couldn’t get the "bid" button to become active at any time before, during, or after the auction!

It was a 1905 Drake hardback with an Olive Green cover, as far as I could tell from the description given to me over the phone by the auction house staff if was not the pictoral cover. I was the second highest bidder at 3200. I would have gone higher if it was that first edition...

Lot one sold for 3,400 + 19% premium to a floor bidder. I left the auction towards the end (other 50 or so lots still to go) and that was the highest price any lot went for.

Yep, I was the phone bidder who stopped at 3200 :) 

...and beaten only by the Robert-Houdin mystery clock which went for a snip at 4,600.

:) Your bidding made the lot a lot more interesting (pun intended ;)) . Including the buyer’s premium, the lot went for more than $7,800... not bad...
Guest | 03/02/07 08:31 AM | link | filter

I know :) If I wasn't bidding, the guy who won it would have got it for a lot less :) I didn't find out it wasn't a first edition until the auctioneer called me five minutes before the auction began, so I didn't really have much time to plan my max bid amount :)

Guest | 03/02/07 09:11 AM | link | filter

I just recieved an email from the auction house giving me the confirmation to bid (to late though).

I was so upset that I couldn't bid, because I thought the lot went for $280!

I thought, man, what a steal!

They emailed me to let me know it sold for much MUCH more then that, and was way out of my price range. Whew. Now I'm not so sad I missed the chance.

Guest | 03/02/07 11:01 AM | link | filter

So I wonder what the value of the Drake edition was, exclusive of the other two Erdnase lots? The Sawyer book is worth about $130.00 (or at least it was a few months ago when I got mine), so that means the Drake edition and the S.W. Adams books comprise the rest of the over $7000.00!

With only 6 copies of the Adams book out there (although I think there were two more kept by the author) how does that $7000.00 break down between the two books?

I'm trying to figure out not only what the Adams book was worth individually, but also what the Drake edition was worth individually.

Does anybody know if the "Dai Vernon" inscription on the Drake edition was Vernon's actual signature, or just the result of somebody making a written reference to Vernon?

Guest | 03/02/07 11:08 AM | link | filter

It was Vernon's signature, and he also wrote (in brackets) 'Apologies' directly underneath Erdnase's name on the title-page.

My guess is that the larger part of the deal was because of the Adams' notes (as far as I know it isn't even available as a facsimile, like the other '6 copies only' Erdnase book) and the Vernon signature.
Do we know if the purchaser was a floor bidder (who had a chance to inspect the lot) or an absentee bidder, who likely did not know exactly what was included? The information that the copy of Erdnase was not the first edition was posted very late and may have been a factor. The Adams title was clearly perceived by the auction house as being the chief item of interest (and presumably value) in the lot, since it was the only one prominently featured in the lot title and description. I have been told that the Vernon name was written in capitol letters on the title page, though it may have been his characteristic signature, which would have added interest and value to this copy. Although many of the Drake hardbacks are harder to find than the true first edition, they do not currently command the same interest for most collectors or fetch the high prices. But it is very hard to parse the relative values of this lot, or any such lot, unfortunately. And what was included among the tantalizing "other material relating to the identity of Erdnase, the Andrews murder investigation, and his death"? Can someone who was at the sale enlighten us?

The guy who won the lot was a floor bidder. I didn't get a chance to inspect the lot as I live miles from London and bid by phone. However, the auctioneer asked permission to publish my name if I won the auction, so - if the winner granted his permission - someone (Dick :) ) might be able to quiz him about what was included in the lot exactly.

Thanks, Will!

I am told that Bill Kalush won the Erdnase lot.

If it was Bill, he must have been after the Adams material because he already owns quite a few first editions of "Expert"!

Hmmm... The Conjuring Arts Research Center already owns Jay Marshall's copy of the Graham Adams' manuscript (inscribed to Bill by Jay on 10/14/94), so I would be
surprised if he spent that kind of money for a second copy...

Guest | 03/02/07 02:06 PM | link | filter

I've been reliably informed by someone at the auction that Bill Kalush was bidding on this lot, but dropped out at about 2,000 and that the winning bidder is a card enthusiast who works in the financial markets in Hong Kong.

Guest | 03/07/07 04:23 AM | link | filter

Just found a very rare edition of Erdnase on Ebay, currently priced at next to nothing:

Item Number 14009332172

Erdnase - Fireside Edition

According to the Busby book the stock was recalled and destroyed after it was published, hence very hard to find.

Ian Kendall | 03/07/07 04:54 AM | link | filter

I met with Gordon Bruce on Monday who said he dropped out at 1900. The amusing thing was his description of the Adams books as 'terrible' but there are only six copies...

Take care, Ian

Jason England | 03/10/07 04:02 AM | link | filter

Heres something interesting regarding The Expert At the Card Table by S. W. Erdnase (at least to me).

I was reading the 1933 gambling classic Cheating at Bridge by Judson J. Cameron when I ran across these statistically improbable sections of matching (or near-matching) text.

CAB p. 7: It is quite generally known that much deception of various kinds is practiced in card games.

EATCT p. 13: Of course it is generally known that much deception is practiced at cards.

CAB p. 7: There is a vast difference between the hocus pocus and the accompanying
talk and unnatural gestures of the card magician, as used in mystifying or amusing his audience, and the practices of the expert card sharper in his pursuit of ready money at the card table.

EATCT p. 11: There is a vast difference between the methods employed by the card conjurer in mystifying or amusing his audience; and those practiced at the card table by the professional.

CAB p. 7: To acquire a perfect understanding of the maneuvers used by the professional card sharper and the exact manner in which they are executed requires considerable study and a lot of practice; therefore the reader who desires a thorough knowledge of the tricks that can be used against him should take a pack of cards in hand and work out each maneuver as it is described until he thinks he could recognize it being used in a card game.

EATCT p. 11-12: But a perfect understanding of the risks that are taken may aid greatly in lessening the casualties and the reader desiring a complete understanding should take the deck in hand and work out for himself the action as it is described.

CAB p. 7: The object of this work is not to make the innocent player a vicious one, nor to transform the pastime-player into a professional; not to enlighten the naturally crafty, who have the disposition to cheat but not the skill, but it is brought forth wholly for the purpose of engendering caution in the unwary and trustful, and it is hoped that it will demonstrate to the novice that he cannot beat others at their own game.

EATCT Preface: It may caution the unwary who are innocent of guile, and it may inspire the crafty by enlightenment on artifice. It may demonstrate to the tyro that he cannot beat a man at his own game, and it may enable the skilled in deception to take a post-graduate course in the highest and most artistic branches of his vocation. But it will not make the innocent vicious, or transform the pastime player into a professional; or make the fool wise, or curtail the annual crop of suckers.

CAB p. 14: A long experience has convinced the author that, whenever the stakes are considerable, there is always someone in the game who is looking for the best of it, and they invariably find it.

EATCT p. 10: A varied experience has impressed us with the belief that all men who play for any considerable stakes are looking for the best of it.
does not refer to proprietors or captains of gambling houses.

EATCT p. 11: When we speak of professional card players we do not refer to the proprietors or managers of gaming houses.

CAB p. 19: Were all players dependent on luck, the result of their scores would be about the same in the end.

EATCT p. 9: Were all gamblers to depend on luck they would break about even in the end.

CAB p. 19: The vagaries of luck or chance do not enter into his consideration, since successful manipulation is more profitable than mere speculation.

EATCT p. 9: However, the vagaries of luck, or chance, have impressed the professional card player with a certain knowledge that his more respected brother of the stock exchange possesses, viz.--manipulation is more profitable than speculation.

CAB p. 20: Having become a past master in his chosen profession, he can laugh at Lady Luck and defy the laws of chance, because his fortune is at his fingers ends, varying only with his skill and the fatness of the losers purses.

EATCT p. 23: He has become a past master in his profession. He can laugh at luck and defy the law of chance. His fortune is literally at his finger ends.

CAB p. 22: The deportment of the successful gambler is usually as finished as his skill in manipulating the cards; his sangfroid is proverbial, for without it the ability to control the cards would be nearly worthless. He is quiet, unostentatious, gentlemanly and reserved, and expresses no emotion over either gains or losses.

EATCT p. 22: The deportment of the successful card player must be as finished as his skill. A quiet, unostentatious demeanor and gentlemanly reserve are best calculated to answer his purpose. Especially the entire suppression of emotion over gains or losses, Without ability to control his feelings the "advantage player" is without advantage.

CAB p. 23: He is careful to observe uniformity of action at all times, and it is an inviolable rule that there be no departure from his customary method of performing each artifice attempted, particularly in the manner of holding, shuffling, cutting, or dealing the cards, and also in the necessary conversation in carrying on the auction.
EATCT p. 22: The inviolable rule of the professional is uniformity of action. Any departure from his customary manner of holding, shuffling, cutting or dealing the cards may be noticed, and is consequently avoided.

CAB p. 26: Skill alone in handling the cards does not of itself always insure success.

EATCT p. 22: Ability in card handling does not necessarily insure success.

CAB p. 26: The expert manipulator considers nothing too trivial which might in any manner contribute to his success, either in avoiding or allaying suspicion, in the intricate manner of carrying out each detail, or in leading up to and executing any maneuver; for should he possess excessive vanity, the temptation to show off or give exhibitions to supposed friends is very great, and likely to trip him up.

EATCT p. 25: The finished card expert considers nothing too trivial that in any way contributes to his success, whether in avoiding or allaying suspicion, or in the particular manner of carrying out each detail; or in leading up to, or executing, each artifice.

See also in EATCT p. 23: Excessive vanity proves the undoing of many experts. The temptation to show off is great.

CAB p. 26: Although a skillful manipulator may be suspected, detection in any particular artifice is almost impossible, and in most cases absolute proof of the act is wholly wanting.

EATCT p. 24: But though under certain circumstances a past-master at the card table may be suspected, detection in any particular artifice is almost impossible, and proof of the act is wholly wanting.

CAB p. 27: A perfect understanding of the advantages taken by the majority of experts should greatly aid in lessoning ones losses.

EATCT p. 11: But a perfect understanding of the risks that are taken may aid greatly in lessening the casualties.

CAB p. 63: The cut has always been the bte-noir of the cheater, and it always will bewere it not for the formality of the cut he would have everything his own way.

EATCT p. 100: The greatest obstacle in the path of the lone player is the cut. It is the bet
noir of his existence. Were it not for this formality his deal would mean the money.

CAB p. 87: If an expert were asked what single artifice gives the greatest advantage, he would unhesitatingly decide in favor of second dealing.

EATCT p. 23: If requested to determine from what single artifice the greatest advantage is derived we would unhesitatingly decide in favor of bottom dealing.

Ive no doubt that there are many other similarites to be found in Mr. Camerons work, but those are the ones I ran across in about an hours worth of browsing. Aside from the few instances mentioned in *The Annotated Erdnase* regarding Frank Garcia, does anyone else know of this sort of flagrant plagiarism of Erdnase?

Jason

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**Guest** | 03/10/07 05:45 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Jason, if somebody has access to plagiarism detecting software (similar to what turnitin.com offers) one could feed into it the electronic versions of the most important works of cheating at games & gambling. This should give you a fairly complete overview of who swiped from whom.

Best,

Chris....

[www.lybrary.com](http://www.lybrary.com)

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**Larry Horowitz** | 03/10/07 11:39 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Of course now the question must be asked.....

Could Judson J.Cameron be plagerizing himself?

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**Guest** | 03/10/07 04:24 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Marshall D. Smith related to Martin Gardner that Erdnase was about 40, and not over 45 when they met in the Chicago hotel room to begin the drawings for Expert.

If the bridge book was written in 1933, and they were authored by the same person, that person would be about 70 to 75 when he wrote the bridge book.

All that's needed to answer your question is to know how old Judson J.Cameron was
when he wrote the bridge book.
Doing a simple search for that information, I don't find anything, but I'm sure somebody will know more about Judson and how old he might have been in 1933 when the bridge book was published.

Cheating at Bridge was published by Dorrance & Co., a subsidy publisher (aka a vanity press) still operating out of Pittsburgh, PA (CAB was published in Philadelphia). Perhaps they still have records relating to this book?

Neither the catalog of the Library of Congress nor the online master card catalog WorldCAT shows any other books written by Judson J. Cameron or Judson Cameron. Searches of several online subscription newspaper archives don't yield anything useful either.

CAB has a 1933 Dorrance edition, and a 1973 Gambler's Book Club edition (which may be evidence that the copyright was never renewed). The Copyright Office's online search capability is offline over the weekend -- the copyright record might give something interesting about the author (was J.J. Cameron a pseudonym?)

There are several Judson Camerons in the Ancestry.com index of Censuses that go through 1930, but none of them indicate that they are the author of the book in question.

Dorrance also published Thurston's "autobiography"

Since Erdnase self-published ECATCT, why would he turn to a vanity press to publish another book 30+ years later?

Sounds to me that Judson J. Cameron found material that he liked in Expert and helped himself. Certainly not the first time that's happened, but common enough with amateur writers.

Regardless, that's a nice bit of research, Jason.

While I agree with David, that this is probably just somebody copying from a prior
work with related material, the argument that "30 years ago he self-published why would he use a vanity press later" is very weak. 30 years is a long time where circumstances can dramatically change.

Best,
Chris....

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Guest | 03/11/07 08:06 AM | link | filter

Bill,

I checked the copyright renewal records and there is no renewal for "Cheating at Bridge" or any J. Cameron. One could lookup the original copyright registration record in 1933 for further info.

Best,
Chris....

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Guest | 03/11/07 09:52 AM | link | filter

Anyone who uses a vanity publisher is someone who doesn't know anything about publishing or someone who has had their manuscript turned down by regular publishers and has more ego and money than common sense which should tell them to revise their work.

Vanity "publishers" regularly charge huge sums to print crap. They have little respect within the industry because most in publishing and book selling know who they are and pay scant attention to books published by them.

There is one small but supposedly "regular" publisher who has charged several authors $30,000 each for their books to be published. When that news leaked out, their standing in the publishing community dropped.

One vanity press hustle is to charge for printing and binding but to only bind 100 copies, keeping the rest of the printed matter "in storage." Experience has shown them that the typical vanity press author will only ever want 100 copies or so. After a few years of paying "storage fees" they usually agree to have the remaining "books" pulped...at a fee, of course.

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Larry Horowitz | 03/11/07 11:02 AM | link | filter

Just to throw more wood on the fire,

When the book was published and when it was written are not always the same.
How were vanity printers of 1930 different then today?

**Guest** | 03/11/07 01:25 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

A clarification if I may, Larry.

Vanity presses hold themselves out to be publishers, not simply book manufacturers. There are any number of companies around the world who are in business to produce books. When I owned a small publishing company I used several as do most publishers who do not own their own printing plants.

Vanity presses hold themselves out to be publishers and prey on the ignorant and naive. The cost of producing a book through a vanity press and through a normal book manufacturer is far different.

There is a huge difference between a vanity press book and something self-published. Expert was self-published and did not come from a vanity press.

As best I understand it, the vanity presses of those days and the vanity presses of today operate with the same hustle.

**Guest** | 03/21/07 08:36 AM | [link](#) | [filter]

I am so apologize. I steel search inside Erdnase.

I am interesting on "Transformations. Two hands." May be somebody know where was first published Third Method?

Also about Fifth Method. On "Magician's Tricks" by Hatton written that Felicien Trewey was inventor of Colour Change, and on "Expert Card Tecniques" that he invent just this Fifth Method. Who know more deep sources about this subject? May be first book where Trewey invent Colour Change? May be article on magazine? How Lumier's movie "Partie dcart" 1895 with Trewey connected with this subject?

**Guest** | 03/21/07 10:41 AM | [link](#) | [filter]

...where was first published Third Method?

The third method Erdnase change? I'm pretty sure that was published in Erdnase...

**Guest** | 03/21/07 01:21 PM | [link](#) | [filter]
If it be so - he wrote it. But he wrote only about Forth Method "The improvement is our own". If we understand that Forth Method is only Third Method with first and little fingers on ends, we realize Third Method was usually invented before. The difference between Third and Forth so little, that should be only one method with notes, and "made" extra method can only man who WANT INFORM ABOUT HIS INOVATION!

Guest | 03/21/07 06:59 PM | link | filter

No disrespect, but I think you're in the wrong thread for the kind of details you're looking for, you'd be better posting in the "Workers" over on the Magic Cafe, a forum that's crawling with guys who fret over every card move ever published.

Guest | 03/21/07 08:52 PM | link | filter

Regarding Judson Cameron's CHEATING AT BRIDGE (1933) and Erdnase (1902), Jeff Busby in the chapter "Bookmen, Pirates and Ghosts" of THE MAN WHO WAS ERDNASE (1991) wrote (p. 358): "A close examination reveals the astonishing fact that much was lifted by Cameron from THE EXPERT. It is not simply technique re-explained, but true plagiarism of the original text..." Although he cites but one example, Busby clearly was way ahead of the curve on this information. He discusses several other much earlier "derivative" works, perhaps the most interesting being F. R. Ritter's 1905 COMBINED TREATISE ON ADVANTAGE PLAYING AND DRAW POKER, illustrated with photos, which was apparently the volume that Vernon's father showed him, which Vernon later misrecalled as having been Erdnase (Busby does not make this claim, however).

Guest | 03/22/07 12:50 AM | link | filter

Thanks, Mr. silverking. I will try.

Guest | 03/22/07 01:38 AM | link | filter

Oleg Stepanov wrote:

On LEGERDEMAIN section, on chapter SHIFTS and paragraph "The S.W.E. Shift" we can read:

"With the deck face up it makes an instantaneous "transformation," and the position of the deck permits the operator to get a glimpse of the index without being observed."

Please, what it means? I understand first part. I understand second part. But I do not understand ",". If parts connected should be "glimpse with the deck face up". Or second part should be like "and, when the deck still face down, the position of the deck
permits the operator to get a glimpse of the index without being observed."

On same place but "The Longitudinal Shift":

Now the deck is ready for the shift, but the right hand may be withdrawn without disclosing the break at the inner corner, or the fact that the little finger runs between the packets. The left thumb and finger hold the packets firmly together and the deck could not have a more innocent appearance.

Which "finger" means on second sentence? Little finger from first sentence or this is just typo and should be "fingers"? For me this is important because on my language "little finger" only one word and this is not finger (like thumb on English).

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I don’t know whether this is the right place for technical details, and I can’t help with the question about Trewey, but here are my thoughts on the previous questions:

Re the S.W.E. Shift:
It’s not very explicit, but I think he might be saying that if you do the shift with the deck face up as a transformation, the position of the deck allows you to glimpse the index of a card in the middle of the deck and choose one that contrasts with the card on the face. You can therefore avoid changing (for example) the 8 of Hearts to the 8 of Diamonds, which is not very impressive.

Re the Longitudinal Shift:
I think you are right that it should be "fingers" in the plural, because the deck is held closed by the left second, third and little fingers. In the description of the S.W.E. Shift he says:

"This position, like that of the "Longitudinal" [Shift], allows the second, third and little fingers to appear over the top of the deck (...) the other fingers and thumb holding the packet firmly together."

Guest | 03/22/07 05:36 AM | link | filter

>>>Re: the S.W.E. Shift:
>>>It’s not very explicit, but I think he might be saying that if you do the shift with the deck face up as a transformation, the position of the deck allows you to glimpse the index of a card in the middle of the deck and choose one that contrasts with the card on the face. You can therefore avoid changing (for example) the 8 of Hearts to the 8 of Diamonds, which is not very impressive.

Ops. Thanks. After reading this I can not understand what I suppose before. :-(
Re: the Longitudinal Shift:
I think you are right that it should be "fingers" in the plural, because the deck is held closed by the left second, third and little fingers. In the description of the S.W.E. Shift he says:
"This position, like that of the "Longitudinal" [Shift], allows the second, third and little fingers to appear over the top of the deck (...) the other fingers and thumb holding the packet firmly together."

Thants too. Not important is this correct or not, important "it can be correct". I am Russian and after reading Hoffmann, Vernon and Ortiz, when I get something supposed like error I always think "It can not be true that I am most clever man in the World and find errors what not find famous specialists". But if somebody who know language better than me agreed "can be not correct" my stress is out.

Thanks again. I have more questions but I afraid here not correct place. I will try find another.

Guest | 03/22/07 11:45 AM | link | filter

Oleg -- even though I'm not able to answer your questions, I enjoy reading them and the discussion they generate. Please continue to participate in the Genii Forum.

Guest | 03/22/07 02:28 PM | link | filter

Dear Mr. Bill Mullins.
Probably this is misunderstanding. I do not want left Genii Forum. I means just, looks like this thread about history and I should ask my questions on another places like History or Close-up...

OK. More errors (or not errors).

Page 66
Then when the right hand has made the next downward motion, instead of drawing off the TOP card with the left thumb...

Am I correct here should be FIRST card, like it calls on TECHNICAL TERMS? So, can it be technical error? Looks like Erdnase confuse on terms what invent.

Page 51
...then as the extra cut is made a convex crimp can be put in the under part by pressing it quickly downwards with right thumb against the table edge as it is drawn out. The ally cuts by the ENDS.
But on THE PLAYER WITHOUT AN ALLY we can read "concave if the player cuts by the ends, and convex if at the sides." So, should here be SIDES?

There are a lot of things what can be calls like typos. Is it interesting too?

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**Guest** | 03/23/07 03:38 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Although this thread is mostly about historical aspects of Erdnase, I think technical questions are OK too, unless the moderators prefer to have them as separate threads.

Page 66
Then when the right hand has made the next downward motion, instead of drawing off the TOP card with the left thumb...

This does look like a minor inconsistency - as you say, according to his list of technical terms it should be "first card".

Page 51
...then as the extra cut is made a convex crimp can be put in the under part by pressing it quickly downwards with right thumb against the table edge as it is drawn out. The ally cuts by the ENDS.

But on THE PLAYER WITHOUT AN ALLY we can read "concave if the player cuts by the ends, and convex if at the sides." So, should here be SIDES?

I think this is OK. On page 113 (The Player without an Ally) he says "the two packets may be crimped in opposite directions". Depending on whether the other player normally cuts at the ends or at the sides, you have to crimp the two packets accordingly. In the description on page 51 you start with the whole deck "concaved", so when you cut and make a convex crimp (i.e. in the opposite direction) in the "under part" and then place it on top there will be a gap at the ends of the deck, not at the sides. So the ally can cut by the ends.

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**Guest** | 03/23/07 03:22 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

For all who want to dig deeper into the plagiarism analysis of "Cheating at Bridge" and Erdnase, I have now a digital version (PDF) of Cheating at Bridge available for sale at $5.

Happy plagiarism hunting.

Best,
My suggestion that Stepanov might want to check out the Cafe "Workers" forum to get some answers to his Erdnase card handling questions has nothing to do with not wanting to talk about it in this thread. His questions are highly technical, and the answers he was getting here weren't......if he got any answers at all. I made the presumption that he wanted answers to his questions from those who might know.

A quick trip over to the Cafe "Workers" will show you that Stepanov is currently engaging with the likes of Hideo Kato and others.

Personally, I read the 'Workers' forum far more often than I read this Erdnase thread, so I'll actually be enjoying much MORE of Stepanov's thoughts than I otherwise would have if he'd kept asking for input only here.

Peace.

I think this is OK. On page 113 (The Player without an Ally) he says "the two packets may be crimped in opposite directions". Depending on whether the other player normally cuts at the ends or at the sides, you have to crimp the two packets accordingly.

In the description on page 51 you start with the whole deck "concaved", so when you cut and make a convex crimp (i.e. in the opposite direction) in the "under part" and then place it on top there will be a gap at the ends of the deck, not at the sides. So the ally can cut by the ends.

I am so apologize. Unfortunatelly I should do not agree with you. Erdnase clearly wrote FULL PROCEDURE "By drawing the deck to the edge of the table the concave tendency can be put in the whole deck first..."

And I suppose "opposite directions" was only regress. So, normal do only one, but if you so ... you can do with both...

Here I come to very much difficult question. Who was Erdnase, how he wrote book, how peoples write books... I made big books and short articles. This is big difference. Big books - high level of links... And this is so difficult to do correct. If you made revolutionary book (like Expert) you should refuse previous ideas. And this is not easy
Did Erdnase know bridge? Sure. Why he did not wrote? It was "antiquated moss-covered ruses as well known as nursery rhymes". Can we read "between lines"? What Erdnase "miss" wrote about crimp? Probably - yes. (Apologize for Russian supposition :-))):

1. Many years ago it was popular across crimp, but now all peoples know it so much that modern expert do not use it. Better bend cards along.
2. If you do crimp for both packs will be easy to see top (blink of sun or lamp), so modern expert do not use it and made bent only bottom part.

Not important is it correct or not (Tuilage was known on 1764), but author mean it when write about crimp. This is inside of book. He "should" be revolutioner ...

But, to be revolutioner not easy, because peoples can say - you just do not know truth what was written on previous books... And unfortunately peoples "made weak" - "the two packets may be crimped in opposite directions".

I am so apologize. May be this is not correct. It was difficult write here so big message. But I suppose this is not only technical problem. For example - sleight and slight. What difference between "two authors" and "two printers" (apologize, I do not know how call man who made plates by reading handwritten text). Two different authors use different vocabulary (different words, different forms) but two printers can not write "pack" where written "deck", but they can made different errors if different literacy. "Slight" not only on "LEGERDEMAIN" but last time appear on "CHANGES", so totally - pages 125-150. It can be another man who made plates. Just supposition.

I am so apologize. May be this is not interesting...

Multiple copyrights was not invented by Erdnase. I get book compiled by Albert A. Hopkins "Magic: Stage Illusions and Scientific Diversions Including Trick Photography" (1897) where 3 copyrights and additionally "All rights reserved".

Also, on magic were not only two "treatises" - "Madern Magic" and "Expert" but Henri Garenne on 1886 wrote "The Art of Modern Conjuring" which was "A Practical Treatise on the Art of Parlor and Stage Magic..."

Just for information.

If you are writing a revolutionary book, you don't necessarily reject everything that has gone before. For example, if you assume that all the gamblers had read The Secret Out or some other book that has standard sleights in it, you would be wrong. Erdnase's
market was different than many of the previous books, although he did include the section on legerdemain. Perhaps he realized that magicians would look for a book on gambling and that he should include something they would find useful.

If you are writing a book that teaches you how to play a musical instrument, such as the flute, you don’t leave out the fingering chart and the scales.

Also, nobody says that Erdnase invented multiple copyrights. And if you think that you have even scratched the surface of pre-Erdnase conjuring books, you are really mistaken. There are at least 1000 major titles that appeared before Erdnase.

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**Jason England** | 03/27/07 03:18 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Bill,

I think the Russian-English is hurting us a bit here.

I believe that he's referring to the fact that some have called the multiple copyrights in Erdnase "uncommon" for that era; he's not saying that Erdnase was the first.

He's just trying to show that perhaps they were more common that people have indicated.

Or I could be completely off here.

Jason

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**Guest** | 03/27/07 03:28 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

>>>>Also, nobody says that Erdnase invented multiple copyrights.

Apologize. Looks like I was wrong. I just read peoples too much interesting on 3 copyrights. "Invented" was just language form.

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**Guest** | 04/13/07 03:17 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Here's an interesting EATCT hardcover I've not seen before. Would this be something that a library did as a one off, or is this a published edition? The owner (who we all know!) has had the book for 40 years...

[http://cgi.ebay.com/The-Expert-at-the-C ... dZViewItem](http://cgi.ebay.com/The-Expert-at-the-C ... dZViewItem)

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**Jim Maloney _dupi_** | 04/13/07 03:58 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)
Looks like it's a Fleming edition, without the dust jacket. Check out the photos here: http://www.erdnase.com/editions/index.html

-Jim

Guest | 04/13/07 04:02 PM | link | filter

Thank you for that Jim.
You can just see the blue covers where the dust jacket is worn away.

Guest | 04/30/07 12:10 AM | link | filter

On Stanyon's "Magic" I find first advertising of Erdnase on December 1904 and book price was 4/6. If I understand well it was pounds. How much was it on dollars than time? All three books of Hoffmann sold by same price.

Guest | 04/30/07 01:41 AM | link | filter

4/6 is actually 4 shillings and 6 pence - or about 22 1/2 pence in decimal currency.

this would equate to about a half dollar at current exchange rate.

Jon/Baph

Guest | 04/30/07 03:07 AM | link | filter

Thanks.
I want Hoffmann on half dollsr. :-)

Guest | 05/29/07 12:44 PM | link | filter

David Alexander

Member # 1398

posted November 26, 2006 02:31 PM |

"German was a required course for mining engineers. Thomas Sawyer pointed out in his notes on Erdnase that "Erde-nase" means "Earth Nose" in German. Earth nose...mining engineer? It would be a major find to learn if there was an informal group of guys who called themselves the "Erde-nases."
Hello David, just a minor comment if you want to follow this thought: the German plural for *Nase* (=nose) is *Nasen*. They would call themselves *Erde Nasen* or *Erd Nasen*.

Hope that helps.

__________________________

**Guest | 05/29/07 10:03 PM | link | filter**

I always considered this "Erdnase" = Earth-nose hypothesis a bit far fetched, but I recently did a google book search on "Erdnase" and several pre-1902 German references came up where it is used. Mostly obscure linguistic texts. I believe in one it was the German equivalent of the term for "pig" in a Japanese dialect...

__________________________

**Guest | 05/30/07 12:00 AM | link | filter**

Thank you, Thorsten. I hope to get to where I can do a bit more research into my candidates schooling as a mining engineer and I appreciate the correction on the term I should look for.

__________________________

**Guest | 05/30/07 12:58 AM | link | filter**

Richard, I’d be interested to see some of those references if you have the time to post them. It seems far-fetched to me too, and too much of a coincidence on top of the highly plausible anagram explanation(s) of the name, but who knows...

__________________________

**Guest | 05/30/07 03:32 AM | link | filter**

I just did a search in Google Books and found a few references to "Erdnase" (probably the ones Richard mentioned). One is as a literal translation of a word in the Ainu language that apparently means "foothills" (= Vorgebirge), another is a literal translation of a slang term for "pig" in some other language ("Erdnase" or "Nase in Erde" = nose in the dirt), and another seems to be an actual German word meaning something like "mound (of earth)".

But even more interesting was this from a catalogue of works on spiritualism, magic and other related subjects:

[http://books.google.com/books?id=FboZAA ... ase&pgis=1](http://books.google.com/books?id=FboZAA ... ase&pgis=1)

Samuel W. Erdnase / pseud. Robert Samuel ??? Is this just a red herring, or did the catalogue author know something we don’t?

__________________________

**Guest | 05/30/07 06:40 AM | link | filter**
Edwin, that apparent error dates back to a listing by Frederick J. Drake in the UNITED STATES CATALOG: BOOKS IN AMERICA, interim edition of 1902-1905. This is basically a collection of publisher's catalogs. Drake's of 1904 advertised the book under this name, though the book was never published under that name nor did the edition advertised by Drake (45 illustrations rather than 101, 204 pages rather than 205) ever appear. At least, no known copies survive and the earliest known Drake imprint dates from 1905. Did Drake know something others did not? More likely it was, like the other bibliographic information in the entry, simply an error, one which has been propagated by subsequent catalogers. But who knows? Another mystery...

I had a feeling someone might have come across that before. And there I was thinking we'd solved the mystery...

Here's something I found about the second edition of Erdnase - but you probably knew about that too:

http://www.surnateum.org/English/surnateum começa.html

Search for the word "Erdnase" (near the bottom of the page).

Having just searched the British Library - they have a copy as well. Here's the listing

System number 001157102
Author ERDNASE, Samuel Robert.
Title Artifice, ruse and subterfuge at the card table. A treatise on the science and art of manipulating cards, etc.
Publisher/year Chicago: Frederick J. Drake & Co., [1902].
Physical descr. pp. 178; illus. 16 cm.
General note Cover title: The expert at the card table.

Shelfmark X.619/6510.

Their X. stacks are usually firsts and rare. When I get it to read, anyone want me to make a copy? <G>

Jon

Some folks in another Genii thread talking about the recent release of Erdnase DVD's
wonder if it belittles Erdnase to question if, in fact, he himself could do ALL of the material he wrote about in the book flawlessly.

I don't believe the question belittles Erdnase at all.

That it COULD all be done flawlessly has been shown by the likes of Vernon and Freeman (although seen only briefly on video, likely far more often if you lived in LA and were a Castle regular while Vernon was holding court).....but I think it's certainly fair to wonder if Erdnase himself could do it all.

I've pondered the question since picking up the book over 30 years ago and determining just how difficult it would be to do every move in the book flawlessly.

If Erdnase was a die-hard fan or practitioner of both cheating and/or card magic, I don't believe it's a stretch to wonder if he may have had a great deal more knowledge than he did actual skills (I'm not saying he did, only that it wouldn't be a stretch). I find many magi and card handlers even today usually KNOW far more about card handling than they can actually perform flawlessly....myself included.

I personally have always thought of Erdnase as highly skilled based on how he wrote and what he said in 'Expert', but also thought that doesn't require that he be able to do every single move he writes about 'under the gun'.

I wonder what others think or would care to postulate about Erdnase's actual card handling ability based on what we know to date?

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**Guest** | 05/30/07 09:42 AM | link | filter

A number of listings of Erdnase are incorrect as Drake was not the original 1902 publisher. The author was.

That the author could explain his sleights clearly is not evidence that he could perform them all flawlessly throughout his life. The book clearly is something that was worked up over a period of years. What seems more likely is that he worked up something, developed a high degree of competence to the point that he fully understood what he was doing, wrote it up, took pictures from which the drawings were made, and then moved on. There is subtle evidence that the reference photographs were taken at different times. Some things he doubtless was more facile with than others, some things he kept fresh and others, not.

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**Guest** | 06/01/07 05:58 PM | link | filter

I wanted to take advantage of this forum to discuss the "SWE Shift". I have just finished the Artifice section, and starting the legerdmain section, but i was having
trouble thinking of a covering action for the "SW Shift", during a poker game, because i know of one magician who blows on the deck, or waves over the deck while doing the shift, but during a poker game those actions cannot be done. So i just ordered Wesley James' 7 DVD and Book Set which is on its way.

If anyone has any tips on the covering motion, or on the shift itself, it would be appreciated!

- John

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**Guest | 06/01/07 06:49 PM | link | filter**

Welcome to the forum, John!

Because of the nature of this thread and the fact that it has become a real jewel of internet interaction, you may find that the moderators ask that you start a new thread on this technical question (perhaps in the "Close-Up Magic" section).

All the best,

Clay Shevlin

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**Guest | 06/01/07 07:18 PM | link | filter**

I have just finished the Artifice section, and starting the legerdmain section, but i was having trouble thinking of a covering action for the "SW Shift", during a poker game

Which is why the shift is not IN the section on Card Table Artifice. It's not meant to be used as a hop. It was designed for card tricks.

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**Guest | 06/04/07 12:59 AM | link | filter**

Do we know Erdnase was an American? Could explain why finding Andrews is so tough.

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**Guest | 06/04/07 02:08 AM | link | filter**

would erdnase have been as a great and treasured book if we knew who he was? i personally dont think it's one of the greatest books written on cards, it might have been good for that generation, but i wouldnt recomend it for todays card learners.

im sure if we knew who he was, the book would be pretty much unknown.
Steve, the author gives his nationality as "American" on the first page of the copyright registration form. That, combined with the language, the fact that it was self published in Chicago, and the fact that the illustrator did not recall any signs of a foreign accent (and believed the author was from the East coast) make it extremely likely that he was a citizen of the United States.

Brian, I don't understand your statement at all. Most people thought the book was written by "S. W. Erdnase" and were unaware that there even was an identity issue. Vernon's proselytizing for the book was based on its content, not its mystique.

Jim Morton

would erdnase have been as a great and treasured book if we knew who he was? i personally dont think it's one of the greatest books written on cards, it might have been good for that generation, but i wouldnt recomend it for todays card learners.

im sure if we knew who he was, the book would be pretty much unknown.

This seems like a good time to quote Aaron Fisher--one of today's "card learners"--on the subject: Erdnase is my favorite book. It's the book that trained me, with some help from an older magician or two, in the craft of card magic. For my money, there is no better manual to learn the craft of serious sleight of hand with cards."

'Nuff said.

Jim

Anyone doing any of the magic from that book? I mean besides Ricky Jay's use of the patter from the Exclusive Coterie for a version of Hofzinser's Power of Belief.

Hi everybody:

This thread is absolutely fascinating. Having read all the ideas and theories put forth, I would like to add one little thing.

I have translated Erdnase into Danish (the book is to be published in my language, too, and Richard (Hatch), I have NOT forgotten my promise) and, considering how poor the
illustrations in the book are, due to the many reprints from other reprints, I decided to make new drawings.

Since I am no artist, the following is the method I use: I have somebody take photos (colour slides) while I am posing for the shooting. Using a projector, I use a piece of paper as a screen, trace the hands and cards with a pencil, re-trace it with an inkpen, scan it into my computer and place it at the appropriate place in the text.

One thing has surprised me: Several times, I found it impossible to hold my hands and the deck in such a way that the photo (slide) could show the exact position as depicted in the book. In other words, the slide couldn't be super-imposed on the book's drawing in such a way that they register.

My idea is that the artist "cheated" in order the better to show his points.

I am perfectly willing to admit that another possibility could be that my photographer is a poor one. Perhaps others will try out the above, and we may get to know for sure whether the illustrator - whomever he might be - actually used photos. If nobody can superimpose the slide of a drawing and the drawing itself exactly, photos will be out of the question.

Thank you for sharing,
David

Jonathan: I use The Exclusive Coterie all the time - except for the patter. In my opinion, it is one of the greatest card tricks ever, clean, direct, and truly amazing. I have added a few touches of my own but the modus operandi remains the same.

Guest | 06/04/07 10:27 AM | link | filter

I believe that 'Expert' is long past the time when folks could reasonably debate as to its value and historical significance.

'Expert at the Card Table' has already established its place in the athenaeum of card literature.

Although anything CAN be debated, this particular book is long past the period where that debate really has any significant purpose.

Guest | 06/04/07 10:33 AM | link | filter

To David Lindgreen,

Since I haven't seen your photographer I cannot comment on his or her quality, but
there is a very real reason why you cannot match up. It is also evidence that supports my observation that the reference photos used in Erdnase were taken at different times.

If you will privately email me, I'll give you my observations that should solve your problem.

David Alexaneer
dalexandro006@socal.rr.com

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Guest | 06/04/07 10:49 AM | link | filter

Re:

I believe that 'Expert' is long past the time when folks could reasonably debate as to its value and historical significance.

'Expert at the Card Table' has already established its place in the athenaeum of card literature.

Although anything CAN be debated, this particular book is long past the period where that debate really has any significant purpose.

I respect your wish not to discuss the book or its presumed value to students of this craft. And I hope you can understand that others may not share your opinion or value a perspective based upon such a presumption.

The text is. The author is not. Its previous champion is dead. Some may wonder as to the "intent" of the work and the nature of its ideal reader.

Kindly understand that some of us did read the "erdnase" text critically and while it remains a respected text it is not necessarily Gospel Truth or an ideal pedagogical tool for most students of the craft.

Believe it or not, not all creative, productive and very serious students of this craft have use for "erdnase" per-se and may even worry over its use as a political more than artistic instrument.

Reasonably yours,

Jonathan

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Guest | 06/04/07 10:49 AM | link | filter
Richard,

As I said, I think it may have been a good book then, and Vernon learned from it. I would pick other books in front of it to learn from. People may have thought the author's name real at the time but, I believe the mystery has kept the book alive more than the moves/tricks that are in it.

Jonathan:

I use three of his four methods for determining a card merely thought of, on an almost daily basis. I also use the Diagonal Palm Shift from the legerdemain section, and in the past have performed The Top and Bottom Production, which is a fine effect.

Thomas Baxter

Guest | 06/04/07 04:41 PM | link | filter

As I said, I think it may have been a good book then, and Vernon learned from it. I would pick other books in front of it to learn from. People may have thought the author's name real at the time but, I believe the mystery has kept the book alive more than the moves/tricks that are in it.

The book has remained popular thanks to Vernon's recommendations to his serious students and their belief that he was right to recommend it. Simply put: Vernon changed magic. His inspiration was Erdnase.

But let me ask you this: If you were beginning a serious study of the piano, would you begin by studying the work of Elton John?

Guest | 06/04/07 05:11 PM | link | filter

Perhaps Tiny Tim or Neil Young would have worked better using a guitar comparison.

Comparing "Elton John" as pop music piano player to "Erdnase" as card player diva does not work out too well on the Erdnase side.

Unfortunately the guy who wrote text for "Erdnase" took what at this time reads as a condescending tone and mentions but did not teach much of what one needs to learn in the craft, while the guy who wrote text for "Elton John" wrote effective sentimental things that have stood for a generation and earned the performer much publicity.

Whatever crew was involved in the 'Erdnase' text went away quietly into the
indifference of the conjuring community. On the other hand, Reginald Dwight, now Sir Elton John is doing fine, long live the queen. ;)

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**Guest** | 06/04/07 08:42 PM | link | filter

I wonder if this thread has wandered off its LONG standing topic (the longest single thread on the Genii forum), which is the hunt for Erdnase and interesting observations in the text of the book itself which might assist in identifying who he could have been.

I'm not sure its the thread for debates........unless its a debate about who Erdnase was.

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**Guest** | 06/04/07 09:04 PM | link | filter


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**Guest** | 06/04/07 09:17 PM | link | filter

Re: the "crew" remark....there is no evidence that there was anyone other than Erdnase involved in the writing of the book.

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**Guest** | 06/04/07 09:58 PM | link | filter

Re: the "crew" remark....there is no evidence that there was anyone other than Erdnase involved in the writing of the book

The idea that there is more than one person involved in the writing of the book is intriguing, and one that has been overlooked just because the available "evidence" suggests otherwise. I quoted the word "evidence" because, to the best of my knowledge, only a couple of people have actually seen "Erdnase." The fact that only a couple of people met one guy does not rule out a couple or group of people writing the book then one guy acting as a front man. Of course, I am not by any means an EACT scholar, so if anyone wishes to slap me silly with proof otherwise, please feel free to do so.

Gord

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**Guest** | 06/04/07 11:10 PM | link | filter

Gord, I don't think the suggestion that more than one person may have had a hand in writing the book has been overlooked. James Harto is often cited by some as having had a hand in writing the "Legerdemain" section of the book (though I do not find the evidence compelling) and many of those supporting the Milton Franklin Andrews
theory of authorship bring in an "editor" to help him with the writing. "Editors" as diverse as Mark Twain and William Hilliar have been suggested and investigated.

Guest | 06/04/07 11:34 PM | link | filter

Speaking as a published author, editor, and publisher, for reasons I have already articulated in this thread and my Genii article, there is no evidence that Expert is the product of anything other than one man. Indeed, the book itself is strong evidence that there was no editor or ghost writer involved.

Guest | 06/05/07 02:39 AM | link | filter

The illustrations show the same person’s hands throughout. That, I think links the two sections and, considering the person who posed for the artist appeared to be familiar with all the material, that is strong evidence to support the view it was one author.

You're welcome,

Joe

Guest | 06/05/07 04:35 AM | link | filter

re the "crew" mention:

Many of the songs that folks remember were co-written by Bernie Taupin and the guy’s name was Reginald Dwight. I was working from a parallel on the "Elton John" - "Erdnase" comparison used in the post just above.

I find the "erdnase" text puzzling yet I don’t have enough background to decompile, parse and analyze it to offer the sort of analysis I feel it deserves. No "theory" offered as to its authorship. Perhaps some exploration of its mythic nature but no scholarly discussion intended.

As to folks holding onto a dear ghost via a book that the living man used to hold dear... also a separate subject. A much more interesting subject IMHO as the affected are still with us to discuss the matter but none the less its own topic.

Back to the wits, will and advantage play. :)

Guest | 06/05/07 04:55 AM | link | filter

Edwin:
The first entry you've cited was from Harry Price's Short Title Catalogue (1929). While there is much valuable information therein, it is full of mistakes and guesses. Price probably got his info from the source cited by Richard Hatch.

The discussion of Erdnase's book in the second link you provided is a good example of someone who (a) bibliographically speaking, doesn't know what they're talking about and (b) wants to make their library sound really special. I loved this part of the discussion:

**There are only two known copies of the second edition (the rarest of all editions). The Surnateum library holds both copies, which differ ever so slightly from each other. ...**

The fact that this information can be had on the internet is testimony to the wondrous nature of the world wide web. And proof that what one finds on the internet may lead one astray!

Clay

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**Guest | 06/05/07 05:12 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)**

There are only two known copies of the second edition (the rarest of all editions). The Surnateum library holds both copies, which differ ever so slightly from each other. ...

The fact that this information can be had on the internet is testimony to the wondrous nature of the world wide web. And proof that what one finds on the internet may lead one astray!

Considering it's a bizarre magic site the story aspect is just fine and seems appropriate. Not a bad entry from a **Tlonist** perspective.

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**Guest | 06/05/07 06:01 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)**

J.T.,

Are you the webmaster of that site?

CHS

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**Guest | 06/05/07 06:12 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)**

The site is a resource for those who know how story/context affects the base trickery in our craft.
Here is some about the folks who contribute content and maintain the place.

I wonder why there's no mention of the pack of cards that came with one of the editions of that book?

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**Guest** | 06/05/07 09:12 AM | link | filter

Anyone who consults Chelman's website, The Museum of Supernatural History, and believes what is written there, please contact me as I have a bridge in Brooklyn for sale at a bargain price.

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**Pete Biro** | 06/05/07 11:19 AM | link | filter

Hey, I bought the Brooklyn Bridge. What gives you the rights to sell something that belongs to me? :D

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**Guest** | 06/05/07 12:43 PM | link | filter

Clay et al.:

I see what you mean. Looks like I'd better stick to origami...

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**Guest** | 06/05/07 02:06 PM | link | filter

No, Edwin, explore!

Mine was a cautionary tale re the internet and authoritative-sounding websites. It was in no way intended as a knock or to discourage you.

As with any mystery, IMO the more people who explore and ask questions, the better off we are.

CHS

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**Guest** | 06/05/07 03:03 PM | link | filter

The bibliography thing looked fairly legitimate and did sound like an interesting lead, but as for the Surnateum website I should have looked at that more closely. It's true that you definitely don't get this kind of thing in the world of origami though.

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**Guest** | 06/05/07 04:17 PM | link | filter

Clay wrote:
As with any mystery, IMO the more people who explore and ask questions, the better off we are.

Generally yes, but with a caveat. Those new to the subject should acquaint themselves with what has been said/written before, not just chime in with some idea or observation that has already been brought up and discussed previously.

Guest | 06/05/07 04:52 PM | link | filter

David wrote:
Generally yes, but with a caveat. Those new to the subject should acquaint themselves with what has been said/written before, not just chime in with some idea or observation that has already been brought up and discussed previously.

David, I agree, but with a caveat. ( :D ) Sometimes those new to the subject can bring a fresh perspective to what the experts perceive to be a "retread" of an idea, and sometimes such a fresh perspective would not have been forthcoming had the newbie read up on the subject in advance of thinking about it.

C.

[added by edit]

P.S. I'm ever the optimist, David!

Guest | 06/06/07 01:17 AM | link | filter

David wrote:
Generally yes, but with a caveat. Those new to the subject should acquaint themselves with what has been said/written before, not just chime in with some idea or observation that has already been brought up and discussed previously.

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I've followed this thread from the beginning and wasn't aware that this particular reference had been discussed previously. A forum search shows one post about the Surnateum in 2005, but nothing to suggest the site might have a reference to Erdnase that had been previously investigated. I just thought it might be something new and interesting.

Guest | 06/06/07 07:49 AM | link | filter
Edwin,

I wasn't referencing you in my post. I'm sorry if you read it that way, but I was responding to Clay's idea of "new" observations, not anything posted by you.

David

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**Guest | 06/06/07 09:42 AM | link | filter**

Edwin, you've contributed a valuable bit of information to the thread.

Chelman's site is quite well known to magi who focus on the bizarre style, and many will read this bit on his site about the 'only two copies in the world' editions of 'Expert' in his library and believe what they read, even though it's completely false.

Edwin, you've brought to light that there's still a great deal of misinformation and disinformation about various editions of the book out there.

This thread remains the most authoritative source of information on both the author and the book. When taken with David and Richard's Magic and Genii articles (which are absolutely priceless by the way) on Erdnase, you've got THE most accurate information, which you've now added to Edwin!

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**Guest | 06/06/07 11:53 AM | link | filter**

Thank you, there will be more coming if my next two lines of inquiry pay off.

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**Leonard Hevia | 06/06/07 04:19 PM | link | filter**

Hi Silverking. Can you tell me the issue of *Magic* that contains Mr. Hatch's article on Erdnase. I have a complete file of Stan Allen's wonderful magazine--but without an index, it could take some time...

---

**Guest | 06/06/07 05:55 PM | link | filter**

Does anyone know the phsycology behind the SW Shift? Why The SW Shift rather than a classic or the longitudinal?

If anyone has any ideas please let me know.

-John

---

**Richard Kaufman | 06/06/07 07:41 PM | link | filter**
I've seen many excellent cardmen do the SWE Shift and it's always obvious that something has happened. Chris Kenner does it very well with an outjogged card helping on the misdirection, and he also moves his hands at the moment the shift occurs.

Howie Schanzman had a nice way of doing it: as a cut to the table. This helps to hide the odd action.

Guest | 06/06/07 09:31 PM | link | filter

I have a complete file of Stan Allen’s wonderful magazine--but without an index, it could take some time...

MAGIC's web site has an index, in downloadable form. Richard Hatch’s article on Erdnase is in the Dec 1999 issue.

Guest | 06/07/07 09:41 AM | link | filter

Be sure to get David’s 'Genii' article as well as Richard’s 'Magic' article. Richard and David have different views on who Erdnase might be, and the true Erdnase fan should definitely have them both.

I read and re-read both articles often. I would have loved to have been at the LA Convention where both authors gave their talks in the same time period....I'm not on the invite list though.

David has some passages in his article that will give you goose bumps as you see just how important the SWE Shift could really be!

Guest | 06/07/07 09:54 AM | link | filter

Thank you for your kind words.

As I gave my paper at the 1999 conference there were no coughs, rustling of papers, people shifting in their seats or anything of the sort. The room was utterly silent and the audience's attention was almost palpable. It was an interesting experience in a lifetime of doing interesting things.

Although, as was suggested by a friend, it could just have been that the lights were in my eyes and everyone in the audience had simply left and gone to the bar. ;)

Guest | 06/07/07 02:54 PM | link | filter
As I mention David, I get goose bumps just READING the material....I can only imagine how electric it must have been to be sitting at the conference hearing it all for the first time!

David, do you know if yours and Richards presentations might have been recorded and available for purchase?
I've looked for such recordings, but never had luck in finding them.

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**Guest** | 06/07/07 08:50 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

To the best of my knowledge there are no publicly available tapes from the conference for sale.

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**Richard Kaufman** | 06/07/07 09:19 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

No tapes of any Conference event have ever been sold. The only time a tape has been released was the DVD of "Palengenisia" included with last September's (October's?) issue of Genii

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**Roger M.** | 08/13/07 11:10 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

The rather scarce 'S.W.Erdnase:Another View' by Thomas Sawyer is for sale on Ebay.

It doesn't come up for sale that often, this is the second one I've seen in a couple of years.
This is the revised and enlarged version.

I've got a copy, but if anybodies looking for one, here's a tiny link to Ebay:

[http://www.tiny.cc/sO0HK](http://www.tiny.cc/sO0HK)

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**Guest** | 08/14/07 02:15 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Originally posted by Bill Mullins:

**ERDNASE IN NON-MAGIC POP CULTURE**

Modesty Blaise studies EACT by Erdnase in _Dead Man's Handle_ (by Peter O'Donnell, 1986). Darwin Ortiz points out in _The Annotated Erdnase_ that Scarne, Zingone, and Rosini discuss the "merits of the Erdnase one-hand shift" in _No Coffin for the Corpse_ (by Clayton Rawson, 1942). Amy Tan's _Saving Fish From Drowning_ (2005) has a character named E. S. Andrews, who uses card tricks to assert power over Burmese tribesmen.
Any other non-magic notices of Erdnase?

Just found another: _The King of the Nightcap_ by William Murray, Bantam Books 1989 (murder mystery) has a snippet available in Google Books: "her hair and showed her a couple of fine-tuned variations on the Erdnase Shift, I had her gasping with pleasure. "Hell," she said, "this is better than a good lay." "

This is intriguing, to say the least.

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Guest | 08/14/07 02:21 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Stepanov Oleg:

Originaly posted by Richard Hatch:
Oleg, thank you for this interesting early citation. Is that Jesse Frederic’s Bibliography? Does it give any publication details on the book, such as date and place of publication? Thanks!

Dear mr. Richard Hatch. Yes, this is Jessel Frederic’s Bibliography. Information only name, 1902 and "Canada copyright". If you wish I can send you image of this page.

[Later downthread, Richard Hatch asks for a scan of the bibliographic citation.] See HERE for a page image.

And anyone who would like to compare the writing style of W. E. Sanders, (David Alexander’s candidate) might look up:

or

"Mine Timbering" by W. E. Sanders, _Mineral Industry_, vol 8 p. 715 (1899)

or the book
_Mine Timbering_ by Wilbur E. Sanders, Bernard McDonald, Norman W. Parlee and others. pub by Hill Publ Co, NY and London, 1907. (reprints the two articles above)

or


Some biographical trivia on W. E. Sanders:
The Oct 28 1911 issue of _Mining and Engineering World_ says "Wilbur Edgerton Sanders of Los Angeles returned from an eastern trip last week."

The 1902 Butte MT city directory has him living at 534 West Galena as a boarder, and working as a mining engineer for the ACM Company at 508 Hennessy building.

From 1889 - 1891 Helena MT city directories, we know that he boarded at 328 N. Ewing, and listed his occupation as "mining engineer".

From 1880 census:
age 18, born in Ohio, occupation "at school", has a older brother (2 years) James U., a younger brother (8 years) Louis/Lewis P.

From 1930 census:
Age 64, married for 20 years to Henrietta C. Sanders; occupation Mining Engineer, resides at 2909 Regent St. Berkeley CA

(the inconsistencies in ages with respect to the year the census was taken is common in looking people up in old census records.)

The 1885 minutes of the 46th convention of the Beta Theta Pi fraternity says that he was on the crew team, and is currently mining in Arizona (but his mailing address is still Helena MT), and that he was of the class of 1885 at Columbia.


Note that U.S. Patent #694995 "Car Axle Journal Box" is by Wilbur, and the images of the patent maybe found at Google's patent search.

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**Guest** | 08/14/07 05:55 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Bill, great stuff, as usual! What most intrigues me about the Sanders' CV is that his 1910 marriage took place in Denver, site of one of the "Erdnase sightings (Hugh Johnston recalled meeting someone introduced to him as "Erdnase" by Del Adelphia backstage in Denver, which would have been about this time).

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**Guest** | 08/14/07 08:11 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Denver definitely seems to be the center of the Erdnase universe. Earlier in the thread, we established that both your (Richard Hatch) E.S. Andrews and Todd Karr's E.S. Andrews lived there, perhaps a block or so apart from each and maybe even at the same time. And Milton Franklin Andrews spent time there.

Alternatively, W. E. Sanders, your E.S. Andrews, and M. F. Andrews all spent time in the Berkeley CA area, so maybe the East Bay is the key location.

That Erdnase, he sho' do get around.

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**Guest** | 08/14/07 08:13 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Originally posted by Richard Hatch:

The Wikipedia entry on Erdnase has the following line, which was news to me:

"Research for an upcoming documentary has uncovered correspondence between noted physicists and authors Stanley Wesley Stratton and Robert Andrews Millikan on the subject of conjuring and crooked gambling. In 1896 Stratton suggested a textbook on the subject. Further evidence suggests that Millikan and Stratton hired Professor Hoffman to write the book based (partly) on notes they provided."

Sounds extremely farfetched and a likely hoax to me, but does anyone know anything more regarding this claim?

If you look at the edit history for this article in Wikipedia, you find that this particular nugget was added on April Fool's day 2006. Coincidence? I think not.

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**Guest** | 08/14/07 08:48 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)
Wilbur Sander's patent was filed in August 1901 and granted in March 1902, almost exactly the time when the first edition copies were coming off the printing press. Of possible interest is the facsimile of the Wilbur E Sanders signature, which could be compared to the signature of "S. W. Erdnase" on the copyright application (assuming the author filled out the application himself).

Guest | 08/14/07 09:00 PM | link | filter

Another patent this particular Wilber E Sanders filed (in 1913) is 1107846, a Bin.

Guest | 08/14/07 09:06 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Richard Hatch:

Wilbur Sander's patent was filed in August 1901 and granted in March 1902, almost exactly the time when the first edition copies were coming off the printing press. Of possible interest is the facsimile of the Wilbur E Sanders signature, which could be compared to the signature of "S. W. Erdnase" on the copyright application (assuming the author filled out the application himself).

W. E. Sanders was clearly busy being a mining engineer during the period when EACT had to have been written. That's not to say that he couldn't have done it in his spare time (he was still single -- didn't get married until his late forties), but it does tend to make me discount him somewhat as a candidate for Erdnase. He was all over the West between his college graduation in 1885, and the publication of EACT, so he may have spent time on the road becoming a card expert, and fleecing those he encountered along the way. But to me, EACT represents a "life's work", not a hobby, and I tend to believe that the author's full time job was card play.

I just found out that he (W. E. Sanders) was likely a classmate of Amos Alonzo Stagg while at Philips Exeter.

Roger M. | 08/15/07 09:59 PM | link | filter

A Montana Historical Society document describes Sanders as more than just a mining engineer, including occupations that might seem to give him a lot more opportunity for card play.

A quote from that document:

"He worked in the field of mining as a mine superintendent, a shift boss, an assayer, a laborer, and a mine owner in Helena, Butte, and the surrounding area".
He would seem to have done some time in a few different types of mining jobs as well as engineering, any of these other positions could possibly open the door to late night card games with different players of varying skills.

Has anybody physically visited the "one lineal foot" of documents that the Montana Historical Society lists as being in their possession, and dedicated to the life of W.E. Sanders?

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**Guest | 08/16/07 10:27 AM | link | filter**

One issue with Erdnase being Sanders is that in the book he talks about how he "needs the money". I’d expect that the amount of income from a niche market book on card technique would be much less than he’d make from his normal occupation of mining engineer/operator. Perhaps the "need the money" bit is just a literary conceit. Or maybe it’s part of a non-practical and romantic side of his personality. Interesting that he applied for patents too...maybe part of the same mentality and quest for hitting the jackpot.

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**Jim Maloney dup1 | 08/16/07 11:01 AM | link | filter**

Originally posted by Bob Coyne:

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I think David Alexander has already addressed the "needs the money" bit. Basically, he'd probably make better money by actually cheating people than he would by publishing a book detailing the methods of cheating. One question I'd like to have answered is this: Why would someone who was actively working as a miner in Helena, Montana publish a book in Chicago, IL, 1500 miles away?

-Jim

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**Guest | 08/16/07 11:17 AM | link | filter**

Jim,

Perhaps this is a nit (but perhaps not): I suspect that being a miner and being a mining engineer are very different jobs.
Jim, if he did (as is apparent) want to keep his name from being associated with the book, the limited publishing scene in Montana in 1900 could have made getting the book published there difficult if not impossible. He may even have been recognized by his face in larger Montana cities at the time.

Chicago might have been the closest city where a project like this could be completed in an anonymous fashion.

Also, in 1900 there were a three or four rail lines through Montana that took a direct route to Chicago. For a guy from a family with a bit of money, Sanders would likely travel frequently and in many ways might look at a trip to Chicago as not out of the ordinary, or financially difficult.

I believe Blair summarizes several of the concepts first set forth by David Alexander. I look forward to the day when David publishes additional results of his continuing research.

Originally posted by Magicam:

Jim,

Perhaps this is a nit (but perhaps not): I suspect that being a miner and being a mining engineer are very different jobs.

Clay

Yeah, you're right, Clay. And those are all good points, Blair, and I suspected as much. I was mainly raising them as questions that would need to be answered by anyone pursuing this person as a candidate. Like Clay, I'm very interested in seeing the results of David's research.

-Jim
I too am a big fan of David's work.

Like many, most of my existing knowledge of the Erdnase hunt comes from David Alexander and Dick Hatch's existing research.

The house that W. E. Sanders grew up in is now a bed and breakfast -- you can spend the night in Erdnase's house! See HERE.

Originally posted by Bob Coyne:

One issue with Erdnase being Sanders is that in the book he talks about how he "needs the money". I'd expect that the amount of income from a niche market book on card technique would be much less than he'd make from his normal occupation of mining engineer/operator. Perhaps the "need the money" bit is just a literary conceit. Or maybe it's part of a non-practical and romantic side of his personality. Interesting that he applied for patents too...maybe part of the same mentality and quest for hitting the jackpot.

It's difficult to know with any certainty what Sanders' financial situation was, but he probably didn't "need the money" at the turn of the century. 1. He had been able to go to an elite Eastern university.

2. He was a member of one of Montana's "first families". His father was a lawyer, his mother came from a respected family as well. They had been members of the professional class since before the States War, in Ohio.

3. He was an engineer -- a profession that generally had (and has) a middle to upper-middle class career path.

By 1930, though, we can say for sure that W. E. Sanders was not poor. In that year, census records show that his house was worth $13,000 -- more than any other house listed on that census page. Also, he had a live in servant.

Bill, that is pretty cool. Here's a photo Mark Twain with W. E. Sanders' father in Helena, Montana in 1895 (scroll down for the photo):

Mark Twain with W. F. Sanders 1895

Maybe Twain did help ghost write THE EXPERT after all!
Originally posted by Richard Hatch:

...  

**Maybe Twain did help ghost write THE EXPERT after all!**

How does the tone of Twain’s later works compare to the tone of the introduction to the erdnase text? If I read the text with an inner voice of Twain (okay it will be Hal Holbrook) it comes across with a humor that I did not detect earlier. As a literary conceit it works nicely

Eventually posted by Jim Maloney:

**One question I’d like to have answered is this: Why would someone who was actively working as a miner in Helena, Montana publish a book in Chicago, IL, 1500 miles away?**

Originally posted by Blair Morris:

**Jim, if he did (as is apparent) want to keep his name from being associated with the book, the limited publishing scene in Montana in 1900 could have made getting the book published there difficult if not impossible. He may even have been recognized by his face in larger Montana cities at the time.**

**Chicago might have been the closest city where a project like this could be completed in an anonymous fashion.**

**Also, in 1900 there were a three or four rail lines through Montana that took a direct route to Chicago. For a guy from a family with a bit of money, Sanders would likely travel frequently and in many ways might look at a trip to Chicago as not out of the ordinary, or financially difficult.**

The following may be pertinent to the question: *Duluth [MN] News-Tribune*, published as *The Sunday News Tribune*; Date: 11-10-1901; Volume: 23; Page: 5;

"Wilbur E. Sanders, of Butte, Mont., was in the city yesterday. He is preparing a text book on mine timbering."

Using WorldCat (a master card catalog of academic and other libraries) I can't find ANY commercially published books from Montana between 1898 and 1903. I find a couple from Idaho, and (depending on how you define "commercially") 1 from Oregon. I don’t think it could have been published locally to Montana.
And this isn't relevant to the question of publishing in Chicago, but is still interesting (and shows that Sanders' character is not so pure that he couldn't be a sharper):

"Ore Thief Convicted" *Boise [ID] Statesman* Date: 05-28-1897; Page: [1]
"The jury returned a verdict of guilty against W. E. Sanders, charged with grand larceny, the theft of ore from the Trade Dollar mine."

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Guest | 08/30/07 01:34 PM | link | filter

As I understand the timeline, Erdnase was in Chicago in Dec 1901 working on drawings for EATCT with Marshall Smith. The book was released soon after, in 1902.

"Made Another Payment. Purchasers of Snow Creek Property Well Pleased" *The [Boise] Idaho Daily Statesman* 02-07-1904; Page: 11
"On November 1, 1901, the property was leased by W. E. Sanders from the late Thomas McEwen. Mr. Sanders proceeded with development work until April, 1902, when he bonded it to T. W. Davidson and associates for $67,500." [The mine was near Sumpter OR in the Greenhorn district HERE; photo of mine site HERE].

M. D. Smith could have been wrong about the dates, but if he was right, I don't see a mining engineer in the middle of developing a new property in the wilds of Eastern Oregon deciding to drop everything for a couple weeks, take the train to Chicago, develop the illustrations for a book on card sleights, and go back to Oregon and pick back up on the job. If we accept the dates, W. E. Sanders is looking less likely as Erdnase.

---

Roger M. | 09/01/07 08:29 AM | link | filter

Finding that Sanders had a bit of larceny in his heart is telling!

Mine development in 1900 would have involved rock sampling and subsequent assaying as it does today. Perhaps Sanders himself wouldn't have been the chap to do the sampling (being hard labour, and perhaps guided by a geologist), and wouldn't have done the assay of the samples either (being that it was his own property). This might also mean that he wouldn't have to be at or near the mine site to guide the process.

The rock sampling and assaying could have been taking place under his direction, but without him present.

Another possibility is that he was in Chicago on mining business, and took time out from that business to meet with Smith and undertake the drawings.
I enjoy reading your research Bill!

Has anyone learned what a mining engineer actually did in those days?

He engineered in the mines!

Here’s an interesting link I ran across tonight:

Erdnase Opera Link

Composer Gavin Bryars (who earlier composed some string quartets inspired by Erdnase) and writer Glen David Gold (of CARTER BEAT THE DEVIL fame) are working on an opera called WHO KILLED ERDNASE? Set for a premier next spring. Should be interesting!

Since a number of resources have come on line and others are taking up the research, I will give some info that I developed some years back. I compliment Bill for his good work. Time has been scarce for me lately, but some of you may find what I learned to be of interest and spur further research.

Wilbur’s book, Mine Timbering, was actually a compilation of articles written by a number of people, two of the articles (as I recall) having been written by Wilbur himself. He was the editor of the book. It was published in 1907 by the Hill Publishing Company of New York and London. As I understand it, the book remains one of the standards on the subject. The book is readily available through used book dealers for $50 - $75. I have a copy in my collection, but it is buried in a box that I haven't unpacked yet.

I would observe that Wilbur’s articles are dry and direct engineering articles. Only in his personal diaries does he sound like Erdnase. Comparing Wilbur's professional writing and Erdnase will prove nothing.

I have no argument that Expert represents a "life’s work," or shall we say 20 years experience, more or less. I never claimed, nor can anyone claim, that the book was
written just before it was published. There is no evidence that it was and few authors work that way.

Clearly, Wilbur announced (or simply told friends who let it out to the papers) that he was working on his mine timbering book in 1901, a book that wasn't published until 1907 and was only a compilation of previously published articles. A nice cover for his real project, perhaps and a great excuse to carry around and work on a manuscript.

I've always thought that Expert was written over many years with insights written down as he developed them and tested them in the mining camps where he worked or on the train as he travelled. I have a number of his addresses and he was all over the west.

We do not know if Wilbur was acting for investors or other principals in the Oregon project. He did not necessarily have to stay at the mine to develop it or have his orders carried out. Other business could have very easily taken him East as the train was relatively quick and direct for its day and Chicago was a hub.

Chicago would be, as I've previously explained, the perfect place to publish a book anonymously...and the entire process of getting the book publishing in gear would have just taken a few days. It would not have been a long, drawn out process.

In Butte he would have been too well-known even if the services he needed were available. He had his family to consider as he was a part of Montanas first family. His brother was a noted attorney and his mother and father were still very much a part of Montana society. The Senator died in 1905 and Mrs. Sanders in 1909. The Sanders had the first automobile in the area, an observatory in one house, etc. They were quite well-to-do. One huge scandal involved a family member marrying a cook! With that setting people back on their heels, one could only imagine how the local society people would have reacted to the son of Montanas first family being the author of a book on card cheating, GAMBLING, one of Satans tools to trap the unwary sinner. Proper people and the Sanders were very proper people - simply didnt do those sort of things.

Anyway, Ive learned that his wife was the daughter of the territorial Attorney General in the Colorado area, another reason why he had to keep his past secret. I believe his parents did not die until after Expert had been published and, as I recall, I think his father-in-law was in practice in Berkeley.

Since people are finally digging, Ill release the two main reasons why I don't think anyone heard of him in the magic societies of the day or why he did not attempt to capitalize on the reformed gambler idea: Some short time after Expert was published Wilbur became a Christian Scientist.

A religious conversion and one other thing: For years Wilbur suffered from tinnitus. I have letters of him trying new doctors, always looking for a cure. As he aged he...
became progressively deaf. On top of being a Christian Scientist, his wife was a Christian Science practitioner. Yet another reason for him to discard his past.

I located and corresponded with Wilbur’s step-grandson who visited him at his mine in Northern California in the early 1930s. He said Wilbur was quite deaf and that he had to shout to be understood. He and Henrietta did not live together that much in later years with Wilbur spending a lot of time at his mine.

I had a great fantasy that I would find her relatives and that they would direct me to a trunk in the garage that belonged to her. In it I would find the handwritten manuscript for Expert.

Unfortunately, that fantasy evaporated when I learned how the Widow Sanders died in the late 1940s. She suffered from undiagnosed and untreated Tuberculosis, the bacillus apparently not responding to Christian Science practices. She finally went to a doctor probably somewhat traumatic given her beliefs and he diagnosed terminal TB, giving her only days to live.

She moved into the bedroom of her grandson in the home of her son with whom she had been estranged, the grandson being away at college. True to the doctors diagnosis, she only lasted a few days, dying in some discomfort. She was quickly buried. All her possessions, including the bed, the bed linen, the mattress, essentially everything in the room, was burned. Any possessions or evidence that she might have had that could have contributed to solving the mystery went up in smoke sixty years ago.

She’s buried in the Bay Area while Wilbur is up in Montana.

All that and one other thing: some time back someone sent me info linking Wilbur’s family with the Dalrymple family. I have to follow that more closely, but it looks good.

---

Guest 11/28/07 11:08 AM | link filter

Originally posted by Richard Hatch:

Smith thought the hotel was on the SE corner of Congress and State, but there does not seem to have been a hotel at that location then (He was more certain that it was on the east side of State Street, and there are several good candidates in the neighborhood at that time).

The current (11/2007) Google Maps/satellite view shows an empty lot with a building under construction at the SE corner of Congress and State. The 1886 Robinson Fire Insurance Map (available HERE) doesn’t name the building at that corner. It shows the Marvin House and the Congress House almost directly across the street (on the west side of State St.), and Brown’s Hotel a half block north on the west side of State. A block south, on the east side of State, is the Globe Hotel.
Bill Mullins | 02/04/08 10:11 AM | link | filter

It's always struck me as, well, odd that the story of Dai Vernon chasing Allan Kennedy and the Center Deal is so well known, but that I've never heard of him ever trying to locate Erdnase.

Did he put any effort into locating/identifying Erdnase? When he met Marshall Smith, what was his reaction? What did he think of Martin Gardner's research? Did he want to continue it?

Did he agree that M. F. Andrews was Erdnase?

(If the answers to these questions is in David Ben's book, forgive me. I need to get off my wallet and buy a copy.)

Gord | 02/04/08 10:53 AM | link | filter

Everyone will be pleased to know that the mystery that was Erdnase has finally been solved. www.chapters.indigo.ca has a copy of Expert for sale under the name of "Samuel R. Erdnase."

There you have it. We Canadians have figured it out. Hooray for us!

---

Pete Biro | 02/04/08 12:51 PM | link | filter

Funny, I thought his name was Jeff Busby Erdnase Senior.

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Richard Hatch | 02/04/08 01:47 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Bill Mullins:

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Did he agree that M. F. Andrews was Erdnase?

(If the answers to these questions is in David Ben's book, forgive me. I
Vernon was very interested in the identity question early on. He apparently learned from his friend John C. Sprong that S. W. Erdnase is a reverse spelling of E. S. Andrews, and Sprong, who lived in Chicago apparently learned this from the publisher at that time, Frederick J. Drake. The exact provenance of this sourcing to Drake is unclear, as some version have Vernon himself pestering Drake for this information while he was in Chicago, possible while cutting silhouettes at the world's fair in 1933. Whether Drake gave this information to Sprong or Vernon or both, and whether Drake claimed it was the author's true name, and whether Drake even knew the author or his true name is all unclear at this point. Some contact between Drake and the author at some point may be presumed, as they advertised first edition copies at $1 starting in 1903 and published their own edition in both paperback and hardback (at 25 and 50 cents respectively) starting in 1905, when the book was still clearly protected by copyright. Vernon was apparently disappointed by the scant information he was able to glean from Marshall D. Smith, to the point of even questioning his involvement as illustrator of the book in later days. He was impressed with Gardner's research and findings, but Vernon never accepted his friend Gardner's conclusion that Milton Franklin Andrews wrote the book. Gardner believes this was because Vernon could not accept that possibility that his idol was a notorious murderer, but Vernon may have had other good reasons to question the theory.

Vernon also speculated that he might perhaps have met the mysterious author as a youth while studying magic books at the library in Ottawa. A stranger with a red beard engaged him in conversation about card work and gave him some fine points on the pass. Vernon never saw the man again and fantasized that perhaps it might have been the mysterious Erdnase.

These references are from my memory, so may not be entirely precise (I am out of town without access to my library at the moment), but I'm pretty sure most are from the Vernon Touch columns and Persi Diaconis' introduction to REVELATIONS.

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**Cugel** | 02/04/08 02:33 PM | [link] | [filter]

[QUOTE]Originally posted by Gord:
[qb] Everyone will be pleased to know that the mystery that was Erdnase has finally been solved.
[wb] **www.chapters.indigo.ca** has a copy of Expert for sale under the name of "Samuel R. Erdnase."
There you have it. We Canadians have figured it out. Hooray for us!

---

**Roger M.** | 02/04/08 03:51 PM | [link] | [filter]

The "Samuel" reference would be an error made decades ago, which has been repeated
over and over again.

It actually shows up in quite a few different places.

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**Jim Maloney** dup1 | 02/04/08 05:50 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Gangrini:

Gord, try using the code to reduce that URL to a hot link next time. Otherwise it throws off the page settings and makes it a pain in the ass to read the thread.

Can a mod please tidy that up?

Thanks.

It appears that we've having some issues with the URL tag. I'm going to talk to Brad about it. I should point out that quoting the super-long link does not help matters. ;)

-Jim

---

**Gord** | 02/04/08 09:06 PM | link | filter

Sorry guy's, I did use the URL tag but it didn't work so I cleaned it up as much as I could.

Gord

---

**Gord** | 02/04/08 09:06 PM | link | filter

Originally posted by Blair M.:

The "Samuel" reference would be an error made decades ago, which has been repeated over and over again.

It actually shows up in quite a few different places.

Does anyone know where this mistake first came up and why? Gord

---

**Roger M.** | 02/04/08 09:40 PM | link | filter

When he acquired the plates from Erdnase, that was the name Fredrick J. Drake registered in the U.S. Catalog as being the original author. Drake himself may have made the name up.
To be fair, there are some folks who feel that Drake may have been asked by Erdnase himself to specifically use that pen name when he registered the authors name for copyright purposes.

Whichever is true, that's the name Drake used.

The false name was quite successful steering folks off the right track in the hunt for Erdnase for many years, so perhaps its purpose was served.

The name wasn't the only error this initial catalog listing contained. The same listing says the book had 204 pages rather than 205. It also promises only 45 illustrations rather than 101.

David Alexander | 02/04/08 09:51 PM | link | filter

Why Erdnase would ask Drake to change the copyright he already owned does not make sense.

Drake got the plates from McKinney who was going bankrupt but McKinney did not own the plates so they could not legally sell them to anyone. Erdnase owned the plates because the book was self-published. The last time I talked to Martin Gardner he didn't understand this point until I pointed it out.

I think Drake tried to re-copyright the work in a name he could own and control, "Robert Erdnase." That was not successful as somewhere along the way the real Erdnase asserted himself, possibly/probably through an attorney to whom he showed the checks paid to McKinney for typesetting and printing, and Marshall Smith for illustrations, along with the copyright papers.

I don't think Drake ever had direct contact or even knew who Erdnase really was.

David Alexander | 02/04/08 10:24 PM | link | filter

Correct that to I don't think Drake had direct contact with or ever knew who Erdnase really was. Certain subsequent actions by Drake suggest that to me.

Roger M. | 02/05/08 01:14 PM | link | filter

David,
Do you think that any action Erdnase might have had a lawyer undertake on his behalf against McKinney might have proceeded beyond a "harsh" letter?

If a letter didn't do the job perhaps some sort of legal process could have been undertaken?
Leo Rullman, writing in his BOOKS OF YESTERDAY column in The Sphinx in 1929, says that the publisher at that time [Frederick J. Drake] had "not been in touch with him [the author] for many years, as the copyright was purchased outright and no royalties figured in the transaction." This is specific enough that I think it reasonable to assume that Rullman, a trustworthy source on such things, must have gotten this information directly from Drake, likely in correspondence with them on this topic. Whether Drake was trustworthy is another question. Incidentally, an earlier column of Rullman's, in the November 1928 Sphinx, is the earliest published reference to S. W. Erdnase=E. S. Andrews that I have found.

Richard Hatch | 02/08 05:15 PM | link | filter

To clarify my earlier post on Vernon's involvement in the search for Erdnase, his Genii Touch column of August 1970 is devoted to Erdnase. There he credits Drake with having told Sprong that S. W. Erdnase was the name "Andrews" all mixed up, which was apparently the first Vernon learned this. He (Vernon) says he (Vernon) subsequently "badgered" Drake "religiously for months" in the hopes of learning more information about "Andrews" but claims Drake told him he could "not betray a confidence" and told him nothing further. It is not clear to me how reliable this account of Vernon's is on this point. I suspect he was dealing with Frederick J. Drake's son, who was later president of the company, rather than Frederick J. Drake himself. The fact that Vernon claims to have spent "months" pestering Drake on this point indicates that it was likely during his prolonged stint cutting silhouettes at the 1933 World's Fair, unless anyone knows of a similar period of time he spent there at an earlier date.

In the same column he discusses Gardner's research and says that he (Vernon) was "fairly certain this Milton Andrews, who was a gambler, was not the one who wrote the book." He also questions whether M. D. Smith was illustrator of the book, based on his weak recollection of the work years later.

David Alexander | 02/08 07:20 PM | link | filter

Drake never owned the copyright and did not own the plates. That is clear from the evidence, regardless of his self-serving statement to Rullman who doubtless reported it correctly, but had no understanding of what was going on. Had Rullman does a tiny bit of digging, he would have had an interesting story on his hands. It was all there for them to find...but they didn't.
Originally posted by David Alexander:

Drake never owned the copyright and did not own the plates. That is clear from the evidence, regardless of his self-serving statement to Rullman who doubtless reported it correctly, but had no understanding of what was going on. Had Rullman done a tiny bit of digging, he would have had an interesting story on his hands. It was all there for them to find...but they didn't.

Hmmm... The claim that Drake obtained the original first edition plates from the presumed printer McKinney comes to us from Martin Gardner, though I have been unable to ascertain his source and verify this claim. Drake was selling first editions at half price in 1903 and it is certainly plausible that they might have obtained the copies and the plates as part of a liquidation of the assets of McKinney's business, but I would classify that as conjecture at present. It seems to me equally possible that they could have obtained the books, the plates and the copyright from a discouraged author who (in his own words) "needed the money." The fact that Drake did not formally file the paperwork to transfer the copyright and did not later renew it is not proof they did not own those rights. Without knowing the details of the author's dealings with McKinney (who not only allowed the author to file the copyright using their address but also sold copies of the book) it is not possible to know who owned the plates, McKinney or the author. Quite possibly the author did not pay his full bill to McKinney (which might have contributed to their subsequent bankruptcy!) and so McKinney claimed ownership of the plates and unsold copies in payment. Obviously, this is speculative conjecture, but so is (I think) the claim that McKinney was merely a printer paid in full in advance with no vested interest in the publication. On what evidence is such a claim based?

My scenario is based on common sense, how printers and businesses behave, how people behave, and a rational interpretation of the evidence developed so far. People act in their own self-interest and often they see what they can get away with for their own benefit.

The book was, as announced on the fly title, Published by the Author. McKinney was not the publisher and there is zero evidence that he was anything but a printer. Being the printer meant they did the job for a fee. Like every other small printer, they would require the job to have been paid in advance, especially for a stranger, a walk-in off the street. They had to make over 200 individual plates to print the book, a large investment in time and material for a small shop. McKinney almost certainly sent Erdnase to Marshall Smith who was paid for his work by Erdnase. It is highly unlikely that in this instance McKinney acted as a publisher or participating partner. That Erdnase contributed in any way to McKinney's subsequent bankruptcy is without
merit.

Drake gives himself away by trying to re-copyright the book under the name Robert Erdnase. If he had the copyright assigned or purchased, there was no need for him to do that. It is possible that Hilliar, who Drake had published, gave him advice about a property Drake could pick up easily, but we do not know, even though The Man Who Was Erdnase claims without a shred of evidence presented, that Hilliar brokered the sale of the plates to Drake. Perhaps all of Drakes actions were done innocently from information supplied by Hilliar. At this remove, no one knows.

I am amazed that you dont see the renewal of the copyright as evidence that Drake did not own it. To think otherwise makes absolutely no sense. It was a property that had been selling well for years and it was in Drakes self interest to renew the copyright IF HE WAS ABLE. I take the lack of renewal as clear evidence that Drake could not renew it because he did not have standing to do so.

I think what happened is that Erdnase was out of touch with McKinney for a period of time and only learned about McKinneys bankruptcy after the fact and Drakes acquisition of the plates and the remaining book stock. All he needed to do was hire an attorney and show the copyright paperwork, the cancelled checks to McKinney and Smith (since he paid Smith with a check it is likely that he paid McKinney with a check or checks), all sufficient evidence to prove ownership of the book.

A letter could have been sent by Erdnases lawyer without ever having to divulge his real identity to Drake. Drake, knowing that he had been caught out or acting in good faith on bad advice, had no defense. For Drake this was just another title in a large catalog of exploitation material. A defense would have been time consuming and expensive, especially when he would almost certainly lose both civilly and criminally, if charges had been brought. It was simpler and cheaper to settle, so a deal could have been struck for the lease of the plates and a royalty.

I also think that royalty payments were made for a time, easily mailed to whatever bank Erdnase named. One day the royalty checks came back, account closed. Drake has no way to contact his author, but he had no incumbency to hunt him down and pay him money, but he could not do anything else but make sure the accounting was accurate and of course, like any smart publisher, he kept selling the book.

The year 1930 rolls around, copyright renewal is due but Drake has been caught out once before and declines to do anything that would prompt legal action, so the copyright is not renewed and book reverts to the public domain, but Drake continues to sell it, an important point. Seven years later he sells the plates, but by that time photo offset was becoming more financially viable, so a knock off of the title was possible without resetting the entire book. Drake did well with the title and never knew who Erdnase really was, perhaps erroneously thinking it was someone named Andrews to whom he paid royalty and lease payments.
And, I find Drake selling the plates seven years later to be telling because in those days seven years was the time that one could legally assume someone was dead. Doubtless, when Drake sold the property he had the new buyer assume all responsibilities which allowed Drake to keep the royalties and lease payments, a nice bonus on top of the profits hed made over the years. That's what a good businessman would have done.

It should also be noted that none of the people who interviewed Marshall Smith were anything like trained researchers or historians. This was an inconsequential job for Smith who only recognized the work from the style of lettering he used in numbering the drawings.

Martin Gardner had an agenda in dealing with Smith as is clear from the published correspondence where he is pushing Smith to correctly remember Erdnase's height as corresponding with M.F. Andrews, many inches taller than the man Smith remembers. To his credit, Smith did not alter his memory to support Martin Gardner's theory, which is wrong in so many ways. After several exchanges over the years, Smith did move his estimate one inch, but that was a long way from Andrews's six feet plus to the man Smith remembered as being 56 or so, as Dick Hatch so ably demonstrated at the LA History Conference.

**Richard Hatch | 02/07/08 01:05 AM | link | filter**

Originally posted by David Alexander:

_The book was, as announced on the fly title, Published by the Author. McKinney was not the publisher and there is zero evidence that he was anything but a printer. Being the printer meant they did the job for a fee. Like every other small printer, they would require the job to have been paid in advance, especially for a stranger, a walk-in off the street._

What is the evidence that Erdnase was a stranger to McKinney? Certainly he could have been, but we really don't know. Erdnase picked McKinney for some reason, perhaps because they were not strangers. My favorite candidate, Edwin Sumner Andrews, was raised on a farm where his nearest neighbor was an Irish immigrant named Patrick McKinney who had a son named James. James McKinney, the printer, was the son of an Irish immigrant and James had a brother named Patrick who worked in his print shop. Probably just a goofy coincidence, but maybe not (McKinney is not a common name). I see no reason to assume the printer did not know who the author was. The fact that he allowed the author to use his address on the copyright registration and sold copies of the book (presumably on behalf of the author) argues otherwise, in my opinion. One of Jay Marshall's first edition copies came from the library of Edward Gallaway, who Busby/Whaley/Gardner tell us was McKinney's
typesetter and later his business partner. I doubt many typesetters keep copies of the books they work on, again suggesting more than a "job for hire" in this instance.

Drake gives himself away by trying to re-copyright the book under the name Robert Erdnase.

I am not aware that Drake made any such attempt. The "Samuel Robert Erdnase" mislisting comes from a Drake catalog of 1904 that also listed the book as 204 pages (rather than 205) with just 45 illustrations (rather than 101). I know of no associated attempt to re-copyright the work under that description. Occam's razor would favor the multiple errors as being sloppiness on the part of Drake's advertising department, not dishonesty on Drake's part.

And, I find Drake selling the plates seven years later to be telling because in those days seven years was the time that one could legally assume someone was dead. Doubtless, when Drake sold the property he had the new buyer assume all responsibilities which allowed Drake to keep the royalties and lease payments, a nice bonus on top of the profits he'd made over the years. That's what a good businessman would have done.

I don't think either the sale of the Erdnase plates to Frost circa 1937 (the last dated Drake edition) or Drake's failure to renew the copyright is very significant. Drake transferred to Frost several titles as part of the same deal: Roterberg's Card Tricks, Kunard's Book of Card Tricks and Robert-Houdin's Card-Sharpers. Several of these were copyrighted by Drake in 1902 (the Roterberg and Robert-Houdin) and were continuously in print from Drake up until the time of the transfer to Frost. None of them had their copyrights renewed by Drake. I think it merely reflects a change in the company's publishing interests. They divested themselves of their entire sleight of hand line, including Erdnase.

Martin Gardner had an agenda in dealing with Smith as is clear from the published correspondence where he is pushing Smith to correctly remember Erdnase's height as corresponding with M.F. Andrews, many inches taller than the man Smith remembers. To his credit, Smith did not alter his memory to support Martin Gardner's theory, which is wrong in so many ways.

Gardner first found and interviewed Smith several years before he developed the Milton Franklin Andrews theory and had no agenda at that time. Later he did return to Smith in an attempt to corroborate the claims of Edgar Pratt, who's claims Gardner initially found highly suspect. Only when Gardner obtained weak (in my opinion) confirmation that James Harto had claimed some association with Erdnase (a claim
Gardner first heard from Pratt, but which has nothing to do with MFA) did he take Pratt’s claims seriously and become convinced of the MFA theory.

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**Bill Mullins** | 02/07/08 11:24 AM | [link] | [filter]

Without taking a side on the extraordinarily interesting discussion between Alexander and Hatch, I’d note that some of the points raised might be supportable from the record:

Originally posted by David Alexander:

*McKinney almost certainly sent Erdnase to Marshall Smith . . .*

Is there any evidence that McKinney (or Drake) ever worked with Marshall Smith on any other project? (I know that Richard Hatch is accumulating other Drake books). Did McKinney and Drake ever work on anything else together?

*For Drake this was just another title in a large catalog of exploitation material.*

By this, do you mean that Drake had played fast and loose with other copyrighted works in its catalog? Has anyone ever checked this?

---

**Bill Mullins** | 02/07/08 11:45 AM | [link] | [filter]

Originally posted by Richard Hatch:

*One of Jay Marshall's first edition copies came from the library of Edward Gallaway, who Busby/Whaley/Gardner tell us was McKinney's typesetter and later his business partner. I doubt many typesetters keep copies of the books they work on, again suggesting more than a "job for hire" in this instance.*

From Census records: 1910: Edward Gallaway, age 41, address 3353 Polk St. Occupation printer, works at a print shop. Born Ohio, mother born Ireland, father born US. Wife Rose (age 37), daughter Julia (age 16), son William (age 7)

1920: Mostly the same. New address: 5420 Harrison St. Still works as a printer at a print shop. Lists both parents as being born in Ireland this time. Son William (age 17) is now an apprentice at a print shop.

1930. Both kids have moved out. Still at the same house; now he owns it and its value is $5000. He is now the proprietor of a print shop. Now his father was born in NY.

I've no idea how close either Polk or Harrison St. was to the McKinney plant.
In 1918, an Edward Gallaway ran for Cook County commissioner. Dunno if it is the same guy.

Richard Hatch | 02/08 12:14 PM | link | filter

Bill, thanks, as always, for the great info!
I don't yet know of other links between McKinney and Marshall Smith, or McKinney and Drake, or Drake and Smith. Drake started his business in 1899 and expanded his line of titles greatly in 1901-1903. This included hiring William J. Hilliar to provide a number of titles, including Downs' Tricks with Coins, which Hilliar had ghosted (the reprint irked Downs, whose permission had apparently not been secured, but did not break his friendship with Hilliar), Hilliar's "translation" of Robert-Houdin's CARD SHARPERS (which was a direct reprint of an earlier edition with which Hilliar had had nothing to do) and Hilliar's own MAGICIAN'S HANDBOOK, which was patterned on and in parts plagiarized Selbit's Handbook (which Drake briefly advertised in their catalog). I suspect Drake was duped by Hilliar (who was also in Chicago editing the first issues of the Sphinx for the Vernelos) though they may have knowingly encouraged this thievery. However, they clearly secured Roterberg's permission to publish an expurgated edition of his NEW ERA CARD TRICKS, and commissioned and copyrighted other titles they published. Erdnase is unique among the Drake titles I have seen in bearing the author's copyright, rather than Drake's which would argue in favor of their not having secured the copyright when they began publishing it, but having worked something out with the author. My guess is that Rullman was mistaken in naming Drake as the copyright holder in 1928, rather than merely the publisher at that time. A 1920 guide to publishing for authors states that Frederick J. Drake would buy works outright or pay royalties, so either is possible in the case of Erdnase.

Richard Kaufman | 02/08 03:51 PM | link | filter

I've removed a link from Gord's post that was screwing up the layout of this thread and making it impossible to read. I did try using the URL button (Mr. Maloney!), but it wouldn't create an abbreviated link for some reason.

Bill Mullins | 02/08 05:09 PM | link | filter

Some interesting articles and classified ads:

Chicago Daily Tribune (1872-1963); Jul 28, 1895; p. 6;
"Says They Were Employes Only."

Treasurer F. O. Bartlett of the Regan Printing House denies James McKinney's assertion that he and Charles L. Van Inwagen ever occupied official positions in the Regan...
company.
Van Inwegen embezzled a sum of money from McKinney Wednesday night and left for
Nebraska. "Charles L. Van Inwegen," said Barlett, "never owned one share of stock in our
company or occupied official position. He was employed in the capacity of accountant
only at a salary of $1,200. James McKinney was never manager of the company, but a
solicitor on salary."

Chicago Daily Tribune, 30 Jan 1903 p. 7 (and 31 Jan 1903, p. 7)
"In the District Court of the United States for the Northern District
Of Illinois, Northern Division

IN THE MATTER OF JAMES MCKINNEY, Bankrupt - No. 8577.

Public notice is hereby given that the undersigned, The Equitable
Trust Company, Receiver of said estate, will receive bids for the whole
or any portion of the property of said estate at any time up to nine
o'clock a.m. of the 4th day of February, A.D. 1903.

Each bid must be accompanied by cash or a certified check for at
least fifteen per centum of the amount of such bid.

All bids so received will be submitted to his Honor, Christian C.
Kohlsaat, Judge of said Court, at ten o'clock a.m. on the 4th
day of February, A.D. 1903, for approval or rejection.

An inventory of the property of said estate may be seen at the office
of the undersigned, No. 152 Monroe street, Chicago, Illinois, and
the property is open to inspection at the shop lately occupied by
said bankrupt, No. 73 Plymouth Place, Chicago, Illinois.

THE EQUITABLE TRUST COMPANY
Receiver in Bankruptcy of the Estate of James McKinney."

Chicago Daily Tribune, 3 Feb 1903 p. 11

" New Incorporations. . . .
The McKinney and Galloway company, Chicago: capital, $2,500; printing, publishing
and engraving:
incorporators, James McKinney, Patrick J. McKinney, and Arthur Stern."

Chicago Daily Tribune, Feb 27, 1912; p. 19;
"NOTICE --
By virtue of an order entered by the Probate Court of Cook County, Illinois, on the 20th day of February, A. D. 1912, I, Emma McKinney as administratrix of the estate of James McKinney, deceased, have this day sold to Robert Mowat, all the right, title, and interest of said estate in and to the goods and chattels used by said decedent under the name of James McKinney & Co., in the conduct of a Printing Business, at 618 Sherman st., Chicago, Illinois.

EMMA McKINNEY
Administratrix Estate of James McKinney, deceased.
Dated, Chicago, Feb. 21, 1912."

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Richard Hatch | 02/07/08 05:19 PM | link | filter

Yeah, it would sure be interesting to get the inventory list from the McKinney bankruptcy, and find out who bought their stuff. Seems like the court records relating to it might still exist...

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Bill Mullins | 02/07/08 05:44 PM | link | filter

And someone with time to kill in Washington DC might want to check this out:


The scrapbook, compiled by Duncan, contains 85 pen and ink letters in the form of captioned cartoons by the Chicago painter Marshall D. Smith to Duncan. The artworks illustrate the events of their friendship, especially their mutual love "of Chicago,... and anything afloat." Also included are four snapshots of paintings by Smith owned by Duncan, and a typescript and handwritten notes by Duncan about the cartoons and his friendship with Smith.

General Info: Unmicrofilmed; use requires an appointment and is limited to AAA's Washington, D.C. storage facility."

[From the WorldCat database of library catalogs; I assume that AAA is American Art Association or something like it]

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Richard Hatch | 02/07/08 09:37 PM | link | filter

Bill, I spent a pleasant afternoon checking out the Marshall D. Smith scrapbook about two years ago. Made photocopies of a few of the illustrations. The only thing I really...
learned was Smith’s middle name… No magical content or Erdnase related stuff. But you never know until you look!

Richard Kaufman | 05/12/08 09:11 PM | link | filter

The deluxe DVD set of The Expert at the Card Table, performed by Allan Ackerman and with all the accompanying goodies, will sell for $129. A bargain considering the number of discs and the extras. Click on the link at the top of this page to see more.

George Olson | 05/15/08 11:11 AM | link | filter

Richard…

Which link?

Thanks,
GO

Richard Kaufman | 05/15/08 11:27 AM | link | filter

The banner at the top of this page. The ads rotate, so just click your refresh button a few times until the Houdini’s ad comes up.

Roger M. | 05/15/08 03:29 PM | link | filter

Ahhh yes, but do you have any specific dates you can tip us on Richard? There’s still no "BUY" button to push.

My money has been sitting in my PayPal account for months now ;)

Richard Kaufman | 05/15/08 04:32 PM | link | filter

Geno is doing it the proper way: taking all the time he needs to make the best product he can. Not rushing it to market. And not taking any money until he gets very close to the release date. At least we now know exactly what’s in it and what it’s going to cost. To me, $129 is cheap to see Allan Ackerman perform and explain everything in The Expert at the Card Table.

Bill Mullins | 05/30/08 11:42 AM | link | filter

I see from the most recent issue of _Magic_ that Mike Caveney is releasing an updated version of Vernon's annotations to Erdnase — Revelations — this summer.
Bill Mullins wrote: I see from the most recent issue of _Magic_ that Mike Caveney is releasing an updated version of Vernon’s annotations to Erdnase, _Revelations_, this summer.

He's taking orders now, and it should be shipping by the end of June, according to the [website](http://example.com).

-Jim

Joe Naud | 05/30/08 12:27 PM | link | filter

This is great. Thanks so much for the link.

Joe

Green Skittle | 05/30/08 01:43 PM | link | filter

Excellent to see a Revelations reprint, thanks for the link.

Joe Pecore | 05/30/08 01:52 PM | link | filter

Looks to be more then just a reprint. From the website:

This new, over-size book was triggered by the discovery of more than 160 long-lost photographs of Dai Vernons hands that were taken in 1961 specifically to illustrate this manuscript. It is as close as you will ever get to a personal session with the Professor.

Includes: A facsimile reproduction of the entire, original typed Revelation manuscript.

The entire text of The Expert at the Card Table with Vernons annotations inserted at the appropriate places illustrated with the newly discovered photos.

Plus more than 100 pages of added material including Vernons explanation (with photos) of Topping the Deck, Walter Scotts Second Deal and Double Belly Cut, the Ping Pong Shift, The Hop, Allen Kennedys legendary Center Deal and more.
Richard Kaufman | 05/30/08 01:56 PM | link | filter

You'll understand more when you see Jamy's review in our July issue. There is a lot of new material added. The original Revelations text is no different than it was in the original publication years ago, however photos have now been added of Vernon doing many of these things, and lots of new material has been added (though none of it comes from the original Revelations manuscript).

Jeff Pierce Magic | 06/09/08 07:51 PM | link | filter

Lance Pierce wrote:
Vernon told the story several times of how he first came to know of the book. He stated that his father, who worked in the patent & copyright office in Canada, came home one day and told him that they’d received a book on gambling (the Erdnase book), but that he felt Dai was too young to read such as yet. Vernon said that he badgered his father about the book to no avail, but that shortly after, he saw the book on display in a local store and acquired it.

I hope I’ve remembered this with some accuracy; I’m going back some years here from when I heard the story. It does imply that the book was indeed submitted for copyright in Canada and that it wasn't so much "sold under the counter" (at least not where Vernon found it), but that it was carried rather openly.

Lance

Excuse me if this is just a rehash of a former topic.
On page 99 on "The Vernon Touch" Vernon recounts this story but also says that "about a month and a half later, he saw a copy of the book in a bookstore window. It was a stiff board with a large King of Hearts on it.

Since the King of Hearts cover came a couple of years later on a Drake copy, perhaps from 1905 on, perhaps the copy his father was talking about was not an original copy but a later Drake copy. Does anybody know if the 1905 Drake copies were copyrighted in Canada?

Jeff Pierce

Richard Hatch | 06/09/08 11:40 PM | link | filter

Vernon was mistaken in thinking that the book received at the copyright office was Erdnase, according to those who have looked into this over the years. Another plausible candidate for that book published in 1905 has been found. There is no
Canadian copyright record of Erdnase (again, according to several different credible researchers who have looked into this over the years).

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**Geno Munari** | 07/12/08 12:38 PM | link | filter

Here is a NEW STARTLING discovery on Erdnase and M.F. Andrews. Check out this link.


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**Roger M.** | 07/13/08 01:49 AM | link | filter

I'm sorry to dampen any high spirits which accompany this new Ackerman project, but I must register my disappointment and surprise at folks who still trumpet Andrews as Erdnase.

Sadly, as much as I'm a huge supporter of this project, and was one of the very first to pre-order ....it's hugely disappointing to read (yet again) about Milton Franklin Andrews being S.W. Erdnase.

Andrews wasn't Erdnase, plain and simple.

The evidence actually points AWAY in every direction from Andrews, and has done for a number of years now.

For such a high quality project all the way around, this is a definite slip in the area of the identity of Erdnase.

A very large disappointment indeed.....especially in light of ALL the newer and far higher quality evidence pointing to at least three other gentlemen, all of which are far more likely candidates for Mr. Erdnase than Andrews ever was, or ever will be.

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**Richard Hatch** | 07/13/08 02:40 AM | link | filter

Roger, I was also surprised to see the advance materials trumpeting the MFA theory as the though it were the definite solution, but Geno has assured me that he has not edited out my rather extensive criticism of that theory and the information on competing theories, particularly my own favorite(s)... I am hoping that this will help balance things, though I have not yet seen the interview with Bart Whaley or Martin Gardner nor had access to Whaley's new research on MFA, which I look forward to very much. Regardless, I am confident that Allan Ackerman's presentation of the technical material in Erdnase will be worthwhile, having seen him lecture on aspects of it.
Roger M. | 07/13/08 10:34 AM | link | filter

Richard, I’m relieved slightly to know that a dissenting voice will (hopefully) be on the record, and contained somewhere within the DVD package.

I just find it unusual that with this VERY THREAD being one of the finest sources of information on Erdnase available anywhere, that anybody could seriously continue to postulate Andrews as Erdnase.

I find the work of Dick Hatch and David Alexander to be FAR more realistic and complete than the now debunked work trying to point to Andrews.

There is SO MUCH wrong with the Andrews theory that ISN’T wrong with the theories put forth by Richard and David, and much of that is RIGHT HERE in this thread to read.

Anybody doing any serious Erdnase work cannot simply discount the information presented in this thread. To do so is the "slip" I referred to in my last post.

Also note that there are HUGE differences in physical descriptions between Erdnase and Andrews that are simply "overlooked" in these new proofs attempting to point to Andrews.

Folks just seem to forget that we’ve got documentation from a man WHO SAT WITH ERDNASE FOR HOURS!!.......and later provided a description of him. That description provided (by Smith) of Erdnase, and the one provided of Andrews couldn't be more different.

Here’s to hoping that Dick’s most impressive thoughts on the identity of Erdnase don’t wind up on the cutting room floor.

As for the Ackerman material itself, I suspect it will be the finest ever seen on this work, and anticipate spending many hours working through the book with Alan.

In the end, I feel strongly enough about this topic to simply remove any and all offending material from the package which too strongly tries to sell "Andrews as Erdnase", and simply stick it at the back of a library shelf behind some books where it will remain likely for a very long time :)

Richard Evans | 08/16/08 12:40 PM | link | filter

I hope this isn't a naive question, but I wondered whether there was any way of viewing this whole topic with all the users’ names restored (the early parts have been anonymised since the last upgrade of the forum). Is there an archive of the thread somewhere?
Thanks in anticipation.

**Chris Aguilar** | 08/16/08 05:23 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Richard Evans wrote:* I hope this isn’t a naive question, but I wondered whether there was any way of viewing this whole topic with all the users’ names restored

**Here you go.**

**Richard Evans** | 08/16/08 06:59 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Thanks, Chris.

**Geno Munari** | 08/21/08 09:54 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Tuesday, August 19, 2008

Martin Gardner  
750 Canadian Trails Dr.  
Norman, OK 73072

Re: MFA Erdnase Nulda Petrie

Dear Martin;

I hope all is well with you. Enclosed is a copy of the San Francisco Call, Nov. 7, 1905. I have enlarged the section of the article so that you can read it. This new revelation is beyond a coincidence. Here is my theory.

Milton Franklin Andrews started this whole mystery by using an alias in the form of an anagram. S. W. Erdnase, although an imperfect anagram, it gives the user protection from his or her real identity, and also gives the user a frame of reference with which to recall a fictitious name. If he was bouncing from city to city, the use of anagrams kept the user from making a mistake and giving the wrong name to a person he may have previously associated.

Thus anagrams may be used as a memory tool. A name is often easier to remember if it is in the form of an anagram. For example, if you choose a pseudonym for Geno Munari, you might uses Oneg Iranum, or Moe Rainnier.

MFA used many aliases as his standard modus operandi; William P. Brush, William Curtis etc.
When Bessie Bouton was murdered the police questioned two bystanders (cited in the Colorado Springs Gazette Dec. 22, 1904) I have enclosed a copy for you also. One bystanders name was W.S. Maunder. An anagram of this, although not perfect, is S.W. Erdnase. Interesting, but perhaps coincidental.

But then in the Nov. 7, 1905 story, MFAs lady friend gave her name as Miss Edna Little. Compare that to the real name, Nulda Petrie, and another anagram. The (u) and (r) are not used and a (t) and (L) are added to make the name look correct.

The answer to the puzzle was right in front of our eyes. A simple anagram.

These findings by my research team Don Fineout and myself are completely independent of any other research. I think it is very strong evidence that affirms the wonderful work that Bart Whaley, Jeff Busby and yourself completed.

This is a direct link between MFA and Erdnase. All of your other strong evidence makes MFA the correct candidate. There is no other suspect that is even close. One theory I have been thinking about is; who are the people that played in the game with Erdnase? Those that played in the game were probably fleeced. It stands to reason that these easy marks were people of prominence and/or had money. If you could identify one of these parties there is a chance that there may be a trail to a description of Erdnase. If one of these suckers was a businessman that could earn money in business, he or she may have had a background check completed on Erdnase. There even might be a picture taken with him. Read on!

I think there is a very great possibility that Erdnase played poker with Lucky Baldwin. Baldwin was an interesting businessman, gambler and racehorse owner. His land holdings in the San Gabriel Mountains reached about 46,000 acres, which later became Arcadia, Pasadena, Monrovia, Sierra Madre and San Marino, California. His ranch also became Santa Anita Racetrack. My wife Penny grew up in El Monte and Monrovia were Lucky Baldwin had a presence. For instance Baldwin Boulevard is one of the main streets in the area. Penny loves horses, as did Lucky Baldwin, and discovered the book about him, Lucky Baldwin, The story of Unconventional Success, by C.B. Glassock. I thank her for this find. Baldwin fits the prerequisites to play with Erdnase. He loved women, loved to gamble, ran with fast company and had plenty of cash. He also traveled via steamships and spent a great deal of time in San Francisco. Baldwin died in 1909.

In Glassocks book there is a picture of Baldwin at the poker table with three other players. The game is in Luckys private quarters in his Baldwin Hotel, San Francisco. Could one of those players be Erdnase? In my perspective one of them slightly does resemble M.F. Andrews.
Card Table. I think that you will be in the news again.

Give me a call if you like to discuss this new information.

Very warm wishes,

Geno Munari

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Roger M. | 08/21/08 11:57 PM | link | filter

Everybody is welcome to have an opinion Geno, but please don't drastically alter the tone of the thread by declaring that you are on the cusp of confirming the actual identity of Erdnase, especially if it mirrors the Whaley/Gardner/Busby research findings.

It's STILL an ongoing search, and nobody knows the correct answer at this time.

Your claims, connections, and observations above are all quite interesting, but not even close to the final word.

Your claim that "there's no other suspect that's even close" is disturbing in that there has been an immense amount of research done, and the other three well known candidates are most definitely "close".

As mentioned above, you're obviously more than welcome to post your opinions, but refrain from declarations of pending success, as there are still others in this thread taking the entire process quite seriously.

There are also polite members of this thread who continue to refrain from pointing out the obvious errors the above trio of authors engaged in to make the crime fit the scene.

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Richard Kaufman | 08/22/08 12:02 AM | link | filter

I think Geno is taking it very seriously. His candidate has (and always has had) the one thing no other candidate has--a deck of cards in his hand. Despite the differences between Marshall Smith's recollection of what Erdnase looked like (and he couldn't even remember having illustrated the book at first), Geno may have done some new research.

More is yet to be revealed.

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Roger M. | 08/22/08 12:05 AM | link | filter
I support the search for Erdnase, and I encourage everybody to continue to treat this thread as the fine source of information it is.

Quality research *doesn’t* permit "lines" to be drawn wherever the researcher wants to draw them to ensure that the final conclusion matches the desired outcome.

**Roger M.** | 08/22/08 12:10 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

The statement "no other candidate even comes close" essentially shoves [censored] in the faces of Richard Hatch, David Alexander, and Todd Karr.

M.D. Smith vividly recalled many very specific details once he was prodded into remembering the scene in the hotel room, it's human nature to recall the basic scene, and then to begin to recall and further fill in all the details. It's *how* people remember things.

To just brush aside the fact that M.D. Smith stared Erdnase in the eyes and registered his appearance to memory, and was the *only* person we know for sure to have done that, could be referred to as "ignoring facts which point in a direction other than the one you want to go".

Deck of cards in the hands or not, the simple, *indisputable* fact is that MFA doesn’t look at all like M.D. Smith recalled S.W. Erdnase looking like. Sorry, but that's a research problem that's far more difficult to overcome than simply ignoring the fact that it exists.

**Richard Hatch** | 08/22/08 12:31 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Here's how I understand Geno's argument: "S. W. Erdnase" is an imperfect anagram of "M. F. Andrews" (the ES of the first being replaced with the MF of the second). This has been considered a relative weak point (one of several!) of the MFA case. Geno has noticed that MFA's girlfriend "Nulda Petrie" used a similarly imperfect anagram, "Edna Little" as a pseudonym (the P and U of the first are replaced with the L and T of the second). That such a close associate of MFA would use such a pseudonym strengthens the claim that MFA himself might have done so earlier. I have no problem with that logic, but it is hardly "smoking gun" proof. And it does require us to reject the testimony of our only credible eyewitness to the creation of the book, Marshall Smith, who remembered a very different man than MFA.

**Jonathan Townsend** | 08/22/08 08:05 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

One bystanders name was W.S. Maunder. An anagram of this, although
not perfect, is S.W. Erdnase. Interesting, but perhaps coincidental.

But then in the Nov. 7, 1905 story, MFAs lady friend gave her name as Miss Edna Little. Compare that to the real name, Nulda Petrie, and another anagram. The (u) and (r) are not used and a (t) and (L) are added to make the name look correct.

The answer to the puzzle was right in front of our eyes. A simple anagram

Names as "imperfect anagrams" leads to some odd places when one gets swept away by much imagination and a small data set - especially when one has a desired outcome.

Didn't Lewis Carroll/Martin Gardner comment on this as regards the word game where you change one letter at a time to get from a given start word to a given end word? History students will recall efforts to find certain words in the output of a process applied to names - and to find heresy/treason through a reading of text (Richelieu).

Remember there's not so great a textual distinction between insipid and inspired, or santa and satan for that matter ;).

David Alexander  | 08/22/08 10:23 PM | link | filter

First of all, an anagram is defined as a word or phrase formed by reordering the letters of another word or phrase, such as satin to stain.

Now we have the imperfect anagram, a device without a specific definition. Is an imperfect anagram defined as a rearrangement of letters in a word with one letter unused? Two? Three? Can one add two or three letters, dropping others to arrive at the desired result and still call it an imperfect anagram?

On his website in a Press Release Geno takes this nonsense to new heights where he claims:

Scramble the letters around and we derive:

W S MAUNDER
S W ERDNASE
M F ANDREWS

W.S. Maunder is not an anagram for S W Erdnase any more than you can get M F. Andrews out of S W Erdnase. When Geno was adding and subtracting letters to make the evidence fit his theory he forgot to remove the 5 inch difference between Milt
Andrews and the memory of the one person we know met Erdnase: Marshall Smith.

And Nulda Petrie - no need to add or subtract letters to get an interesting anagram from her name. One of the 7,300 words and phrases that her name makes up is Painted Lure. How appropriate.

Anyway, this entire approach to evidence reminds me of a great quote from the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts.

Matthew Field | 08/24/08 06:43 AM | link | filter

While the debate the over the definition of an anagram goes on in the background, I’d like to make a comment about the Prologue to Geno Mulari’s production of the Erdnase DVDs with Allan Ackerman.

Geno was kind enough to allow me to take a peek at the prologue to the series, the life of M.F. Andrews. It is one of the best produced short films devoted to magic ever produced. Ernest Borgnine’s narration is magnificent -- he sounds like an old-timer reminiscing. And Christie Wessling’s direction is feature-film quality. The production values, the set, the music -- stupendous!

Why does this mean so much to me? Because one of the most important things in our art is the concept of respect.

What Geno achieves in the prologue is to present the life of Andrews, the presumptive identity of SWE, as a living history. By giving this a production that looks better than many Hollywood big-budget movies, he is saying to one and all that this man, Erdnase, is someone deserving of our attention and respect for his grand accomplishment.

I can't wait to see the final product, which will probably take me the rest of my life to absorb.

Matt Field

David Alexander | 08/24/08 11:16 AM | link | filter

There is no debate about the definition of what an anagram is unless one is Humpty Dumpty.

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean -- neither more nor less."
I'm sorry Matt, you're a nice guy, but using the word "presumptive" about M.F. Andrews as Erdnase requires massive chutzpah. The evidence suggests otherwise, which you clearly haven't read. Neither has Geno, apparently.

Dick Hatch's work has removed Andrews from consideration. If that weren't enough there's Marshall Smith's description of Erdnase. Smith remained steadfast in his description of Erdnase in spite of Martin Gardner's repeated hectoring to change his mind about Erdnase's height. As Dick so ably demonstrated with two people in the audience at the 1999 Conference on Magic History, the five inch difference is striking and not something dismissed out of hand.

A film is not historical research as anyone who has seen Oliver Stone or Michael Moores work will understand. You can wrap an empty box with pretty paper and ribbons, but its still an empty box, even if Ernie Borgnine hands it to you.

And "respect" for a murderer and thief just because you think he's the author of a book on cheating? Please, this thread is now wandering further through the looking glass than ever. What's next, the Attila the Hun Appreciation Society?

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Carlo Morpurgo | 08/24/08 11:23 AM | link | filter

David Alexander wrote: First of all, an anagram is defined as a word or phrase formed by reordering the letters of another word or phrase, such as satin to stain.

Now we have the imperfect anagram, a device without a specific definition. Is an imperfect anagram defined as a rearrangement of letters in a word with one letter unused? Two? Three? Can one add two or three letters, dropping others to arrive at the desired result and still call it an imperfect anagram?

It seems that it was not such an uncommon practice for authors to create a pseudonym by using imperfect anagrams. A 10 minute research on google (imperfect anagram pseudonym) revealed an abundance of material to look at. Starting from:

The pseudonyms adopted by authors are sometimes transposed forms, more or less exact, of their names; thus "Calvinus" becomes "Alcuinus" (V = U); "Francois Rabelais" = "Alcofribas Nasier"; "Arrigo Boito" = "Tobia Gorrio"; "Edward Gorey" = "Ogdred Weary", = "Regera Dowdy" or = "E. G. Deadworry" (and others); "Vladimir Nabokov" = "Vivian Darkbloom", = "Vivian Bloodmark" or = "Dorian Vivalcomb"; "Bryan Waller Proctor" = "Barry Cornwall, poet"; "Henry Rogers" = "R. E. H. Greyson"; "(Sanche) de Gramont" = "Ted Morgan", and so on. It is to be noted that several of these are "imperfect anagrams", letters having been left out in some cases for the sake of easy
pronunciation. (Answers.com)

Not to forget the author Margaret Yourcenar (real name Crayencour, an imperfect anagram). There a few academic articles that might be interesting. I could peek at this one:

"Parisian Nobles, a Scottish Princess, and the Woman’s Voice in Late Medieval Song"
Author(s): Paula Higgins

One obvious candidate for a potential anagram is the text of the song Bel Acueil le sergent d’amours, the first piece in the Mellon Chansonnier, a manuscript made for Beatrice of Aragon and which bears formal dedications to her elsewhere in the manuscript. Not surprisingly, the song's incipit conceals her name (Example 8). The name itself uses only fifteen of the twenty-five letters in the incipit, but it is possible that the remaining letters form some kind of descriptive phrase (106). According to contemporary practice, a certain amount of liberty was accorded in the creation and resolution of anagrams (107). An anagram was 'imperfect' if many of the letters remained unused, or if letters had to be used more than once. It was considered 'perfect' if all of the letters of the phrase could be used without repetition (108). There were also several degrees of sophistication in anagrams. Imperfect anagrams, like those attributed to Villon, conceal only the name of one person or several people, while others concealed an entire verse or phrase (109).


I guess according to this definition Andrews is an imperfect anagram of both WS Maunders and SW Erdnase....

There's another fairly recent article (2007) by Alastair Fowler (Regius Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature Emeritus at the University of Edinburgh) that could contain information about imperfect anagrams used in the past. Just the one phrase showing up in google tells it: "Besides, imperfect anagrams have always passed muster in authorial pseudonyms, which are by definition intentional". I will take a look at this paper later, when I get hold of it.

Carlo
S.W. Erdnase:
"...the jars to our pocketbook caused far less anguish than the heartrending jolts to our insufferable conceit".

"Boldness and nerve are also absolutely essential. Ability in card handling does not necessarily insure success. Proficiency in target practice is not the sole qualification of the trap shooter. Many experts with the gun who can nonchalantly ring up the bull’s eye in a shooting gallery could not hit the side of a barn in a duel. The greater the emergency, or the greater the stakes, the greater the nerve required".

"We have not been impelled to our task by the qualms of a guilty conscience, nor through the hope of reforming the world. Man cannot change his temperament, and few care to control it".

M.F. Andrews:
"I caught her playing sneak on me and going to the Alhambra Hotel district, in which she became a well known character. We split up several times on the strength of it, but each time I took the bag of diamonds".

"As I realize my life is at stake, and as I am a crack shot, being an old-time bear hunter in the Maine woods, whoever tries to get me, make your will".

"In Holyoke, Mass., I have a wife living. I wish I had a divorce".

"I have consumption, heart failure, lots of crushed ribs and catarrh of the intestines. One month in jail and I would be dead as a herring".

........Anybody who think the same person wrote these samples might consider seeking remedial english lessons. It’s obvious they were written by different people, and when this information is taken in consort with M.D. Smiths memory of what S.W. Erdnase actually looked like, M.F. Andrews as a candidate becomes what he's always been, an obvious distraction in the search for the identity of our friend S.W. Erdnase.

David Alexander | 08/24/08 01:25 PM | link | filter

"Imperfect anagrams" and "potential anagrams." All words can be made into anagrams if one wishes them so, depending on how many letters are to be added or left out.

Roger's observation on the disparity in the skill of writing and the experienced writing "voice" one reads in Erdnase forms part of the evidence that Milt Andrews was not Erdnase.
Then there's that five inch discrepancy in height that no one has yet overcome.

Richard Kaufman | 08/24/08 02:15 PM | link | filter

I am now at the point, having reached 50, where being asked to recall the details of things that happened at 10 years of age (the 40 year gap between when Gardner questioned Smith and when Smith drew the illustrations for Erdnase) is something I can relate to. It's easy to misremember things. Some things are pinpoint sharp, others are fuzzy. Still other memories seem exact and clear but in fact are faulty.

It's also easy to underestimate the idea that Smith might not have wanted to disappoint Gardner, Vernon, et al., with a lack of details. And so he made them up.

It's also easy to underestimate the idea that Smith might have purposefully given false information for other reasons.

Carlo Morpurgo | 08/24/08 02:20 PM | link | filter

David Alexander wrote: "Imperfect anagrams" and "potential anagrams." All words can be made into anagrams if one wishes them so, depending on how many letters are to be added or left out.

True, even Alexander or Gardner or Dai Vernon all have "Erdna" inside them, so they can be made into Erdnase by changing a few letters and anagramming the rest. But the point is that it was a practice to create pseudonyms by modifying a few letters of the real name. This alone isn't proof of anything but if other evidence comes into place you can't ignore it. Likewise, you can't use your argument alone to disprove the documented cases of such anagrams being used by past authors.

David Alexander wrote: Roger's observation on the disparity in the skill of writing and the experienced writing "voice" one reads in Erdnase forms part of the evidence that Milt Andrews was not Erdnase.

Then there's that five inch discrepancy in height that no one has yet overcome.

I am not in particular for one or the other theory, since I only read this topic sporadically, so I might miss several bits of info. For example, about the writing style, is it disproved that there was a ghostwriter? Is MFA's 9,000-word letter published somewhere?

Also, I am wondering if we could trust Smith's memory: the guy was an illustrator and yet could not recognize his own drawings...
Roger M. wrote: ....Anybody who think the same person wrote these samples might consider seeking remedial english lessons. It's obvious they were written by different people, and when this information is taken in consort with M.D. Smiths memory of what S.W. Erdnase actually looked like, M.F. Andrews as a candidate becomes what he's always been, an obvious distraction in the search for the identity of our friend S.W. Erdnase.

This disparity between the writing styles is what virtually requires MFA advocates to ring in an "editor" to polish his prose. Bart Whaley in TMWWE has a chapter giving the results of a computer analysis of the prose styles of Erdnase, MFA and their proposed editor, William Hilliar. The result of that admittedly rudimentary analysis was a match between Erdnase and MFA and Erdnase and Hilliar. Logic should then allow us to argue that Hilliar ghostwrote MFA's confession/alibi letters!

Roger M. | 08/24/08 03:14 PM | link | filter

The liberties that Whaley/Busby/Gardner took to arrive at the conclusion they arrived at in the book remain difficult to accept as legitimate research. That those same liberties are being taken today, and even expanded upon is disappointing at least, and outrageous at best.

Richard K., it's OK to observe ones potential inability to remember details with the passage of time, although for many people recalling vivid and accurate details from events of 40 years previous presents little or no difficulty. Recall that M.D. Smith brought forward a number of things from his meeting with Erdnase, during which he relayed to Gardner a wide variety of details. (recorded in the Gardner/Smith Letters). The height and general appearance of Erdnase was mixed with comments about the room they were in, how he got paid, Erdnase's general attitude, Erdnase's card table (which we see throughout the book), and other details that would not only be difficult to "make up", but ones there would be no reason to even put on the record if they weren't legitimately being recalled by M.D. Smith.

As for Smith having reason to misstate details (or outright lie) about what happened during his meeting with Erdnase, we have just as much reason to presume that he had absolutely no reason to misstate or lie about anything as we do to presume he might have. That the two balance each other out is reason to render them neutral in the absence of
information required to place importance on either one of them.

I don’t go through life presuming folks to be liars in efforts to render conclusions to match my expectations.
In general, the conclusion that a subject might be lying or telling the truth is assisted by quality research.
There are far more potential lying characters within the "M.F. Andrews is Erdnase" research camp than there are amongst those who continue to examine other candidates. Some of the characters that Whaley/Busby/Gardner used to support their conclusions were of highly questionable character. Many would call them a cadre of lifes losers.

M.D. Smith had no reason to lie or misstate any of his recollections. If anybody has evidence otherwise, they’ve not presented it here.

To conclude that Erdnase was M.F. Andrews, and then to continue that there is more to support the story which hasn’t been released yet is pointless and unhelpful.
If you’ve got something important for the Erdnase researcher to read, post it (or publish it).
If you’re going to tell us all that you’ve got a secret, but you’re not going to share it until you’re ready, that’s fine......but spare us all the M.F. Andrews [censored] in the meantime.

If your evidence is nothing more than the basic argument from the Busby/Gardner/Whaley book, then you’re presenting nothing new (or helpful) in the search for the real Erdnase.

As for the improper anagrams, they’re interesting.
But lets be honest with each other, they’re really nothing more than an interesting observation.
They’re not at all conclusive of anything.

If Geno had posted suggesting that folks take a look at Nulda’s and the other characters names in light of potentially being examples of imperfect anagrams, and then went on to suggest that people were welcome to comment on those observations, I believe that would have contributed some interesting information to the record.

But to present all of this as being definitive proof of M.F. Andrews as Erdnase, and to then go on and disparage all the other dedicated Erdnase researchers by stating that "nobody else even comes close" seems a bit over the top to say the least.

I’d really like to see this thread continue as the source of high quality information on the search for Erdnase that it currently is.
To attempt to end the thread with the claim that M.F. Andrews is Erdnase helps nobody, and makes the entire thread appear to be a waste of time.
You'll note that not a single Erdnase researcher has dared to make the definitive statements that were made in Geno's post. I hope that this overall caution displayed by most posters to date regarding over-the-top statements would remain a cornerstone of this thread.

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**Carlo Morpurgo** | 08/24/08 03:15 PM | [link] | [filter]

*Richard Hatch wrote:*

This disparity between the writing styles is what virtually requires MFA advocates to ring in an "editor" to polish his prose. Bart Whaley in TMWWE has a chapter giving the results of a computer analysis of the prose styles of Erdnase, MFA and their proposed editor, William Hilliar. The result of that admittedly rudimentary analysis was a match between Erdnase and MFA and Erdnase and Hilliar. Logic should then allow us to argue that Hilliar ghostwrote MFA's confession/alibi letters!

I am curious as to what parameters were used for the analysis. I guess I will need to read the book.

I would run the same analysis with "The Art fo Magic", written by John Northern Hilliard. In the introduction by Reynolds I read that "Hilliard joined the Chicago Press when he was 17" (so in 1889) and that "later he worked on the Chicago Herald as a drama critic and editorial writer". Could he have anything to do with Erdnase?

Carlo

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**Roger M.** | 08/24/08 03:26 PM | [link] | [filter]

It seems to me that the quality of writing in "Expert at the Card Table" goes far beyond editing, or the ability of an editor to "buff" up an inferior writers material to make it read as "Expert" reads.

Erdnase gives us *original* thinking, most of it seen for the very first time in writing *anywhere* and presented in what could be described as glorious prose.

To say that this "original thought" is that of M.F. Andrews, and that it reads as it does due to the skills of an editor is difficult, if not impossible to accept.

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/24/08 03:45 PM | [link] | [filter]

There is nothing in Hilliard's prose (who, indeed, ghost wrote Downs' Art of Magic) that would line up with the style of Erdnase.
Much of this is rehashing discussions that have been gone through before in this thread and elsewhere.

Smith didn’t recognize his drawings because they were tracings of photographs because photographs would have been more costly to reproduce and muddy in the execution in any event given the cheap paper he decided to use.

The logistics of having to do 101 drawings individually "from life" has been examined before. The project would have taken several weeks and would have required Smith to take unusual positions with respect to what Erdnase wanted in his illustrations. (See the various Points of View in the illustrations.) Smith didn’t remember a multi-day or multi-week project or anything at all out of the ordinary associated with this little job. He remembered one meeting on a particularly cold day in a cold hotel room in downtown Chicago.

When Smith was annointed by Garder as the "Dean of Magic Illustrators" I’m certain the old man did not want to disappoint his new admirers. I’m not suggesting he made things up, but he originally thought he’d only done 30 or so illustrations and only recognized the work as his by the style of the lettering and numbering. As an experiencied artist I suspect he recognized what he’d actually done using a light box and just didn’t say anything for fear of disappointing Gardner.

I should also point out that Martin Gardner and those who talked to Smith were not experienced interviewers and not trained historians by any stretch of the imagination. It is unknown how much Smith was lead in the questioning. That, and the fact that Gardner pressed Smith to "re-remember" Erdnase's height to be in keeping with Gardner's candidate, which is hardly the sign of a disinterested investigator who is simply following the evidence.

Also, during one of my conversations with Martin Gardner I discovered that he did not understand that the book had been self-published by the author, thinking McKinney had been the publisher as opposed to being just the printer. I do not know if this was a product of Gardner's aging memory or if he mis-understood that from the beginning. It changes a number of conditions on the creation of the book if one fails to understand that the original edition was self-published.

Comparing the ability of a ten-year-old’s memory with that of an adult doesn’t apply here. Smith was an adult with his own business when he interacted with Erdnase and it was early in his career when every job was important.

Editor? This has been trotted out before without success. This presumes that the author needed help in expressing himself which is belied by the clear voice present in his writing. And who is this greatest of magic editors/ghost writers...someone so
skilled at being able to write the detailed and ineffible into clear and unambiguous prose and then never talking about this job or showing up on the magic scene ever again? Sorry, but the idea of an editor just doesn't hold together.

What was clear to me from the beginning was that Erdnase was intelligent, educated, AND an experienced writer able to express himself in personal terms. Every experienced writer knows it takes lots of time and lots of writing to have a "voice." Erdnase has a voice... and it isn't Milt Andrews'.

While it has been some years since I read the Whaley book with its circular argument, my memory of their "computer analysis" was that it was put through a program that produced something from the Flesch Scale, a technique for determining "readability" and nothing else. The Flesch Scale is useless in determining authorship. (Happy to be corrected if I remember this incorrectly.)

What was done by Whaley is nothing like the textual analysis done to "Primary Colors" which determined the author was likely to be Joe Klein, who admitted the same after prodding by others in interviews after denying it repeatedly. The academic who did the analysis does not claim to have a computer that can determine authorship because no such program exists. That should be understood by all.

An editor would almost certainly have removed "conge" and other words to make the prose more readable. I am convinced that we are reading the un-edited words directly from Erdnase himself, not filtered through a ghost writer or editor.

Richard Kaufman | 08/24/08 07:25 PM | link | filter

Okay, I wrote it.
It's time I confessed.

Bob Farmer | 08/24/08 07:29 PM | link | filter

No, I am Spartacus.

Jon Racherbaumer | 08/24/08 08:46 PM | link | filter

You gotta love it!
Conchis (conscious?) in Fowles' THE MAGUS posited that "mystery is energy." And everybody (as the old radio show suggested) loves a mystery. Where's Jimmy Hoffa? Amelia Earhart? Charlier?

Reading the serious research and the circumspect and wild speculations is truly entertaining and...well...energizing. (Someone not long said to me, "How do we know that the guy who met with Smith was not a 'ringer' sent there by Erdnase?"
Hmmmm...

Not since the initial Kennedy assassination have I read so much "fun stuff."

Keep it going...

And, by the way, I agree with Matt Field re the fine film Geno Munari produced and coaxed into being. I hope it encourages others to raise the bar when it comes to production values. Geno bothered to script something, hire actors and crews and editors to create a first-rate film. Sure, it is likely that some will bum-rap it, but the professionalism and caring that went into it will be obvious.

Say what you will, but Geno's entire Erdnase Project is an unmistakable labor of love and for the price--especially if you have not bought anything regarding Erdnase--is an incredible bargain.

Onward...

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**Carlo Morpurgo** | 08/24/08 10:31 PM | [link] | [filter]

*David Alexander wrote:* Much of this is rehashing discussions that have been gone through before in this thread and elsewhere.

Sorry...as I said I did not read this thread regularly, nor have I read anything else other than the recent Genii article. In any case, it's not a bad thing to rehash discussions once in a while -- some new thoughts may develop.

*David Alexander wrote:* Editor? This has been trotted out before without success. This presumes that the author needed help in expressing himself which is belied by the clear voice present in his writing. And who is this greatest of magic editors/ghost writers...someone so skilled at being able to write the detailed and ineffible into clear and unambiguous prose and then never talking about this job or showing up on the magic scene ever again? Sorry, but the idea of an editor just doesn't hold together.

Why would *anyone* so skilled as a writer do this job and never talk about it? Obviously there is such person, that we know for sure. Could it simply be because it's a book about cheating at cards?

Carlo

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**Carlo Morpurgo** | 08/24/08 10:34 PM | [link] | [filter]
Roger M. wrote: It seems to me that the quality of writing in "Expert at the Card Table" goes far beyond editing, or the ability of an editor to "buff" up an inferior writers material to make it read as "Expert" reads.

Erdnase gives us original thinking, most of it seen for the very first time in writing anywhere and presented in what could be described as glorious prose.

To say that this "original thought" is that of M.F. Andrews, and that it reads as it does due to the skills of an editor is difficult, if not impossible to accept.

Suppose that Modern Coin Manipulation and The Art of Magic were authored by S.N. Woldenson, whose real identity is a mystery. Would you argue, by the same token, that the writer was indeed Woldenson himself?

Carlo

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**bagelsandlox** | 08/25/08 12:03 AM | link | filter

Welease, Woger!!!!!!!!!!

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**David Alexander** | 08/25/08 12:17 AM | link | filter

Carlo wrote:
Why would anyone so skilled as a writer do this job and never talk about it? Obviously there is such person, that we know for sure. Could it simply be because it's a book about cheating at cards?

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There is a big difference between someone who writes something as personal as Expert and being a person hired to re-write or edit someone else’s work.

As I’ve explained in my article about my candidate (Genii January 2000), there were perfectly good reasons for him not to discuss it with anyone.

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**Richard Hatch** | 08/25/08 01:20 AM | link | filter

_Jon Racherbaumer wrote:_ (Someone not long said to me, "How do we know that the guy who met with Smith was not a 'ringer,' sent there by Erdnase?") Hmmmm...

Jon, Marshall Smith himself raised this possibility in correspondence with Martin Gardner. when the wanted poster description of MFA that Gardner sent him did not
agree with his clear recollection of the person he met. Knowing (from Gardner’s forwarded information) that MFA was wanted by the law, Smith wondered if perhaps he had sent someone else to meet with him. But Smith almost immediately rejects this possibility, based on the fact that the person he met performed all the sleights in the book (and who but the author could do that?) and seemed to him not to be hiding anything. In fact, MFA was not wanted by the police in the winter of 1901 when the illustrations are presumed to have been prepared, so MFA would have had no reason to send someone else, assuming such a person could have been found. It is virtually certain that Smith did at least some of the illustrations and met the author as part of that task. The real question is to what degree his recollection of those meetings can be trusted. As the only credible eyewitness to the author, I take his testimony at face value. While he is eager to assist Gardner in his research, Smith makes clear distinctions about what he recalls and what he isn’t sure of. He is very certain that the man he met and whose hands he sketched was no taller than 5’ 7”, possibly as short as 5’5”, and between 40 and 45 years old, i.e., about a dozen years older than Smith himself (MFA was 6’1” and just two weeks older than Smith). The only linkage of MFA to Erdnase came from Edgar Pratt, whose claim to have known MFA is dubious and whose information on him can be entirely traced to an article on MFA that he read in the Sunday Supplement to the Philadelphia Enquirer (“The Malted Milk Murderer,” in American Weekly for May 20, 1945). Several of the statements he makes to Gardner are provably false. Gardner himself doubted Pratt’s claims until he was able to obtain weak corroboration for one of them, the claim that Harto had contact with Erdnase, a claim Harto had made to others, which Gardner first heard from Pratt. The Harto claim (which I take seriously) does not link Erdnase to MFA, except through Pratt.

Dick, would you mind expanding your take on the Harto connection to Erdnase?

All of the Harto papers and library contents were put up for auction. I wonder if reference was made by Harto to Erdnase in any of his papers?

Harto does seem to be one of the more stable sources to have claimed that he knew Erdnase.
I actually hesitate to use the word "claimed", as Harto seems only to have mentioned in passing his association with Erdnase. He doesn't appear to be seeking anything out of the connection.

(I should also point out after re-reading my last few posts that although I disagree completely with Bart Whaley's conclusions in TMWWE, I do think he's a gifted researcher and a skilled historian. I'm likely not alone in preferring that he take his talon's out of MFA as the only candidate and put his talents to work on continuing the search with a wider eye).
Hi Roger, thanks for the request. I thought that perhaps I had expounded on Harto earlier in this thread, but couldn't find the posting if I did (as an aside, is it possible to have the earlier contributions by myself, David Alexander, and others to this thread properly attributed again, rather than remaining anonymous? I notice that some early attributions have been restored, such as Lance Pierce and Richard Kaufman, but not the majority...).

I'll be at the TAOM all this weekend and at Magic in the Rockies next week, so I can't put up much at the moment (still packing) or for a few weeks, so here's an abbreviated answer:

Clearly Harto told several people of an association he claimed to have with Erdnase. Only Pratt claimed that Harto had contributed the Legerdemain section of the book, and Pratt's testimony is questionable as noted in earlier postings. Charles Maly, one of the Harto associates who confirmed for Gardner that Harto spoke of an association with Erdnase, claimed to have seen a notebook of material that Harto was working on as a proposed sequel to Erdnase. If this notebook survived the destruction of many Harto documents by Audley Dunham, it has not yet surfaced, nor have any Erdnase references in Harto documents that have survived. But I take his claimed association with Erdnase as a serious possibility, and one that may lead to further information on the identity question.

I do not think that Harto had much, if anything, to do with the writing of THE EXPERT. If one assumes (as I do, though I recognize it is an assumption and not a proven fact) that the book was assembled shortly prior to publication, Harto's schedule makes his collaboration with the author unlikely. Harto was touring with the Pawnee Bill Wild West Show as a ventriloquist and magician in the sideshow during several seasons prior to the book's publication. They would set up in a new city nearly every day, arriving by train, parading through town, setting up the show, doing the shows, striking the show, loading on the train, and traveling overnight to the next stop on the tour. I traveled to Pawnee, Oklahoma to check the tour route books in the Pawnee Bill Museum for those seasons and the schedule does not much leave much free time to work on a book, unless the primary author was also working the same tour. There was a magician name Andrews from Philadelphia (Pratt's later home) who did later join the Buffalo Bill Wild West show for their tour of Europe, and Harto was also at one time associated with the Buffalo Bill show, but this would have been after the book's publication and I have been unable to develop much information on this particular "person of interest." Another possibility I considered was Charles Andress (whose name reverses to S. S. Erdnase if you drop the rest of the first name reversal), a traveling magician with strong circus and Chicago connections, but I think him an extremely long shot for any number of reasons. I did track down Andress' son and spoke with him by phone a few years back (his father sired him when he was 80 or so!), but he knew nothing about the book and I haven't followed up on that line of inquiry.

Although Harto did get billing as a card magician early in his career (as a teenager) and was respected by his peers for his general knowledge of magic, mentalism and
escapes, he does not seem to have been noted for originality in his card work. And the reference to the originality of his patter that is quoted in TMWWE is, in the original context, actually a reference to the originality of his ventriloqual dialogues, which I don't think can be extrapolated to assign him credit for the patter in Erdnase's LÉGERDEMAIN section.

**Jim Maloney | 08/29/08 07:40 AM | link | filter**

*Richard Hatch wrote:* (as an aside, is it possible to have the earlier contributions by myself, David Alexander, and others to this thread properly attributed again, rather than remaining anonymous? I notice that some early attributions have been restored, such as Lance Pierce and Richard Kaufman, but not the majority...).

I'm fairly certain that's being worked on, it's just that Brad has been busy with other projects.

-Jim

**Jason England | 08/29/08 08:27 AM | link | filter**

This is directed at David Alexander, although others can feel free to chime in.

What, if any, evidence is there to support the supposition that the illustrations were drawn from photographs?

As an admittedly completely unscientific experiment, I just tried to duplicate Fig. 26 from Erdnase. Mind you, I've never drawn anything in my life. I did what I consider to be a fairly good FINISHED drawing in exactly 2:21 (just under 2 and a half minutes).

Let's make the reasonable assumption that Erdnase had a proper outline of what he needed illustrated. Let's also assume that only the briefest of sketches would actually be needed (and could be properly inked in later). Finally, operating on the assumption that a decent artist like Smith would undoubtedly sketch much faster than a complete novice like me, how is it that you consider it impossible to have all the drawings done in a single, long day?

Let's say that each sketch took 4 entire minutes. 4 x 101 = 404 minutes. Well, 60 x 8 = 480. In an eight hour workday I find it hard to believe that all of the sketches couldn't be done and still leave time for breaks and a brief lunch. Bump this up to a 10 hour day and drop the time a bit (Fig. 26 is perhaps one of the more complicated ones, easier Figs would've taken much less time to sketch) and you are not only well within the possible, you're well within the PROBABLE.
The aforementioned non-scientific elements acknowledged, where exactly am I going wrong here?

Jason

PS: Although I don’t remember if Smith mentioned it, a second meeting of some type is a reasonable assumption, if only to drop off the drawings. It’s not unthinkable that another few hours could have been spent correcting a few of the Figures that weren’t to Erdnase's liking. A brief second meeting like that might not have made enough of an impact on Smith to recall it 45 years later, but could’ve contributed significantly to the possibility of all the drawings being done without photographs.

David Alexander | 08/29/08 08:39 AM | link | filter

Jason,

I believe I covered this in my Genii article and elsewhere in this thread.

There is a HUGE difference between "duplicating" a drawing that's already done and creating one from life. They are entirely different processes.

David Britland | 08/29/08 11:15 AM | link | filter

Hi Jason

If Smith’s account is accurate then he made detailed sketches of all the positions from life during a single meeting with Erdnase.

I’ve found that the most time consuming aspect of illustrating magic books is getting the preliminary sketch right. Taking a good photo can also be time consuming. Unless Erdnase had planned every view I’d imagine there would be some discussion about the best angle for each illustration. All time consuming.

But somehow Smith made detailed sketches required for every illustration, sketches that first had to be approved by ‘Erdnase’, in a single meeting.

I don't find it implausible that he could ink those sketches in the same amount of time. In fact I’d say he could probably ink those sketches more quickly than it took to make them. After all, he could add nothing of his own. There is no further discussion. He couldn’t change them in case they wouldn’t meet the approval of his employer.

If we want to be sceptical about the time taken to make the illustrations maybe we should wonder whether Smith could indeed have made detailed sketches of all the illustrations in just one meeting. But that calls into question Smith's recall of his
encounter with Erdnase.

**Richard Kaufman** | 08/29/08 11:32 AM | link | filter

Considering the care with which Erdnase wrote the text, I would say it’s certainly possible that he had, in his head, plotted out the exact view from which each sketch needed to be made. If he had photos made in advance and then given them Smith, the drawings could have been made in as little as 10 to 20 minutes each.

**Geno Munari** | 08/29/08 11:53 AM | link | filter

Very true Richard.

In those days if he would have had photos taken he would have to get a photographer and the process was not so simple as it is today. Also very expensive, however he could afford it. If indeed he did have a photographer where and when were the photos taken. In Chicago? Or some other city? More than likely in a larger city that would have commercial photographers. Could have been a referral from the Chicago printer. Maybe we should look into photographers that were in the approximate area of the printer. I don't recall any investigation into that area of concern.

**Jason England** | 08/29/08 02:27 PM | link | filter

David Alexander wrote: Jason,

I believe I covered this in my Genii article and elsewhere in this thread.

There is a HUGE difference between "duplicating" a drawing that’s already done and creating one from life. They are entirely difference processes.

No doubt about it. But if I shop around at the local art college and can find a guy that can make a nice pencil drawing of me holding a deck of cards in some weird (to him) position in under 4 minutes then your theory is in a world of hurt.

Are you saying that I can't find that guy no matter where I look?

Because you're essentially saying that it can't be done (or more specifically, that it couldn't have been done in Chicago in the winter of 1901).

And remember, all you have to do is average 4 minutes per sketch to make this a one-day job. Some individual sketches would certainly take a bit longer, others a bit less.
As for Erdnase coming prepared for a meeting like that, remember, this is the guy that rewrote what it means to be specific and detail-oriented with regards to gambling and magic books.

I have no problems believing he showed up knowing exactly what he wanted drawn and from what angles. Look at how many of the figures depict exactly what one would see if you were "seated in the usual manner with a looking glass opposite" for hours on end. I can admit that I'm speculating, but I believe Erdnase knew what he wanted drawn.

I'd even go so far as to posit that he might've shown up with crude sketches of some of the more mundane figures already in hand, and only had Smith sketch 50 or 60 of the more difficult ones. Then Smith retired for a week (or whatever) and redrew and inked all 101 before returning to Erdnase for delivery. This might even account for Smith's recollection that he'd done much fewer drawings than the book seemed to indicate to him.

Anyway, you seem married to the idea that there were photographs at this meeting. I'm asking if you have any real evidence, or is this just conjecture on your part.

All we really know is that somehow, Smith and Erdnase managed to get these drawings done in a shorter amount of time than modern experts believe possible given only one (recalled) meeting. But there are at least a few other scenarios that are plausible that don't require photographs:

If they really met more than once and Smith just didn't remember this 45 years later then photos aren't necessary.

If Erdnase showed up with a decent number of crude or (heaven forbid) decent but not professional sketches already done then photos aren't necessary.

If Smith had help in some other fashion then photos aren't necessary.

If there is something else we're all overlooking then photos aren't necessary.

So I'm back to, do you have anything other than conjecture that photos were used? Because you sure talk like you do.

Jason

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Richard Kaufman | 08/29/08 02:41 PM | link | filter

If photographs were used, then the following could be true.
At my peak, I could do a drawing from a photo in 10 minutes. At the other end of the
spectrum is Earle Oakes, who (working from my photos) spends about an hour on each drawing.

Either way, it could be done in a week with no problem. As to finding someone who could do an accurate anatomical sketch in four minutes--it's unlikely. Not impossible. But unlikely. The anatomy in those drawings is extremely accurate, and all the drawings look like they've been done from the hands of the same person.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/29/08 02:51 PM | link | filter

If photos were used... who's got em? Same for sketches and the reams of paper one is wont to go through getting text into shape for publication.

David Britland | 08/29/08 03:05 PM | link | filter

The title page of Erdnase says the illustrations were 'drawn from life.' And Smith didn't mention seeing any photographs.

If Erdnase made photographs he would have taken them to the meeting with Smith otherwise they wouldn't have served any purpose either as reminders to Erdnase about what the drawing should be or to Smith as guides for his illustrations.

The more I think about it the more difficult the task seems to make all the preliminary sketches in the space of one meeting. But maybe Smith was an exceptionally fast worker and Erdnase knew exactly what he wanted. Or there is some other explanation.

David

Richard Kaufman | 08/29/08 03:24 PM | link | filter

"Drawn from life" sounds better than "traced from photos." Taking photos in 1902 was not an easy business: I believed poses had to be held for a long time due to the length of the exposure required. So, there are arguments to be made on either side of that issue.

It's also possible that Smith may have not wanted to admit he traced the drawings from photos. Many derogatory comments about my own drawings used language that included things like "he just traces them." Of course that's foolish, but that's what some people think.

From my point of view, as the artist, I couldn't care less what anyone thinks, or thought. My only goal was to get a lot of drawings done as quickly as possible at the best quality I was capable of. One of the benefits of using photos is that when you look at the drawings in, say Derek Dingle's book, or David Roth's book, you can recognize them as their hands, and there is always information in the drawings, because they
were done from photos, that would not otherwise be there. As much as I admired Joe Schmidt's work, there was simply a level of detail missing from it because it was done freehand.

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**Joe Pecore | 08/29/08 04:24 PM | link | filter**


When Kodak introduced the $1.00 Brownie Camera in February of 1900, it was an immediate success, but with one problematic flaw - the shoebox-style, cardboard back wore out quite quickly, leaving the rollfilm inside more susceptible to light leaks. To fix the problem, Kodak engineers created a metal latch to hold a new rear cover in place, and all was well again. The original Brownie Camera was only in production for about two months, and is quite rare today. Eastman Kodak company records indicate that many of these first Brownie Cameras (about 15,000) were shipped to England.

The Brownie Camera with its new back door design would go on to be known as the No. 1 Brownie Camera in 1901.

More info [http://history1900s.about.com/od/1900s/p/brownie.htm](http://history1900s.about.com/od/1900s/p/brownie.htm)

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**Eoin O'hare | 08/29/08 04:47 PM | link | filter**

Any artist I know that draws from life will sketch simple, abstracted shapes initially, in order to represent the object being drawn. -When you draw a head you will probably start by drawing an oval.

These shapes are an aid to obtaining the objects correct proportions and construction. Often the shape will require correcting and repositioning, resulting in rough sketches. For illustration purposes these 'roughs' are then inked to produce informative line drawings. The sketch is then cleaned to leave only the line art.

If I'm drawing hands, I'll often quickly block in triangles to represent the palms or backs of the hands to give me the initial sketch to work on.
It looks to me as if Smith used a similar strategy but instead of triangles he used hearts.
Take a look at Fig.69 in The Open Shift. This drawing seems to have partially escaped cleaning, you can clearly see a heart shape on the back of the left hand.

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**Larry Horowitz | 08/29/08 05:15 PM | link | filter**
I find some weakness in your suggestions.

To think that 101 drawings could be made in one day would imply no changes. That each and every drawing was exactly what the author envisioned defies logic. To think that there were only 101 drawings and no ideas that just didn’t work or weren’t needed defies logic. I can well imagine the artist stating that he could demonstrate a move better from a different drawing view then the author might have envisioned. This might only be found by some degree of trial and error.

I think that a 8-10 hour drawing day would cause enough fatigue that there would be a notible (by experts, at least) change in drawing quality.

On a different note regarding memory:
My father is 94. During the 60’s-70’s, following some heart problems and a doctor’s suggestion, my father had a shot of scotch every night when he got home. Last week in discussions with him, he had no recollection of this. So a meeting to do art work, 40+ years removed, could well be mis-remembered.

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**Geno Munari** | 08/29/08 07:51 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

The more I think about the 101 drawings in Expert, and there may have been more, it seems that Smith had to have more than one meeting with Erdnase. Anyone that has published a book with hand drawn illustrations may agree. There are just two many things that have to be checked and re-checked. Smith may have met with Erdnase on two or three times maybe more. Perhaps more as the communication methods in those times was difficult.

Perhaps Smith forgot those additional meetings. Maybe this has been covered before here. If so sorry. But it is a plausible and consistent theory.

The real bone of contention with the MFA theory is that Smith was right and the other witnesses are wrong or the investigator has a problem with them. With all due respect facts are facts. You can’t pick and choose the facts you like.

But in reality all those who disbelieve the Gardner-Whaley-Busby theory base their reason on Smith's testimony. Yet there are several other witnesses and many other facts that can connect MFA with Erdnase.

David Alexander posted that Hatch’s work has dismissed MFA. How so? This position stated as such reads as though it had footnotes and was gospel.

I am not convinced 100% about MFA, but I haven’t dismissed him.
None of the other candidates however have laid a claim on the authorship of Expert. Why haven't they? Why isn't there any connection to Erdnase via testimony, relatives etc., from these other candidates?

Wouldn't one of the relatives have something to connect the two? I would think so.

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**Jason England** | 08/29/08 07:59 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Larry,

First of all, I hope all is well with you. Haven't seen you in a few months.

To Erdnase: I agree that doing every illustration (even just the initial sketches) to Erdnase's satisfaction right there at that initial meeting is unlikely. But, I provided a number of scenarios where Smith's memory of the event could be taken essentially at face value and yet you still only have one major meeting. Some method or instance of delivering the finished drawings obviously took place as well of course.

My particular favorite of these scenarios is that Erdnase had some rudimentary sketches already done, and asked Smith to either redraw, or match those drawings in style. This solves the "they didn't have time in one day" problem, as well as providing a plausible (though not perfect) explanation for the peculiar copyright notification on some of the figures.

I'm not saying that this theory is correct by any means, but then that's the difference between me and some others here. I openly admit that this is just a guess on my part. I think it's a viable guess, but a guess nonetheless.

On the other hand, David Alexander writes about photographs as though he's sitting on all 101 as we speak. I simply asked for some clarifications regarding whether or not he has other evidence (even a well-substantiated rumor of photos stemming from the early 20th century might suffice), or if photos is just his favorite solution to the "how could they have pulled this off with just one meeting" problem.

Jason

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/29/08 08:01 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

It's hard to imagine that Smith could have successfully drawn all 101 illustrations having met Erdnase only once if there were no photographs to either trace from or use as a source of reference.

However, I see no reason to accept Smith's recollections as gospel.
I agree with Jason England on this. There’s nothing to say Smith wouldn’t have been able to put out decent drawings from life at a good rate. The argument that many artists block out perspective, doesn’t mean all artists do so. I worked as a freelance commercial artist doing caricatures and so on when I was in college, for various large and small companies: media promotions, sales and marketing, etc. I have never in my entire life had to block out perspective. I can just draw what I see. (Or at least I could when I was actively drawing on a regular basis).

Yes, I’m aware that this kind of ability is the exception to the rule. But Smith was a hack for hire, a commercial artist plying his trade. What we do know is what Smith recounted to Gardner;

"He placed the board on the table, using it as a surface for demonstrating sleights which Smith sketched rapidly in pencil."

and

"Smith took the sketches home, inked them in, and returned them to Andrews later."

If Smith, the only first-party link who’s ever really been quizzed about Erdnase, recalls drawing freehand at a rapid pace, I’m inclined to believe him.

Richard Kaufman | 08/29/08 08:08 PM | link | filter

I don’t think the drawings support that statement.

Irving Quant | 08/29/08 08:10 PM | link | filter

To support Jason’s guess:

From the Preface: "if it sells it will accomplish the primary motive of the author, as he needs the money."

Wouldn’t 101 photographs cost a good amount of money to have? then again paying an artist would have also cost money. For all I know, since I haven’t really done research on pricing at the time, both could have been affordable. The guy didn’t work with a team according to some of you, so can you tell me how a broke card cheat, with no publisher or a banker (no evidence suggesting there was one), gets enough money to put this project together? Erdnase must have known what pictures he wanted before meeting with Smith (either from crude sketches or already memorizing all 101 positions) since to figure out these things during the session would have cost him more money.
On another thought: Now lets say that Erdnase went to a bank and got the cash. Could it be possible put together a price for how much a project like his could have cost and look at bank records in "hit geographic areas where Erdnase could have been from exactly" for somebody that took that approximate amount of cash from a bank? (think IRS?) Just a thought...

Richard Kaufman wrote: I don't think the drawings support that statement.

I respect your opinion (and your experience as a commercial artist and publisher), but I don't see why not. It's certain he would have made adjustments and corrections for errors in the inking stage. That's how I worked and, as noted, we have no reason to distrust the primary source (Smith), unless we have doubts about Gardner's accuracy.

Geno Munari | 08/29/08 08:12 PM | link | filter

When Gardner showed Smith the clippings of Milton Franklin Andrews he wrote, "The more I look at the front views, the more I am sure they look like Andrews"

Not a line up by any means but a picture will jog your memory.

Roger M. | 08/29/08 09:09 PM | link | filter

Actually he said "The front views could be Andrews. Can't remember a mustache. The profile doesn't look like him. It's probably the expression. This view looks retouched, or a poor snap shot".

THEN, penciled on the reverse side of the same letter was the sentence "The more I look at the front views, the more I am sure they look like Andrews".

So he didn't say that upon first looking at the pictures.

There seems to me to be enough of a difference between what M.D. Smith said in the actual letter, and then what he penciled in on the reverse to keep the facts straight, and to not confuse the timeline of who said what, when they said it, and where it might be written.

Geno, you you state that some "choose" to believe M.D. Smith over the other witness's. There were no other "witness's".
M.D. Smith is the only person to have seen S.W. Erdnase with his own eyes.
All the rest of them made statements which implied that they knew him.......and many of those statements are second or third hand. There is to me quite a large difference between M.D. Smith, with his name clearly written on "Expert" as the illustrator, and somebody making a claim that they knew Erdnase.

Also you state that people have "dismissed" MFA as a candidate. Nobody has dismissed him in the sense that you imply.

I certainly haven't dismissed him. I've read the evidence, filed it away, and now continue the search. The facts are that between Richard Hatch, David Alexander, and Todd Karr, there have been proposed three additional candidates that are equally as strong, and in some cases far stronger than the MFA candidate.

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**Geno Munari** | 08/29/08 09:33 PM | link | filter

Roger
How so?

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**Roger M.** | 08/29/08 09:52 PM | link | filter

Geno, is your question "how so" are they stronger candidates?

There is a gross discrepancy between the police description of MFA and Smith's description of Erdnase. Six+ inches difference in height, a sunken chest vs. a man Smith described as "handsome" and with no mention of disfigurment, and possibly one of the most glaring difference in writing styles one could imagine is a starting point.

If for some reason you choose to reject Smith's description of Erdnase (although there is absolutely no basis to do so) then the best we can do is likely share our independant thoughts in the same thread.

But to be fair to the discussion, I wonder if Smith's description of Erdnase should be taken at face value until somebody presents factual evidence to indicate that it shouldn't be.

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**Carlo Morpurgo** | 08/29/08 10:17 PM | link | filter

*Cugel wrote:*
"He placed the board on the table, using it as a surface for demonstrating sleights which Smith sketched rapidly in pencil."
"Smith took the sketches home, inked them in, and returned them to Andrews later."

If Smith, the only first-party link who’s ever really been quizzed about Erdnase, recalls drawing freehand at a rapid pace, I’m inclined to believe him.

I think it’s safe to assume that Smith had not seen or even conceived any sort of card sleight as those described in the book. Now, most of us here when we think of second deal, push through, bottom deal or whathave you, we know exactly what is going on in our mind, and if we practiced, we know where the tip of the 2nd finger is on the bottom, or how much the second card should be exposed for second deal and where the thumbs should be etc.

Mr. Smith was most likely blown away by Erdnase’s "demonstrations" (IF they had taken place), and I am finding it hard to believe that he was able to sketch them rapidly "live", and completing the drawings later. To the uninitiated these hands movements are very unnatural.

Carlo

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Cugel | 08/29/08 10:24 PM | link | filter

You may find it hard to believe, but the fact is doing a life drawing of a man’s hands holding a deck of cards stationary is no harder nor easier than any other life drawing.

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Carlo Morpurgo | 08/29/08 10:28 PM | link | filter

Jason England wrote: My particular favorite of these scenarios is that Erdnase had some rudimentary sketches already done, and asked Smith to either redraw, or match those drawings in style. This solves the "they didn’t have time in one day" problem,

But then how do we solve the "who did the rudimentary sketches" problem? I can't imagine Erdnase doing them himself.... and if it was someone else, then the sketches must have been pretty darn good in order for someone completely unaware of any card sleights to be able to "make them better". But then again if the sketches were already detailed enough, chances are there would have been be no need to ask Smith to refine them (they dont seem to be masterpiece drawings anyway)
Roger you said, "The facts are that between Richard Hatch, David Alexander, and Todd Karr, there have been proposed three additional candidates that are equally as strong, and in some cases far stronger than the MFA candidate."

What are the facts about this?

Read the entire thread, this is hardly groundbreaking news.

The fact is that the three of them have presented candidates that are more than worthy of consideration.

This is a fact.

I have not seen these facts given anywhere in this thread.

Your quote, "The fact is that the three of them have presented candidates that are more than worthy of consideration."

How are they and what specifically are those reasons they are more worthy?

Could this be a possibility:

1. Mr. Smith made initial sketches of Erdnase doing the moves.
2. Mr. Smith uses a second person imitating the hand positions to define and ink the final product.

This would support the mention from the book that drawings were made from life. Which life (individual) is not specified.

Following an earlier post by Richard K. about Roth & Dingle's hands being recognized, since we have no other evidence of what Erdnase's hands looked like, we are assuming the hands in the drawings are his.
Purely observational but descriptions of Andrews put him as sickly and thin. To me the hands in the drawings do not represent someone who is sickly and thin. They seem to be on the thick side, from someone who has a little weight on his frame. If these were drawn from real life, it does not sound like Andrews to me.

Secondly, why not find a impartial artist, one with no magic experience and recreate the meeting between Erdnase and Smith. Get someone like Jason, who can recreate the poses in the book. This will put you in the ballpark of the time needed to hand sketch the 101 illustrations. Just an idea.

Jeff Pierce

Artists differ in talent and experience so trying the experiment really wouldnt produce anything germane to the discussion.

Knowledgeable artists understand that hands have traditionally been the most difficult to accurately draw or paint. My wife is a portrait artist with thousands of commissions and decades of experience. In addition to her portrait work, she also did the line drawings for James Randis magic book published for the public some years back. She worked from photographic reference exclusively for that project and if memory serves, she used a light box to move the work along.

Ive done quite a bit of analysis of the drawings in Expert. Some of it has been posted in this thread and some hasnt.

For those wishing to comment or contribute to this discussion, I would think it incumbent to spend the time getting up to speed by reading my Genii article, Dick Hatchs Magic article and this entire thread first.

Much of what is being discussed now has been covered months, if not years ago.

David, I’m sorry I’m not up to speed, I have not spent a good portion of my time involved in this mystery as you have. I have read these posts over a long period but I have not read your Genii article so perhaps you should post it here if you expect us to reference it. My comments are just my curiosity of the subject matter.

I would have to disagree with you on the value of the experiment. A number of questions still exist about the 101 drawings and the amount of time it took Smith to
complete them. While not an exact science, recreation of a time frame happens often in forensic science, for instance the Kennedy assassination was recreated to see if Oswald could actually get three shots of in the time frame allowed. I think I might have merit but I will read your article when it gets posted.

Jeff Pierce

Richard Kaufman | 08/30/08 01:49 PM | link | filter

Jeff, you really need to buy all the back issues of Genii. :)

John Lovick | 08/30/08 01:58 PM | link | filter

Artists differ in talent and experience so trying the experiment really wouldn't produce anything germane to the discussion.

David,

You've been writing for years--as if it's a fact--that Smith worked from photographs. Your main reason for stating this is that you contend that it is not possible for someone to have sketched all those drawings in one sitting. If one were to find an artist who could sketch quickly enough to do 101 drawings in a day, then it would blow your theory (which you state as a fact) out of the water, and would be ABSOLUTELY germane to the discussion.

David Alexander | 08/30/08 04:39 PM | link | filter


Richard sells back issues. Support Genii. I should not be expected to bring everyone up to speed if they're not willing to extend themselves by reading the literature on the subject.

Carlo Morpurgo | 08/30/08 06:37 PM | link | filter


Richard sells back issues. Support Genii. I should not be expected to bring everyone up to speed if they're not willing to extend themselves by reading the literature on the subject.

I guess this means that a discussion on what you wrote in that article is never possible in this forum, unless everyone actually own that issue of Genii, or someone decides not to support Genii.
Carlo

**Terry** | 08/30/08 08:15 PM | link | filter


This is a 3 paragraph section ending with the assumption that Mr. Smith traced photographs supplied by the author.

**Cugel** | 08/30/08 08:20 PM | link | filter

*David Alexander wrote:* Knowledgeable artists understand that hands have traditionally been the most difficult to accurately draw or paint.

Nice inference there. I guess I should be offended, if I had the energy.

**Jeff Pierce Magic** | 08/30/08 10:04 PM | link | filter

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* Jeff, you really need to buy all the back issues of *Genii.* :)

Richard, they would have found the identity of Erdnase and discovered where Hoffa is by the time I finished reading all the back issues. I think I'll go back to lurking.

Jeff

**Bill Mullins** | 08/31/08 12:35 AM | link | filter

*Jeff Pierce Magic wrote:* they would have . . . discovered where Hoffa is by the time I finished reading

Didn't you hear? They found Jimmy Hoffa. He was in a hospital maternity ward, directing labor.

**Bill Mullins** | 08/31/08 01:06 AM | link | filter

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* Taking photos in 1902 was not an easy business: I believed poses had to be held for a long time due to the length of the exposure required.

By the turn of the century, fast exposures (shorter than 1/20 of a second) were easily possible. (remember, Edward Muybridge took his famous sequence of pictures of a horse galloping in 1878, in which the exposure was short enough to prove that at
points in a horse's gallop, all four feet were in the air.) Cameras were starting to be mass-produced consumer items, instead of the tool of solely professional portrait artists, etc. Lenses and film were both much faster than those used in the Civil War era, when long poses had to be held. Amateurs were taking pictures in bulk. Celluloid film was starting to supplant glass plates.

**Bill Mullins** | 08/31/08 01:34 AM | [link] | [filter]

How did Erdnase find Marshall Smith? What was his prominence as an artist in 1902? Had he advertised his services as an artist?

Did he show up in contemporary city directories? Worked on different material for Drake publishers? For McKinney? In 1902 he had illustrated a book for Hurst & co in NY (_Jack Henderson Down East_ by B. F. Cobb) -- was this how Erdnase ran across him?

**Terry** | 08/31/08 09:27 AM | [link] | [filter]

*Bill Mullins wrote:*

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* Taking photos in 1902 was not an easy business: I believed poses had to be held for a long time due to the length of the exposure required.

By the turn of the century, fast exposures (shorter than 1/20 of a second) were easily possible.

Easily possible, but easily accessible/affordable? The gambler, who was Erdnase, may not have had access, time or money to spend on photographs.

The individual who wrote the book wanted to remain anonymous and publish his textbook. Without directly putting the book in the hands of the author and providing concrete documentation of it, any attempts to identify him today is purely conjecture as there is no direct evidence or possibly anyone alive who may have known him.

The book was ahead of its time then and still is now. I am sure the gambler who was Erdnase would be justly proud it has stood the test of time and his identity would trouble anyone over a century later.

**Glenn Bishop** | 08/31/08 10:23 AM | [link] | [filter]

I have been reading this thread with great interest and would like to add one or two thoughts or opinion into the mix.
The first thought is from the Busby book and the story of how MD Smith and Erdnase met in that hotel room. And the "story" that Erdnase took out a deck and a small board that was covered with felt and then did some card tricks for him.

This story from the Busby book and the way that the book "Expert at the card table" was written - as I have said in this thread before - the little bits of business that is written in the card trick section. Those little bits of business that one only learns if they "do" magic for people. In my opinion "doing" magic for people is the "only" way to come up with and "get" those little bits of business that Erdnase wrote about in his book.

Plus the reference to the word "performer" or "perform" such as used in the bottom deal explanation in the book "Expert At the card table". And the way that three card monte is written up - more like a magician or a performer would do it for "entertainment" than a street con artist that used a script.

Makes me think that Erdnase "was" a magician!

Being a performer I have worked with caricature artists that could do the drawings in the amount of time of 10 to 12 hours. I had a friend do drawings for a balloon book - hands doing balloon twists - that in my opinion were done in the same amount of time. I used a performing caricature artist to do the work because his work could have detail (hands close up) and he also could do the work in a short time because he was a performer that was used to the grind of doing caricature art over and over in an afternoon at a venue.

Then I will also add the question of that could Erdnase afford pictures from a camera if he "needed the money"?

To shoot - develop and perhaps re-shoot pictures?

I am moved to believe that if I needed the money I would try to get the project done without the added expense and new technology of "drawings" from pictures.

To this I will also add - the Vernon story of a book - that was written about in Revelations - that had gambling in the first part and magic in the second part. The word pictures could be drawings or illustrations from the laymen point of view. In my opinion magicians over analyze and are often over opinionated about little details.

Just my opinion.

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Eoin O'hare | 08/31/08 10:41 AM | link | filter

Erdnase Bottom Dealing
Roger M. | 08/31/08 12:26 PM | link | filter

That's a very interesting idea Eoin.


Carlo Morpurgo | 09/01/08 11:15 PM | link | filter

I asked a friend of mine (BA at Yale, major in Photography, M. Phil., Columbia Univ., and currently an Art History professor) whether it would have been possible to take photos of the hands holding a deck of cards like in the drawings, back in 1902. Beside the exposure time, I was not sure about closeups, but her (brief) answers were

- the drawings aren't particularly impressive -- anyone in the Renaissance could do a better job.

- According to our professor of Photo who specialized in the 19th century: no problem with close ups and there were already early flashes, so motion could be "stopped".

- Muybridge does stop-action photographs of men and animals running circa 1890.

But then I also asked whether it would be reasonable that one person could draw "live" 100 drawings like those in the book (I sent her about 40 of them) and the answer was

- 100 drawings like these in one day without photos? -- yes.

So ...anything is possible! Back to square one on this one folks.

Carlo

Cugel | 09/02/08 06:02 AM | link | filter

You didn't have to ask your Professor friend. Smith said he drew them from life and it is entirely feasible that he did so.

Carlo Morpurgo | 09/02/08 07:23 AM | link | filter

Cugel wrote: You didn't have to ask your Professor friend. Smith said he drew them from life and it is entirely feasible that he did so.
judging from the thread, not everyone here has same faith as you in what’s been claimed by Smith or Erdnase, or anyone else for that matter (that is a good thing....)

by the way, did Smith actually claim that he drew from life?

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**Cugel** | 09/02/08 07:33 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Yes, he did. He recalled it clearly. The quotes from Martin Gardner are above.

judging from the thread, not everyone the has same faith as you in what’s been claimed by Smith

Indeed. Another conclusion to be drawn is that, judging from the thread, not everyone has the same desire to base their conclusions on facts and evidence as I do.

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**greg manwaring** | 09/07/08 09:10 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Well, by watching the animation of those two drawings of the bottom deal, I would guess that he did freehand them. The hands are almost alike in size and proportion, but the deck shrinks and grows as do the sleeves. I could have imagined that the hands had been traced and then the sleeves just added on, which would allow for their inconsistencies, but then the decks shrinkage wouldn’t be so pronounced if he was working from photos that have been taken one after the other.

But to play devils advocate, IF he only used photos for 'freehand reference' then that could explain the size shrinkage of the pack in the hands.

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**Rick Ruhl** | 09/07/08 12:39 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*John Lovick wrote:*

Artists differ in talent and experience so trying the experiment really wouldn’t produce anything germane to the discussion.

David,

You’ve been writing for years--as if it’s a fact--that Smith worked from photographs. Your main reason for stating this is that you contend that it is not possible for someone to have sketched all those drawings in one sitting. If one were to find an artist who could sketch quickly enough to do 101 drawings in a day, then it would blow your theory (which you state as a fact) out of the water, and would be ABSOLUTELY germane to the discussion.

John
My wife Sydney is an artist and has done many sketches in her time. I asked her if it was possible for an artist to do 101 sketches in a day and she said, "If the artist was good, then yes, it can be done in a 'long' day, but clean up would take another day". This takes into account that the subject doesn’t have to be there for 'clean up'.

Maybe I’ll have her do a couple sketches of my hands and we’ll time how long it takes.

Rick and Syd

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**Bill Mullins | 09/10/08 01:02 PM | link | filter**

The book said the illustrations were "drawn from life"; Marshall Smith said he drew them from life. Why is there any consideration given to the possibility of tracing photographs?

What’s the deal with the heart prominent on the back of the left hand in Fig. 69?

The Conjuring Arts Research Center has a nice copy available for download at their site: [HERE](#).

Richard Hatch, I believe you mentioned that you inspected the Marshall Smith scrapbook in the papers of Frederick Duncan at the Smithsonian. Has anyone ever gone through the archives at the Art Institute of Chicago with respect to Smith? I believe he won at least one prize in a contest they sponsored, and their collection owns some of his work. The catalog for their library has the cryptic entry for call # P-20494 "Miscellanea - Pamphlet - Marshall D. Smith"

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**Eoin O’hare | 09/10/08 07:43 PM | link | filter**

*Bill Mullins wrote:*

The Conjuring Arts Research Center has a nice copy available for download at their site: [HERE](#).

Cool! I’ve just uploaded it to my ipod touch using this [app](#) (Mac only)

Tip: Before you upload it on to your ipod touch or iphone, you should re-size the page size so you'll be able to zoom in and out on it. Here’s how; double click to open the pdf in 'Preview'. Go to File/Print -in the print menu select your paper size - I choose A4 , click on the "Scale each page to fit paper" and then click the PDF button to save it as a new pdf file that has been resized. Upload this file to your ipod. PDF pocket Erdnase.

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**Richard Kaufman | 09/10/08 08:48 PM | link | filter**
A couple of observations:

I agree that it seems unlikely that Erdnase decided to publish the book for the money, despite his claim to the contrary. It's also undoubtedly the case that the book was not written hastily and was the culmination of years of experience. However, it does seem unusual that someone, who had meticulously worked on his book for so long, should decide to travel to Chicago with the intention of finding both an illustrator and a publisher for his book and hope to complete the project within a few weeks.

If this was the case, one possible explanation might be that financial circumstances forced him to publish his work with a degree of haste. Many first-time authors find the time to write their book during a period of illness (which, in turn can be a cause of financial hardship). It's possible that the book was written during a period of protracted illness, or perhaps the manuscript had been completed over a period of time and illness forced publication. While publishing and selling a book is not a good way of getting cash fast, it may have been the only option open to him at the time. It would be interesting to know whether there is any history of illness among the current candidates for Erdnase.

Incidentally, I checked the mysterious fig.69 and the heart-shape on the back of the hand. Rather than looking like draft pencil marks that should have been erased, it looks to me more like an area that's been cut out. At the margins of the heart shape there are a few marks that seem to be protruding from under the edge of the shape.

Cugel wrote: So, wait: did he decide to publish the book for money or didn't he?
I don't know!

Intuitively, it seems unlikely that he would publish the book in order to get money quickly: it's simply not an easy way to get rich quick. Secondly, if he was a cardsharp, there would be easier ways of getting substantially more fund using his skills. Thirdly, the profile of Erdnase does not suggest that he was a gamblert/con artist and (depending on whose theory you subscribe to) may have been from a well-off background and wouldn't need the money anyway.

However, despite all the evidence pointing away from the author publishing the book to raise much-needed cash, there is an inconsistency in that the publication and printing appears to be somewhat rushed.

I'm not making a statement of fact - just raising either option as a possibility.

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**Paul Hayward** | 09/22/08 02:43 PM | link | filter

I would like to ask a few questions regarding the excellent interview Geno Munari conducted with Mr Bart Whaley on the Erdnase DVD's. This whole project is monumental in my opinion. Towards the end of the interview Mr Whaley suggests it is possible to account for the discrepancy in Smiths description of Andrews as small in stature compared to the tall M.F Andrews. However, no mention is made of the specific arguments that would presumably cast doubt on the reliability of Smiths description. I was wondering what these explanations could be and what the luminaries on Genii thought about these arguments.

In the interview with Richard Hatch, a tour de force in my opinion, Richard gives a clue by stating that Whaley and Busby simply gave greater weight to the testimony of Edger Pratts. No specifics are provided however.

Also, I notice that in the Magipedia section on Erdnase, it states the following 'Martin Gardner's research, now largely discredited'. Is it largely discredited? The tone of the interviews was more along the lines of entertaining these different hypotheses and trying to weigh up the pro's and cons of each. So my second question would be, is there compelling overwhelming evidence to throw out Martin Gardeners candidate afterall? The quote above would certainly suggest there is.

Regards,

Paul Hayward

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**Roger M.** | 09/22/08 03:44 PM | link | filter

I was amazed at just how unconvincing Whalley's argument was, even as he spoke
directly to the camera.

Frankly, I was expecting to hear the core evidence that led Whalley himself to believe that MFA was Erdnase and that led to the conclusions reached in his book. Alas, I heard nothing solid from Whalley that would tend to lend weight to that argument, and in fact felt the material in his book was a far stronger argument than what was verbally delivered. So much of what he said included conclusions that were just opined without any solid evidence to render that conclusion the result of a piece of solid research. (I’m speaking strictly of this project. As I’ve stated before I believe Whalley to be a solid researcher otherwise).

Dick Hatch on the other hand, delivered what in my opinion is the most solid recitation on Erdnase yet offered by anybody. He was working largely without notes, and everything he said had the voice of authority attached to it. Dick’s research is comprehensive and is also fleshed out to the point where, even to a "non die hard" fan of the search for Erdnase, Hatch provides a road map that is easy (and extrememly interesting) to follow.

Geno has outdone himself on this project, and I’m happy to have both the Whalley and Hatch viewpoints on video as a reference for the ages.

I’m just beginning with the Ackerman’s actual card handling DVD’s, as I’m sure others are as well. These will take some time to absorb fully. What I’ve seen to date is fantastic, and Ackerman himself has come a long way in terms of his onscreen personality. Ackerman comes across as somebody who truly understands the Erdnase material to its very core, and further displays assured confidence in everything he’s saying and doing. It may indeed be difficult (and likely impossible) for anybody to ever surpass Ackerman’s efforts on this DVD set.

This DVD package (for those who haven’t yet purchased it) is currently untouched in terms of what it delivers. The quality of the package itself is superb, and the scope of what it covers is vast and dealt with in a clear and concise manner.

Bravo Geno, Alan, Dick, Martin and Bart for the efforts put into this amazing project.

Paul Hayward  |  09/22/08 04:16 PM  |  link | filter

Hi Roger,

I’ve just spent four days solid with a practice mat on my knee and bee cards at the
ready watching and going through the whole set from beginning to end. The standard is superb. Allen Ackermans handling is very clear and workmanlike throughout and for my money he captures much of the essence of Erdnase whilst keeping his own identity as a magician. Geno and the team are to be heartily congratulated for a fantastic project. To be fair, the interview with Mr Whalley tended to focus on the method and theory of investigation rather than evidential specifics. I had the distinct impression that he had set aside the research on Erdnase for some considerable time. Richard Hatch, on the other hand, came across with a great deal of passion and enthusiasm for the subject that felt current and ongoing to him.

Regards,

Paul Hayward

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**Bill Mullins** | 09/23/08 01:03 AM | [link] | [filter]

It seems to me that currently, there are four "strong" candidates for Erdnase (M. F. Andrews, Hatch's Andrews, Karr's Andrews, and Alexander's Sanders). The points that weigh most heavily in M. F. Andrews's favor are:

1. He is the only one of these major candidates whom we know to be a gambler and proficient with a deck of cards,

2. He has what would be the closest to contemporary confirmation (statements by Pratt),

3. His family believed he wrote a book (see _The Man Who Was Erdnase_).

Weighing against him:

1. "M. F. Andrews" <=> "S. W. Erdnase" is a forced fit, at best.
2. Known samples of his writing don't match the style of EATCT.
3. Inconsistencie in his physical description with the statements of Marshall D. Smith.

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**Paul Hayward** | 09/23/08 01:47 AM | [link] | [filter]

Hi Bill,

Thanks for your reply. This balanced picture does seem to fit with the general discussion. Its your last 'third' point that particularly intrigues me as Mr Whalley suggests he can explain those physical inconsistencies in a way that continues support the M F Andrews hypothesis. Does anyone know what these mitigating arguments are?
There aren't any mitigating arguments.

Whalley never met Erdnase, M.D. Smith did.

Smith sat across the table from Erdnase, Whalley didn't.

Smith offers a description of Erdnase as the only person who we know of that is confirmed to have actually met, sat, worked and spoke with Erdnase.

This is all covered in great depth previously in this very thread. I'm not sure how much value there is in going over it again.

Hello Roger,

It was not my intention to irritate or stir things up. I suspect I would be agreeing with you. If the only argument for getting round the physical discrepancies is bad memory then that would be most unconvincing given all the other information regarding Smiths testimony. I have ordered 'The Man Who Was Erdnase' and I will look for Whalleys arguments in there.

Regards,

Paul

Paul, please don’t think you're stirring things up or irritating anybody. You're not.

I'm inclined to talk about this stuff endlessly, as are others here :)

"The Man Who Was Erdnase" is a must have book for those interested in all things Erdnase. One can disagree with the overall conclusion reached in the book, but still see it for the abundance of amazing research it contains.
broader view of the search for Erdnase. (as I said in an earlier post, his written views make a stronger argument than his verbal efforts in the DVD.) I think Whalley is off base with his MFA conclusion, but that aside the remainder of the book contains some of the best information on Erdnase available anywhere. There are other sources, but this is one very convenient package containing much factual information that isn't dependent on "opinions".

But back to the topic, to simply put forth that perhaps M.D. Smith had a bad memory is an example of the kind of "conclusion jumping" that plagues the MFA theory.

Here's the rub:
*There's absolutely no evidence offered to presume M.D. Smith had a poor memory, and further there's no reason to presume that his description of Erdnase isn't 100% accurate.*

Just saying "perhaps M.D. Smith had a poor memory" with absolutely no reason to make such a statement doesn't remotely justify the huge physical differences we know exist between MFA's police description and M.D. Smith's first hand description of Erdnase.

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**Paul Hayward | 09/23/08 02:36 PM | link | filter**

Thanks Roger. An excellent reply.

Regards,

Paul

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**Marco Pusterla | 09/23/08 03:10 PM | link | filter**

Sorry, but I think somebody is concentrating too much on Bart Whaley's part in the MWWE project. I understand (I may be wrong, though) that was Martin Gardner who made the connection Erdnase -> Milton Franklin Edwards, it was Gardner who tracked down M.D. Smith and introduced him to the magical fraternity, it was Gardner who interviewed Pratt and it was was Gardner who did the bulk of the research. I understand that the major contribution of Bart Whaley to the book was to collate the material found by Gardner and put it in narrative form, in addition to run some minor checks (like finding Andrews' grave...).

Or did I miss something ????

---

**Roger M. | 09/23/08 03:49 PM | link | filter**

Marco, the book is certainly based on Gardners original footwork.
You didn't miss anything.

I believe that Whaley did more than just "run some minor checks" though. There are sections of the book that are clearly written by Busby, with much of the remainder of the material put into words, and then onto the page by Whaley. I'd not call it "collating the material" though, as much of this content is written in Whaley's voice.

You've highlighted an important point for those who may not know the story "in depth", and that's that when speaking to the theory that Milton Franklin Andrews was Erdnase, we're actually speaking to an argument that was proposed by Gardner, researched and supported by Whaley, and adamantly stuck to by both parties as the end of the search for Erdnase.

I'd not underestimate Whaley's input into the book itself though, the guy knows how to dig, research, and write.

He may have just reached the wrong conclusion though, as Gardner might have :)

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**Marco Pusterla** 09/23/08 04:22 PM | link | filter

Roger,

Personally, I believe that Whaley's involvement with the project was more a literary one rather than about of finding new information.

In the book, he writes (p. 287):

> I couldn’t share the pleasure that Gardner and Marshall had in meeting several of these persons. My delights came from digging out undiscovered newspaper reports and some new documents and then, by comparison with the old evidence to gain fresh insight.

My understanding of the above (then he continues with a phrase about the pleasure of talking to descendants of Andrews...) is that Whaley accepted and supported Gardner's theory and was able to flesh it out in a captivating way. The book is certainly about Andrews' life, but the possibility that Andrews was Erdnase is not sure (as we know: this is why we're discussing it! :D).

All the best,

---

**Terry** 09/24/08 02:29 PM | link | filter
Jon R. recommended a book in his Genii column that might offer up other candidates if researched.


On page 356, a gambler by the name of Bert Bell has a resemblance to Erdnase's description.

The book describes Bell as practicing his second deal for 2 hours per day to maintain his skill. A veteran gambler called him the most perfect dealer of seconds he ever saw. "He was also an excellent bottom dealer and quick run-up artist. He was expert at the false shuffle and location work."

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**Magic Randy** | 09/24/08 03:19 PM | link | filter

*Terry wrote:* Jon R. recommended a book...

The book is 'Knights of the Green Cloth - The Saga of the Frontier Gamblers' by Robert K. DeArment....

I also highly recommend this book.

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**Bill Mullins** | 09/24/08 11:47 PM | link | filter

*Marco Pusterla wrote:* I understand (I may be wrong, though) that was Martin Gardner who made the connection Erdnase -> Milton Franklin Edwards,

Not to denigrate in any way Martin Gardner's enormous contributions to Erdnase research, but wasn't it Pratt who first proposed that Erdnase = M. F. Andrews?

---

**Marco Pusterla** | 09/25/08 03:35 AM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:* Not to denigrate in any way Martin Gardner's enormous contributions to Erdnase research, but wasn't it Pratt who first proposed that Erdnase = M. F. Andrews?

Bill,

I'm away from my library now but if I remember correctly, Gardner found the link to Andrews thanks to somebody tipping him about "Erdnase" being "Andrews" in reverse, then finding all newspapers about the Andrews case and sending the photos...
to Pratt who eventually confirmed the murder was indeed his old friend Andrews.

All the best,

Carlo

Marco Pusterla wrote: I’m away from my library now but if I remember correctly, Gardner found the link to Andrews thanks to somebody tipping him about "Erdnase" being "Andrews" in reverse.

In the Genii article it’s claimed that Gardner immediately recognized the Andrews anagram.

Carlo

John Bodine

Getting back to the illustrations for a moment, Mr. Erdnase references the illustrations in his writing, and should he have had the book finished at the time he hired Mr. Smith wouldn’t it be likely that he knew in advance what positions he wanted illustrated? This would certainly make the process go much more quickly as he would know not only the hand position but perhaps the angle from which he wanted it illustrated.

To Jason England’s point, if someone were to sit down draw 101 illustrations of predefined positions and predefined angles, wouldn’t the process go quite quickly?

-johnbodine

Bill Mullins

Richard Hatch wrote: One of Jay Marhall’s first edition copies came from the library of Edward Gallaway, who Busby/Whaley/Gardner tell us was McKinney’s typesetter and later his business partner.

From the Chicago Tribune, May 11, 1930, p. 16
"Ed. Gallaway, Printing Trade Estimator, Dies

Edward Gallaway, 67 years old, 5429 West Harrison street, president of the Printers’ Estimating school, died Friday afternoon. He was widely known as a printing estimator. He established the school in the Transportation building six year ago, at which time he was chief estimator for R. R. Donnelly & Sons company.

Mr. Gallaway published two technical books on estimating in printing and was a
member of the Old Time Printers' association.

He is survived by his widow, Rose; a son, William C. Bellwood, and a daughter, Mrs. Julia Dryden of Colorado Springs, Colo. Funeral services will be held tomorrow afternoon at 3 o'clock from the chapel at Madison street and Western avenue, in charge of Excelsior lodge of Odd Fellows."

Weird coincidence: This obituary is immediately next to one for Harry Blackstone.

From WorldCat:


George Olson | 10/29/08 03:34 PM | link | filter

Hey, Bill Didn't Harry Blackstone pass in 1965?

Unless the coincidence was the similarity of names

GO

Bill Mullins | 10/29/08 09:29 PM | link | filter

This one was "Irving Harry Blackstone", not the magician.

George Olson | 10/30/08 01:44 PM | link | filter

Whew, I thought I'd entered a time warp....

GO

Richard W | 11/05/08 11:34 AM | link | filter

hi there

I have been doing some research into another possible candidate for erdnase. This individual is called Herbert Lee Andrews. In brief, he...
- Had a wife named Emma Shaw Andrews (S.W Erdnase in reverse).
- Lived in Chicago around the time of publication of Expert.
- Helped run a business just a few blocks away from James McKinney and Co. This business went bankrupt a few years before the publication of Expert.
- Was well educated, and had an analytical and inventive mind, with several engineering patents to his name (thus perhaps explaining the detailed nature of Expert and the unusual copyright notices in the book).
- Came from a well-respected and religious family based in Hartford County (thus providing a possible motivation for anonymity).

The little bit of research that I have carried out into his life is described here:

http://www.richardwiseman.com/erdnase.html

and it would be great if anyone can find out more, especially any links with gambling or magic. No idea if it will come to anything, but I thought it was worth mentioning.

Eoin O'hare | 11/05/08 12:10 PM | link | filter

This wouldn't be a psychological research experiment aimed specifically at magicians, would it?

Jonathan Townsend | 11/05/08 01:33 PM | link | filter

That's a remarkable find and as RichW noted it raises some questions.

Richard W | 11/05/08 03:12 PM | link | filter

LOL. Nope! I have done some research with magicians, such as this survey:

http://www.richardwiseman.com/magicsurvey.html

but nothing to do with Erdnase!

Tortuga | 11/05/08 04:07 PM | link | filter

Very interesting development. Three questions immediately come to mind. First, is there any physical description or photo documentation of H.L. Andrews? That might corroborate M.D. Smith's description of Erdnase. Second, is there a date of birth for H.L. Andrews? M.D. Smith said the man claiming to be Erdnase was 40 or 45 at the time that he did the drawings for the book. Finally, is there a way to determine whether H.L. Andrews was related to Louis Dalrymple?

An interesting candidate for sure, but lots of digging to do to flesh out more details.
Jim Maloney | 11/05/08 04:53 PM | link | filter

_Tortuga wrote:_ M.D. Smith said the man claiming to be Erdnase was 40 or 45 at the time that he did the drawings for the book.

The link to Richard gave to his site lists HL Andrews' birth year as 1844, which would put him at 58 in 1902, which puts him 13-18 years older than what M.D. Smith suggested. It's not entirely unreasonable that he could have looked younger if he was in good health, but it is somewhat of a stretch.

-Jim

Jim Maloney | 11/05/08 04:55 PM | link | filter

This also raises the question, "Why didn't he illustrate the book himself?":

He was described as having a natural taste for drawing and perspective, and a high admiration of the beauties of nature.

-Jim

Rick Ruhl | 11/05/08 05:00 PM | link | filter

What if...

What if Erdnase wasn't a man. What if it was a woman, say, Emma Shaw Andrews, knew all the moves and wrote the text to *Expert At the Card Table*, and had a friend pose as Erdnase for the drawings since at that time, women were not considered equal in society?

She could have been with the gamblers as the 'woman' and learned all the moves, then if her husband gambled away all of his money. wrote this book to get the money back and to get even with her husband.

Richard W | 11/05/08 05:40 PM | link | filter

_Tortuga wrote:_ Very interesting development. Three questions immediately come to mind. First, is there any physical description or photo documentation of H.L. Andrews? That might corroborate M.D. Smith’s description of Erdnase. Second, is there a date of birth for H.L. Andrews? M.D. Smith said the man claiming to be Erdnase was 40 or 45 at the time that he did the drawings for the book. Finally, is there a way to determine whether H.L. Andrews was related to Louis Dalrymple?
An interesting candidate for sure, but lots of digging to do to flesh out more details.

All good questions. I have not been able to find any physical description or photograph of H L Andrews, which is surprising. Good point re Smith's memory of Erdnase's age - I am not sure how much faith I would put in his comments, given that they were about events that happened to him over 40 years ago - but, if they are accurate then it doesn't support the H.L.A idea. Re Louis Dalrymple, interestingly Dalrymple worked as a cartoonist for Puck, and a series of special issues of Puck were produced at the Chicago World's Fair, some of them featuring Dalrymple's work. Details and examples here:

http://www.graphicwitnes‌s.org/group/election92.htm

There are several online sources showing that A H Andrew's and Co exhibited at the Fair, and provided all of the furniture for one of the major banks there. Again, might mean nothing at all, but perhaps worth investigating further.

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Richard W | 11/05/08 05:43 PM | link | filter

Jim Maloney wrote: This also raises the question, "Why didn't he illustrate the book himself?"

He was described as having a natural taste for drawing and perspective, and a high admiration of the beauties of nature.

-Jim

Yes, I can't tell from the patents whether he did the drawings himself. As I say, I am not arguing that he was Erdnase, just that he is an interesting possibility. There is rather a limit to the digging that I can do from the UK, so thought he was worth mentioning in case anyone could find out more.

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Richard W | 11/05/08 05:50 PM | link | filter

Rick Ruhl wrote: What if...

What if Erdnase wasn't a man. What if it was a woman, say, Emma Shaw Andrews, knew all the moves and wrote the text to Expert At the Card Table, and had a friend pose as Erdnase for the drawings since at that time, women were not considered equal in society?

She could have been with the gamblers as the 'woman' and learned all the moves, then if her husband gambled away all of his money, wrote this book to get the money back and to get even with her husband.
Yes, of course! That would explain the heart on illustration 69 - it was her way of saying 'i love you, even though you lost all our money'. The other option is that M D Smith actually met Emma Shaw Andrews, but dressed as a man. This would explain why Smith said Erdnase's hands were 'like a womens'. It all seems so obvious in retrospect.

Richard W wrote:

Rick Ruhl wrote: What if...

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Richard, are you still going to tell me that there's no hidden psychological research experiment. :)

This is interesting and Richard should be congratulated for his work. However, I would point out that his candidate was born in 1844, making him 58 at the time he would have encountered Smith the book's illustrator. Smith remembered a man around 40. That is a considerable difference, especially at a time when people lived much harder and much shorter lives than today.

Then there is the observation in Richard's blog about his candidate: "He was described as having a natural taste for drawing and perspective. "
If so, then why would he have the necessity of hiring an artist to illustrate his book when he was apparently skilled himself?

It would also be helpful if his education included Latin and if there was evidence of him doing considerable writing during his lifetime as the writing voice one hears in Erdnase is practiced and experienced which only comes from doing a lot of writing.

---

**Rick Ruhl** | 11/05/08 08:42 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Richard W wrote:*

*Rick Ruhl wrote: What if...*

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Smith did say Erdnase was only 5'6". That's about an average height for a woman.

---

**Jonathan Townsend** | 11/05/08 08:57 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Kinda makes me wonder again about that illustration on the facing page of *More Magic*.

---

**David Alexander** | 11/05/08 09:19 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Rick,

People back in that day had a much shorter average height.
Roger M. | 11/05/08 09:38 PM | link | filter

That's great work Richard, excellent research.

For the age difference, I do tend towards sometimes wondering if some folks might underestimate M.D. Smith's excellent "eye".

When he describes Erdnase's age, height, and skin texture, Smith knows what he's talking about......as a look at his series of New Orleans garden portraits will indicate......M.D. Smith had a wonderful eye for detail, and obviously was more than capable of seeing those details, and also putting them to paper (or canvas as the case might be).

David Alexander | 11/05/08 11:10 PM | link | filter

My wife has been a professional portrait artist for over three decades. She's had several thousand successful commissions but I'm always amazed when a client calls from years back, mentions their names and she remembers the details of the commission. Not every time, but most times.

Smith also remembered the weather the day he met Erdnase, an important fact that allowed me to pinpoint the day.

Cugel | 11/06/08 03:57 AM | link | filter

Rick Ruhl wrote: What if...

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She could have been with the gamblers as the 'woman' and learned all the moves, then if her husband gambled away all of his money, wrote this book to get the money back and to get even with her husband.

Let me think. Hmmm. Nope.

Richard W | 11/06/08 04:19 AM | link | filter

David Alexander wrote: This is interesting and Richard should be
congratulated for his work. However, I would point out that his candidate was born in 1844, making him 58 at the time he would have encountered Smith the book’s illustrator. Smith remembered a man around 40. That is a considerable difference, especially at a time when people lived much harder and much shorter lives than today.

Then there is the observation in Richard's blog about his candidate: "He was described as having a natural taste for drawing and perspective..."

If so, then why would he have the necessity of hiring an artist to illustrate his book when he was apparently skilled himself?

It would also be helpful if his education included Latin and if there was evidence of him doing considerable writing during his lifetime as the writing voice one hears in Erdnase is practiced and experienced which only comes from doing a lot of writing.

Hi, thanks for that. Yes, all good points. I agree with you about the voice in the book - to me it sounds like an analytical mind and one, as you say, that has written before.

---

**Jonathan Townsend** | 11/06/08 09:55 AM | link | filter

I've followed up to finding the building and the mention of Anderson - where are the links to more about the person?

---

**Jeff Pierce Magic** | 11/06/08 10:46 AM | link | filter

My question is why are we all "mostly" convinced that erdnase can only be an anagram for andrews? By definition an anagram does is not religated to just forwards or backwards spellings. When I ran S. W. Erdnase through a program to create anagrams, one interesting thing jumped out at me, and one name stood out, so I'm going to throw a name out with absolutely nothing to back it up.

Dr. E. Wessan (perhaps Edward?)

As a doctor he would have been well educated, speak in a technical fashion with an anilitical mind, and have the soft hands of a surgeon.

Perhaps in 1902 this Dr. Wessan was trying to pay off his school debt and did so by publishing this book. Perhaps, a short time later, when he realized that the sales from the book were not exactly going through the roof, he dropped his interest in the book and allowed the copyright to expire.

As I said, nothing to back it up except my imagination.
David Alexander is not convinced of that: his candidate is named Saunders as I recall.

Was there not a point where the publisher acknowledged that the name was a reversal of Andrews?

Take care, Ian

The Andrews name was floated around right up until Martin Gardner asked M.D. Smith in a direct question if the name was Andrews, and Smith stated that he indeed thought he remembered the name as Andrews.

(The actual process was Gardner asking Smith if he remembered Erdnase as the author of the book, Smith saying he didn't remember Erdnase as the name, and Gardner suggesting that it might have been Andrews with Smith then agreeing that Andrews sounded right.)

It should be noted that Smith didn't independently state that the name was Andrews, but was instead given the name by Gardner and asked if he agreed.

Although the Andrews name was in the mix for years prior, there's nothing rock solid to confirm that Andrews is in fact the only name to be looking for. The extension of that of course is that there's nothing to confirm that it isn't Andrews.

Roger M. wrote: ...(The actual process was Gardner asking Smith if he remembered Erdnase as the author of the book, Smith saying he didn't remember Erdnase as the name, and Gardner suggesting that it might have been Andrews with Smith then agreeing that Andrews sounded right.)

It should be noted that Smith didn’t independently state that the name was Andrews, but was instead given the name by Gardner and asked if he agreed.
The extension of that of course is that there’s nothing to confirm that it isn’t Andrews.

Ahem - at this point some of us are wondering something like if Gardner were leading his witness to another name, say "Michaels" we might have a completely different story,

"of course..." I love those words. Here's what they summon today -

Though since the publisher did not explicitly state that the author was demonstrably a male human being there is equally good reason to believe the person they met was an alien, a dog in a costume, one of their multiple personalities or even just an entire fiction used to get rid of Gardner in much the same way as the widow Hofzinser got tired of fussy tricksters annoying her over her ex husband’s works.

---

**Ian Kendall** | 11/06/08 12:21 PM | link | filter

I'm fairly sure that someone asked the publisher, who then revealed that the name was Andrews backwards.

Also, I read somewhere else that a move was going to be included in 'Andrews' book'.

Take care, Ian

---

**Jonathan Townsend** | 11/06/08 12:36 PM | link | filter

*Ian Kendall wrote:* I'm fairly sure that someone asked the publisher, who then revealed that the name was Andrews backwards.

Also, I read somewhere else that a move was going to be included in 'Andrews' book'.

Take care, Ian

Kindly cite sources in historical discussions - once we get into hearsay and vague recollections we are too far into into the realm of dogma and fairytales to merit serious consideration.

For example: I read somewhere that a guy could touch his finger to his nose and fly up the chimney - and that sometimes he has a sleigh and reindeer up there too. I also heard that a few times. Must be true - right? Well yes I did read it somewhere and yes I heard it several times but still not true if you’re looking for the person in question.
* 

Do we have some BBS members who are in the area described in that map who might make some direct inquiries about friends and family? Every time we get a family and/or business connection we are increasing the odds of finding a diary, correspondence or even a manuscript. Here's hoping fortune will finally favor us who neglected a significant author way back when.

---

Roger M. | 11/06/08 01:05 PM | link | filter

You're right Ian, Erdnase apparently used the name "Andrews" in his dealings with McKinney the printer, and Smith the illustrator. (Erdnase published the first edition himself)

In neither instance though is there anything resembling a "smoking gun" in terms of something written down and dating from the period.......at least not yet :)

---

Richard Evans | 11/06/08 01:15 PM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote:

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* 

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time we get a family and/or business connection we are increasing the odds of finding a diary, correspondence or even a manuscript. Here's hoping fortune will finally favor us who neglected a significant author way back when.

In terms of the first point, regarding the publisher revealing the name 'Andrews', this is cited in several sources - one of which is in Persi Diaconis' introduction to 'Revelations' (p.iv). He states that Vernon recounted that J.C. Sprong pestered Frederick Drake (publisher of the 2nd edition of EATCT) for info about the author after Drake admitted to having some information. Drake eventually caved-in and pointed out that 'S.W. Erdnase' spelled 'E.S. Andrews' backwards. Whether Drake actually knew the author remains unclear.

It would be interesting to know several things about Drake's revelation:
- the year in which he disclosed this info to Sprong
- whether Sprong made this info widely known
- whether there's published evidence of anyone previously realising that the author's name was a pseudonym.

---

**Ian Kendall** | 11/06/08 01:15 PM | link | filter

Jon, calm down. I'm just asking a question about something I had read about Erdnase. I'm the last person who could be called an expert on Expert but I do have a fairly good memory and I do remember these points. And, it seems, Roger can corroborate my memories. Even if I did get publisher and printer mixed up.

If you want sources, I _think_ the first snippet came from the Jophnson book on Kennedy, and the second probably from a Giorgio column from way back.

Take care, Ian

---

**Jonathan Townsend** | 11/06/08 01:32 PM | link | filter

Some of us have read enough history and done enough research to enjoy sifting tales and dogma apart from historical records and primary sources. Every hypothesis deserves testing via "why would someone write this, who would want to believe this and why do I wish to believe it" before being proffered as more than anectote IMHO.

For example, leading a witness via such as 'did the bad person touch you here' or 'don't you remember when they... ' have recently lost credibility as ways of getting the best accurate report from a person. Hence" - such tales are dismissed here but the tactic might still be good for dual reality tricks.

Then we get to vague allusions in place of forthright statments. Since when is 'abc is
cba backwards' the same as 'yes I know the guy and his family is still over on market street'? The Drake item starts to read as a deflection of pestering rather than an invitation to meet the person in question. Remember the report of what Hofzinser's wife told he taunters? That the props were burned and the papers too ... but now we know better. Human nature is what it is and folks don’t like to be pestered when not likewise rewarded.

Back to history - real people, places, things and documents.

Kudos to RichW for finding several real leads and places folks might go to explore.

*[GROUCH]Unless of course you want fairy tales, which are far more fun for woolgathering... how about adding a few murders and a conspiracy to the tale - maybe some allusions to Lovecraft’s Chthlu for now till some artifacts and testimony from madnen of the time can be corrolated (or fabricated as needs be)?

Sometimes we do need to choose - between the tedium of real historical reseach and it’s dusty days, eyestrain from reading and long process of interviewing vs the romance of learning just how the Necronicon was hidden among the magii in the early twentieth century by a clever devotee.

/GROUCH/

Richard Evans | 11/06/08 01:35 PM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote: You’re right Ian, Erdnase apparently used the name "Andrews" in his dealings with McKinney the printer, and Smith the illustrator.
(Erdnase published the first edition himself)

In neither instance though is there anything resembling a "smoking gun" in terms of something written down and dating from the period.......at least not yet :)

Is there evidence of correspondence between Andrews and McKinney?

As far as I recall, the only documented connection is in the copyright application - in which Erdnase gives his contact address as c/o James McKinney & Co. However, in that application, he uses the pseudonym E.S. Erdnase and not 'Andrews'. There’s justifiable reason for believing that Marshall Smith (the illustrator) was coaxed into remembering the name 'Andrews' by Gardner.

Jonathan Townsend wrote: The Drake item starts to read as a deflection of pestering rather than an invitation to meet the person in question.
Possibly - which is why it would be interesting to know whether this was the first time that anyone outside the publishers' realised that the name was a pseudonym. Was this a genuine revelation?

Jonathan Townsend | 11/06/08 01:58 PM | link | filter

Getting to the copyright application - what leads the historian to presume the person filing was not also a staff member of the publishing house? Let's take a small step and consider the publisher as having an orphaned book manuscript - the author not wishing to deal with the process... One could understand the publisher delegating the task of filing to staff and likewise telling them to sign the name written on the book but c/o the company.

Ian Kendall | 11/06/08 02:00 PM | link | filter

Jon, again - calm down. You are putting way too much emphasis on a simple question.

Take care, Ian

Richard W | 11/06/08 02:03 PM | link | filter

Hi

A few people have been kind enough to email me their thoughts on the new Herbert Lee Andrews candidate. As I have said before, I am not convinced by him, but thought it worth raising as an issue. For those that might have missed it, I have placed the info so far here: http://www.richardwiseman.com/erdnase.html

Someone has pointed out that Smith recalled meeting Erdnase in a hotel on the S.E. corner of Congress and State, and that this would only be two blocks away from the A H Andrews store. I think that the location of the hotel has been challenged, but interesting if accurate.

Jonathan Townsend | 11/06/08 02:04 PM | link | filter

Ian Kendall wrote: Jon, again - calm down. You are putting way too much emphasis on a simple question.

Take care, Ian

Wrong.

I am asking pertinent questions - though perhaps being a little too playful by adding
counterexamples too close to the cogent argument parts of my posts.

Sheer the wool and focus on the history. It's a noble if less than glamorous activity. We can enjoy fantasy and tales of magic books separately.

Anyone near Chicago and have direct access to the county clerk records up for an expedition to follow up on RichW's findings?

---

**Roger M. | 11/06/08 02:50 PM | link | filter**

It's probably worth pointing out that all the information folks are referencing (including my own last couple of posts) already exists within this thread, some of it in great detail.

It's probably a good idea to take the time to read the entire thread, and to find the answers contained within.

Some questions asked in the last few posts have been answered repeatedly by experts in previous posts.

There is little of late that can be called "accurate and new information", at least that isn't already referenced here.

This thread represents one of the finest single sources of Erdnase information (and is always worth reading over again) outside of the Busby/Gardner/Whalley book, and David and Richards articles in Magic and Genii (and now Richard's on camera work in Geno's new Ackerman DVD set).

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**Richard Evans | 11/06/08 03:07 PM | link | filter**

Jonathan Townsend wrote: Getting to the copyright application - what leads the historian to presume the person filing was not also a staff member of the publishing house? Let's take a small step and consider the publisher as having an orphaned book manuscript - the author not wishing to deal with the process... One could understand the publisher delegating the task of filing to staff and likewise telling then to sign the name written on the book but c/o the company.

Jon - That's a perfectly valid theory, but one that would prove difficult to pursue. As with any research, one needs a starting point. The Erdnase anagram is a reasonable place to begin.

---

**Jonathan Townsend | 11/06/08 03:14 PM | link | filter**

Richard, I may be out of my field of expertise here though I would suggest the...
publisher and their staff as a sensible place to explore as their names are on record and may have diaries, manuscripts and family tales to tell.

Richard Evans | 11/06/08 03:31 PM | link | filter

Absolutely agree, if those records can be found. I understand that the McKinney records were probably destroyed when the company went bankrupt in 1902; they haven’t been located to date.

Who knows - these documents, like the author’s inscribed copy of the book, may someday show up in an attic (or mis-filed in an archive) and provide irrefutable evidence.

For many people (as the old adage goes) the thrill is in the chase, not the quarry!

Richard Lane | 11/06/08 06:13 PM | link | filter

re McKinney:

My notes with dates and locations are currently boxed up, but I thought I’d offer this passing note.

James McKinney did indeed file for bankruptcy in 1903, but within months he was fully operational and re-financed in a new location just round the corner from 73 Plymouth Place. Printer's Row experienced a craze of promoting 24-hour production and McKinney’s new set-up provided the machinery and shifts to provide fast turnover for handbills, etc. His company even continued for a number of years after his death, until the new owners changed the name.

The Equitable Trust Company, that handled McKinney’s bankruptcy, fell through a number of owners over the last century. I tracked the handovers and Equitable ultimately dissolved into a currently active Chicago bank. A dead end for any paperwork, as far as I could see, regarding any paperwork from the sale of the printer’s assets.

I’ve trawled through the research center at the Chicago History Museum looking for ideas. Nothing jumped out. Contemporary photographs are surprisingly thin for the Printer's Row district. You can track the homes and careers of Gallaway, Smith etc., through city directories. I found it most interesting that Marshall Smith’s listing amounted to just a name and contact. No bold script, banner or highlighting. In other words, unless explicitly directed to Smith, if you utilized the phone book it would be awfully random to end up at his door.

I can't recommend enough taking the addresses from Whaley/ Bushy and this thread
& creating your own Erdnase walking tour. Take in a few historic magician haunts and its a wonderful way to tour the city.

Always grateful when this thread is re-energized.

**Richard Evans** | 11/06/08 06:38 PM | link | filter

That's very interesting. After he filed for bankruptcy, did he continue with the same company, or was a new company formed with a different name?

Interesting too to speculate in what format Erdnase would have handed his manuscript to McKinney for printing. Presumably, McKinney would have received a typed manuscript and loose illustrations from Erdnase, and then done the typesetting and formatting. Other than typing the manuscript himself, what other options would have been available to the author to have a hand-written manuscript typed?

**Larry Horowitz** | 11/06/08 06:41 PM | link | filter

I have a question. I hope it is not to simple minded.

Would the printer of the book also be the "binder"? Is there another firm, a binder, that should be looked for in the Chicago area?

**Richard W** | 11/06/08 07:52 PM | link | filter

*Richard Lane wrote: re McKinney:*

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That's very interesting. Do you have an address for Smith at that time?

**Stepanov** | 11/16/08 07:50 AM | link | filter

I am so apologize if this question was solved before....
Vernon told about 3 technical errors inside Erdnase, but on Revelations wrote only about:
Page 53, line 4: The third paragraph should begin, "the third finger and thumb do the work."

Another peoples "find" five errors, but, unfortunatelly lists of that 5 errors - differ. So, Ortiz suggest:
1. Page 45, line 4: This sentence should read: "Now suddenly draw out the middle packet with the right third finger and thumb ..." I must thank Gary Plants for pointing this out to me.
2. Page 53, line 4: This sentence should read, "The third finger and thumb do the work."
3. Page 54, line 17: Once again, Erdnase really means, "... push out the bottom card with the third finger tip." (This is technical error number three. Thanks to Gary Plants for pointing this one out.)
4. Page 133, line 3: This passage should read: "... right third and little fingers ..."
5. Page 202, line 3: This line should read: "This leaves C.'s cards in position."

But, inside "The Man who was Erdnase" Grismer mentioned:
1. Page 53, line 4: Change "second" to "third".
2. Page 54, line 17: Change "second" to "third".
3. Page 95, line 15: Change "ball" to "base". (Grismer quips, "A baseball error!")
4. Page 120, line 17: Either delete "left" or change "left" to "right".
5. Page 133, line 3: Either delete "left" or change "left" to "right".

Please. What last solution about five errors?

For me most important pages 120 and 133. The word "right" on my language has both english meaning like "right hand" and "correct". But the word "left" has two different equivalents: "leviy" - "left hand" amd "ostavshiysya" - past from "leave".

Can I made next translations?

Page 120:

When the top card is thrown, the LEFT little finger is moved in under the end of the third finger...

like

When the top card is thrown, the LAST FROM PREVIOUS LIST little finger is moved in under the end of the third finger...

And page 133:
The LAST FROM PREVIOUS LIST third and little fingers take no part in the action ...

I use form "LAST FROM PREVIOUS LIST" because just before that sentences written about another fingers of right hand and word LEFT can mean not "Left Hand" but fingers was still not mentioned before but from same (right) hand.

Bill Palmer | 11/16/08 08:10 PM | link | filter

The first of each of the translations would be correct.

Todd Karr | 01/10/09 03:20 AM | link | filter

To address the earlier posts: First of all, as someone who’s put quite a bit of research into print, my track record is not exactly withholding information for ransom.

Second, when I announced The Erdnase Scroll, I thought it would be of interest to those who read this thread. It’s a really interesting form of the book, and I wanted to let people know what was in it. Should any mention of the Munari DVDs or pocket-sized Erdnase be stricken because (gasp) they’re for sale?

I have never had any intention of withholding anything. I want everyone to be researching these leads, and the more hands looking, the better.

However, I thought it would be a nice bonus to those who’ve purchased The Erdnase Scroll if they could get first glance at my research. They are serious historians and Erdnase fans paying a lot of money for a production that takes hours of hand-crafting to produce, and this is a thank-you for their investment.

My research currently resides in a marketed item. To the best of my knowledge, Geno’s not publishing free transcriptions of his DVDs and Ortiz isn’t offering free PDFs of his material...you have to buy these items to do your research. Mine just happens to be in an item that is extremely labor-intensive and expensive to produce...and I’m STILL going to give away the facts soon.

After the first batch is sent out, I’ll be revealing everything here so everyone can check out the leads, free. I’m just giving the first look to the purchasers of the Scroll.

What the Scroll owners will have that others don’t are my full research images, since I can’t post pictures of the news articles here. But if someone’s really interested, I will of course send them copies as PDFs.
In the meantime, two serious Erdnase researchers, Dick Hatch and Bill Mullins, have been in touch with me and I've shared some of my leads with them because they're active historians who I know will help pursue the trail...and neither has purchased a Scroll, though I will be sending each of them a free copy as thanks for their immense help over the years.

My other intent in posting on this thread is to let people know how excited I am about these developments. I'm glad readers are so interested...a little patience and I'll tell all, free of charge. And remember, I may in fact be totally wrong about these leads!

Finally, if you want to get a head start, I'll give you this clue. The name is somewhere people have been looking for a long time...if you've been serious about reading this thread, you'll know where I mean. I was really skeptical until I saw it. We know Erdnase liked word play (reversing the name) and it looks like he inserted his real first name in an interesting verbal way. It's a common man's name, it's not encoded, and it appears several times in various ways.

If someone spots it and posts it here, I will confirm if they're right, and if not, I'll be posting my full findings here soon anyhow.

Dustin Stinett | 01/10/09 03:26 AM | link | filter

I moved the posts that were--more or less--ads to the Marketplace (I'm still working on it) and I will post a link to them here for those who want to read Todd's teasers. I'm going to leave Todd's explanation above, however.

Thanks,
Dustin

And here are the two posts that Todd is referring to. There were calls to delete them; I would not. I compromised by moving them.

Thanks:

http://www.geniimagazine.com/forums/ubb ... ber=183761

Todd Karr | 01/10/09 03:33 AM | link | filter

Sure, that works for me! No problem, and I'll keep that in mind for any future product announcements. Thanks, Dustin.

Richard Kaufman | 01/10/09 11:31 AM | link | filter
does. If he wants to sell it (in any form) that's his choice. If you want to read it, then you can buy his product (that's your choice).

Tenthumbs | 01/16/09 08:47 AM | link | filter

It’s always struck me as odd that no one from the author’s family (extended or otherwise) has yet confirmed his identity... we're almost certainly dealing with a black sheep.

David Alexander | 01/16/09 03:56 PM | link | filter

Not necessarily. If you read the January, 2000 issue of Genii where my thoughts are laid out you will see where there is plenty of reason to suspect someone who wanted to keep this aspect of his life private for good reasons.

No one came forward because no one knew.

Jonathan Townsend | 01/16/09 04:29 PM | link | filter

Tenthumbs wrote: ...we're almost certainly dealing with a black sheep.

Thanks - I had not considered that possibility. Though if they were not the one who posed for the illustrations we can't rule it out either.

Bill Mullins | 01/16/09 05:49 PM | link | filter

Tenthumbs wrote: It's always struck me as odd that no one from the author’s family (extended or otherwise) has yet confirmed his identity... we're almost certainly dealing with a black sheep.

Don't know if I agree with that. What reason would his contemporary family have to confirm the identity, assuming the author didn't conceal it?

My family doesn't do around telling people what I've written (no books as yet, but numerous professional articles and reports, and several articles in magic publications, and contributions to books in other hobbies). They just view it as another aspect of who I am and what I do.

Why should his descendants have had reason to disclose the identity? For 99.99% of county, "erdnase" has no meaning or interest. The overlap between the group of us magicians who care who he was, and the members of his family who know, is probably zero, and has been for most of the 100+ years that the book has been out.
Remember, it was a nearly a full generation before speculation even in the magic press about the identity of Erdnase occurred. The first mention of the identity of Erdnase being a mystery in non-magic writings that I can come up with is a column in the Oakland Tribune 9/5/1956 mentioning that the mystery had been solved by magicians, not gamblers, and the author was Milton C. Andrews (the solvers were Martin Gardner and Jay Marshall, and the author of the column was likely Fred Braue).

So a full half century after the book was released, no one outside the magic community (what is the earlier discussion of the book in gambling literature?) even knew, or cared, that someone would be interested in knowing that the identity of the author is unknown. I don’t know what my ancestors were doing 50 years ago (my parents were in college. Grandparents? no idea).

It’s only been in the last decade or so that mentions of the search have slipped into the Wall Street Journal, and other “popular” media. By now, anyone who knew anything first hand has been dead a long time.

David Alexander | 01/18/09 01:51 AM | link | filter

A friend tracked down the grandson of a highly successful showman and performer of the 1930s. When contacted the young man had little to no comprehension as to why anyone would be interested in his grandfather.

Some (many?) people have no sense of history at all.

I believe we have previously discussed my thoughts on the circumstantial evidence that suggests Erdnase’s family had no idea of his literary pursuits.

JHostler | 01/18/09 10:15 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: Why should his descendants have had reason to disclose the identity? For 99.99% of county, “erdnase” has no meaning or interest. The overlap between the group of us magicians who care who he was, and the members of his family who know, is probably zero, and has been for most of the 100+ years that the book has been out.

All highly arguable, given the press on Erdnase candidates, resurgent popularity of genealogy, ubiquity of Internet access, etc. etc. It’s equally (if not more) plausible that descendants of Milton Andrews et al would’ve picked up the scent of mystery by now and chimed in. The fact that no one has said a thing in 100 years leads me to believe we’re either dealing with an author who had/has no living [extended] family or was/is entirely alienated. Alternative theory: We’ve not yet pegged the true author's name, and have therefore failed to leave the necessary bread crumbs for the aforementioned family.
Just something to consider...

**David Alexander** | 01/18/09 10:32 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Or he took great pains to make certain his family had no knowledge of his activities.

Again, consider the social structure of the times and the fact that the book slid into public domain without the copyright being renewed.

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**JHostler** | 01/18/09 10:48 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*David Alexander wrote:* Or he took great pains to make certain his family had no knowledge of his activities.

Again, consider the social structure of the times and the fact that the book slid into public domain without the copyright being renewed.

Which, even if it were true (ask RK how difficult it would be to hide authorship from one’s family), still wouldn’t explain why extended family has not reacted to theories regarding our current slate of candidates - whose names are all over cyberspace just waiting to be found.

In the end, it’s all speculation...

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**David Alexander** | 01/20/09 12:19 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Comparing RK and Erdnase is a non-starter as RK is a professional writer and lives at home with a wife and child. He signs his name to everything he writes and has no reason to hide what he does for a living.

Erdnase clearly had skills as a writer but was not necessarily a professional writer except as may have been required by his work, which wasn’t professional gambling. It is clear from his writing voice that he is an experienced writer. A voice takes a lot of writing to perfect.

Secondly, you presume there is an extended family that is aware of their family’s history. In my candidate’s case he had no issue and lived apart from his two brothers for much of his adult life. He interacted with them infrequently.

If any of the extended family is still alive they would be great nieces and nephews. His step-grandson only saw him a couple of times when he was eight in the early 1930s. My candidate died in 1935. Anyone alive today only knew him as a child.
Richard Kaufman | 01/20/09 01:18 AM | link | filter

Jeez! Leave me outta this!

Bill Mullins | 01/20/09 03:24 AM | link | filter

John Hostler wrote: All highly arguable, given the press on Erdnase candidates, resurgent popularity of genealogy, ubiquity of Internet access, etc. etc.

"press on Erdnase" -- outside of the magic community, where is this press of which you speak? As near as I can tell, neither the book nor the author has ever been mentioned in The New York Times, for example. Newspaperarchive.com has almost 100 million newspaper pages scanned and digitized for searching within its database - searching for "erdnase" returns zero hits. You can find the author mentioned twice in columns by Braue in the Oakland paper (see above), and in an article about Dai Vernon in 1936 that was run in several papers.

An analogous situation: Robert A. Heinlein was, probably, the most important science fiction author of the 20th century. His widow, Ginny, was the love of the last half of his life, and after he married her, he tended not to mention his previous wife, Leslyn MacDonald (even to the point of suppressing mention of her in a book-length critical review of his works). But what was more or less unknown was that he was married prior to both of them, for about a year, in the 1920's. Heinlein's family knew about this, and the woman's family knew about it. When I made contact with the nieces of this woman earlier this year, they were aware of the fact she had been married to the guy who wrote "Stranger in a Strange Land", but had no idea anyone cared.

It wasn't that they suppressed the information for 80 years, it was that they simply didn't have any reason to tell anyone. One more generation, and their knowledge would likely have been lost. And Heinlein was on the NYT best seller list several times, had several movies made from his books, was a central figure in the counterculture of the 1960s and in the Libertarian political movement today. And it's all over the internet and in numerous published works that Leslyn was his first wife (a mistake which is slowly being rectified within Heinlein scholarship).

Compare this "secret" to the authorship of Erdnase. The Erdnase secret is a generation older. The author of EATCT was able to be anonymous from day one (possibly and perhaps probably from even his immediate family), while Heinlein's first marriage was a matter of public record (I found the woman's name in the LA Times). EATCT made a _much_ smaller splash than Heinlein's collected works. There are likely thousands of times as many people who have read Heinlein's works or are otherwise aware of him as there are those who have read EATCT.
"smoking gun" are small. But even if a diary or original MS exists, the odds of it coming to light to those of us who care about who Erdnase is are vanishingly small.

Dustin Stinett | 01/20/09 03:46 AM | link | filter

Bill,

I will admit to not reading your entire post simply because I was not compelled to. I knew you were wrong after the first sentence.

The Erdnase story was a front page article in the *Wall Street Journal* not long ago.

That's pretty damn good press outside the magic community.

Dustin

Jonathan Townsend | 01/20/09 09:51 AM | link | filter

Ah the joy that "erdnase" has brought our little world.

The thought of a masked magician doing exposure of material from that text ...

At least it keeps folks out of trouble and may even give some a reason to get familiar with a dictionary.

David Alexander | 01/20/09 10:48 AM | link | filter

Even being wrong on the Wall Street Journal article...and a BBC radio special...and a large sidebar in an article in American Heritage (I was involved in all three), I think Bill makes a good point. The most important sentence in his post being a reference to relatives of Heinlein’s first wife, "It wasn’t that they suppressed the information for 80 years, it was that they simply didn't have any reason to tell anyone."

With Erdnase we are dealing with an exceptionally private individual who grew up and lived in a time far different from today. You need to read history to understand this. If he came from a prominent family - as my candidate did - then being associated with the riff raff who were gamblers and the like was not something that anyone would want advertised.

I have some small personal experience in this as divorce was once considered a huge personal failing and, in some instances, mildly scandalous. I was in my late 50s and looking at family pictures that came out of my mother's estate with my older cousin. In looking at one picture I mentioned that I knew everyone in the picture - my mother,
my grandparents - but I didn't know that tall man with the moustache. "That's your mother's first husband," I was told.

Like Heinlein's first marriage described above, it was a short relationship that my cousin only learned about when he was ten, ironically looking at the same photograph. His mother, my maternal aunt, informed my cousin who it was in the photo and that the family "didn't talk about it." Even when I divorced my first wife my mother, sympathetic as she was, didn't say a word. Had it not been the accidental confluence of my cousin being at the right place at the right time looking at the right picture...and me asking the right question, I never would have known anything about my mother's first short marriage.

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**Pete McCabe** | 01/20/09 03:25 PM | [link] | [filter]

I just want to say that I love this thread, that this is one of the all-time great uses of internet technology, and that I am particularly fascinated by the new theory that Erdnase was actually Richard Kaufman. The game is afoot!

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**Richard Kaufman** | 01/20/09 04:28 PM | [link] | [filter]

I am not Erdnase! I am a free man!

But I am wearing Mr. Andrews underwear today in honor of the inauguration of our new president. :)

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**Dustin Stinett** | 01/20/09 05:25 PM | [link] | [filter]

So you are wearing long-johns because of how cold it is there?

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**Richard Kaufman** | 01/20/09 05:41 PM | [link] | [filter]

Of course they are long-johns! No self-respecting card cheat in 1900 in Illinois would be without them.

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**Bill Mullins** | 01/20/09 05:45 PM | [link] | [filter]

*Dustin Stinett wrote*: I knew you were wrong after the first sentence.

The Erdnase story was a front page article in the *Wall Street Journal* not long ago.

That's pretty damn good press outside the magic community.
The first sentence of my post was a rhetorical question -- how could it be wrong? <G>

Of course I’m aware of the Aug 16 2000 Wall Street Journal article -- I mentioned it in my post just previous. (I’m also aware of mentions of Erdnase in The Financial Times, in American Heritage, in The Guardian, in Amy Tan’s novel "Saving Fish from Drowning", in Michael Ondaatje’s novel "Divisadero", in an issue of the Jonah Hex comic book, and several other places in popular media. I could send digital copies of most of the periodical articles.)

I suppose you’re disputing the statement that I imply: That the sum total of the mentions of Erdnase/EATCT in popular media, and the subset of those that include discussions of the fact that Erdnase seems to be a pseudonym for an unknown author, is small and insufficient to be of note to any living descendant(s) of whoever the author was.

We are 4 or 5 generations removed from 1902. I couldn’t name any of my great-great or great-great-great-grandparents, much less discuss their vocations or avocations. If the author has living descendants, they don’t know about his being Erdnase.

If they do know, they aren’t aware anyone else cares, because there has been so little mention of the subject in anyplace besides magic circles.

To help prove my point, can you identify any of these people? Dan Carol, Matt Linland, Argus Hamilton, Tom Laubenthal. Know any of them? They were famous enough to be covered on front page of the Wall Street Journal the same week as Erdnase. Big deal for one day, anonymous soon after.

We (magicians) are aware of the Wall Street Journal article, and other mentions, and think they are important. To us, they are. To most of America, People Magazine’s coverage of Jennifer Aniston is important. CNN Headline News’ coverage of whatever has gotten Nancy Grace in a snit is important. Britney, Obama, Desperate Housewives. Erdnase is a nobody.

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**Pete McCabe** | 01/20/09 11:01 PM | link | filter

I was on the front page of the Wall Street Journal back in 1988. For all the good it did me.

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**Bill Mullins** | 01/21/09 05:07 PM | link | filter

Thoughts on the title: "Expert at the Card Table"
I've often thought that one of the most obvious signs that the author of the book was a skilled writer is the title itself. "Expert at the Card Table" has a crispness to it, at least moreso that other contemporary books like "New Era Card Tricks" or "Modern Magic".

Was the title influenced by Oliver Wendell Holmes series of essays "The Autocrat at the Breakfast Table"? Phrases of the form ([noun] [preposition] the [adjective] table) go back as far as "The Knights of the Round Table", if not farther.

Erdnase was certainly not the first person to use the phrase in print.

"State Press -- What the Interior Papers Say" _The Galveston Daily News_, (Houston, TX) April 06, 1882; page 2 col C [found in Gale 19th Century Newspapers database]

"In fact gambling is, if not so respectable, less demoralizing, and causes less suffering to the innocent, because these speculations in futures, when applied to the necessities of life, frequently distress the poorer class who take no part in the speculation, but suffer the consequences, while only the dupe and those dependent on him suffer from the expert at the card table." [reprinted from the Victoria TX Advocate]

I'm doubtful that there is any connection between this article or its author and EATCT, but you never know.

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**Jim Maloney** | 01/21/09 05:47 PM | [link] | [filter]

*Bill Mullins wrote: Thoughts on the title: "Expert at the Card Table"*

I've often thought that one of the most obvious signs that the author of the book was a skilled writer is the title itself. "Expert at the Card Table" has a crispness to it, at least moreso that other contemporary books like "New Era Card Tricks" or "Modern Magic".

Perhaps, but didn't he actually title the book "Artifice, Ruse, and Subterfuge at the Card Table"?

-Jim

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**El Mystico** | 01/22/09 01:40 PM | [link] | [filter]

Regarding tracking down people who knew him...

There are several signs in the book that Erdnase knew and taught gamblers - eg p22, teaching a blind shuffle in 5 mins, p24 the size of hand doesn't matter, p73 referring to instructing certain players.
But, from my reading, I’m not convinced he performed card tricks; eg p154 he refers to the sixth method as "very pretty", instead of mentioning its effect on an audience; and p 172 he doesn’t say "I’m giving you my patter", he says he has 'garnished' the tricks to show the part that patter plays.

Nor do I see any sign that he taught the tricks to others.

But he has clearly read a number of conjuring books.

However, p122 convinces me that he did perform the 3 card monte as an entertainment. Although the comment there about bearing repetition, and the comment on p119 about amateurs entertaining friends suggests to me that’s what he did.

So - while it is probably too late now, I suspect the early investigators would have had more luck finding gamblers who knew him than magicians....

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**Todd Karr** | 01/22/09 02:54 PM | [link] [filter]

Being a former hustler is nothing to trumpet, especially if you've had victims, jail time, or assumed names...all of which applies to the E.S. Andrews I've been chasing (Bill Mullins is on the hunt now, too).

To give a very close example, my grandmother was very careful to hide the fact that her brothers had run a bookie operation from her house. If you have pride in your family or have had relatives involved in crime, you might want to keep it quiet.

When I started asking her and my grandfather about my Uncles Max and Izzy, I found out that my great-uncles had actually been dealers in underground gambling houses in Detroit; one was under a tobacco store called the Subway Smoke Shop. My grandfather told me that my Uncle Max was "what they called a mechanic," and whenever someone was winning too much, they'd call Max in to deal so the house would win.

Max and Izzy were known as Big Pie and Little Pie. They eventually went to Vegas in the 1940s, dealt blackjack, invested in the Last Frontier, eventually bought percentages of the Golden Nugget, sold out in the 70s, and retired early. Uncle Izzy taught me how to shuffle cards casino-style and do the spread-and-turnover when I was ten and just getting into magic.

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**Richard Kaufman** | 01/22/09 03:13 PM | [link] [filter]

... and is that all he taught you?

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**Jeff Pierce Magic** | 01/25/09 01:31 AM | [link] [filter]
I'm wondering about the origins of the Erdnase Change. It seems to be widely know that this sleight is a creation of Houdini. Richard Harch writes elsewhere: "According to an article in The Magic Wand by Victor Farelli on the sleight, which had been shown to Farelli by Houdini, it was first published by P. T. Selbit in his Magician’s Handbook in 1901, with credit to Houdini, but without Houdini’s permission. Farelli also says that Houdini said Selbit’s description was incorrect and taught Farelli the proper handling, which he gives in his article. Thanks to askalexander.com for making such questions relatively easy to research!"

Now if this is true then Selbits book would have had to make it’s way across the pond and into the hands of magicians in the states within months of EATCT being published. In 1901 Houdini was not widely known in the states but somewhat famous in the UK. When he finally returned to the states in 1902 EATCT was already published.

At the least this give credence to the idea that Erdnase did not write the magic section. Was Harto in the UK in 1901?

Jeff Pierce

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**Todd Karr** | 01/27/09 02:57 PM | link | filter

Richard: Max was already dead by the time I was a kid, and I didn’t see Izzy very often. He did teach me to set a limit when you’re gambling, and when you lose that amount, walk away from the table. But no other card stuff, unfortunately. I wish I had known more at the time so I could have asked better questions.

OK, folks, a good historian admits when he’s wrong. Bill Mullins sent me a great clipping from 1898 about E.S. Andrews that takes a lot of the wind out of my theory about Erdnase’s first name. My Scroll customers still get a lot more 1890s info on conman E.S. Andrews, but I’ve omitted the first name theory I thought was so strong.

Here's how my research proceeded: I traced E.S. Andrews to another collections agency scheme with a company called Wingate’s Trade Exchange. They had offices all over New England, in places like Rhode Island, and the Midwest. E.S. was noted in one court case as the company’s secretary.

On the earliest of the business directory notices, a treasurer was listed: Fred J. Andrews. Aha! I said. This must be Andrews' real name, which might explain two things: 1. Why he’s only referred to as "E.S." (no real name behind the initials), and 2. Why in the later Wisconsin cases he was so concerned about claiming he didn’t use an assumed name (to hide other activities under another name).

Well, Bill Mullins’ news item from 1898 says that the treasurer Andrews of Wingate’s was ill and couldn’t come into court, so secretary E.S. Andrews came instead. This
logically implies there were two men, perhaps relatives.

Now a wild fantasy might be that the two men were one and the same, and E.S. Andrews just pretended the supposed Fred was ill. But that’s a bit too much speculation.

I also found a record of Fred Andrews, debt collector, in Wisconsin in 1910, from Rhode Island, with kids born in Wisconsin at exactly the time E.S. Andrews was operating there. Same guy? Coincidence? No proof, and without proof, it’s just theory.

Here’s what really threw me, and it’s a good example of trying to fit the facts to a theory. Look at the title page of Expert, at that inverted pyramid, down along the right side toward the bottom. You can see the name "FRED" in several different ways, down, up, etc. See if you think I’m dreaming this about the wordplay-prone Erdnase.

So either it’s 1. Of no significance; 2. The author’s real name; 3. Perhaps a relative of the author.

In any event, my candidate, conman E.S. Andrews, is still a contender, and I’ve now got a lot more leads on him back into the 1890s. If he’s not Erdnase, what an interesting guy.

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**Bryan So** | 01/27/09 07:36 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I typed Erdnase in books.google.com and found this weird sentence in an 1851 book:

<some Japanese character> ein Vorgebirge, wörtlich: eine Erdnase

what does that mean?!

The full URL is here
[http://books.google.com/books?id=vIoAAA ... dq=erdnase](http://books.google.com/books?id=vIoAAA ... dq=erdnase)

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**Joe Pecore** | 01/27/09 08:15 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Babelfish German to English translation gives:
"a Vorgebirge, literally: an earth nose"

The title of that book in English:
"Meeting reports of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, philosophical..."

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**Richard Hatch** | 01/27/09 08:46 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)
The article with that citation is a report on the Ainu language of the indigenous people of several islands of northern Japan. The Ainu term for the German word "Vorgebirge" (promontory) is literally "earth nose" (Erde-Nase=Erdnase in German).

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**Carlo Morpurgo** | 01/27/09 10:56 PM | link | filter

*Todd Karr wrote:* Look at the title page of Expert, at that inverted pyramid, down along the right side toward the bottom. You can see the name "FRED" in several different ways, down, up, etc. See if you think I am dreaming this about the wordplay-prone Erdnase.

Which version of the book should we be looking at? Can you give us a pointer to some web page? I can't seem to find it in my books.

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**Jim Maloney** | 01/27/09 11:16 PM | link | filter

You can see what Todd’s talking about in the download provided at erdnase.com. Specifically, check out the words "of", "handler", "hundred", and "life" and how you can work out "Fred" from the placement of those words.

It is interesting that you can form the name that way, but I don't think it's 100% clear (i.e., you can't take the last letter of last word on each line to form the name; you have to fudge it a little bit). Still, it is a curious coincidence.

-Jim

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**David Alexander** | 01/27/09 11:47 PM | link | filter

We're beginning to repeat ourselves. The "erd nase/earth nose" German business was originally discovered by Thomas Sawyer and published in his monograph "Erdnase Another View" some years back. I cited this when I reported it in my article, Genii January 2000 page 19. I found it interesting because my candidate was a mining engineer...who studied German at university.

Now, about the "Freds" in Todd’s theory: Todd, I'm sorry, but I don't see them. Looking at both my article which reproduced the title page of the first edition and my copy of Revelations which used an old version of Erdnase, the inverted pyramid has nine lines counting from top to bottom. There are four words that contain an f - of on the first line, another of at the end of the fifth line, and the words from and life on the eighth line.

The f at the end of the fifth line lines up to an r at the end of the next line down and then to the letter d below that. Each of these letters ends their respective lines. F R D does not spell Fred. Or am I missing something other than the requisite F to spell the
name properly?

If you extend it down one more line you do line up the letters F R D E which also
doesn't spell Fredeven backwards.

I've tried looking at the "Fs" and how they line up vertically and at an angle and the
closest I can come is the "F" at the end of line five when I apply a left-leaning 45 degree
angle do I see the letters "FED" lining up on lines five, four, and three.

The "F" in life in the eighth line matches up on an angle to the right with the second
letter in each of the ending words in the lines above it spelling out "FEE." Again, not
"FRED."

A 45 degree to the left from the "F" in "from" lines up with "F O C N Y N B Y" giving a bit
of leeway as we move to the top line of the pyramid. Again, not "Fred."

If we are to apply different rules such as zig zagging where needed, then it is possible
to make up other words, but then we could just wander all over the place to make other
coincidences that have no more relevance than the non-existent "Freds."

Joe Pecore | 01/27/09 11:48 PM | link | filter

ARTIFICE
RUSE AND SUBTERFUGE
AT THE
CARD TABLE
A TREATISE ON THE SCIENCE AND ART OF
MANIPULATING CARDS
BY
S. W. ERDNASE

EMBRACING THE WHOLE CALENDAR OF SLEIGHTS THAT
ARE EMPLOYED BY THE GAMBLER AND CON-
JURER, DESCRIBING WITH DETAIL AND ILLU-
STRATION EVERY KNOWN EXPEDIENT,
MANEUVER AND STRATEGY OF
THE EXPERT CARD HANDLER,
WITH OVER ONE HUNDRED
DRAWINGS FROM LIFE
BY M. D. SMITH

PUBLISHED BY THE CONJURING ARTS RESEARCH CENTER

Fred?

David Alexander | 01/27/09 11:54 PM | link | filter

Here's another hidden message in the pyramid.
Here's another hidden message in the pyramid.

I think you mean "Line three - second letter from left".

:)  

-Jim

Thank you, Jim...and just for clarity, this comment was NOT aimed at Joe Pecore, just the whole idea in previous posts about "Fred." I decided to have a bit of fun and show that nearly anything can be spelled out if you want to apply special rules.

I agree with you David, which is why I put "Fred?" with a question mark.

Thank you, Joe. You were far more subtle than I, but we're on the same page, so to speak.

By the way, a long time ago I handed the pyramid over to some code guys I knew to see if they could find any hidden messages in it. They came up empty. I've even looked at number of words per line and number of letters, etc. I didn't find anything except the message in the fly title that I've already written about.

I don't think there's anything hidden in the pyramid. No "Freds." No "Ninas." A few
people will catch that last reference.

**Carlo Morpurgo** | 01/28/09 01:12 AM | link | filter

Is there a "theory" behind the pyramid? If it was just supposed to be touch of "art" then I don’t understand why he chose to split the words "conjurer" and "illustration". It does not look so good, and also the third line is longer than the second. I get a better result (using the same type of fonts) if I start the second line with "that", the third line with "conjurer" and the fourth with "illustration".

**Ryan Matney** | 01/28/09 01:29 AM | link | filter

This is all getting a little too 'bible code' for me.

If Erdnase turns out to be a secret Templar/Freemason/Gliterati who left clues in the pyramid leading to the ark of the covenant and an acrostic in the ledgerdemain section explaining jesus’s lost years...well, won't we feel silly for thinking it was all just a bunch of card tricks.

On the other hand, George Lucas might be interested in the rights to all of this since he is dry as a bone for ideas.

**Carlo Morpurgo** | 01/28/09 01:44 AM | link | filter

This is how I would have done it for a book cover

http://tinyurl.com/cnce6y

(click on photos for a larger view)

**Joe Pecore** | 01/28/09 08:07 AM | link | filter

Is the Conjuring Arts version of the title page exactly how it looked in the self-published first edition in 1902?

**Jonathan Townsend** | 01/28/09 08:57 AM | link | filter

Ryan, you're missing it. Check the reference to "calendar" and then recall the claim of completeness. Given that at least one of strategies used by real card players of the time, "the spread addition", was not detailed in the book it follows that there is also at least one day in the year to be explored by those how know. Also note the use of the word "science" in the title when the book contains no hypotheses, experimental design or citations to earlier works. From this the magical
nature of the work is made plain to even the uninitiated. And so the good book opens the very gates of time to the cognoscenti. More to be found if you carefully note the values of the cards displayed and the seemingly odd repetitions of less than informative poses in the illustrations.

Kindly do not take the name of Fred (or Al) in vain lest you get smitted with gross misfortune or bring such upon others. Hallowed be E. S.

Joe - the theory that the book spontaneously appeared without an author is ill suited to public discourse.

David Alexander wrote: I decided to have a bit of fun and show that nearly anything can be spelled out if you want to apply special rules.

Did you apply special rules when you read "W.E. Sanders" inside S.W. Erdnase? or is that a standard rule?

NCMarsh | 01/28/09 02:46 PM | link | filter

W.E. Sanders is an anagram of S.W. Erdnase, and -- yes -- it sticks to the "standard rules" of an anagram.

I don't know if, at the end of the day, either is more likely to be correct (it is entirely possible, and highly likely, that there are no intentionally coded clues to the author's identity...I think it would be funny, given the decades of effort and scrutiny, if that were the case)

N.

Carlo Morpurgo | 01/28/09 03:28 PM | link | filter

Imperfect anagrams are also "standard rules", used in the past to create pen names - this is proven.... The whole point is whether there is other strong evidence associated to a rule. Dismissing a potential rule in itself is not a valid argument in my opinion, that was my point. Even anagrams (valid ones) can be many.

David Alexander | 01/28/09 08:15 PM | link | filter

Carlo,
I've been writing about "W.E. Sanders" as an anagram of "S.W. Erdnase" for over nine years. Where ya been?

I understand, more or less, the rules for creating regular anagrams. I know there are a few pen names created by "imperfect anagrams" but those may be special cases. I would appreciate you laying out the rules for "imperfect anagrams" and the source you are citing.

Carlo Morpurgo | 01/28/09 10:49 PM | link | filter

David Alexander wrote: Carlo,

I've been writing about "W.E. Sanders" as an anagram of "S.W. Erdnase" for over nine years. Where ya been?

I understand, more or less, the rules for creating regular anagrams. I know there are a few pen names created by "imperfect anagrams" but those may be special cases. I would appreciate you laying out the rules for "imperfect anagrams" and the source you are citing.

I've been on and off about this subject, but I knew that yours was an anagram....I was making a point that you cannot dismiss any rule only on the basis that it is more or less attractive. What counts is the supporting evidence.

my background "forbids" me to make a distinction between "regular anagrams" and "imperfect anagrams", defined e.g. by allowing to change (add or substitute or eliminate) one or more letters. The rule is the rule, it's only our mind that finds it more attractive when we do not change any letter, as opposed to one, or when we read straight as opposed to zig-zag.

Regarding sources...I think I kinda started citing some sources in this very thread, where ya been? Unfortunately no one really took it seriously, so I stopped. Look at what I wrote here somewhere in the past few months, I can't recall.

David Alexander | 01/29/09 12:26 AM | link | filter

Carlo Morpurgo wrote: [I've been on and off about this subject, but I knew that yours was an anagram....I was making a point that you cannot dismiss any rule only on the basis that it is more or less attractive. What counts is the supporting evidence.

my background "forbids" me to make a distinction between "regular anagrams" and "imperfect anagrams", defined e.g. by allowing to change (add or substitute or eliminate) one or more letters. The rule is the rule, it's
only our mind that finds it more attractive when we do not change any letter, as opposed to one, or when we read straight as opposed to zig-zag.

Carlo, I think you're pulling my leg.

David Alexander wrote: Carlo, I think you're pulling my leg.

Actually I wasn't.... I really do believe that your anagram is just as worth as the various Fred zig-zagging. Also, as I understand it the name Fred came about before the pyramid thing, not afterwards.

Carlo

ps. I know my opinion here counts near nothing, since I am not in the loop, but I am still puzzled about this pyramid. Why on earth did he decide to split those words and make the third line longer?

David Alexander wrote: Carlo sees the regular anagram as worth the same as the zig zagging "Fred." I leave that opinion to others to try and figure out the logic behind it, but I'll comment on the idea of "imperfect anagrams" which someone else correctly observed was "too Bible code" for them.

Carlo writes: my background "forbids" me to make a distinction between "regular anagrams" and "imperfect anagrams", defined e.g. by allowing to change (add or substitute or eliminate) one or more letters. The rule is the rule

Well, in my view rules need to make sense, so lets apply Carlos rule of imperfect anagrams to the nine letters of S.W. Erdnase and see what sort of "imperfect anagram" we can find.

Carlos rule states we may change, add, substitute or eliminate one or more letters, so if we keep the S and change the W for an L, change the ERD for CLE, change a few more letters and move a couple of others around we end up with nine letters that spell S.L. Clemens or Mark Twain, who some suspected to writing the Expert in the first place.

Carlo Morpurgo wrote: Believe me, I got your point. What you are saying is obvious. I could tell you that you that even perfect anagrams will generate many more names than yours, and I can reiterate that the rules of permuting letters as opposed to choosing a subgroup and
permuting those, or even changing one letter and then permuting, are all arbitrary. You prefer perfect anagrams since the rule is simpler, just like you most likely prefer to the number 1 as opposed to the number 23433.39823376. I think we can continue like this forever. But I will just quote what I wrote in an earlier exchange on this topic (in this thread)

"True, even Alexander or Gardner or Dai Vernon all have "Erdna" inside them, so they can be made into Erdnase by changing a few letters and anagramming the rest. But the point is that it was a common practice to create pseudonyms by modifying a few letters of the real name <i.e. using imperfect anagrams>. This alone isn't proof of anything but if other evidence comes into place you can't ignore it. Likewise, you can't use your argument alone to disprove the documented cases of such anagrams being used by past authors."

Jeff Pierce Magic | 01/30/09 10:39 AM | link | filter

Jeff Pierce Magic wrote: I'm wondering about the origins of the Erdnase Change. It seems to be widely know that this sleight is a creation of Houdini. Richard Harch writes elsewhere:
"According to an article in The Magic Wand by Victor Farelli on the sleight, which had been shown to Farelli by Houdini, it was first published by P. T. Selbit in his Magician's Handbook in 1901, with credit to Houdini, but without Houdini's permission. Farelli also says that Houdini said Selbit's description was incorrect and taught Farelli the proper handling, which he gives in his article. Thanks to askalexander.com for making such questions relatively easy to research!"

Now if this is true then Selbits book would have had to make it's way across the pond and into the hands of magicians in the states within months of EATCT being published. In 1901 Houdini was not widely known in the states but somewhat famous in the UK. When he finally returned to the states in 1902 EATCT was already published. At the least this give credence to the idea that Erdnase did not write the magic section. Was Harto in the UK in 1901?

Jeff Pierce

Any comments on this?

Jeff

Jim Maloney | 01/30/09 11:08 AM | link | filter

Well, Selbit's book isn't necessarily the only way someone could have learned it.
Houdini was touring the US before heading to Europe in 1900. It's not entirely unlikely that he could have shown the move to others in that time frame.

A few years ago, I had written a very very basic program to run a stylometric analysis on some text I was looking into. At some point, I want to dust that off and run the two sections of Erdnase through it to see if there is any significant difference between the writing style in each.

-Jim

Jeff Pierce Magic | 01/30/09 11:23 AM | link | filter

Jim, I don't think Houdini had much success in the US before 1902. It stands to reason that Selbit, being from England, learned it directly from Houdini during his 1901 tour. EATCT came out in 1902 before Houdini returned to the states, so that would say to me that someone was in England in 1901 and learned it from Houdini or Selbit. Did this give much time for it to get back to the states for Erdnase to learn it and then include it in Expert, or did someone else write the magic section, who learned it from either of these two? I would imagine that in 1902 it took months for items to come across the pond to the states. The time frame looks weird to me, that's all. Also did I not read somewhere that Houdini came up with the move in 1901? I could be totally wrong here.

Jeff

Jim Maloney | 01/30/09 12:08 PM | link | filter

Houdini was on the Orpheum circuit -- one of the largest vaudeville circuits -- in 1900. And success or no, he was working in the US from the early 1890's, doing a card act. It's not entirely unlikely that he shared the move with others during that time period. (Depending on when he first came up with it, of course -- the 1901 date you cited may simply be because that's when Selbit's book was published.)

Nate Leipzig's reputation stretched out to England while he was still living in Detroit -- and that was when he was just hanging around backstage at the Temple Theater, before he even considered becoming a professional magician.

-Jim

Richard Hatch | 01/30/09 12:27 PM | link | filter

Houdini, successful or not in the US before leaving for England, was extremely well connected with the magic community and surely showed his move around. Which is probably why it was then used in the book that you mentioned.
fairly quickly. But Selbit's book also reached the States quickly and could well have been read by Erdnase while preparing his book. Frederick J. Drake advertised copies of Selbit's book in 1901, before they hired Bill Hilliar to plagiarize it. Since they were the first reprinters of Erdnase, it is not too much of a stretch to imagine he might have gotten the book from them - a general public source - or from any of the many magic stores carrying it. Harto was not in England at the time, in fact was touring with a Wild West show. In my opinion, it is unlikely that Harto had anything to do with Erdnase's book, though I take seriously the claim that he corresponded with the author and may have been working with him on a sequel to it.

Richard Kaufman | 01/30/09 02:18 PM | link | filter

Is the change published in one other place prior to Erdnase aside from Selbit? It might also be credited to Houdini in Gaultier (1914) but can’t recall.

Richard Hatch | 01/30/09 04:05 PM | link | filter

The change is in Gaultier, shown to him by Houdini. The earliest publication of the move might be in an expose article Houdini himself collaborated on, in THE NEW PENNY MAGAZINE, no. 120, volume X, under the title "The "New Change" Trick and How it is done". There is no text describing the move, just three photos of Houdini's hands apparently performing the change. This is reproduced on page 73 of THE WIZARD EXPOSED. Anyone know the exact date of that issue (the book says circa 1901) and the date of publication of Selbit's book (which sold out in a few weeks time, according to Selbit in the second edition of 1902. There was a third edition in 1904, so it was clearly a very successful publication)? Most of this information is from Busby's chapter in THE MAN WHO WAS ERDNASE on the provenance of the material in Erdnase, which is very interesting.

Jim Maloney | 01/30/09 04:39 PM | link | filter

Richard Hatch wrote: Anyone know the exact date of that issue (the book says circa 1901) and the date of publication of Selbit's book (which sold out in a few weeks time, according to Selbit in the second edition of 1902.

The best I can see for The New Penny Magazine is that it was a weekly magazine and the volumes were split by quarter. It started in October 1898, so volume 10 would put it about February 9th, 1901, assuming a consistent schedule.

-Jim

Eric Fry | 01/30/09 08:38 PM | link | filter
Just curious. How did Farelli’s description of the move differ from Selbit’s?

I have no reason to doubt that Houdini originated the move. It sounds like Farelli says as much. But I notice that the wording in Selbit’s "The Magician's Handbook" doesn’t quite say that Houdini originated the move. It says: “For the knowledge of the movement I am indebted to my friend Mr. Harry Houdini …" 

Richard Kaufman | 01/30/09 10:43 PM | link | filter

That would be how a credit might have been given, if one was given at all at that time.

Richard Hatch | 01/31/09 02:26 AM | link | filter

Gaultier says (in the Hugard translation published by Fleming): "We do not know whether Mr. Houdini was the inventor of this method, but it was by him that we first saw it done during one of his visits to Paris." (p. 112. Cf. p. 127 of the French edition). According to Silverman, Houdini’s first visit to Paris was in November 1901 (he went a month before his December engagement to practice his French).

David Alexander | 01/31/09 10:43 AM | link | filter

Jim Maloney wrote:

Richard Hatch wrote: Anyone know the exact date of that issue (the book says circa 1901) and the date of publication of Selbit’s book (which sold out in a few weeks time, according to Selbit in the second edition of 1902.

The best I can see for The New Penny Magazine is that it was a weekly magazine and the volumes were split by quarter. It started in October 1898, so volume 10 would put it about February 9th, 1901, assuming a consistent schedule.

-Jim

Jim,

Was The New Penny Magazine sold in the United States?

Jim Maloney | 01/31/09 11:10 AM | link | filter

The publisher, Cassel and Company, was UK based, but it appears that they did have a New York office, so it is likely that it was distributed here.
Richard Hatch | 01/31/09 01:21 PM | link | filter

It seems extremely unlikely that Erdnase would have chanced across the 3 photos in THE NEW PENNY and reconstructed the move from them. More likely that he was either shown the move, or, as Busby argues, learned it from the Selbit book.

David Alexander | 01/31/09 01:38 PM | link | filter

What is the earliest the Selbit book could have been available in the United States?

David Alexander | 01/31/09 01:41 PM | link | filter

Interesting to imagine a meeting between Houdini, then just a hard working act, and Erdnase, also an unknown, trading card moves.

Jonathan Townsend | 01/31/09 01:54 PM | link | filter

Let's add Vernon to that mix - showing around a card change he had just discovered on his own after a relative had shown him the basic card change - kids do that you know. Can we place Houdini in Canada around that year as well? Makes for a nice symmetry with the "trick that fooled Houdini". I guess that would make Houdini the author and "erdnase" the ghost writer... that works from the story/myth perspective.

Richard Hatch | 01/31/09 02:40 PM | link | filter

The September 1901 issue of Mahatma has Selbit on the cover and the story mentions he is putting "the finishing touches" on his Handbook. It is advertised in the January 1902 issue from the Mahatma offices (curiously, the advertisement states: "Original European Edition - Not a reprint") for $1.00. We know from the copyright application that the Expert was at the printer by mid-February 1902, so that does seem to be a very small "window" for the author to have been influenced by Selbit's book, unless this section was hastily added at the last moment, as some have argued. Any earlier notices of availability of the book in the States?

Jeff Pierce Magic | 01/31/09 03:00 PM | link | filter

Good catch Richard, that's what I figured although I had no concret info. I think we need to figure out when Houdini came up with the move.

Jeff
Expert was being typeset in mid-December, 1901 or shortly thereafter. From the narrow window of opportunity it seems more likely that Erdnase learned it either directly from Houdini or from someone Houdini taught.

Was it part of Houdini's card act?

Another consideration is that Houdini could have had the move for years and only showed it to people backstage or at social gatherings or when meeting amateurs, but a clever fellow like Erdnase could have watched Houdini (or a student) do the effect several times, gone home and worked it out himself. The history of magic has plenty of instances like that.

And on Jon's insertion of the Vernon into the mix...he was SEVEN, Jon!

On page 216 of The Man Who Was Erdnase, the last paragraph of the first transformation it states that Houdini knew Harte at least 6 years before Expert was published. This gives erdnase more than enough time to have learned it from HArte for inclusion in the book.

Jeff, it's been a while since I read the book. Is there a source cited for this or is it another of Busby's unsupported claims?

Thanks.

David, he cited the paperback version only of Houdini: The Untold Story page 313-314 which includes a letter from Houdini to Harte from 1923.

Thanks, Jeff.
I don’t think there’s a description of Houdini’s card act in any of the biographies. My guess is it was a manipulative act of fancy cuts, shuffles, and back palming. Conceivably, color changes would fit that mode.

The well-known poster from the mid-1890s as the king of cards shows him doing ribbon spreads on his arms and one-handed shuffles. There’s a photo of him making those shuffles. Then there’s that film of him later in life doing a ribbon spread on his arm and back palming a fan of cards, which makes me think that might have been part of his early act.

Then there’s his bombastic claim, in the introduction to the book about Elliott, that he and Elliott were on a par with each other as manipulators and that Houdini was one of pioneers of the back palm.

"At Kohl and Middleton (dime museum) on a Christmas and New Year I gave forty-four shows ... each performance lasting only 10 minutes. I am referring to this as a fact not generally known, and because for years I took a pack of cards in my hands at 10 o’clock in the morning, and until 10 o’clock at night they were constantly being mixed, shuffled and manipulated, and that is how the back and front palming, now known all over the world, was introduced to popularity."

There are early newspaper articles describing him as a card manipulator or sleight of hand artist. From 1899: "There is nothing that Mr. Houdini cannot do with the cards; he would like to have a game with Poker Davis while he is here ... and from what I saw of the performer's cleverness yesterday I will promise 'Poker' that he will see bigger hands and more of them than he could ever dreamed could come together in one evening."

The problem with assessing whether Houdini created a color change is that he was a chronic liar. But he was an intelligent man with a genuine interest in all facets of magic, and he was inventive in his specialties of escape and publicity, so it’s not impossible that he invented a card move. I can’t see how we can ever know the truth about it.
"Houdini says there are only 20 of these in existence, and they cost $175 each." [Ft. Wayne News, 8/2/1899 p. 7]

And from the Portsmouth [NH] Herald, 9/20/1899, p. 5:
"One of Houdini’s favorite tricks for the edification of newspaper men is an expose of the three-card monte game... The regulation crimp in the corner is there."

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 02/02/09 09:47 AM | [link] | [filter]

A quick sidebar about Houdini. He made comment about learning the cups and balls ... has there been any findings on his cups and balls work?

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**David Alexander** | 02/02/09 09:56 AM | [link] | [filter]

According to measuringworth.com, a site run by economists that claims to produce relative values for historical monies, $175 in 1899 is as follows:

- $4,686.32 using the Consumer Price Index
- $4,010.28 using the GDP deflator using the value of consumer bundle *
- $0.00 using the unskilled wage
- $0.00 using the nominal GDP per capita
- $128,123.53 using the relative share of GDP

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**D21400** | 02/12/09 04:01 PM | [link] | [filter]

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* You'll find a sharp division in our field over whether some of the moves in Erdnase have any value or not. I have seen the best in the world do the SWE Shift, and not a single person has ever performed it where it was deceptive to me. Where, in other words, I didn't SEE, actually see, that a pass occurred. Why waste time studying sleights that you'll never use? No one really has enough time to study the sleights you WILL use in the depth they should be studied and practiced.

I might add that I'm pleased to have Jason England on this Forum. I had the pleasure of spending a few minutes with him at the Magic Castle last November (December?) and he did some very fine work. One thing in particular stands out, which you'll all get to see if the original credit sequence in the movie "Shade" is retained.

The move is so rare that when you use it on the card table. No one whould see it. in a Casual situation with some talking and laughing no one whould even think about it (if
Richard Kaufman | 02/12/09 05:16 PM | link | filter

D21400, why in the world would anyone hold a deck in that position in his left hand?

Dustin Stinett | 02/12/09 06:38 PM | link | filter

I'm with Richard on this one. There are a load of more natural shifts that can be used in a "casual situation" when no one will "think about it."

Dustin

John Bodine | 02/20/09 05:06 PM | link | filter

Although there are other shifts that might be more natural in their handling, i think it's very important to study how one might get into and out of position for each of the shifts described in the book. The author did not always go into detail about when a particular shift might be more effective.

In the case of the SWE shift, it's not too difficult to see that if a player to your right cut the cards, you replace the bottom half onto the top half stepped just off the right short side, slide the deck towards the edge of the table to assist lifting it from the table, perform the shift the moment the deck leaves the table and is received by your left hand.

This handling is natural, allows the shift to be done with some concealment from the table edge, and is not in any way an odd position to hold the deck at that moment.

Not saying this is how it's best used or best timed, only that there are natural ways to achieve the required position.

Also note that the S.W.E. shift is in the Legerdemain section and as such, was probably dismissed by the author for use at the card table.

-johnbodine

Tortuga | 02/21/09 12:53 PM | link | filter

John, you bring up an excellent point. Nobody would hold the deck that way, for very long at least. In the context in which you describe the mechanics it makes perfect sense to me. The packets are picked up, quickly readjusted while making the move, and then placed into dealing grip as per normal. To me the brevity of the hold on the
cards would outweigh any unnatural grip. Success would also be dictated by the casualness of the operator, the timing, etc.

**Frank Stickley** | 02/22/09 11:18 AM | [link] | [filter]

You might speculate that this grip was dismissed by Erdnase, and maybe it was - but the reality is that there are openings right now in games where folks are allowed to complete the cut and square the cards side on, above the table. There are scufflers working right now who lift and square and in the same action bring in a cooler. So don’t dismiss it because you “think” Erdnase thought something he never wrote.

There’s way too much creative speculation in magic by people who don’t seem to play cards outside of their bedrooms.

Frank Stickley, Jnr.

**flynn** | 02/22/09 02:07 PM | [link] | [filter]

I wonder if most card cheats motives are not the money but rather just the thrill of getting away with advantage play.

**Jonathan Townsend** | 02/22/09 10:01 PM | [link] | [filter]

_flynn wrote:_ I wonder if most card cheats motives are not the money but rather just the thrill of getting away with advantage play.

Probably worth interviewing some of the actual advantage players to see which is more important to them. Perhaps can get some background research if you check with those to treat gambling addiction and thrill seeking behaviors.

**David Alexander** | 02/23/09 01:42 AM | [link] | [filter]

I suspect you’ll find a range of motives from simple greed and the desire to get "one up" on someone to more complex motives that involve varying degrees of sociopathology.

**flynn** | 02/23/09 05:12 AM | [link] | [filter]

It’s gonna take some time looking for card cheats among the gambling addicts that play cards. I’m gonna look into this though. I’ve always wondered about that and I think Erdnases touched on it I’m gonna have a look around to see where I read that.
Frank Stickley wrote:
There's way too much creative speculation in magic by people who don't seem to play cards outside of their bedrooms.

Frank Stickley, Jnr.

And indeed, this is why it is practically irrelevant having people like Mr Stinnett reviewing such things as the James and Ackerman DVDs.

Frank Stickley | 02/23/09 05:03 PM | link | filter

Don't involve me in your politics.

Magic Fred | 02/23/09 06:44 PM | link | filter

Nothing to do with politics. I've already refuted Mr Stinnett's review of the James set point by point based only on facts.

Pete McCabe | 02/23/09 07:17 PM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote: Let's add Vernon to that mix - showing around a card change he had just discovered on his own after a relative had shown him the basic card change - kids do that you know. Can we place Houdini in Canada around that year as well? Makes for a nice symmetry with the "trick that fooled Houdini". I guess that would make Houdini the author and "erdnase" the ghost writer... that works from the story/myth perspective.

Maybe Vernon was the real author. This would explain why he always said the book was so great.

Jonathan Townsend | 02/23/09 08:26 PM | link | filter

I sincerely doubt he could have written the "erdnase" text, even if a prodigy, at the age four or five at the time. Though perhaps if he mentally aged in reverse ala Ben Button...

magicam | 02/26/09 11:29 PM | link | filter

This seems like such an obvious question, so it must be asked with advance apologies and head hung low if it has already been addressed here (I've been away from the Forum for so long and do not have time at present to reread this thread).

Why would Erdnase publish both advantage play and magic sections?
One obvious answer would be that the author wanted to appeal to two distinct markets to increase sales; but for those who harbor doubts that profit motivated publication, doesn't this answer seem unsatisfactory?

I do recall some discussion here on the question of Erdnase's involvement with magic. On that question, one can at least safely conjecture that the author was very familiar with some of magic's literature and culture (e.g., in that era, would the casual or neophyte magician have known about Charlier?).

Perhaps Erdnase suggests the answer to this question in his book?

Apologies again if this is a rehash issue.

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**David Alexander** | 02/27/09 12:18 AM | link | filter

Simple enough - It was cover for an instruction book on gambling sleights.

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**Tortuga** | 02/28/09 12:03 PM | link | filter

A couple of thoughts. First, Magicam raises an interesting point. Whomever wrote up the 'Charlies' pass (misspelled in the book—should have been Charlier pass) in EATCT was probably well versed in magic. Worth exploring in regards to whether Erdnase was a magician, a magician/gambler or a gambler that had a magician write the entire book or the magic section of it. Interesting stuff to ponder.

Second, I can (unfortunately) comment a little on cheating at the card table. Limited as my experience is, mostly playing against family and close friends, I can vouch for the rush that one gets when "getting away with it."

The easiest games that I found to move in were blackjack and a game we played called 13-33. Blackjack you all are familiar with and it is obvious that a top card peek and a second deal would give tremendous advantages there.

13-33 is a little more unusual and involves each player receiving two hole cards and one up card. The player, during the game must try to get as close to 13 points or 33 points as possible in order to win. Some call it going for high and going for low. You can determine whether to go for high or low on the first deal (i.e. 3 cards) and change later on and take more cards. By the way, picture cards are all worth 1/2 point. Everything else is worth face value. What I would do is when it came time to decide whether to take a card or not, bubble peek the top card. Simple enough and most people were still counting up their cards from the previous deal. Actually, I'd do it the second I laid the previous player's card onto the table while all eyes were on that card, not my left hand.
Once knowing the value of the card, I’d either hit, stand pat, or if it was late in the game deal a second and take my chances. If all of the players before the dealer deny a hit, the dealer has one last chance to take a card. It is assumed that the other players are pat and the dealer then must decide to hit or stay pat. If you were waiting for others to bust, and weren’t that close to 13 or 33, you might have to take that last card. My skills at that time limited me to taking the top or second card, I didn’t deal bottoms. Sometimes I’d peek a bust card and deal a second and bust anyway. That’s how it goes. Most of the time I’d win at least half the pot. If one player goes for low and one for high and both are closest, they split. Otherwise, you can have two players tie going for 13 or 33 and also split. I’ve even seen a three-way split, two tied for low and one winning high. Sorry to ramble on, I’ll get to the emotional part now.

For me it wasn’t just about the money but it was about the money. I was as greedy as the next man. The greater thrill was in getting away with it. It made me feel superior, smarter than the rest. I had some control, control that eluded them. It is an adrenaline rush that the brain conjures up whenever you do something that you recognize is wrong. The rush creates a heightened sense of awareness. I swear that when I moved in the game it allowed me to see better, hear better and generally focus better. Maybe some of you know what I’m talking about.

Bottom line? Erdnase’s quote about gamblers ”making the hazard” rings true with me. He didn’t delve deep into the thrill of cheating he probably knew all too well, but he described the euphoria that some feel when simply making the bet. If you think about it, moving in a live game is itself a gamble. Get caught and you could be banished from the table or much, much worse. That’s part of why I felt the rush. Merely getting away with it.

Jonathan Townsend 02/28/09 12:48 PM | link | filter

David Alexander wrote: Simple enough - It was cover for an instruction book on gambling sleights.

Um... IMHO no.

Cover would have the sleight descriptions and casual mention of their use in gaming tucked away inside discussions of card tricks.

David Alexander 02/28/09 02:18 PM | link | filter

That may be how you would have done it, Jon, not Erdnase. The cover held until the 1930s when a sheriff confiscated copies and the printing plates because he recognized exactly what it was.
David Alexander wrote: That may be how you would have done it, Jon, not Erdnase. ...

"erdnase"

Just because an easy answer is dangled like a carrot does not in any way require intelligent people to act like either end of a horse. BTW the author of "The Modern Prometheus" was not Anonymous.

We do seem to have a pattern in our culture of folks claiming to read the minds of nonexistent persons.

Those with classical education and a familiarity with the literature of the time are welcome to discuss how issues and data were published in ways that evaded direct retaliation and rejection at the time. Roman a clef was one technique. The conceit was another. I am sorry that the minders of that time adjudged the matter of the book, its author and content were not worthy of attention. I’m sure they had their reasons. That may well be a more useful matter of inquiry at this time - say in memory of J.M.Basquiet or perhaps J.N.Hofzinser.

Ah, Jon...mildly insulting, generally oblique, intellectually pretentious, and just barely on topic all at the same time. My congratulations.

magicam wrote: ... Why would Erdnase publish both advantage play and magic sections? ...

David Alexander wrote: Simple enough - It was cover for an instruction book on gambling sleights.

David has spent much time exploring the subject of EACT and its authorship, so of course his response deserves consideration. But for the sake of discussion and to play the devil's advocate, I'd like to echo the essence of Jonathan's response and expand a bit on the issue.

Reading between the lines, I think Jonathan was suggesting that, if the magic section was intended to act as cover for the little treatise on gambling sleights, there were better ways to do that. But at this point, perhaps it is worthwhile to distinguish between cover as pure camouflage and cover as misdirection of authorial intent and/or the book's highest and best use. In the former (as camouflage), the idea is to disguise the fact that the book has any cheating instruction at all; in the latter, the idea is...
dilute, in the eyes of the casual observer (which would include lawmen) the importance of the book as a guide to cheating (e.g., by making it appear as a mish-mash of sleight of hand moves in the gambling and magic worlds).

If Erdnases intent was to camouflage the content of the book, among other things he could have titled it differently and could have buried the gambling portion at the back of the book (i.e., the legerdemain section could have started the book). And, as Jonathan suggests, the author could have characterized and structured the gambling moves as tricks, etc. And these strategies would also seem apply to the latter distinction of "diluting" the books real character and utility.

Which brings us to another question, which some may find irrelevant (or to which the answer is obvious): was this an instruction manual on how to cheat at cards or a magic book? The title and preface of the book, and perhaps the fact that the gambling section gets front billing and constitutes more than half of the text, suggest the former.

I do not find friend Davids answer to be wholly satisfying, if only because, if that was Erdnases intent, his attempt at providing cover seems poorly executed, and most who have studied Erdnase give him high marks for intelligence and education. Was this really the best he could do to provide such cover? On the other hand, perhaps Davids answer is, in essence, correct, and the manner in which Erdnase provided such cover is more a reflection on the degree to which he cared about the adequacy of the cover in other words, maybe he really didnt care if the true nature of the book was obvious or discernable.

But if Erdnase didnt perceive much of a need to provide real cover, then we return back to the original question: why did he include the magic section in the book?

Here, Ill conclude by asking our members who are knowledgeable about both sleight-of-hand card magic and the literature thereof: did the conjuring section of EACT represent a meaningful contribution to the literature at the time, or was its content more of a throwaway nature? I think the answer to that question may be relevant.

I believe the answer to the question of why the magic section was included in EACT may have significance, perhaps not as any sort of smoking gun, but at least as a clue to the identity of the author.

Bill Mullins | 03/02/09 01:22 AM | link | filter

What if the author was a guy who was interested in sleight of hand with cards, and had something to say about the subject in the two major subfields: gambling and magic.

Sometimes, it's easy to overanalyze. This may be one of them. He wrote a book, and when he got finished, it had two big parts. Since he self-published, he didn't have an
editor who told him that if he confined himself to either magic or gambling, readers a
century later wouldn’t obsess over why he wasn’t as focussed as he could be.

He’s certainly not the only author who was interested in both fields (Darwin Ortiz, for
example, or Simon Lovell, or R. Paul Wilson).

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**magicam** | 03/02/09 05:57 AM | [link] | [filter]

What if the author was a guy who was interested in sleight of hand with
cards, and had something to say about the subject in the two major
subfields: gambling and magic. ... 

If that proved to be true, then we’d know more about Erdnase, right? ;)

He’s certainly not the only author who was interested in both fields
(Darwin Ortiz, for example, or Simon Lovell, or R. Paul Wilson).

But he may be the only _anonymous_ author with such interests who is widely revered by
the inner circles of magic.

The context of my recent posts relates to the search for Erdnase’s real name.

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**Tortuga** | 03/02/09 11:53 AM | [link] | [filter]

Since his identity is still debatable and over a century has passed, we can all enjoy the
right to speculate. That is what is so interesting about this pursuit, the chase. The
chase for the identity of Erdnase involves sleuthing, digging through recorded history
and surely involves speculation. Nothing wrong with speculation. One never knows
when thinking outside of the box will lead to a hot trail. I fault none in this thread for
their thoughts, speculation or assumptions. It is all of interest and since nobody knows
the real truth it all merits consideration. Preconceived notions are no more worthy
than half-baked assumptions in my book.

The real tragedy will come if and when the mystery is solved. What then do we
ponder?

A few thoughts. The author, assuming that both sections were in fact written by the
same person, knew much of gambling and magic. He knew of the similarities and the
differences. It seems as though the gambling section was written first, but he may
have written them concurrently. The gambling section is larger. Does that mean it is
more important to the author? After all, it does come first. One thing is certain, the
author loved his craft. He believed that it was an artform, worthy of intense study. He
did not belittle magicians, simply pointed out that they can 'get away' with
mannerisms that the gambler could not.
One thing has struck me as I’ve read the book and read this thread that I find particularly interesting. The fact that someone of this man’s obvious prowess would chose to remain anonymous. Now perhaps he was hoping that someone would figure out his identity and then he could make a grand entrance and perhaps sell even more books. Talk about a marketing coup. But I think the author was content to put the information on the record and remain in the shadows.

My understanding is that the book was advertised in magical publications. Gamblers back then didn’t have their own journals like they do today with the various poker magazines, websites and such. Did the author count on word of mouth to get the book circulated? Would the section on magic be intriguing enough for the magicians of the day to plunk down their cash? Some have commented already in this thread about the poorly written advertisements. Is it any wonder it didn’t sell initially?

The chase goes on.....

T Baxter | 03/02/09 06:31 PM | link | filter

Perhaps he was just trying to sell more books?

While many readers of EATCT would no doubt enjoy experiencing the gambling world vicareously through the book, how many would ever take what they learned into an actual card game and try cheating?

Perhaps, knowing this, the author included the magic section so as to at least give readers the opportunity to actually use some of the things they learned from the book.

T. Baxter

Jonathan Townsend | 03/02/09 06:52 PM | link | filter

Consider for a moment that the line about “needing the money” describes the intent driving the writing and the selling of the book... does that jibe with ad copy for the book and its publicity? How about the tone of the work? Or the organization of its contents? Who was the intended market?

Richard Hatch | 03/10/09 12:33 AM | link | filter

The following is from Jeff McBride’s latest Museletter:

During the Flasoma Convention 2009 in Peru, Tamariz explained his reasons for thinking that the S. W. Erdnase material was actually written by L’Homme Masque. L’Homme Masque was a Peruvian magician who lived at the same time as Erdnase. Dai Vernon considered him to be one of
his idols. Gaetan Bloom shares Juan’s assumption. Juan and Gaetan held a lecture and discussion speculating that there is enough evidence pointing in the direction of L’Homme Masque as the author. I am sure that Juan will share further research at upcoming events.

As I see it, here are a few of the pros:
1. Had experience hiding his identity
2. Was an expert at sleight of hand
3. Was a compulsive gambler

And here are a few of the cons:
1. Was not an American national (as specified on the copyright application and strongly implied by the idiom of the book)
2. No evidence he was ever in North America (I’m working from memory here, so could be wrong). I believe that at the time the book was published he was based in France and actively performing in Europe.
3. He was a close friend of T. Nelson Downs, who would likely have known had he written the book and would likely have told others
4. Does not bear any resemblance to the man described as the author by illustrator Marshall Smith (L’Homme Masque was a large man, with beard, and heavily accented English. Smith described a small, clean shaven man without an accent)

But I have not heard the arguments of Sr. Tamariz and M. Bloom, so am eager to learn more!

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**Larry Horowitz | 03/10/09 01:23 AM | link | filter**

Richard,
As we discussed, the writing by Erdnase is very good. Too good to be that of a non-native speaker. Even a translation from another language would not give us as many beautifully turned phrases.

Neither Juan nor Gaeton are English speakers by birth. The quality of the writing may not register upon them.

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**Jonathan Townsend | 03/10/09 08:30 AM | link | filter**

The idea of someone writing that text as a foreign language piece strikes me as odd. The nuances from the polyglot English and the auditory aspect of the French just did not make it over together in the few translated works I have explored IMHO. Now perhaps there once was such a tradition of accurate translation. My feeling, perhaps tainted by the Sharpe/Fisher treatment of Hofzinser's Card Conjuring and also Ponsin’s The Latest Magic Revealed is that such is unlikely. Maybe the current translation of Dante's Inferno will make a case for such being possible?
I’d like to know more about the argument from its grounding in the material discussed and its context.

**David Alexander** | 03/10/09 08:49 AM | link | filter

*Richard Hatch wrote:* The following is from Jeff McBride’s latest Museletter:

During the Flasoma Convention 2009 in Peru, Tamariz explained his reasons for thinking that the S. W. Erdnase material was actually written by L’Homme Masque. L’Homme Masque was a Peruvian magician who lived at the same time as Erdnase. Dai Vernon considered him to be one of his idols. Gaetan Bloom shares Juan’s assumption. Juan and Gaetan held a lecture and discussion speculating that there is enough evidence pointing in the direction of L’Homme Masque as the author. I am sure that Juan will share further research at upcoming events.

Is it a coincidence that at a Peruvian convention two guys who haven’t thought this through speculate that Erdnase was Peruvian? Sounds like pandering to one’s hosts.

This is nonsense on so many levels.

**Jonathan Townsend** | 03/10/09 09:59 AM | link | filter

David, wait till the first big card guys meeting in China. :D

**Tortuga** | 03/10/09 10:53 AM | link | filter

Another reason to put into the Con column in Mr. Hatch’s post above:

How on earth would a reference to a “colored club room attendant”, make it into a book if the author had never set foot in the U.S.? The grammar attributed to the aforementioned attendant was obviously a southern dialect. Of that I am ”suah”.

**D21400** | 05/11/09 04:31 PM | link | filter

As said before it’s a move designed for not gambling moments. With the proper misdirection you wouldn't eve noticed i held the cards like that.

And for most laymen they just don't know how (and care) how you hold the cards . They are just waiting for the big ending. every pass needs misdirection. Not?
Leonard Hevia | 05/11/09 08:26 PM | link | filter

I recently re-read David Alexander’s Erdnase essay from the January 2001 issue of *Genii*. Near the end of the article, he mentions that it’s an interim report with more information pending. He particularly notes that there is almost ten years worth of diary entries from W.E. Sanders that he hadn’t followed up on.

After roughly eight years, has Mr. Alexander had the chance to read more of the diaries? I understand that the diaries cannot leave Montana and are too fragile to be Xeroxed. W.E. Sanders certainly fits the profile. The idea that Erdnase left the E.S. Andrews clue to trip up those on his trail is a compelling one.

David Alexander | 05/11/09 09:32 PM | link | filter

Leo,

I’ve come up with other things that I think give credence to Wilbur Edgerton Sanders as Erdnase, some of which I’ve detailed in this long and winding thread, not the least being the reason why he was not part of amateur magic at the time.

Work and other factors have prevented me from traveling to Montana to read the rest of Sanders’ diaries. Also, digging into the archives at Columbia might produce results..."Erd nase" being German for "earth nose," perhaps a play on words for mining engineers who were studying German? There may be a mention of a small group of students who called themselves that back in the 1880s.

In my research for the Roddenberry bio I learned that he was president of a long-extinct service club at LACC - the Archons - a name he resurrected in the first year of the original series episodes: The Return of the Archons. The only evidence left was a single membership certificate in Gene’s archives.

Some times its just that slender a thread that proves the case. In other situations it is a preponderance of circumstantial evidence that is unlikely to be a long string of coincidences.

Leonard Hevia | 05/12/09 07:56 PM | link | filter

Thanks for the updates David. I figured you were too busy these days to travel all the way to Montana to finish up on those diaries. I find it interesting to learn you wrote somewhere on this thread that Sanders stayed out of the magic scene for a reason. That only makes it tougher to find the smoking gun.

I’m in the process of slowly printing out this thread on hard paper. I’m roughly a quarter of the way through, and it’s not cheap. This thread is up to 96 pages, and each web page equals about four to five sheets of copy paper printed on one side.
BTW--the Alexander article is in the January 2000 issue--not 2001.

David Alexander | 05/13/09 12:13 AM | link | filter

Sanders suffered from tinnitus probably caused by exposure to loud sounds in the mines he managed, although there are probably other causes for the condition. Regardless, he was becoming progressively deaf in later life.

I found his step-grandson a while back who remembered visiting him in the early 1930s at a mine he was working in Northern California. The step-grandson was 8 or 9 at the time and remembers having to shout for Sanders to hear him.

Then there was his conversion to Christian Science and a late-in-life marriage to a Christian Science practitioner which would have almost certainly caused him to abandon playing cards, especially anything associated with gambling.

Leonard Hevia | 05/13/09 08:03 PM | link | filter

And what of the Jay Marshall anecdote that Hugh Johnston told him he met Erdnase. It supposedly happened after Johnston’s performance around 1905 at the Empress Theater in Denver, Colorado. Del Adelphia brought Erdnase backstage to meet him.

Is it possible that a photo might exist of Adelphia with Erdnase? Perhaps Adelphia mentioned meeting Erdnase in a letter or diary entry. I don’t see anything to lose in pursuing this sliver of a trail. At best we might confirm Erdnase’s identity, and at the very least we’ll learn more about Mr. Adelphia’s life.

I learned of the Jay Marshall story from Todd Karr and Richard Hatch’s research.

David Alexander | 05/14/09 12:23 AM | link | filter

Leo,

Magicians are often [censored] artists, so who knows what was going on in that instance? or if it really happened and Johnston was just telling Jay a story? Was Hugh lying? Was Del Adelphia having a laugh at Johnstons expense with a fake Erdnase? What sort of bona fides did Erdnase present to Johnston or was it just Del Adelphias word?

To me, this sort of story has little to no value for a variety of reasons. I’ve heard it before and had no interest in following it up as there are too many unanswerable questions.
members of Our Gang, and at least a couple of people who claimed to have been inside the monkey suit in the original King Kong. All baloney.

In modern times there have been a number of men claiming to be Medal of Honor winners. One news account I read stated that there were more men claiming to be Medal of Honor winners than actual recipients. If they get caught it will be expensive as the maximum fine is $100,000 plus the embarrassment of being shown to be a liar. Back in the mid-1990 they caught an Illinois judge claiming to be a double MOH recipient. You'd think a judge would know better. He had to resign.

Jonathan Townsend | 05/14/09 11:52 AM | link | filter

David Alexander wrote: Magicians are often [censored] artists, so who knows what was going on in that instance....

Hold onto those words. Hold them tight.

Bill Mullins | 06/04/09 05:02 PM | link | filter

Of passing interest:

*Buffalo Morning Express*, June 14, 1905, p. [??-- illegible in microfilm/scan]
"After his Debtor

A petition in involuntary bankruptcy was filed against Fred W. Grislock of Penn Yan by Edwin S. Andrews yesterday. Andrews claimed Grislock had transferred property with intent to [?? illegible]. He asserts that Grislock owes him $11,288.14."

Jeffs | 06/30/09 01:05 AM | link | filter

I would like to begin by thanking all those who have contributed to this thread, particularly Mr. Alexander, Mr. Hatch, and Mr. Kaufman. Reading this full thread over the past several weeks I was awed at the amount of work and ingenuity that has gone into this search. I have several thoughts that I want to research more before I post them but I do have a quick comment today. Please forgive me if they are covered in TMWWE or The Gardner-Smith Correspondence as I do not yet own them. I do plan to purchase copies of Mr. Alexander's and Mr. Hatch's magazine articles though, as soon as fund allow.

When Marshall Smith was interviewed was he asked if Erdnase was wearing a wedding ring when he met him? Since there is no ring in the illustrations he was either not wearing it when they were created or asked Smith to disregard it. Since this is not mentioned here I assume that it is either unknown or has been dismissed as a clue but I thought it was worth asking as this would possibly provide a piece of evidence...
about the man.

As an aside to Mr. Kaufman, please tell me this thread is backed up or in ten years people will be selling bound copies of this thread on EBay, or whatever has taken the place of EBay. There is so much information here that it would be a shame to lose it.

Thanks,

Jeff

Roger M. | 06/30/09 03:41 PM | link | filter

I would postulate that this is one of the most "backed up" threads in magic, and perhaps the internet in general, regardless of vertical subject matter. I personally have about 8 different iterations of it in time, spread over a few different hard drives. Considering its importance to the study of Erdnase himself, I'd guess that between the Genii crew and regular readers of this thread, it's as safe as it could be, and likely sitting on at least a few dozen hard drives for posterity :)

I don't recall any comments about a wedding ring in the Gardner/Smith Correspondence, which is not to say that it wasn't ever brought up elsewhere. For the period of time after he was "re-discovered" by Gardner, Smith spoke to many magicians at conventions and elsewhere.

Interesting angle though Jeff, and similar to the one Gardner followed when he found Smith. When you are pressed for luck in finding the man (Erdnase), look for people around him that he would have been close to, and especially people who he would have been extremely close to.

Sebastien L. | 07/01/09 06:36 AM | link | filter

JeffS wrote: As an aside to Mr. Kaufman, please tell me this thread is backed up or in ten years people will be selling bound copies of this thread on EBay, or whatever has taken the place of EBay. There is so much information here that it would be a shame to lose it.

This thread was actually the reason I started looking into how to restore the anonymous posts to their rightful owners. We're not quite there yet but it's quite a bit better than it was.

Richard Kaufman | 07/01/09 01:25 PM | link | filter

Everything is now backed up.
Sebastien & Mr. Kaufman,
I am glad to know that this is all backed up so it will not be lost.

Roger M,

Thanks for the info about Smith speaking at conventions.

Along that line does anyone have any info about which conventions or magic meetings that Marshall D. Smith spoke at. From what I understand he was found by Gardner in 1946 and died in 1973 so there was quite a bit of time for him to speak to groups of magicians. Does anybody out there have copies of programs or notes/letters that describe Smith's appearances? The general idea is to establish a timeline of appearances and possibly uncover an offhand remark made by Smith that may offer a clue to Erdnase's identity. I know it may be a remote possibility but it seems worth it to gather as much information as possible along this line in case something has been missed. I will also put a note in the Magic History section to see if any of the collectors out there have anything along this line.

Thanks,
Jeff

Richard Hatch | 07/07/09 08:42 AM | link | filter

To the best of my knowledge, the only convention appearance by Marshall Smith was the 1947 SAM Convention in Chicago that May. The program includes a photo of Smith circa 1902, one of his paintings, and an article by Martin Gardner, The Mystery of Erdnase (reprinted in Darwin Ortiz's THE ANNOTATED ERDNASE). At this convention he signed copies of Erdnase and several photos of him at the convention, with Vernon, Gardner, and Paul Rosini (looking very hung over), have been published. In the Gardner-Smith correspondence, his attendance at one other Chicago magic event is mentioned.

Bill Mullins | 07/09/09 06:58 PM | link | filter

If this info has ever been brought to light before, I don't recall. But forgive me if this is old news.

The 1880 and 1900 Census has been indexed by two subscription Genealogical websites: HeritageQuest.com, and Ancestry.com. 1890 records are not available (national records were lost in a fire, and no one has pulled together local copies).

The 1880 census shows:
Anne E Andrews (age 36), female
Annie C (age 14), female, daughter
Alvin E (age 12), male, son
Rosella E (age 10), female, daughter
and Milton W (age 7), male, son

All living at #49, Widows Home, Market St., Hartford, CT. Anne is listed as having the occupation of dressmaker. Anne, Annie, and Alvin were all born in NY, and Rosella and Milton were born in CT.

I believe this is the listing for Milton Franklin Andrews, and his family. "Milton W" may be a typo, or he may have changed his name in later years. In several of the newspaper articles about his death, it is mentioned that he had still living a brother named Alvin E Andrews (once I saw it as "Alvine"), which is persuasive to me. The info above would imply a birth date of about 1873, making him 29 or so when EACT was published.

So far, I haven't been able to find M. F. Andrews in the 1900 census.

There is a 1923 passport application for Rosella Marion Andrews, of Holyoke MA, which lists as her father Milton Franklin Andrews, deceased.

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Richard Hatch | 07/09/09 07:04 PM | link | filter

Hi Bill. That is him. What was intriguing to me when I accessed the records on microfilm a few years ago (before it was available online) was that his mother was not then listed as a widow, but her husband was not present.
Another surprising thing is that in the 1900 Census Milton Franklin is a resident of New York City, listing his profession as a commercial traveler (this was first discovered by Bill Kalush several years ago).
Unlike the account given in the Busby/Whaley book, MFA's father does not seem to have been a successful middle class patent holder, but a tradesman at the local gun factory. He seems to be absent by the 1880 census, and Hartford directories don't list him either after that, as I recall...

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Bill Mullins | 07/09/09 07:30 PM | link | filter

Geer's 1892 Directory for Hartford, Ct lists

Anne E (wid) and Alvin as living at 13 Benton, Hartford, and in a separate listing, Milton F Andrews, machinist at 9 Sig. (probably Sigourney -- a 1900 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows there being a Sigourney Tool Company, with a machine shop there). and also living at 13 Benton. The site of the machine shop now appears to be...
where I-84 crosses over the NW intersection of Capitol and Sigourney in Hartford.

Richard Hatch wrote: To the best of my knowledge, the only convention appearance by Marshall Smith was the 1947 SAM Convention in Chicago that May. The program includes a photo of Smith circa 1902, one of his paintings, and an article by Martin Gardner, The Mystery of Erdnase (reprinted in Darwin Ortiz’s THE ANNOTATED ERDNASE). At this convention he signed copies of Erdnase and several photos of him at the convention, with Vernon, Gardner, and Paul Rosini (looking very hung over), have been published. In the Gardner-Smith correspondence, his attendance at one other Chicago magic event is mentioned.

Richard,
Thanks for the info. Did Marshall Smith speak or was he just in attendance? If he spoke do notes of the talk survive? I assume that with the heavyweights in attendance that no clues were missed but I am still curious what his talk may have contained. As to the program itself are they rare or common enough to be affordable? One of my problems with researching the mystery of Erdnase is that many of the "textbooks" are rare and out of print. Also, is the photo you mention available for viewing online?

Does anyone out there know what the Chicago event that Richard mentions is?

Thanks,
Jeff

David Alexander | 07/11/09 12:27 PM | link | filter

A few points:

If the 1880 Census has "Milton W. Andrews" as 7 years old, that would make M.F.Andrews 28 when he met Marshall Smith, the illustrator, if Andrews was indeed Erdnase. Is someone suggesting that a 28-year-old who was well above 6 feet tall remained in Smith’s memory as a 5'6" 40-year-old when Smith remembered the weather of that day and what the man was wearing when he visited him in his hotel?

Then there is the un-likelihood of a 28-year-old who had to work for a living working up the repertoire that Erdnase had as well as the skills of an experienced, educated writer. (And don’t throw in Ed Marlo as a counter-example as they lived in far different times and situations.)

About Smith, it should be remembered that no one who talked to him was a skilled interviewer or even much experienced in doing historical research. We do not know how many leading questions were asked or how much the artist wanted to please his
hosts, one of whom had anointed Smith as the "Dean of Magic Illustrators." Smith did not recognize his own work at first, only recognizing his lettering. He originally thought he'd done 30 or so drawings, not 101.

Also, as I recall, at that time Martin Gardner already had the presumption that he'd found Erdnase when he interviewed Smith, with a candidate that he clung to in spite of the disparity in Gardner's thesis and Smith's memory, something Gardner pushed Smith about in his correspondence. Smith only reluctantly added an inch to Erdnase's height.

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Bill Mullins | 07/14/09 03:16 PM | link | filter

David -- I'm not advocating M.F. as Erdnase. However, he's been tied to the story for so long that he's become interesting in his own right. A "person of interest".

To me, the fact that he was working as a machinist two years before EATCT argues against him being the author. Somehow, it seems like he'd being doing something less mundane just before publishing such a work. (and I don't believe it's ever been mentioned before now that he was a machinist).

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Richard Hatch | 07/14/09 03:35 PM | link | filter

David Alexander wrote: A few points:

Also, as I recall, at that time Martin Gardner already had the presumption that he'd found Erdnase when he interviewed Smith, with a candidate that he clung to in spite of the disparity in Gardner's thesis and Smith's memory, something Gardner pushed Smith about in his correspondence. Smith only reluctantly added an inch to Erdnase's height.

Just a quick correction to my friend David's recollection above: At the time Martin Gardner first interviewed Smith in December 1946, he did not have a candidate in mind, other than recognizing the name reversal to "E. S. Andrews" as a likely clue. After fruitlessly pursuing the E. S. Andrews angle, Gardner's first candidate was a writer named JamES Andrews. Only after introducing Smith at the SAM convention in May 1947 was he led by Walter Gibson to get in touch with Edgar Pratt of Philadelphia, which several years later led him to develop the Milton Franklin Andrews theory. At that point, he came back to Smith to try to get eyewitness confirmation of the MFA theory from Smith, but only got very weak corroboration, Smith's recollection (admittedly nearly 50 years after the fact) being at odds with most of the known facts about MFA.
Correction accepted (so much to remember), but I would take exception to the characterization of "corroboration" by Smith..."weak" or not. The size differential, so ably demonstrated by Dick at the 1999 LA History Conference, should eliminate MFA from any further consideration.

What was disappointing to me was Gardner's pressure on Smith to revise his memory of Erdnase's height to conform with his own theory. Smith budged...once and upped Erdnase's height by one inch, as I recall. I think he maxed out at 5'7".

It would have been so much more productive had a trained investigator taken Smith through the task of remembering. I can only imagine what that would have produced.

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Bill Mullins wrote: David -- I'm not advocating M.F. as Erdnase. However, he's been tied to the story for so long that he's become interesting in his own right. A "person of interest".

To me, the fact that he was working as a machinist two years before EATCT argues against him being the author. Somehow, it seems like he'd being doing something less mundane just before publishing such a work. (and I don't believe it's ever been mentioned before now that he was a machinist).

Thanks for that, Bill. I find the fact that MFA was a machinst to be telling and a nice piece of research. I never thought that Erdnase could be a working man as the necessary time to develop the repertoire just wouldn't be there. And then there's Smith's recollection of the man with the "soft hands." Unlikely a machinist would have such hands.

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Actually, depending on what type of "machinist" he was, he very well could have had "soft hands".

Ed Marlo was a machinist, a tool-and-die man from what I recall. No problem with his tactile abilities!

My uncle was a tool-and-die man for Carter Carburetor in St. Louis for many years (decades). He had quite soft hands and used to get manicures regularly. His hands were his "trade" and his ability with very small tools and fine work were what made him such a talented employee. My father also worked at Carter and used to really brag
about his older brother and his "big" job at the company.

So, depending on the definition of "machinst" and just what that work entailed, MFA could have had excellent faculty with his digits.

David Alexander | 07/17/09 01:15 PM | link | filter

As Tortuga pointed out, "machinist" can have different definitions, especially for different eras.

The 40-hour-work week was not codified until the late 1930s and safety regulations were also slow in coming.

Post-World War II working conditions and those of the late 19th and early 20th Centuries were quite different.

John Bodine | 07/24/09 11:03 PM | link | filter

Curious to know how thoroughly anyone has looked for a possible candidate in Canada. I imagine that's already been checked out but thought I'd post in case...

-johnbodine

Richard Hatch | 07/25/09 01:03 AM | link | filter

One of my early "persons of interest" was Captain E. S. Andrews (1853-1935), a Canadian riverboat captain. He's a few years older than I would have liked and nothing about his life indicates either a strong gambling interest (I was thinking the riverboat might have had such activity on board...) or magic connection or travel to Chicago in 1901 or a similar writing style to Erdnase or appearance (as recalled by Marshall Smith). I gathered quite a portfolio on him before "ruling him out." But there could be others. However, the copyright application states that the author's nationality was "American" and I see no reason to doubt it. One might argue that the same application gives his name as "S. W. Erdnase," which we know to be false, but pseudonyms were permitted on the application (and not required to be identified as such) whereas I suspect an untruth about one's nationality might have jeopardized the validity of the application. As best I can tell, the only think pointing to Canada is the correctly formatted Canadian copyright statement (along with the US and British copyright statements) on the verso of the title page. Subsequent investigation indicates that only the US application was submitted, but the triple statement does tell us something about the applicant (that he, or his associates, knew something about international copyright law...).
The *Los Angeles Herald* for 10/16/1905 has an interview with William Ellis, the Australian who Milton Franklin Andrews tried to kill just before he killed himself and Nulda Petrie Olivia. Ellis says that they all (Ellis, Andrews and Olivia) travelled from Australia to the United States "about eight weeks ago" on the *Sierra*.

Ancestry.com (a subscription genealogy database) holds and indexes many immigration records. It has the passenger manifest for the *S. S. Sierra’s* voyage from Sydney Australia, to San Francisco, arriving Sept 11 1905. Two listed passengers are William Brush, age 29, and Mrs. Wm Brush, age 19. Both are listed as "tourists." William was born in the US, Mrs. Brush was originally a Canadian but had obtained residency in the US.

We know that William Brush was a pseudonym used by MF Andrews. I submit that these two passengers are Andrews and Olivia (oddly enough, I can't find Ellis listed anywhere on this voyage.)

The *Herald* article also quotes Ellis as saying that Andrews lived in Australia under the name of Clayton Hill, and that this was in fact his true name [a statement which we know to be false]. I’ve never heard this name/pseudonym in connection with MFA before. He also said that they had to leave Australia because they welched on bets at the Kensington race track.

If anyone is ever in Colorado Springs, there is an interesting piece at the Pioneer Museum there relating to Erdnase. In 1904, Bessie Bouton was killed by M F Andrews. Her body was burned and remained unidentified quite a while, but was eventually identified by her dental work (this may be the first time a body was identified in this way). The collections of the museum include her jawbone. (Her family later moved the rest of her remains to New York).

A couple of weeks or so on 60 Minutes they had a story on an eye witness account of a rape. A woman that was raped, swore she could recognize the attacker. Even went to the line up and identified the man. He went to jail.

After 12 years or so, he was released because of DNA evidence. The point: so Marshal Smith said he was a tall man etc. This was 45 years after he saw Erdnase. This lady swore she knew the attacker within a month. Smith's recognition had to be less accurate than the Lady mentioned because of the time that went by.
I also think Smith would have been more assertive and absolute if he was sure of the facts he recalled.

The 60 minutes broadcast had several experts on this topic of false identity. Many accounts of this type have put the wrong person behind bars.

I have not been in high school for more than 40 years and could not tell you how tall my best friend was.

I just don't see a candidate for Erdnase better than MFA. And how about the premise: Andrews - Erdnase. Anagrams. Maunder, Little (Petrie) etc.

And then the magic books found in MFA' trunk that was reported in the newspaper and the books a relative described in Holyoke, Ma. I find it so darn interesting.

I know that many of you Erdnase researchers refuse to even consider some of these details, however they can't be eliminated until proven false leads. Harte(o) should be re-examined as well.

Respectfully,

Dustin Stinett | 07/28/09 04:00 PM | link | filter

One thing Geno left out is that even when confronted face to face with the actual rapist, the victim was still absolutely convinced that she had originally identified the right guy; that's how certain she was of her recall. It was a fascinating case and, what's more, there were things said by the experts interviewed that we as magicians often take advantage of. Sadly, this case was not about a magic trick or the identity of a mysterious author. But Geno makes a valid point regarding 45 year-old eyewitness testimony.

Dustin

Bill Mullins | 07/28/09 06:10 PM | link | filter

To me, the biggest strike against MFA=Erdnase is the writing style. I just can't conceive that person who wrote MFA's "alibi letters" is the same person who wrote EATCT.

Tortuga | 07/28/09 06:36 PM | link | filter

Bill, I agree. That is why IF he was the "author", it was ghost-written. MFA seemed to be the opposite of suave and refined.
lose details or "misremember" something. As the police are fond of saying, don’t believe anything that you hear and only half of what you see. The point being that appearances aren’t always what they seem, and no two people "see" the same thing. Those visual memories are filed away, but not always in an unaltered state. In other words, I believe that not only time but personal experience, education and prejudice affect what is remembered. Again, to cite police as an example, they are trained to give incredibly detailed and accurate descriptions of people, places and events. Reporters have this skill as well.

Finally, what I have a hard time swallowing is the seemingly huge contradictions in M.D. Smith’s recollection. To miss by 6” to 8” is pretty bad. To not remember a thin build with a sunken chest? Is that really possible. I’d have no problem if that was the ONLY recollection that Smith had, but it didn’t even make the list apparently. Whereas he did remember soft hands, gentle manner, etc. For me it strains the bounds of credulity to believe that MFA was the man that M.D. Smith met. Unless of course the book is a collaboration and MFA was involved, but not the person who met Mr. Smith in the hotel room. I haven’t heard anyone posit that theory or possibility, unless I missed it.

Tortuga | 07/28/09 06:41 PM | link | filter

One final thing regarding memory. I once attended a large, company-wide sales meeting and the featured speaker put everyone on the spot by asking a question. He said, "I want all of you to write the answer to this question down on paper and don’t cheat by looking at your neighbors." "Write down the two colors on a traffic "Yield" sign. We all did and then he asked, "How many said black and yellow?" About 95% of the hands went up, indicating that they believed yield signs are black and yellow.

He then informed the group that they are red and white and have been for over a decade. They used to be black and yellow, but no longer.

We probably see several such signs each and every day and 95% got it wrong.

If you get the chance, try it before a group and see what happens.

Bottom line, memories are notoriously unreliable.

David Alexander | 07/28/09 07:47 PM | link | filter

Marshall Smith was able to remember the weather that particular day and the condition of the room in the hotel as well as the condition of Erdnases hands and his height. Had Erdnase been Milton Andrews an artist would have remembered his odd physicality. As it was early in his career and sufficiently unusual - a guy doing card tricks for him in a cold hotel room - his memory seems trustworthy.
And yes, the writing examples we have of Milton Andrews are far different in style, tone, and voice than that of Erdnase.

And about memory - When I was a private investigator I remember talking to a cop who’d done a child molestation investigation. The victim, a young girl, had been molested several years before but they thought they had the right guy. They handed her a photo line up of six men - all balding, in their late 40s with thinning curly hair. How they managed to find five other guys with such similar features to the suspect was amazing to me. They looked like six brothers.

She looked at the photos and pointed at each man from left to right..."that’s not him"..."that’s not him"..."that’s him." And then to the second row..."that’s not him"..."that’s not him"..."that’s not him." And then back to the guy on the upper right. "That’s him." Confession and conviction followed.

My wife is a professional portrait artist. She has done thousands of portraits over the years and like many artists has a surprisingly accurate graphic memory. A lot of her clients commission additional work, but years apart. When they identify themselves she will often describe to them what portrait she did for themfamily, pet, etc. They are always stunned and flattered that she remembers.

William Henry Brown the silhouette artist of the 19th Century could accurately cut profiles from memory of people hed cut 20 years before.

Some people have better memories than others. Years ago an intelligence officer I knew told me of working behind the Iron Curtain. He spoke the local language fluently and without accent. He was there to meet two local agents. He used a tourist hotel as cover. It was winter and they were bundled up. As they rode the elevator up to the floor where their room was they said nothing and did not remove their hats or scarves.

The next summer the agent returned to the same city and the same hotel. Riding up in the elevator the operator looked at him (he was bareheaded and was in summer clothes) and said, Oh, hello sirwelcome back. Where are your two friends?

Chills ran down his spine.

The flaw in Geno’s theory is that the woman in the case on 60 Minutes was shown a picture of a man who was nearly, but not quite, identical to the man who raped her. This incorrect image was close enough to be imprinted in her memory as the "real" rapist and the conviction of an innocent man followed.

This was not the case with Smith and Erdnase. He described what he remembered and as far as we can determine from the things we can verify as accurate (the date of the
The statement that I have a theory is ad hominem. I am simply reporting what 60 Minutes broadcast.

The facts in the story speak for themselves. I suggest all Erdnase followers that have a different opinion view the broadcast and research the sources. Besides the experts that were aired, many opinions are on the cutting room floor.

Real scientists gather imperative evidence and don't rush to judgment. All I am suggesting is to keep an open mind.

No question that MFA's writings are different than the book. The book had a ghost writer or he sold the idea outright. It might have even been stolen from him. Maybe that is why an author's copy has never showed up.

Maybe there was several scoundrels involved in the production of this tome. It may very well have been a group of guys that honestly could not say that the work was theirs, since more than one person was involved. id. est. If I wrote the book with David, Richard and Bill, how could I have the say it was mine? We might have decided to keep it a mystery. Hence no author's copy.

There are many other ideas to explore on the multiple authorship possibility.

Many of the MFA arguments are based on obfuscation. Example:

Fact #1 - EATCT is written in a style that any sane person would instantly admit doesn't remotely resemble the writings of MFA.

Response to Fact #1 - Well of course it's a different voice, it was ghost written, and if it wasn't ghost written then the idea was bought from MFA by a bunch of guys.

It's not quality research, but trying desperately to make names fit scenarios after the fact.

To be less confrontational, I do feel that MFA remains a distant candidate in the sense that we still have no solid evidence as to who Erdnase was, so MFA stands as much a chance of fitting the position as anybody does.
One simple fact remains, M.D. Smith met Erdnase and remembered meeting him, what he looked like, the weather, the hotel room, some of the conversation, the softness of his hands, etc. And the description Mr. Smith gave didn’t resemble MFA in the slightest… whether you want to argue the quality of Smith’s memory or not, what Smith did recall is solidly on the books.

Of course the obfuscation continues by declaring Smith to "possibly" have a faulty memory as supported by some obtuse TV report, even though there are absolutely no facts to support such a claim against Smith, who provided a great many fine details of both Erdnase the man, and events as they transpired during their meeting.

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**David Alexander** | 08/01/09 12:40 AM | link | filter

Yeah, Geno, you DO have a theory and that is that MFA was Erdnase as you so state in your post, "I just don’t see a candidate for Erdnase better than MFA."

Frankly, I'd pay more attention to your ideas if you knew the difference between "imperative" and "empirical."

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/01/09 02:43 AM | link | filter

This week I learned that Juan Tamariz has an entirely unique and fascinating theory about the identity of Erdnase. He is not ready to discuss it, but when he does, you will all be very surprised.

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**Tom Stone** | 08/01/09 02:56 AM | link | filter

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* This week I learned that Juan Tamariz has an entirely unique and fascinating theory about the identity of Erdnase. He is not ready to discuss it, but when he does, you will all be very surprised.

Is it someone who drives a very, very small car?

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**Philippe Billot** | 08/01/09 03:32 AM | link | filter

No, he was a magician with two names

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**David Alexander** | 08/01/09 01:13 PM | link | filter

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* This week I learned that Juan Tamariz has an entirely unique and fascinating theory about the identity of Erdnase. He is
not ready to discuss it, but when he does, you will all be very surprised.

Let's hope that it's not the idea that Erdnase was L'Homme Masque as that's been dealt with in this thread some pages back. And if it is, he's already discussed it at a convention...unless he's changed his mind and has another candidate.

Q. Kumber | 08/01/09 01:22 PM | link | filter

Surely, if the book were ghost written it must have been done by someone with a thorough grasp of the subject, in which case you are back to square one.

David Alexander | 08/01/09 11:37 PM | link | filter

Ah yes, there's the problem. If the book was ghost written, who was this masterful writer?

Those who know little about writing have put this silly idea forward as a viable theory. It isn't as the work is of someone who was comfortable with the process of writing and had a well-developed writing voice.

This has all been dealt with before and in detail.

Bill Mullins | 08/02/09 12:26 AM | link | filter

"It couldn't have been ghost written, because it is clear the writer knew sleight of hand personally." Fundamentally, I agree with this argument. But in doing so, I have to ignore the fact that the illustrations were done (and quite competently) by someone who had no personal knowledge of sleight of hand. If the artwork could have been done by proxy, why not the writing?

David Alexander | 08/02/09 12:57 AM | link | filter

Bill,

The drawings were traced from photographs. This has been discussed earlier.

Richard Hatch | 08/02/09 01:21 AM | link | filter

David Alexander wrote: Ah yes, there's the problem. If the book was ghost written, who was this masterful writer?

Those who know little about writing have put this silly idea forward as a viable theory.
I believe Martin Gardner (prodded, perhaps by William Woodfield) was the first to propose a "ghostwriter/editor" theory. I would hardly describe Gardner as someone who knew "little about writing," even at that early stage of his writing career. Having said that, I personally don't think a ghostwriter/editor is necessary unless an otherwise compelling candidate can be shown incapable of writing/editing it himself. I don't believe that to be the case yet for the most interesting candidates.

Most MFA boosters do introduce ghostwriter/editors, with Busby/Whaley proposing Bill Hilliar, who knew about editing/ghostwriting (having written books for Thurston and Downs), copyright law, and sleight of hand, and was in Chicago prior to and at the time of publication and had a professional relationship with Drake, the company that acquired stock of the first edition in 1903 and began reprinting it in 1905. Sounds like a good match on the face of it, though I personally don't think he had anything to do with the book...

Peter Kane and Jerry Sadowitz favor Robert F. Foster, a professional writer on Bridge and games, who included information on cheating in his 1897 edition of Hoyle, as the ghostwriter/editor. He may have been in Chicago at the time the book came out, but I personally don't think he had anything to do with the book either. But in both cases the suggested ghostwriter/editors meet the minimal requirements of having writing skills and a knowledge of the subject.

Edgar Pratt suggested to Gardner that James Harto had helped contribute the legerdemain material, but I don't find that to have much credibility either, based on tracing Harto's career during the period prior to the book's publication (he was constantly moving from town to town with Wild West Shows during that period, a very demanding schedule that would have left little time for such a collaboration). There is credible testimony that Harto claimed to have known the author and one witness (Charles Maly) suggested that Harto and Erdnase may have been working on a sequel to the book. I find those claims worth considering, though not very helpful in establishing Erdnase's identity.

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**Glenn Bishop** | 08/02/09 05:29 PM | link | filter

I don’t think there was a ghost writer simply because Expert at the card table was - as I was told - a self published book by Erdnase who wrote in his book "he needed the money".

A ghost writer would have added to the expense of producing the book in my opinion.

So the ghost writer theory is just that a theory in my opinion.

Also in my opinion the story of Erdnase and Marshall Smith is one of the most interesting stories. Because they met in a Hotel room and they went from one drawing to the next - and in my opinion the story of them meeting in a hotel room the same way magicians used to session in the old days - to me that sparks of a time factor - of
the drawings were one of the last things to get done before publishing.

Then the story of them doing one after the other to finish after Erdnase did some close up card tricks on a board covered with felt - makes for an interesting story.

To me it smacks of a man (a magician that did card tricks) trying to get a project done on a budget.

Just my opinion.

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**Nathan Muir** | 08/03/09 04:41 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*David Alexander wrote:* Bill,

The drawings were traced from photographs. This has been discussed earlier.

Discussed. Not proven.

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**AMcD** | 08/03/09 08:14 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Hi all.

Well, to me, basically, the fact that tracking back who Erdnase was has produced no convincing or definitive evidence for one century shows that simplicity and obviousness should be avoided at all cost.

This "affair" is likely to be more complicated than many think. See, about me, as I've written on another place, I even doubt is was a cheat...

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**David Alexander** | 08/03/09 08:55 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Nathan Muir wrote:*

*David Alexander wrote:* Bill,

The drawings were traced from photographs. This has been discussed earlier.

Discussed. Not proven.

The logistics involved in drawing 100+ pictures "from life" don't work out as Smith did not remember a prolonged project that drawing from life would require.

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Richard Kaufman | 08/03/09 09:05 AM | link | filter

The consistency in the anatomy of the hands in the drawings would lead me to believe that they were drawn from photos, whether copied or traced.

Marco Pusterla | 08/03/09 09:32 AM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: The consistency in the anatomy of the hands in the drawings would lead me to believe that they were drawn from photos, whether copied or traced.

Just one question, then...

If M.D. Smith was given a set of photos by S. W. Erdnase, why did he have to meet him at all? As far as I understand, Smith wasn’t a photographer... If he was to meet Erdnase to collect the photos, he would have met him a second time to deliver the drawings and pick up the payment. Did Smith ever said he met Erdnase twice? Perhaps Erdnase may have popped in Smith’s studio, delivered the photos and arrange for a meeting in a hotel to collect the drawings and pay.

If this is the case, then the person that collected the photos may not have been Erdnase at all but one of his associates... perhaps a magician... or the publisher of the book...

Just thinking out loud...

David Alexander | 08/03/09 09:59 AM | link | filter

Also previously discussed...

The meeting was an audition so Erdnase could see if Smith could deliver the goods as an artist.

When he sketched up a few drawings he proved he was sufficiently skilled. A deal was struck to convert the photos to line drawing from which cuts could be made and inserted into the book. This was far cheaper than trying to reproduce over 100 photos which would have required far more expensive paper and reproduction.

Smith was handed the photos. He retired to his studio, did the job and handed the completed job and reference photos to the printer who was near his studio. It seems highly likely that he was paid by the printer on delivery because the printer had collected money in advance from Erdnase, this being a self-published book.

Roger M. | 08/03/09 11:27 AM | link | filter
In the **Gardner-Smith Correspondence** the authors (Hatch, Randall, Gardner,) ponder the following:

*Although Smith must have seen him on several occasions, he can recall only one meeting, but that one he recalls vividly....*

I think Smith could have met with Erdnase a few times as well, and only remembered the longest, most detailed meeting. If the one or two further meetings were just to accept a delivery, make a delivery, make payment, or some other short pleasantry, it’s understandable that Smith could have either forgotten those meetings, or let them blend into his single (but famous) recollection of Erdnase’s visit with him.

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**David Alexander** | 08/03/09 04:33 PM | link | filter

Yes, Erdnase could have met with Smith more than once, but, as I just described in my last post, it wasn’t necessary given what is likely to have happened. There was no need for the two to meet again unless the printer required Erdnase to pay Smith directly. He could have left a check with the printer, the cost of the job having been decided in the first meeting.

Given that the paper was rather cheap, Erdnase was not printing a book for the ages.

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**Richard Hatch** | 08/03/09 05:32 PM | link | filter

*David Alexander wrote:* Yes, Erdnase could have met with Smith more than once, but, as I just described in my last post, it wasn’t necessary given what is likely to have happened. There was no need for the two to meet again unless the printer required Erdnase to pay Smith directly. He could have left a check with the printer, the cost of the job having been decided in the first meeting.

Smith's recollection (as described in the Gardner-Smith Correspondence, was that when the job was completed, the author paid him with a low numbered check from a large Chicago bank. Though he did not recall the amount or the bank, he did recall that he was hesitant to accept a check from a stranger, but the check cleared and he never saw the author again. He speculated on several banks it might have been and Jay Marshall later checked with a few Chicago banks in the 1950’s to see if they had records of accounts by Milton Franklin Andrews or several of his aliases, but without producing any results...

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**Nathan Muir** | 08/03/09 05:48 PM | link | filter
David Alexander wrote: Bill,

The drawings were traced from photographs. This has been discussed earlier.

Discussed. Not proven.

The logistics involved in drawing 100+ pictures "from life" don’t work out as Smith did not remember a prolonged project that drawing from life would require.

That speculation may apply if we know that Smith only worked a small number of similar projects in his career, making this a remarkable occasion. But we don’t.

John Lovick | 08/03/09 08:28 PM | link | filter

The meeting was an audition so Erdnase could see if Smith could deliver
the goods as an artist.

When he sketched up a few drawings he proved he was sufficiently skilled. A deal was struck to convert the photos to line drawing from which cuts could be made and inserted into the book. This was far cheaper than trying to reproduce over 100 photos which would have required far more expensive paper and reproduction.

Smith was handed the photos. He retired to his studio, did the job and handed the completed job and reference photos to the printer who was near his studio. It seems highly likely that he was paid by the printer on delivery because the printer had collected money in advance from Erdnase, this being a self-published book.

You state all this as if it’s fact. It’s NOT FACT. It’s an educated guess on your part. Some people think it’s possible, but many more don’t buy it. And though you have no evidence, you continually state this as fact, when it is pure speculation.

**Richard Hatch** | 08/03/09 08:42 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

The title page says the illustrations were drawn from life and that is what Smith recalled. When I asked Steranko, who knows a thing or two about illustrating, to examine them with that (and other things) in mind, he found some illustrations that looked like they might have been traced, while others supported the freehand theory. As an example of the latter, and Smith’s recollection, consider Figure 16. Smith told Gardner that the author had performed the sleights on a small board. That was news to Gardner and in examining the illustrations in light of that information, he was able to find several, including Figure 16, that show the edge of the board, confirming Smith’s recollection on that point. In this particular illustration, if we assume that it was traced from a photograph, then the board must not have been rectangular as if it were, the side of the board would be parallel to the side of the deck, since the front edge of the deck is parallel to the front of the table. It is not, suggesting a freehand illustration.

**Larry Horowitz** | 08/03/09 08:53 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Interesting point regarding the payment by check.

First, at that time in our country, how common were people to have and pay by check?

Second, a gambler in need of money (as he states) would he have a checking account? I am not sure where I read it, (possibly Hustlers, Beats and Others), but I recall a statement that gamblers tended to carry money folded in their pockets, not in billfolds or wallets. If so, this would also tend to lay doubt on a gambler paying by check.
Jeez Lovick, by this time on the thread with 102 pages and thousands of page views I would have thought that everyone understood that what we were posting were our best ideas, analysis, and "educated opinions" even though we do not preface each statement with the qualification. I would have thought that self-evident...but apparently not.

1. The book says the drawings were "from life" -- if we can't trust the text on such a simple statement of fact, then there's no point in trying to analyze it.

2. It's difficult to give such credit to Marshall Smith's memory on such an incidental detail as the weather (and basing an opinion of the date of his and Erdnase's meeting on a specific memory), if you won't trust his memory as to whether or not photographs were used -- a fact that is key to the assignment.

3. On youtube, eoinmagi has overlaid figs 22 and 23 to make an animation of the movements in the bottom deal: HERE. In that animation, the size of the sleeve (relative to the hands and the deck) jumps significantly. This would not happen if the drawings were traced from photos.

4. Likewise, the sleeve of the right hand changes size when going from fig 17 to 18. And in the sequence of drawings 52 - 54; and in 77 to 78. In Fig 90 the leftmost index is much too close to the edge of the card to have been traced from a photograph.

In looking at the illustrations, I notice that mostly the cards are low-valued number cards (lots of twos and threes). Erdnase's deck seems to have no face cards in it. (Which I take to be evidence that Smith was editing on the fly, rather than slavishly tracing from photos.)

Regarding Richard Hatch's statement about talking with Steranko--I have never seen one drawing done by Steranko that was traced from a photo. None of his drawings of hands are anatomically correct: they show what needs to be explained in the drawing, but they don't look like any hands I've ever seen. That's not to put Jim down: he's a brilliant artist, however his expertise is not in the exacting reproduction of hands performing sleight of hand.

While I am not an artist, but a mere illustrator, I've drawn about 10,000 hands from photographs and my experience in this area far exceeds Jim's. Making any judgment
based upon a line indicating the edge of the table is futile guesswork. The line signifying the table edge could have been added by Smith after the drawings were finished, or even added by someone else after Smith was done. The fact that it's not on the same plane as the deck tells us nothing.

David Alexander | 08/04/09 12:49 AM | link | filter

Bill,

How long do you estimate that it took Smith to make the drawings if he did them from life?

Recall also that Smith did not recognize the work as his while he did recognize his lettering.

So, what do you think the logistics are in producing the book's illustrations?

Bill Mullins | 08/04/09 12:49 AM | link | filter

Larry Horowitz wrote: Interesting point regarding the payment by check.

First, at that time in our country, how common were people to have and pay by check?

I don't know if it was "common", but it certainly wasn't uncommon. My dad (before he died) collected old checks from TN (many had beautiful engravings of the issuing bank). He had hundreds from the turn of the century.

Second, a gambler in need of money (as he states) would he have a checking account? I am not sure where I read it, (possibly Hustlers, Beats and Others), but I recall a statement that gamblers tended to carry money folded in their pockets, not in billfolds or wallets. If so, this would also tend to lay doubt on a gambler paying by check.

The statement by Marshall Smith that he had a "low-numbered" check tells me that he set the account up specifically for the purpose of putting the book together.

Bill Mullins | 08/04/09 01:17 AM | link | filter

David Alexander wrote: Bill,

How long do you estimate that it took Smith to make the drawings if he did them from life?
Recall also that Smith did not recognize the work as his while he did recognize his lettering.

So, what do you think the logistics are in producing the book's illustrations?

I have NO useful background in art (aside from several years as a serious comic book collector), and have no opinion of value as to how long it would have taken to do the drawings. Some who seem informed have said here that they could have been done in a single day, but others have argued convincingly that they couldn't have.

My opinion is that there were at least two meetings between Erdnase and Smith to execute the drawings, and that Smith's memory in the intervening years collapsed these to a single meeting.

Re: recognizing lettering vs art -- this strikes me as odd, since there is so much more room for a personal style to be expressed in drawings vs. lettering. When I collected comics, I could recognize many artists by their work, but no letterers.

In EATCT, sometimes the captions are so neat that they look as if they were done with a LeRoy-type lettering guide, while others are clearly hand drawn, and some are almost sloppy and look very imprecise when compared to the accuracy of the actual drawings. The size of the captions jumps about ("Fig. 43" is larger than "Fig. 44"); most are on a horizontal line, but some are on a slanted line (possibly indicating that the associated drawing was pasted up slightly askew when plates were made? or that the captions themselves were pasted up separately from the drawings (see "Fig. 58" -- it appears to have glue lines around it on the copy downloadable from the CARC)). In some cases the top loop of an "8" is much smaller than the bottom loop; in other cases they are nearly the same size. Whether or not a period follows "Fig" or the digits of the figure number is inconsistent (but this could be an artefact of reproduction). The size and length of the descender in "g" varies from Fig. to Fig. I don't think the lettering shows nearly as much attention to detail as does the artwork.

Richard Hatch | 08/04/09 01:21 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: The statement by Marshall Smith that he had a "low-numbered" check tells me that he set the account up specifically for the purpose of putting the book together.

Another possible interpretation (one of many) is that he had only recently arrived in Chicago...

Richard Kaufman | 08/04/09 01:22 AM | link | filter
I would say that it would have been impossible for Smith to have done the drawings in a day.

Richard Hatch wrote:

Bill Mullins wrote: The statement by Marshall Smith that he had a "low-numbered" check tells me that he set the account up specifically for the purpose of putting the book together.

Another possible interpretation (one of many) is that he had only recently arrived in Chicago...

Which is not inconsistent with what I said. He could have either lived in Chicago, and set up an account for the book (if he already had an account, there is no reason for it not to have been under his real name, so a new account would have been necessary to maintain anonymity), or he could have come in from another area, and set up a local account so that the Printer and Smith would accept his checks, and could have used either his own name or a pseudonym.

OT: We (Alexander, Hatch, Kaufman, etc. and myself) are a sad lot, sitting here in the wee hours discussing the banking and artistic habits of a mystery man who lived a century ago.

Richard Hatch wrote: I would say that it would have been impossible for Smith to have done the drawings in a day.

Has anyone ever claimed this? Not to my knowledge. Smith clearly recalled his first meeting with the author, sketching his hands in pencil from life, taking them home to ink them in after each sketch was approved by the author. He claimed the author was not concerned with the illustrations' artistic merit, so long as they accurately conveyed the information. Smith told Gardner he thought the job took him about two weeks. If they met (as I assume) each day five days a week for two weeks, that's ten days of work, 10 illustrations per day. Sounds reasonable to me, though I admit I have no experience either drawing from life or tracing from photos. Why should he have a clear recollection of each day's work? The initial and final meetings would obviously be the most memorable, those in between pretty much repetitive work (we do know that they discussed Louis Dalrymple at some point, though it is not clear when or exactly what was said...). One of Gardner's notes says "He [Smith] recognized his lettering on the book pictures, but not the drawings themselves. He thinks it strange he can't recall doing the drawings, so probably did them from photographs." Alas, it is not clear from the context if this is recollection or the out of Smith's Gardner.
speculation, in either case, but would be more compelling support of the photo theory if it came from Smith himself. One problem I have with the photo theory is the time and expense involved in making the photos. Setting up the equipment, holding the poses, developing the plates to check them, redoing those that needed it, having prints made for use in the book, or later transfer to illustrations etc. was surely a much more difficult and expensive process 100 years ago than today. Any experts on turn of the century photo technology care to weigh in?

Richard Kaufman wrote: The consistency in the anatomy of the hands in the drawings would lead me to believe that they were drawn from photos, whether copied or traced.

Regarding the anatomical consistency of the hands, Steranko pointed out inconsistencies in the illustrations which could either be interpreted as a single artist whose skill improved over time or more than one artist doing the drawings. In many illustrations the fingernails appear crudely rendered, while in others they are much more realistically defined. In some illustrations the hands appear huge (see figures 61 and 83, for example), while in others they appear small (figure 79 in one interpretation). Incidentally, Smith recalled the author’s hands, as well as stature, as being small, and the author makes a positive statement about the Erdnase shift being possible with a small hand (though presumed easier with a large hand), implying greater familiarity with small hands than large. Milton Franklin Andrews was known to have large hands...

Tortuga wrote: Unless of course the book is a collaboration and MFA was involved, but not the person who met Mr. Smith in the hotel room. I haven’t heard anyone posit that theory or possibility, unless I missed it.

Marshall Smith himself raised this possibility with Martin Gardner when faced with the inconsistencies in the physical description of Milton Franklin Andrews and his recollections of the man he met and whose hands he sketched. Writing to Gardner on August 20, 1951, he says "Now for Mr. Andrews: As I told you before, I'll never reconcile his being 6' 3" [sic. Andrews was described in the police wanted circular as being 6' 1.5", not 6' 3". Smith accurately references the 6'1.5" height in his earlier response of July 15, 1950]... If the police were after Andrews at the time I met him, could Andrews have had someone represent him while doing business with me or the publisher [NB: the book was self published, but Smith may not have known or recalled that]? I doubt that. The man I met, I'm sure, was the real article..." In point of fact, MFA was not wanted by the police at the time the book was in preparation, so would have had no reason (other than a desire for anonymity) to send a surrogate.

Am I the only one who has a feeling of deja vu in this discussion? I think most of these arguments were similarly discussed in this thread a few years back...
Roger M. | 08/04/09 02:53 AM | link | filter

It would certainly halt the repetition of "new" ideas and arguments that are actually old ideas and arguments if folks would read through all 102 pages before posting.

Besides seeing what's already been posted and discussed, this thread in its entirety is the best read on the internet if you're interested in gambling, history, Americana, cheating, magic and a few other topics that intertwine with the Erdnase story.

Nathan Muir | 08/04/09 04:35 AM | link | filter

David Alexander wrote:
Nathan - Do you have any idea how long it would take to draw the illustrations in Expert from life?

Yes.

Eoin O'hare | 08/04/09 06:23 AM | link | filter

I have uploaded all 101 of Smith's drawings to my Flickr account. Here. Each drawing has its own url, and can be embedded by... clicking on the required drawing ...right click on the image and select "copy image address"...Paste this into Genii's "Full reply screen" after you have clicked on the "Enter an image" icon.

AMcD | 08/04/09 07:25 AM | link | filter

I don't know if such a thinking is of any value but looking at the whole set of drawings it appears that small hands have been depicted. The vast majority of figures show small hands. I've got very long fingers and I can assure you the pictures won't look the same as Smith's ones if my hands were used :-).
But more probably Smith just focused on drawing a "scene" and that's why he used a "standard" hand size.

Eoin O'hare | 08/04/09 07:40 AM | link | filter

Is it not useful (and of value) having the facility to embed drawings into the posts which reference them? I've simply made it easy for anyone to add the drawings to their posts.

AMcD | 08/04/09 07:53 AM | link | filter

I was talking about MY thinking (about the small hands)... Your idea is just great.

Richard Hatch | 08/04/09 09:05 AM | link | filter

Thanks, Eoin, that's very useful to this discussion! Here's an illustration (Figure 87) where the left hand (the upper hand) does not look to me like it was traced from a

![Image](fig.87)

Richard Hatch | 08/04/09 09:20 AM | link | filter

Here are two illustrations that bear on the questions of whether the book had a single illustrator or if the illustrations were traced from photos. Look at the nail of the left former in the illustrations is one individual!:

![Image](fig.6)

Copyright, br S. W. Erdnase, 1902.
I assume a manicure of some kind between illustrations would be another explanation!

Q. Kumber | 08/04/09 11:11 AM | link | filter

Does anyone know how many angels can dance on the point of a pin?

Eoin O'hare | 08/04/09 11:27 AM | link | filter

Quentin... it’s the point of a needle, not a pin. ;)

Jonathan Townsend | 08/04/09 11:48 AM | link | filter

It’s the head of a pin – as apropos of ...

Darryl Harris | 08/04/09 11:51 AM | link | filter

Eye of a needle, head of a pin... the sentiment is clear in either case... (;;0) Is is possible that that Smith did the pencil roughs and handed them to an assistant to ink or "finish?" That could explain why he didn't have a clear memory of the illustrations, but he recognized his lettering.

Bill Mullins | 08/04/09 11:56 AM | link | filter

In Feb 2008, I mentioned that the AAA in Washington DC had a scrapbook on Marshall Smith in their collection. Richard Hatch had already examined it (of course).

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, in their Thomas J. Watson library, has a file of "miscellaneous ephemeral material" on Smith. I’ve emailed to ask if it has any Erdnase-related material (but someone on the Forum has probably already checked it
The one thing I learned from my examination of the Marshall D Smith scrapbook in DC was that his middle name was Dennison. Useful to know for trivia contests at magic conventions...
I spoke yesterday to one of his grand-nieces who has his personal belongings in her attic and has promised to prioritize going through them (I hadn't talked to her in about 6 years). I don't expect she'll find anything, but you never know until you look.

Bill Mullins wrote: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, in their Thomas J. Watson library, has a file of "miscellaneous ephemeral material" on Smith. I've emailed to ask if it has any Erdnase-related material (but someone on the Forum has probably already checked it out . . .)

Not sure when I'm going to be in Manhattan next, but I'd be happy to take a look through the file next time I'm there (again, assuming no one else has already looked into it).

-Jim

Richard Hatch wrote: Smith clearly recalled his first meeting with the author, sketching his hands in pencil from life, taking them home to ink them in after each sketch was approved by the author. He claimed the author was not concerned with the illustrations' artistic merit, so long as they accurately conveyed the information.

Smith told Gardner he thought the job took him about two weeks.

Thanks Richard - this is only speculation - if the illustrations were done in only one meeting - could Smith have done them with less detail and have after each sketch was approved by the author (Erdnase) - when he took them home to ink - added more detail to the illustrations during the two weeks he inked them at home?
Adding detail later when they inked them might have made the job faster when they met in the hotel room - as the story goes.
I did a search with the Forum Search Tool and could not locate any reference to Jay Marshall talking to Mrs. Minkley. If I missed it I am sorry to be repetitive. As you recall, she was the sister to Andrews wife. She recalled (1) that Andrews had indeed wrote a book, but remembered it a little thicker than the edition Jay showed her.

That is reasonable, there could have been multiple reasons for this.

She also talks about him doing card tricks.

Then Pratt in a letter to Gardner states that the book would not sell and Andrews was holding the bag. Then to create a market, magic was added (2).

He then said he heard of his death after being friendly with him from 1897-1904. (3)

Also when the police went through his belongings after his death they did find a book on card tricks.(4)

This is very compelling information. Between Harte, Pratt, Minkley and Audley Dunham. There is a great deal of collaboration of people that were around Andrews more than Smith if indeed Andrews was Erdnase.

(1) The Annotated Erdnase by Darwin Ortiz
(2) Letter from Pratt to Gardner
(3) The Annotated Erdnase by Darwin Ortiz
(4) San Francisco Newspaper Account

Roger M. | 08/04/09 05:16 PM | link | filter

Eoin, your scanning and posting of M.D. Smiths Expert illustrations represent a ton of work on your part, and are an excellent resource in this somewhat historic thread on Erdnase.

I thank-you for your efforts!

Bill Mullins | 08/04/09 05:19 PM | link | filter

RE: Marshall Smith and photography. In the Nov 1918 issue of American Photography, it was announced that Marshall D. Smith had taken an honorable mention prize in their monthly competition for his photograph The Artist. (as found on Google Books). Later on (ca. 1925), I found reference to him participating in the Chicago Camera Club in meetings held at the Art Institute in Chicago.

Richard Evans | 08/04/09 07:05 PM | link | filter
Here's the (in)famous fig 69. From the pattern of shading around the heart shape on the back of the left hand, this looks as though a section has been cut from the image rather than drawn on it.

As a general observation of the illustrations: the pictures in EATCT have been carefully chosen. They vary from performer's view, opponent/spectator view and 'exposed' view. I'd be interested to hear from Richard K and others who have experience of selecting which images to show in publications - In the process of producing illustrations, what proportion have to be re-thought (e.g. if the angle is wrong) or scrapped (e.g. when the illustration just doesn't work)? What's the attrition rate? It seems to me that there's far more to it than simply asking someone to draw (or photograph) your hands. I wonder whether Erdnase worked his way up to 101 illustrations, or worked his way down to that number by discarding surplus drawings.

My second question to those in the know is to what extent EATCT differs from other card magic/gambling books of that time in the level of detail shown in the illustrations? Does EATCT mark a departure from the norm, or is it consistent with scope and detail of similar books?

Richard Hatch | 08/04/09 07:20 PM | link | filter

Geno Munari wrote: This is very compelling information. Between Harte, Pratt, Minkley and Audley Dunham. There is a great deal of collaboration of people that were around Andrews more than Smith if indeed Andrews was Erdnase.

Geno, I have done quite a bit of research on Harte, Pratt and Minkley. The only connection between Harte and MFA is through Pratt, who told Gardner that Harte had
helped with the book. Gardner followed up and found two associates of Pratt (Charles Maly and Audley Dunham) who both confirmed that Harte claimed some association with Erdnase (but not necessary that he helped with the book, only Pratt makes that claim). Neither Dunham nor Maly have anything to say that would connect Erdnase to MFA. But because Pratt had told Gardner about the possible Harte connection, when Gardner found some corroboration for that connection it gave Pratt credibility for Gardner that had previously been lacking. I personally don’t find Pratt a credible witness for MFA at all. I don’t see any evidence that he know MFA personally (though he could have). Everything he told Gardner about MFA was in “THE MALTED MILK MURDERER” article that Pratt later sold to Kanter and that was published before Pratt met Gardner. He never told Gardner about that article, and he sold Kanter a photo that is almost certainly of Pratt’s older brother, claiming it was a photo of MFA. Again, he never told Gardner (who by then knew enough about MFA to have called Pratt’s bluff) about the photo. I think Pratt’s strange behavior is most easily explained by assuming that he did not know MFA personally, but was the first to make the MFA=Erdnase connection after reading the Malted Milk Murderer article.

Minkley’s testimony is very interesting. Jay Marshall visited his parents in Holyoke, Mass. and had an article published in the local paper about his interest in the MFA case, as related to the MFA=Erdnase theory, since MFA had lived there, hoping to stir up some local memories. Mrs. Minkley contacted the newspaper (as did a cousin) to tell them that she was MFA’s sister-in-law. According to the newspaper editor’s report to Marshall, at that time she reported knowing nothing about a book. Marshall, a local celebrity thanks to his national television appearances, calls her up from Chicago to ask her about MFA. This was likely a rather exciting surprise for her, and at that point she recalls that he had sold some typed manuscripts on gambling, but is very vague in her recollection. Gardner makes an appointment to meet with her after an upcoming televised appearance in New York. He takes the train up from New York to interview her and brings with him a copy of the book. Apparently he brought the Fleming edition, as it was handy (Marshall may not have owned a first edition at that time). When she meets him and sees it, she apparently reports that MFA’s book was thicker. That would call her recollection into question, as the Fleming edition is by far the thickest, and much thicker than a first edition. Ironically, she thinks she recognizes the illustrations (unlike Marshall Smith, the illustrator!), but not much else. Now, she would have been in her late teens when MFA was living in her parent’s home, so she was not a small child. Wouldn’t the most remarkable thing about the book, even 50 years later, be the fact that your brother-in-law’s name was not on the book he supposed authored, but instead a version of his name in reverse?

It’s not that I don’t want to believe her, as I actually think MFA is a very good candidate (credible last name, knowledge of gambling and interest in magic... Minkley describes some card tricks he did for her... and he died shortly after the book’s publication, neatly explaining why the author so proud of his work never revealed himself to his fans once the book became a success...), but I find her testimony more in
hoping to hear after travelling a great distance to see her immediately after a
nationally televised appearance. If her claim of having seen copies of the book were
credible, that would pretty much seal the case in favor of MFA. But I don't find them
so. Equally damning in my opinion are MFA's older brother Alvin's lack of any
knowledge of the book, though he knew all about his brother's gambling and was close
enough to him to advise him to escape to Australia via Canada when wanted on
murder charges. The claim that MFA didn't tell his brother about the book because he
was embarrassed by it (Gardner and Whaley/Busby's conjecture) makes no sense at all
to me. The author was proud of his work, not ashamed. And how does writing a book
on card cheating compare with multiple murder charges on the shame scale? I think
his brother would have known about the book and would have told Gardner so.
Indeed, I am pretty sure that Alvin was dispatched to San Francisco to recover his
brother's possessions, which would presumably have included the card magic book in
the newspaper report. But Alvin knew nothing about the book and never even
acknowledged Gardner's questions about it when Gardner sent him a copy with
questions about whether it sounded like MFA and whether he could have written by
himself.
Incidentally, I believe I cover most of this information on the Ackerman Erdnase
DVDs. Check 'em out!

Bill Mullins | 08/07/09 12:49 AM | link | filter

Cost of Photography at the Turn of the Century:

1896 ad:
4x5 print paper: 18 cents / dozen
Glass plates: 4 cents each
Pocket Kodak film: 10 cents/ roll
4x5 film: 4 cents each
Glass Plate cameras: $7 to $11 each

1900 ad: Brownie Cameras, $1

1902 ad (Wanamakers Dept store, NYC):
Developing Plates: 2 - 5 cents each
Printing from plates: 3 cents and up, depending on size
Developing from film:
Rolls of 12, 15 cents each
Rolls of 6, 10 cents each
Printing from film, 3 to 6 cents each

1904 ad: "I will develop your No. 1 or No. 2 Brownie Film of 6 exposures and make 6
Velox Prints from them for the One Low Price of 15 cents."
It doesn't look like the cost of doing a 100 or so photos was so high it couldn't have been done. (But I still don't believe it was done . . .)

David Alexander | 08/11/09 10:43 PM | link | filter

Not debating the cost of the actual photos, but the reproduction of them in a book. Photographic reproduction in books, as I understand it, was in its infancy back then. The cheap paper that the original edition was printed on would not have reproduced a photo well at all.

As for the necessity of photos - absent photographic reference the author would have had to have determined the exact poses he wanted to use well in advance and then be able to hold them for the requisite time for the artist to draw them. See Figures 6 and 56 and think of the POV and imagine how those were drawn if not from a photo.

David Alexander | 08/11/09 10:49 PM | link | filter

As I understand the process, the "heart" on the back of Fig 69 is an artifact or "ridge" of metal left over from the making of the cut. Someone just got sloppy.

Geno Munari | 08/12/09 12:06 PM | link | filter

I have located some interesting evidence that Andrews had left that I don't think has been reported here or any other printed articles. (1)

"Everything that could lead to a positive identification had been destroyed or taken away by Brush and the woman. He left, however, what apparently a telegraph cipher code, a private code, and written in pencil in a vest pocket memorandum book, which is accepted as evidence that he is one of a gang."

So possibly this code was used to send telegrams in code and also to make anagrams. Sending a telegram in code requires words that have some meaning that can be spoken and not just a bunch of scrambled letters, otherwise it would have drawn suspicion. This is a pattern that Andrews used; scrambled names an aliases such as Nulda Petrie=Edna Little etc.

If there was a way to search old telegrams there could be some more clues to who Erdnase really was.

Also if Andrews used codes he may have a secret message in Expert!

Notes: (1) Whaley may have found this info but I don't think it was examined to any degree in TMWWE. Gardner was not aware of this information at all.
David Alexander wrote: Not debating the cost of the actual photos, but the reproduction of them in a book. Photographic reproduction in books, as I understand it, was in its infancy back then. The cheap paper that the original edition was printed on would not have reproduced a photo well at all.

It didn't take long searching in Google Books to find several books ca. 1900 - 1905 that were heavily illustrated with photographs, and by searching for their titles within the text of books, find "books in Print" listings and bookseller catalogs and book reviews which listed their prices. $1 to $2 is typical.

In other words, it doesn't seem that the presence of photographs would have made the price of the book exhorbitantly more than it already was.

Does anyone know what the first magic book to be illustrated with photographs was (probably stage illusions)? What was the first close-up/card tricks book to be so illustrated with photos?

Geno Munari wrote: I have located some interesting evidence that Andrews had left that I don't think has been reported here or any other printed articles. (1)

"Everything that could lead to a positive identification had been destroyed or taken away by Brush and the woman. He left, however, what apparently a telegraph cipher code, a private code, and written in pencil in a vest pocket memorandum book, which is accepted as evidence that he is one of a gang."

Geno -- what is the source of this quote? A contemporary newspaper article? Can you provide specifics?

So possibly this code was used to send telegrams in code and also to make anagrams. Sending a telegram in code requires words that have some meaning that can be spoken and not just a bunch of scrambled letters, otherwise it would have drawn suspicion.

I think perhaps you are jumping to an unwarranted conclusion. Telegraph codes have historically been used to 1. Shorten the number of characters to be sent and 2. Encrypt (make secret) the message being sent.
These codes sometimes have a cleartext which is legible, but nonsense ("Send me 1000 decks of Cards" => "turtles boat")
or sometimes have a cleartext which appears to be gibberish ("Send me 1000 decks of Cards" => "JEXTG PEMNN")

Again, a few minutes searching in Google Books (search for "telegraph code" with dates before 1920) confirms the above. See [For Example](#).

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**Geno Munari** | 08/12/09 01:23 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Yes the codes were very common in those days. Here is a link to Pinkerton's [http://www.pimall.com/nais/pivintage/encryption.html](http://www.pimall.com/nais/pivintage/encryption.html)

All these facts about Andrews are strictly speculation and theories, which are fun to explore without drawing a definitive conclusion.

It is just interesting that this private code has never been discussed since it was found in his personal articles.

The source is San Francisco Chronicle, Oct. 14, 1905.

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**David Ben** | 08/12/09 02:21 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

During a discussion about Erdnase over dinner the other night, a friend - Bert Kish - who is a film director and editor by trade, suggested that it was highly unlikely that photographs were used. He suggested that the light required to film close up images of hands on the film stock available at the time, coupled with how long the person would have to hold the cards completely still in order to not have a blurry image, one that would capture detail and permit tracing, etc, rules out photographs as the source for the images.

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/12/09 02:59 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

David -- Edward Muybridge was making photographs of galloping horses 20 years before Erdnase. These were fast enough to see all four feet off the ground.

The Kodak "Brownie" started being marketed in 1900. Their selling point was that they made "snapshots" -- point and shoot.

By the time of Erdnase, photographic technology had advanced sufficiently that the photographs could have been easily taken.
Yes, by 1900 photography was no longer the type of thing where a sitter had to be motionless for minutes in order to achieve an adequate exposure as had been the case even 20 years earlier.

**Marco Pusterla** | 08/12/09 05:03 PM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:* Does anyone know what the first magic book to be illustrated with photographs was (probably stage illusions)? What was the first close-up/card tricks book to be so illustrated with photos?


**Joe Pecore** | 08/12/09 05:41 PM | link | filter

*Marco Pusterla wrote:*


I believe the first edition was published in 1902 (the same year as Expert) and was advertised as "with over 400 illustrations from photographs of Actual Tricks".

**Eoin O'hare** | 08/12/09 05:58 PM | link | filter

In Jason England’s lecture notes, "Second thoughts: Notes on the Second Deal" (which are excellent, by the way), he reproduces what he describes as the earliest known photograph of a strike second deal.

The photograph, highly detailed and looking like it could have been taken yesterday, is from "Combined treatise on Advantage Card Playing and Draw Poker" by F.R. Ritter published in 1905.

I'm not familiar with the actual book so I'm not sure how many photographs are in it, maybe Jason could tell us more about the book?

**Richard Kaufman** | 08/12/09 06:20 PM | link | filter

Don’t forget the Art of Conjuring. Can’t recall the year, but it’s 1902 or 03 (I think). The book is notable for two things: one, it uses photographs; two, one of those photos shows a folding coin in its folded position, masquerading as two coins.

**David Ben** | 08/12/09 06:21 PM | link | filter
I understand the Muybridge images and process but I do not recall his camera being fixed on the extreme close ups required to capture such detail in the card work that is represented. I acquired a Muybridge series of images of hands holding a writing instrument for a friend and none of the images had that sort of clarity. I'm sure that I probably misquoted my friend but I thought that main issues was providing enough light to get the definition on the edge work. It's still a problem and I know, from shooting some 1500 photographs for the Zarrow book with a high end Nikon camera, and with lights, how difficult it is.

I do not believe, for example, that the photos in the Ritter book come even close to the mark.

In those days large publishers could amortize the cost of the then-expensive process of reproducing photographs on large print runs and many titles. Half-tone blocks became a staple in printing photos in popular journals in the late 1890s.

That they could do this is not comparable to a small, self-published book with an apparently limited budget done by a small printer who was unlikely to have the expensive equipment to reproduce photographs.

It would be interesting to have an original copy of "The Modern Conjuror" taken to a printer to determine the number of lines on the screen used to reproduce the photos. The higher the number of lines in the screen, the finer the reproduction... and the more expensive the paper needed.

Was C. Lang Neil's book done as a commercial enterprise (to make a profit) or was it subsidized by the author as a vanity publication? That would make a difference in the decisions made about production values. Is not his wife featured throughout?

Richard's comment regarding The Art of Modern Conjuring is very interesting. I have a first edition and the photos are interesting but quite washed out. I believe it would be difficult for an artist to work without the person who posed for them looking over his shoulder constantly to correct what should or should not be emphasized in the illustration. If he's going to do that, he might as well just stay with him as he illustrates them "from life".

If you turn to page 72 of The Art of Modern Conjuring, for example, and look at photo 2, you see two hands coming together for the French Drop. The hands are in a sort of "diagonal palm shift position" and, as there is not enough lighting, you can barely make out that the left hand is holding a coin. It's in the shadow.
Joe Pecore | 08/12/09 06:53 PM | link | filter

David Ben wrote: If you turn to page 72 of The Art of Modern Conjuring, for example, and look at photo 2, you see two hands coming together for the French Drop. The hands are in a sort of "diagonal palm shift position" and, as there is not enough lighting, you can barely make out that the left hand is holding a coin. It's in the shadow.

But is that an artifact of the printing? What if the artist was looking at the original photograph? Wouldn't it be in better quality?

David Ben | 08/12/09 09:35 PM | link | filter

I don't believe the original photograph would have been much better for purposes of tracing. I base that on comparing the other photographs in the book - which have some degree of clarity given the distance and light available to shoot them compared to extreme close-ups of hands and technique. Also, how large an image could be pulled from the negative circa 1901, assuming that the photographer, a relatively young artist, had the latest equipment? How much time would it take to develop over 100 images to use as a base. Why would an artist - if he had anything to do with it - allow someone to say "drawn from life" when, in fact, they were traced. What does that do for his reputation, and for getting other work. (What? You traced them from photographs!)

I believe the main reason we entertain the notion of photographs is because Vernon mentioned that his father received a book on gambling with photographs. Vernon assumed that it was ECT. I personally checked the copyright registries in Ottawa - entered by hand, most likely be Vernon's father - and it was the Ritter book - as I mentioned in the biography - that was entered into the directory.

David Alexander | 08/12/09 09:50 PM | link | filter

David,
Are your comments directed at Expert or are you still commenting on The Art of Modern Conjuring? It is unclear to me.

Andrew Pinard | 08/12/09 11:04 PM | link | filter

I currently have nothing to add to the Erdnase discussion at hand but...

David's observation on The Modern Conjurer struck a chord. I happen to have a copy of the earliest American edition (1902: J.B. Lippincott with Neil spelled "Niel" on the spine, apparently a rarity; this preceded the UK edition). For giggles, I took my line
screen determiner to Figure 10 on page 248. My rudimentary screen tool only goes up to 133 lpi, but it appears that the screen is at least 150 lpi. It is somewhat surprising that the line screens were reproduced in such fine detail as it would certainly add to the cost of the book.

Seeing that no less a notable than Charles Bertram was featured in the photos (in addition to J.N. Maskelyne, Flicien Trewey, Nelson Downs, Paul Valadon, Ellis Stanyon and Mlle. Patrice (definitely Neil’s wife according to Eddie Dawes), it would not surprise me if shares were offered to the contributors to raise the quality of the finished product.

That being said (and having no evidence to indicate that any shares were in fact sold), the American publisher (originated in Philadelphia), J.B. Lippincott & Co., was founded in 1836 as a publisher of Bibles, prayer books and other religious works. They expanded quite successfully into trade books, what we might refer to today as the "niche market". I don't really believe that they were a vanity press per se. With Neil's connections in the advertising world it is likely that he sought out one of the larger publishing houses. The quality and standard of their print capabilities would likely not allow them to produce an inferior product and the smaller-run trade books may well have served as their laboratory for testing more advanced techniques before adopting them on a larger scale. For what it is worth, Lippincott still exists today in merged form as Lippincott Williams & Wilkins and maintains its headquarters in Philadelphia.

One final note: according to Eddie Dawes, The Modern Conjurer does not have the distinction of being the first magic book to utilize photographs, but rather it is the first to use "full body" photographs to communicate body language [The Magic Circular 74, 83-86 (1980); from The Rich Cabinet of Magical Curiosities published by Peter Scarlett Magic / www.peterscarlett.com].

What book holds the distinction of the first to use photographs for instruction? I have no idea, but would certainly be interested in finding out the answer...

Back to our regularly-scheduled programming...

Richard Kaufman | 08/12/09 11:08 PM | link | filter

I don't entertain the notion of photographs because of anything Vernon said, but because in looking at the anatomy of the drawings (as someone who has drawn about 10,000 hands), that is how I think they were drawn.

And, just because you're tracing photos doesn't require you to copy their line exactly--if you look at my drawings, Ton Onosaka's, and Earle Oakes', all generally draw from photographs I've taken, yet all the hands look entirely different (anatomy of the
individual subjects aside). My drawings look very flat, Earle's look very modeled, Ton's are also flat and have a thicker look to the fingers. You can also draw more quickly when using photos and get a more accurate representation of the anatomy. It also doesn't matter if the photo is slightly dark, or washed out, or even blurry--if you can draw, you can find a line in there.

David Alexander | 08/12/09 11:31 PM | link | filter

Thank you Andrew for looking at the pictures in The Modern Conjuror. One hundred and fifty lines is extremely fine screening, probably the best possible back in that day. Before the world went digital, newspapers usually printed photos at 85 lpi. High quality reproduction is still at 133 and 150 lpi, although some modern presses can go higher.

And back to Smith and his drawings - he claimed that the job probably took "two weeks." I don't buy it because it doesn't ring true. He remembered the audition, his interaction with Erdnase, the weather on the way to the hotel, the condition of the man's hands, the small board he used, what he [Smith] thought he did for his client, and a bit of magic done by Erdnase.

To my knowledge Smith never said anything about any interaction that occurred over a two week period when he, presumably, would have been sketching the various poses had this been done from life and not from photographic reference.

Had this really been a two-week job there would have been some sort of human interaction between the two men....conversation, an exchange of ideas/stories. Erdnase claimed to be a reformed gambler. How many people like that had the young Smith met? How many books like this had he ever illustrated? None before, as best we can tell, and none since. It was an anomaly in his life and people tend to remember anomalies. Meeting Erdnase was an anomaly and Smith remembered one meeting.

Erdnase wanted to establish some sort of rapport with Smith given the story about being related to Dalrymple so one presumes that sometimes during a two-week period, during breaks, a shared meal perhaps, there would have been some human contact but Smith remembered nothing which is another reason why I believe it was a simple tracing job to make cuts relatively unremarkable and not Smith's usual line of work since he only recognized his lettering when shown the book. For me, knowing what I know about art, that's a dead giveaway.

AMCabral | 08/12/09 11:32 PM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: I don't entertain the notion of photographs because of anything Vernon said, but because in looking at the anatomy of the drawings (as someone who has drawn about 10,000 hands), that is how I...
think they were drawn.

That doesn't necessarily mean photographs. I'm an artist myself, and I've got plenty of folks to back up my abilities. It's possible to draw as well from life as from a photograph. Particularly given the nature of the Smith drawings and the level of detail: the anatomy is stellar, true, but the way it's depicted is general enough to distinguish it from the kind of work that Earl, Ton, or yourself do from photographs.

I would also consider that someone who lived as a professional artist in 1902 would possess a certain level of ability comparable to someone who made their living as a magician or card cheat in the same era.

-T

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**David Alexander** | 08/13/09 12:26 AM | link | filter

Further to Richard's observations above - good artists know anatomy and know what should be present, what must be present.

When my wife was studying anatomy for artists with Hal Reed many years ago Hal had his students draw figures from the skeleton up through the muscles and tendons and finally the skin. Good artists know what should be there so a line in a photo doesn't need to be visible to be drawn.

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/13/09 12:28 AM | link | filter

David Ben -- You seem to be making the case that because of technology, time constraints, cost, etc., it is not possible that the illustrations in EatCT were traced from photographs. If you'll check my posts over the previous few days, I think I've shown that this is not the case.

It isn't hard to find other books from that era (1900 - 1905) illustrated by a comparable number of photographs, and research shows that those books could be bought at prices comparable to that of Erdnase.

Photographic film wasn't described in ISO numbers as it is today, but indoor photographs were common, fast exposures had been done for years, and mass-production techniques had made cameras and film into consumer items, rather than costly items only seen at studios.

The photographs themselves weren't grossly expensive. Erdnase could have bought a camera, 12 rolls of 12-exposure film, had it developed at a studio or department store, and had prints made, all for under $20 or so. Not chicken feed in that era, but not a huge capital investment either.
Having said that, though, I still don't believe that is what happened. I think Smith drew from life for 3 reasons:
1. That's what the book says.
2. That's how Smith remembers it.
3. Some of the drawings are obviously (to me, at least) inconsistent with being traced from photos. (but some look to me as if they might have been traced -- I wonder if there is any correlation between those drawings and the copyright notices that appear on some?)

I believe that a well-drawn line drawing is more effective than a well-reproduced photograph in conveying the sort of information that the drawings in EatCT (or any of Kaufman's, or Onosaka's, or Oakes') try to convey. I doubt this conclusion could have been drawn in 1902, though, because there weren't enough photographically-illustrated magic books to draw a good conclusion.

It's my impression that the specific finger-placement instructions in EatCT are more detailed and accurate than those in any magic books that had gone before, but I haven't really studied this. If Erdnase went to extraordinary lengths to describe in words the particulars of how to hold a deck and move the fingers while making a sleight, wouldn't he have done likewise with the illustrations? Would he have known that photographs were simply not sufficient to convey the information that he needed the illustrations to convey (particularly since he had no way of knowing in advance how good the quality would be)?

Newspapers from that era are sometimes illustrated with drawings, and sometimes with photographs. I wonder if there is any data on which is more expensive -- to pay an artist to convert 100 pictures to line drawings, or to pay to have them screened.

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**David Alexander** | 08/13/09 12:44 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Bill,

Once again, it isn't a matter of what could be done back then but what Erdnase could afford. The fact that the book was printed on inexpensive pulp should be a clue. That and the logistics of actually doing 101 drawings from life which have been discussed previously.

And again, Smith did not recognize his own work at the beginning and then only thought he'd done far fewer illustrations than are actually in the book.

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**Seuss** | 08/13/09 12:53 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Bill Mullins wrote: I believe that a well-drawn line drawing is more effective...
than a well-reproduced photograph in conveying the sort of information that the drawings in EatCT (or any of Kaufman’s, or Onosaka’s, or Oakes’) try to convey.

could you elaborate on this point Bill?

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**Bill Mullins | 08/13/09 01:04 AM | link | filter**

析安德鲁·普因写道：

This being said (and having no evidence to indicate that any shares were in fact sold), the American publisher (originated in Philadelphia), J.B. Lippincott & Co., was founded in 1836 as a publisher of Bibles, prayer books and other religious works. They expanded quite successfully into trade books, what we might refer to today as the "niche market". I don’t really believe that they were a vanity press per se. With Neil’s connections in the advertising world it is likely that he sought out one of the larger publishing houses. The quality and standard of their print capabilities would likely not allow them to produce an inferior product and the smaller-run trade books may well have served as their laboratory for testing more advanced techniques before adopting them on a larger scale. For what it is worth, Lippincott still exists today in merged form as Lippincott Williams & Wilkins and maintains its headquarters in Philadelphia.

The book was advertised in the back of other Lippincott books, and in press releases in the NYTimes. It stayed in print until at least 1906. It went through later editions by Lippincott (1911 and 1922?).

All the appearances of a "real" book, not a vanity press book.

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**Bill Mullins | 08/13/09 01:46 AM | link | filter**

戴维·亚历山大写道：Once again, it isn’t a matter of what could be done back then but what Erdnase could afford. The fact that the book was printed on inexpensive pulp should be a clue.

Okay, are you saying it is more expensive to pay an artist to do drawings from life, than it is to pay for 100-odd photos, and then pay the artist to draw from them? That logic doesn’t work.

If you are saying
1. He could only afford to have the book done on cheap paper,
2. That means he couldn’t afford to have photographs reproduced (although photographs were commonly reproduced on newsprint of that era),
3. Therefore he had drawings done because that was all that could be reproduced,
4. Therefore the drawings were done from photographs

then I'm missing a step in this logical chain as well (particularly step 3 to 4). I'm willing to be convinced otherwise, I just don't follow the reasoning.

That and the logistics of actually doing 101 drawings from life which have been discussed previously.

Look, the drawings are GOOD. They do the job. Fingers are right, hand positions are right, angles are right. Erdnase had to have a major role in making sure that they were done properly -- Smith simply didn't have the card knowledge to do this. Either he guided Smith in drawing, or he guided a photographer (himself or another)

Consider:
1. Erdnase had a photographer who knew cards as well as did Erdnase, and gave a near-perfect set of prints to Smith who did an incredible job of transferring them to line drawings, OR
2. Erdnase took his own perfect photos, and handed them off to Smith, OR
3. Erdnase provided mediocre photos to Smith, but worked closely with him to get good drawings, OR
4. Erdnase and Smith met together and worked out the drawings together, without photos.

#4. is logistically the simplest, but requires that Smith spent more time with Erdnase than he remembered (but we already know he spent more time than he remembered, because there are more drawings than he remembered). Even with the real time feedback and cheap exposure cost of modern digital cameras, I couldn't imagine getting a set of photos as would be required for 1 and 2. Imagine doing it where you try and mentally compose the shot, take the picture, wait some length of time to get back prints, and then doing it again to fix the ones that didn't work. #3 is just as complicated as #4, except you add photos.

And again, Smith did not recognize his own work at the beginning and then only thought he'd done far fewer illustrations than are actually in the book.

There are inconsistencies in Smith's memory either way, and he was wrong on some points. If we assume he had a good memory WRT photographs, there were no photos because he didn't recall them. If his memory was so bad that he didn't remember photos, why do you put such faith in his description of the weather? You can interpret his memory in a way that supports your idea of what happened, and I do so likewise. To me, the dispositive points are that the book says "from life"; and that details in
illoes #17-18; 52-54; 77-78; 90; and likely other places are inconsistent with tracing from photos.

Assuming photos were used, do you think that Erdnase took the pictures himself, or hired it out? If he did it himself, how did he pose -- with assistants, or a mirror, or trial and error with many wasted photos? Did W. E. Sanders have any experience with photography as of 1902 that you've found (on the other hand, did he have any personal artistic skills)? Were any other books by Drake/McKinney of this era illustrated by photos, or do line drawings in them look to be based on photos? Does Smith’s other work from this era look different in ways that are best explained by being freehand as opposed to tracing from photos? Did light boxes for tracing exist then?

Richard Kaufman -- when you draw from "pre-illustrative photography", do you trace from prints, from transparencies over a light box, do you copy one from another, does it typically average more than one photo to get one good drawing, is it easy to pose the hands to get the photograph you want -- how efficient is the process?

I don't consider my position to be rock-solid beyond discussion (although I think I'm right), but since yours is contrary to the text, I think the burden of proof is on you to put together a case backing it up. Some circumstantial evidence is consistent with your case, but I think most isn't.

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/13/09 01:49 AM | [link] | [filter]

_Seuß wrote:_

_Bill Mullins wrote:_ I believe that a well-drawn line drawing is more effective than a well-reproduced photograph in conveying the sort of information that the drawings in EatCT (or any of Kaufman’s, or Onosaka’s, or Oakes’) try to convey.

could you elaborate on this point Bill?

Compare any book illustrated by the above artists, or Tom Gagnon, or Steve Beam, or Steranko, to a magic instruction book illustrated by photographs (Stars of Magic, the Slydini books, one of Kaufman’s Darwin Ortiz books, for example). I think it’s easier to follow drawings. Your mileage may vary.

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**greg manwaring** | 08/13/09 02:18 AM | [link] | [filter]

I could imagine that the photos might have been too dark, or 'busy', or too light, for Andrews to conclude that he should have them converted to line drawings. This would keep all focus on the hands.
Bill Mullins wrote: If you are saying
1. Erdnase had a photographer who knew cards as well as did Erdnase, and
gave a near-perfect set of prints to Smith who did an incredible job of
transferring them to line drawings, OR
2. Erdnase took his own perfect photos, and handed them off to Smith, OR
3. Erdnase provided mediocre photos to Smith, but worked closely with
   him to get good drawings, OR
4. Erdnase and Smith met together and worked out the drawings together,
   without photos.

What about? 5. Erdnase provided mediocre photos to Smith, worked closely with him
to get some good drawings. Erdnase saw how Smith traced the photos. Erdnase went
back home and did the rest of them himself.

David Alexander | 08/13/09 10:00 AM | link | filter

One must remember that to the best of our knowledge Erdnase was an amateur book
publisher and may have approached his book as a one-off project. His original
intention may have been to do one run of a few hundred books, sell them through
whatever sources hed developed (we know he had pupils) and then be done with it.

So, lets take Mullins points. The process of developing the material and writing the
book almost certainly took Erdnase years. He may have taken pictures along the way
which would possibly produce photographs of varying quality. Taking them himself
would have been easy enough with a remote shutter release a bulb under his foot. As
Bill has shown, photography was easy and cheap enough for Erdnase to have taken a
series of pictures and had them developed. He did not need an expert photographer.

As I said earlier, newspapers reproduced photographs at 85 lines per inch because of
the cheapness of newsprint. What they produced was sufficient for something that
would be read and then thrown away. That a more expensive process was available is
clearly evidenced by The Modern Conjuror produced contemporaneously, but that is a
book printed on different quality paper with different presses with a far more
expensive process in making the pictures. The two are comparable if only as evidence
that Erdnase could have produced something similar had he the knowledge,
willingness, and financial resources to do so.

It is possible that the quality of the photographs was not sufficient for reproduction or
that McKinney (and McKinney alone, dont bring in Drake as he wasnt a part of this)
did not have the equipment to either make the necessary halftones or the presses to
run them. Again, comparing a small run, special-interest book that was self-published
and printed by a small printer to a large newspaper or a large book publisher is not
The illustrating artist does not need any special knowledge to produce quality drawings. My wife has no magic knowledge and yet she was able to do all of the illustrations for Randi's book a few years back. How those came about supports Smith's experience. Randi dawdled for a year in producing the material for the book and never got around to producing the reference photography. We showed up at his hotel in Hollywood with the manuscript and pushed him to pose for the reference photos. A pillow on the bed was draped with the coat from his Armani suit to provide a dark background and the reference photos were taken. From them my wife produced the illustrations. The photos were not remotely sufficient to reproduce in the book.

How much card knowledge did Donna Allen have when she produced her beautiful drawings for Expert Card Technique?

The drawings in Erdnase are good? Not compared to Donna Allen's fine work as far as I'm concerned. Smith's work is sufficient for the task.

Your various scenarios are not complete. Smith could have been brought in when Erdnase was told that the photos were not sufficient for reproduction and/or too expensive for his budget to reproduce in higher quality (assuming McKinney had the equipment to make the halftones and the presses to run them and that Erdnase was willing to pay for the more expensive process and more expensive paper) or, Erdnase could have been planning all along that the photos could have been converted to cuts and the photographs were simply sufficient to the task as was our experience with the Randi project.

Number 4 is not the simplest and you draw a conclusion that Smith spent more time with Erdnase because he produced more drawings than he remembered. Again, one meeting is all it would have taken. Smith did a few quick sketches to prove his skill to Erdnase, the photos were handed over, the tracings were done at Smith's studio and later delivered to either Erdnase or McKinney. Smith got a check and that was the end of it. The meeting with Erdnase was memorable to Smith but the art work he produced was so minimal that he didn't bother to get a copy of the book for his portfolio because it wasn't representative of his work. Commercial artists normally keep a representative record of their work for selling future work. Why didn't Smith bother to obtain a copy of the book as reference?

For some reason as yet unexplained you seem to find details in illoes #17-18; 52-54; 77-78; 90; and likely other places are inconsistent with tracing from photos. Sorry Bill, to me that makes no sense. I would suggest, just as an exercise, holding the position of Fig 78 steady for ten minutes so an artist can sketch it up. Far more efficient for Erdnase to have all the poses already done, in photographic reference as the other way he would have to have the poses in his head, or suggested in notes, and it would have been a job of many hours involving prolonged interaction with Smith, something
Jeff Pierce Magic | 08/13/09 10:49 AM | link | filter

Not sure if this means anything or it could mean the un copyrighted images were traced but what I did was take image 11 which is copyrighted and superimposed it over image #9, which is not. With minor variations the two hands look to be the same. Here’s the link to the image.

Jeff
superimposed image

Bill Mullins | 08/13/09 10:50 AM | link | filter

Joe Pecore wrote:

Bill Mullins wrote: If you are saying
1. Erdnase had a photographer who knew cards as well as did Erdnase, and gave a near-perfect set of prints to Smith who did an incredible job of transferring them to line drawings, OR
2. Erdnase took his own perfect photos, and handed them off to Smith, OR
3. Erdnase provided mediocre photos to Smith, but worked closely with him to get good drawings, OR
4. Erdnase and Smith met together and worked out the drawings together, without photos.

What about? 5. Erdnase provided mediocre photos to Smith, worked closely with him to get some good drawings. Erdnase saw how Smith traced the photos. Erdnase went back home and did the rest of them himself.

1. The book itself says that Smith did over 100 drawings from life. For your scenario to be true, this would be 3 misstatements: a. Smith did not do 100 drawings, b. the drawings were not from life, c. Erdnase did some of them. This fails the Occam’s Razor test -- too complicated compared to the facts as we know them.

2. Also, this would mean that Erdnase (who we have no reason to believe is a trained artist) can match the style of Smith so well that there is no obvious stylistic differences. I don’t buy that either.

Bill Mullins | 08/13/09 11:37 AM | link | filter

I appreciate David taking the time to engage my points. I realize that we disagree, and probably neither of us will convince the other, but the discussion continues to be fun
(and I hope that you, David, think so too). Please don't take my enthusiasm for my position as contentiousness -- I certainly don't mean it that way.

Someday, I think a really good panel at one of magic historical meetings would be for two people to take opposite sides of a position on some facet of Erdnase and debate it.

_David Alexander wrote:_ So, let's take Mullins points. The process of developing the material and writing the book almost certainly took Erdnase years. He may have taken pictures along the way which would possibly produce photographs of varying quality. Taking them himself would have been easy enough with a remote shutter release a bulb under his foot. As Bill has shown, photography was easy and cheap enough for Erdnase to have taken a series of pictures and had them developed. He did not need an expert photographer.

I mean "expert" in the sense of knowing how to get the pose into the image. The only way I can get a "good" photograph of my son is to take 50, and throw away 49. Top fashion photographers take many more pictures than they use. In fact, I daresay that any professional photographer who is trying to get a particular image will take multiple exposures to get the one he wants. I don't see any way in which Erdnase could do differently to get the 100 photos necessary for reference for the sketches. Most of the illustrations are from the point of view of the spectator, and the camera would be pointing at you to get the corresponding view. It is very difficult to imagine what the photo will look like before it is taken under those circumstances.

Your various scenarios are not complete. Smith could have been brought in when Erdnase was told that the photos were not sufficient for reproduction and/or too expensive for his budget to reproduce in higher quality (assuming McKinney had the equipment to make the halftones and the presses to run them and that Erdnase was willing to pay for the more expensive process and more expensive paper) or, Erdnase could have been planning all along that the photos could have been converted to cuts and the photographs were simply sufficient to the task as was our experience with the Randi project.

Number 4 is not the simplest and you draw a conclusion that Smith spent more time with Erdnase because he produced more drawings than he remembered. Again, one meeting is all it would have taken. Smith did a few quick sketches to prove his skill to Erdnase, the photos were handed over, the tracings were done at Smiths studio and later delivered to either Erdnase or McKinney. Smith got a check and that was the end of it.

I just don't buy this scenario. Obviously (as you seem to agree), Erdnase spent years on
the material and text. This is his life work. I just don't see him getting the artwork done with such a minimal level of feedback and involvement. Poor illustrations would ruin the book. I think he was more involved in the drawing process than Smith remembered, and the quality of the drawings shows that.

For some reason as yet unexplained you seem to find details in illoes #17-18; 52-54; 77-78; 90; and likely other places are inconsistent with tracing from photos.

I gave explanations for each of these sets of photos in my post HERE. The only way that figs 17 and 18 are traced is that Erdnase took the photo for 17, took off his jacket, put on another jacket in which the right sleeve is significantly larger, reposed his hands, and took the next photo. In fig 22, his thumb is half as wide as the deck, but not in fig 26. In fig 16, the deck's length is less than the width of his hand; in fig 58, the deck's width is about the same as the width of his hand. In fig 61, the deck is about the same length as the distance from the crotch of his right thumb to the end of his thumb nail; in fig 26, the deck is about twice as long as this distance. In fig 64, the rear card is shorter than the front one.

If the photos were traced, the geometry of the hands, clothing and cards and their relative sizes would remain consistent from illustration to illustration. It doesn't. You can't maintain that these are traced from photos without explaining these inconsistencies.

Roger M. | 08/13/09 11:50 AM | link | filter

I believe Erdnase could have taken the photographs required to illustrate his writings over the period of time he was actually writing the book, and taken those photographs himself.

As he completed writing each section, he could have taken the appropriate photographs needed to illustrate that section. A remote bulb release was commonplace, and simple camera operation and film development were hardly difficult to come by in any large American city of the era.

Sitting by a sunny window would have shed plenty of light on the photographs. It would seem unquestionable then, that interior photographs of passable quality were within the realm of the amateur photographer in 1900-1902.

Perhaps Erdnase had intended to use the photographs he had taken in the actual book, or perhaps he had intended to have them rendered as drawings all along. If he had intended to use them as guides for drawings, then no further comment required, as that's exactly what he did.
him that photos using a Brownie size negative, and/or with the books planned paper/screen combination wouldn't reproduce in the book as well as the author required.

At that point Erdnase (a man of quick thought as we see throughout the book) would have decided to have his photos turned into drawings (by M.D. Smith, whom he auditioned in the cold hotel room) and continued towards publication undaunted.

If "from life" only implies that the drawings weren't done "from memory", then it's use is still accurate if M.D. Smith made the drawings from photos given to him by Erdnase.

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**Geno Munari | 08/13/09 11:56 AM | link | filter**

David,

What is the source that Erdnase had pupils?

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**Bill Mullins | 08/13/09 12:46 PM | link | filter**

For people interested in the state of the art in printing technology ca. 1900, browse through THIS -- it is a bound volume of *The Inland and American Printer and Lithographer*, a professional journal for the printing trade which was published in Chicago (and coincidentally, it gives a report of a dinner for members of the Chicago printer's association, and James McKinney attended it).

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**Bill Mullins | 08/13/09 12:51 PM | link | filter**

*Sebastien L. wrote:*

> **JeffS wrote:** As an aside to Mr. Kaufman, please tell me this thread is backed up or in ten years people will be selling bound copies of this thread on Ebay, or whatever has taken the place of Ebay. There is so much information here that it would be a shame to lose it.

> This thread was actually the reason I started looking into how to restore the anonymous posts to their rightful owners. We're not quite there yet but it's quite a bit better than it was.

On the first couple of pages of this thread there are some posts credited to Charlie Chang which are obviously by R. Paul Wilson. Is this on purpose, or a mistake of some sort?

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**Richard Kaufman | 08/13/09 02:29 PM | link | filter**
Must be a mistake!

And, yes, the whole Forum is backed up on a regular basis.

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**David Alexander** | 08/13/09 03:54 PM | link | filter

*Geno Munari wrote:* David,
What is the source that Erdnase had pupils?

Erdnase himself. Who else?

Apparently he had more than one.

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**David Alexander** | 08/13/09 03:57 PM | link | filter

*Jeff Pierce Magic wrote:* Not sure if this means anything or it could mean the un copyrighted images were traced but what I did was take image 11 which is copyrighted and superimposed it over image #9, which is not. With minor variations the two hands look to be the same.

Here's the link to the image.

Jeff

[superimposed image](#)

This is an interesting observation. Thanks, Jeff.

Not to be overly picky, but as I understand the copyright act, the entire book was copyrighted. Putting individual copyright notifications on the various illustrations was unnecessary.

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**Richard Hatch** | 08/13/09 05:14 PM | link | filter

*Geno Munari wrote:* David,
What is the source that Erdnase had pupils?

Geno, p. 73 of the standard editions: "The highest tribute that can be paid to the method is the fact that certain players whom we have instructed, can execute the stock with the greatest facility and yet confess they cannot tell why the particular action produces the result..."

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**David Alexander** | 08/13/09 07:48 PM | link | filter

Yes, that's it. Doubtless you can see the superior attitude that Erdnase takes with those...
Bill wrote:
"I mean "expert" in the sense of knowing how to get the pose into the image. The only way I can get a "good" photograph of my son is to take 50, and throw away 49. Top fashion photographers take many more pictures than they use. In fact, I daresay that any professional photographer who is trying to get a particular image will take multiple exposures to get the one he wants. I don't see any way in which Erdnase could do differently to get the 100 photos necessary for reference for the sketches."

And so what? This was a work of years. He had all the time he needed to get the pictures he wanted. Since the book was self-published he had no one demanding the finished manuscript and illustrations. I fail to see how this is pertinent.

Bill wrote:
Most of the illustrations are from the point of view of the spectator, and the camera would be pointing at you to get the corresponding view. It is very difficult to imagine what the photo will look like before it is taken under those circumstances.

You can position a mirror beside the camera and work from that.

Bill wrote:
The only way that figs 17 and 18 are traced is that Erdnase took the photo for 17, took off his jacket, put on another jacket in which the right sleeve is significantly larger, reposed his hands, and took the next photo. In fig 22, his thumb is half as wide as the deck, but not in fig 26.

OK—figure 17 is a slightly closer view than figure 18. Fig 22 has a different POV than Fig 26 I could go on, but the principle should be obvious. They were to my wife who instantly saw that the POV was different, causing foreshortening in Fig 22.

That, and Smith could have traced the hands and then added the stylized French cuffs and jacket sleeve later. They do vary and this could be easily explained by Smith doing them later, freehand, which would account for the variations in size.

You also have to understand the POV of Figures 17 and 18 to see that a camera was far more practical to capture the pose.
That, and Smith could have traced the hands and then added the stylized French cuffs and jacket sleeve later. They do vary and this could be easily explained by Smith doing them later, freehand, which would account for the variations in size.

If we accept your suggestion above that the photos were taken individually over a period of several years, rather than in one or more sittings within a short period of time, couldn’t any inconsistencies in the shirt/coat sleeve be attributed to the fact that he was wearing different clothes at different times over the course of those years?

-Jim

David Alexander | 08/13/09 08:44 PM | link | filter

Jim Maloney wrote:

David Alexander wrote: And so what? This was a work of years. He had all the time he needed to get the pictures he wanted.

...

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If we accept your suggestion above that the photos were taken individually over a period of several years, rather than in one or more sittings within a short period of time, couldn’t any inconsistencies in the shirt/coat sleeve be attributed to the fact that he was wearing different clothes at different times over the course of those years?

-Jim

Sure. Good point.

Disparity1 | 08/14/09 05:09 PM | link | filter

Hang on a minute. Is the suggestion now that Erdnase shot photographs for the book over a long period of time, all with the long range plan of using them, some number of years later, as the foundation for illustrating the text?

Here’s the thing: David’s written books, I’ve written books -- hell, half the people in this thread have written books or something of substance, and I don’t think a single
one of us would propose that the most sensible way to go about it is to write a little, shoot a little, write a little, shoot a little. We generally either write all the text and shoot photos (or make drawings) to accompany it or we shoot a crapload of photos and write the text from those. But, far apart from Occams' Razor, the notion that all things being equal, the simplest explanation is generally the best one, we're asked to believe that either Erdnase left this equipment set up for a period of years or set it up repeatedly, mirrors and everything, whenever a shot was needed, despite the fact that the book says the drawings were made from life, despite the fact that Marshall Smith remembered drawing the pictures from life, and despite the fact that it's the worst way to do it. Erdnase was obviously very insightful when it came to engineering and efficiency, but I'm asked to consider the idea that when it came to putting a book together, he suddenly "didn't have a thorough understanding of what he was trying to achieve?"

With all due respect, I'm not buying it.

On another note was this:

Yes, that's it. Doubtless you can see the superior attitude that Erdnase takes with those he sees as beneath him because they don't understand the math.

It's not doubtless to me, because I perceive no superior attitude in that simple statement, nor do I see a belief that anyone else was beneath him. What I see is the likelihood that there were several people to whom Erdnase showed the system but didn't immediately explain the principle, and without the immediate analysis, it may very well have been difficult to perceive. That's not to say they wouldn't have been able to given a few minutes to think about it. All he's saying here, as far as I can tell, is that the method isn't readily apparent, which is as it should be.

David Alexander wrote: And so what? This was a work of years. He had all the time he needed to get the pictures he wanted. Since the book was self-published he had no one demanding the finished manuscript and illustrations. I fail to see how this is pertinent.

It's pertinent in that any theory about who the author is should be self-consistent. Did he have ample financial resources (as did W. E. Sanders)? Then why did he have the book printed so cheaply? Did he spend time (several years) putting it together? Then why did he essentially "remainder" it so soon after publication?
Bill wrote:
Most of the illustrations are from the point of view of the spectator, and the camera would be pointing at you to get the corresponding view. It is very difficult to imagine what the photo will look like before it is taken under those circumstances.

You can position a mirror beside the camera and work from that.

True, you can, but it's very difficult to get the "right" image.

Bill wrote:
The only way that figs 17 and 18 are traced is that Erdnase took the photo for 17, took off his jacket, put on another jacket in which the right sleeve is significantly larger, reposed his hands, and took the next photo. In fig 22, his thumb is half as wide as the deck, but not in fig 26.

OK-figure 17 is a slightly closer view than figure 18.

No it isn't, because if it were, the deck in 17 would be bigger than it is in 18 -- and it isn't.

Fig 22 has a different POV than Fig 26

Not so much that you get a factor of 2 to 1 in the width of the thumb

I could go on, but the principle should be obvious. They were to my wife who instantly saw that the POV was different, causing foreshortening in Fig 22.

Foreshortening comes into play when an object recedes in the field of view of the image. I specifically looked for details which went across the FOV to make this point -- the corners of the deck which define its width are more or less at the same distance from the point of view of the "camera" or artist, likewise the sides of the thumbnail which define its width. These dimensions don't foreshorten. If I had compared the length of the thumbs, or the lengths of the deck, your criticism would be valid.

That, and Smith could have traced the hands and then added the stylized French cuffs and jacket sleeve later. They do vary and this could be easily explained by Smith doing them later, freehand, which would account for the variations in size.

This is true -- the details of the sleeve aren't important to the information that must be conveyed in the illustration. But to me, this is more supportive of the idea that Smith drew the life and Erdnase focused on the critical features.
together, and Smith did the sleeves at a later point in time. If Erdnase gave him a stack of photos to trace, it would have been just as easy to trace sleeves accurately as it would have been to freehand them.

You also have to understand the POV of Figures 17 and 18 to see that a camera was far more practical to capture the pose.

Practical? Was Erdnase holding the camera in his teeth? The POV of the camera for these shots would be somewhere behind Erdnase's shoulder blades. (If he had taken a picture from in front of his chest, he would have had to use a very short focal length lens, so much so that "fisheye" distortion would occur, and the picture would look distorted).

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/14/09 06:29 PM | link | filter

Jim Maloney wrote:

David Alexander wrote: And so what? This was a work of years. He had all the time he needed to get the pictures he wanted.

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If we accept your suggestion above that the photos were taken individually over a period of several years, rather than in one or more sittings within a short period of time, couldn't any inconsistencies in the shirt/coat sleeve be attributed to the fact that he was wearing different clothes at different times over the course of those years?

-Jim

Not in this case, because figs 17 and 18 are two elements of the same sleight, 18 being a fraction of a second after 17. It doesn't make sense to photograph them separately.

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/14/09 06:34 PM | link | filter

Richard Hatch wrote: p. 73 of the standard editions: "The highest tribute that can be paid to the method is the fact that certain players whom we have instructed, can execute the stock with the greatest facility and yet confess they cannot tell why the particular action produces the result."
David Alexander wrote: Yes, that’s it. Doubtless you can see the superior attitude that Erdnase takes with those he sees as beneath him because they don’t understand the math.

I don’t see any "attitude" here. Erdnase is proud of the fact that, while he has given the theoretical basis for the stack, his instructions are clear enough that it works at a "cookbook" level -- follow these instructions and the stack works automatically.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/14/09 06:57 PM | link | filter

As Bill pointed out - not everyone can make a lightbulb but many have learned to change a bulb.

Jim Maloney | 08/14/09 08:16 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote:

Jim Maloney wrote:

David Alexander wrote: And so what? This was a work of years. He had all the time he needed to get the pictures he wanted.

That, and Smith could have traced the hands and then added the stylized French cuffs and jacket sleeve later. They do vary and this could be easily explained by Smith doing them later, freehand, which would account for the variations in size.

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-Jim

Not in this case, because figs 17 and 18 are two elements of the same sleight, 18 being a fraction of a second after 17. It doesn't make sense to photograph them separately.

Considering he wouldn't have gotten the instant feedback on the photos like we do
today, isn’t it possible that he got the photos back from the developer and realized that only one of those two photos was good and that he would need to reshoot? -Jim

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**Bill Mullins | 08/28/09 01:43 PM | link | filter**

When Martin Gardner was doing the original research on Milton Franklin Andrews, one of his leads that petered out was trying to find out what happened to MFA’s daughter, Rosella. I believe in "The Annotated Erdnase" by Darwin Ortiz, it says that relatives of MFA told him (or Jay Marshall -- the text is at home and I’m at work, going off memory) that Rosella ended up in Los Angeles, somehow associated with the police department.

At Ancestry.com, I found a passport application for Rosella, and records of a trip to England she took in 1923. These included her birthdate (21 Aug 1896) and a photograph. If you go to the Social Security Death Index, the only Rosella that they have with that birthdate is Rosell Puthoff, who died in Cuyahoga Falls, OH in Feb 1979.

Is anyone in the LA area inclined to check city directories from 1930’s-1940’s to see if Rosella Andrews or Puthoff can be located, and if so, associated with the police dept?

Anyone in OH willing to look up obits in the local papers to see if this is 1. the right Rosealla, and 2. does she have any living descendants?

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**Jim Maloney | 08/28/09 02:05 PM | link | filter**

Regarding obits, you should be able to contact the local library and request a copy. Shouldn’t be too difficult since you know the exact date of her death. Most likely you’ll just need to send a SASE. I’ve done this with several of the Leipziger and Chapman relatives in various cities.

-Jim

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**Jim Maloney | 08/28/09 02:08 PM | link | filter**

Also, Rosella Puthoff seems to be listed on some family trees over at Ancestry. Might be worth contacting those people to get more info.

-Jim

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**Bill Mullins | 08/28/09 04:40 PM | link | filter**

I don’t know the exact date of her death, only the month (but I have written to the Akron library to see if they can help).
My account with Ancestry.com doesn't include the forums and community, so I can't get in contact with the other people researching Rosella Puthoff. If you are able to, please email me off-line.

Bill

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**Jim Maloney** | 08/28/09 06:37 PM | link | filter

Sorry, but I don't have access either.

I read over your post too quickly and thought that the SSDI gave the exact date -- I see now that they only have the month/year. Still, it may be helpful. Also, if you're willing to shell out a bit of cash (I believe it's about $30 or so), you should be able to obtain a copy of her social security application, which may provide some additional info.

Is there anything in the 1930 census?

-Jim

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**Jim Maloney** | 08/28/09 06:44 PM | link | filter

Also, the SSDI lists several woman born on that date with the name "Rose" -- it's possible that one of them is the woman in question as well. One was even in California (albeit, Sacramento).

-Jim

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/29/09 05:05 PM | link | filter

I heard back from the Akron library. Rosella Puthoff was born in Chillicothe, not Holyoke, so she isn't MFA's daughter.

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**JeffS** | 09/01/09 12:02 AM | link | filter

This is a bit off the current topic but Allan Holtz, who runs a comic strip history blog called Strippers Guide, was kind enough to provide some info on the death of Louis Dalrymple in answer to a question that I asked him. If you click the link below and scroll down to the entry for 8/31/09 there are two articles about his illness and his NY Times obituary. I think that the connection between Erdnase and Dalrymple is one that deserves further attention so that is what I am working on now.

[www.strippersguide.blogspot.com](http://www.strippersguide.blogspot.com)
Richard Hatch | 09/01/09 12:48 AM | link | filter

Jeff, I agree that the Dalrymple angle is one that could well bear fruit. My understanding is that his death was likely due to syphilis (as mentioned in the link) and perhaps that had something to do with the unusual terms of his divorce (not allowing him to remarry in New York State... for health reasons perhaps?). I have been unable to pinpoint the time when he would have been active working for the Chicago Tribune as noted in one of the articles in your link and elsewhere. If it was circa 1901 and he left abruptly to return east, that would be exceedingly interesting, given his purported "relation" to Erdnase. The fact that his name came up in conversation with Smith and was recalled by Smith 40 years later seems telling. My pet theory (admittedly rather far fetched in the absence of any evidence!) is that Dalrymple provided the initial sketches for the book, then abandoned the project when he left town, forcing Erdnase to contract Smith to complete it. That could explain the stylistic discrepancies, the erratic copyright notices, the conversational reference to Dalrymple, and the fact that Smith was surprised to learn the book had 101 illustrations when he didn't recall making nearly that many. It would, however, not explain why the title page attributes all the illustrations to Smith, though if the author were concerned about concealing his identity (and I am not convinced he was to any great extent) and was related to Dalrymple, putting the latter's name on the title page would likely have jeopardized his anonymity more than putting Smith's name there (though putting a fictitious artist's name would have provided even greater protection, which is why I have trouble accepting the theories that the author wanted absolute anonymity. If so, putting Smith's name on the title page was potentially a big risk, in my opinion).

The two big Dalrymple questions I would like answered are: 1) When did he work for the Chicago Tribune? and 2) Who were his maternal grandparents (his paternal genealogy is quite complete, but I know only approximately where and when his mother was born - Niagara County, New York, circa 1839 - and not the names or details of her parents. I also don't know when or where she died - she is not buried with Dalrymple's father - and that information might lead to her parents' names via a death certificate. From Dalrymple's obituaries, it seems she did not survive him, as she is not mentioned in them as surviving him...). Any help answering either of those questions would be greatly appreciated!

David Alexander | 09/01/09 01:14 AM | link | filter

Dick,

Some time back I had someone on one the Internet genealogy boards send me an email claiming Dalrymple was related to the Edgerton family. That may provide a
convenient connection to my candidate and I’m happy to see this examined.

The idea that Dalrymple did the original art is, well, fanciful is a word that comes to mind.

And putting Smith’s name on the cover, as I’ve mentioned to you before, would not have lead to Erdnase’s real identity because, almost certainly, Smith would have known him as Mr. Andrews. I suspect this was true for the printer as well and why the reversing of the name was easily accepted by them, or at the least, unquestioned.

Both the printer and the illustrator were doing a straightforward job for money. The book wasn’t illegal, wasn’t controversial and wasn’t porn, so they simply did what they were hired to do and got on with it. The author paid, the checks cleared and there was no curiosity about yet another author-published book since everything was paid for in advance, that being the nature of self-published books.

Richard Hatch | 09/01/09 01:37 AM | link | filter

David Alexander wrote: Both the printer and the illustrator were doing a straightforward job for money.

And exactly how do we know this?

McKinney, the printer, not only allowed the author to submit the copyright application in care of his address (indeed, may well have submitted the copyright application for the author) but was selling copies of the book after publication, hardly a common practice for a disinterested party, in my opinion. McKinney’s partner, Galloway, had a first edition copy of Erdnase in his library years later. Again, not usual practice for a disinterested party.

Certainly these facts do not imply that the printer knew the author’s identity nor that it was not a simple ”job for money.” But I think it worth considering ”why this printer, why this city, why this time, why this artist, etc.” in an effort to gain a better understanding of the work’s history. To assume that it was a simple job for hire risks ignoring information of possible interest.

And even if neither McKinney nor Smith knew the artist’s real name, surely anyone tracking them down in 1902 (once the book was published, McKinney’s name and Smith’s name were attached to it for anyone looking into... Unfortunately, no one thought to look until Gardner took up the chase 40 years later...) could surely have gotten a great deal of useful information in tracking the author down: the hotel and time frame of the meetings, a fresh physical description, the exact name he used, the bank he wrote the check on, the exact nature of his claimed relationship to Dalrymple,
etc. McKinney and later Drake are presumed to have had dealings with the author after publication (Drake as late as 1905) and those would have yielded useful clues. In your scenario, as I understand it, Drake had to deal with Erdnase's attorney's, at the very least. Just knowing the law firm would be an interesting detail, now lost to us...

David Alexander | 09/01/09 04:14 PM | link | filter

And exactly how do we know this?

Primarily because this was a self-published book, as announced on the fly title. McKinney, as I understand his business, was not a publisher so he would not have bankrolled the book. He was paid for his services in advance.

McKinney, the printer, not only allowed the author to submit the copyright application in care of his address (indeed, may well have submitted the copyright application for the author) but was selling copies of the book after publication, hardly a common practice for a disinterested party, in my opinion. McKinney's partner, Galloway, had a first edition copy of Erdnase in his library years later. Again, not usual practice for a disinterested party.

You make the assumption that McKinney allowed the author to submit the copyright application in care of his address when it was possibly part of the service McKinney offered the self-publishing author in order to get his business. Everything in one place would have appealed to someone interesting in privacy and it removed the necessity of Erdnase using his own address on the copyright form.

There's no way to know at this remove.

When I was running my niche publishing business I produced over 40 books. Even though I have excellent credit and was known to my book manufacturer and a successful small publisher, full payment was required before the books were shipped to me. Indeed, even after using the same book manufacturer for years I still had to send a 50% deposit with the order.

Erdnase was not a publisher. He was an author doing a vanity book of limited interest to a narrow market. Any printer would have required payment in advance. There's no evidence that I'm aware of that McKinney did any marketing of the book. He did, apparently, provide storage and shipping of the book. Again, a service for payment. It is still done today by some printers.
Further, it depends on how you define disinterested. McKinney was interested in selling his services, so, in that definition, he was not disinterested in keeping a customer happy and spending money.

As I've said before, Erdnase could have easily cut a deal with McKinney to handle storage and distribution for him while he was on the road. Or McKinney, to get the business, could have offered the service for a small additional fee, hence, the checking account which allowed Erdnase to work by mail. Erdnase simply sent a check to McKinney with instructions where to send books.

When I was producing wall art my printer kept one or two copies of everything he printed for me. He used them as examples of the quality of his work. Galloway could have done that. Most printers do that to one degree or another.

*****************************************
Certainly these facts do not imply that the printer knew the author's identity nor that it was not a simple "job for money." But I think it worth considering "why this printer, why this city, why this time, why this artist, etc." in an effort to gain a better understanding of the work's history. To assume that it was a simple job for hire risks ignoring information of possible interest.

*****************************************
You're asking questions that cannot be answered since those answers were in the minds of people long dead who left no paper trail that we have yet discovered. Unless there is an unknown cache of letters or an undiscovered diary that comes on the scene, I can't think of a way to determine those answers short of a seance.

*****************************************
And even if neither McKinney nor Smith knew the artist's real name, surely anyone tracking them down in 1902 (once the book was published, McKinney's name and Smith's name were attached to it for anyone looking into... Unfortunately, no one thought to look until Gardner took up the chase 40 years later...) could surely have gotten a great deal of useful information in tracking the author down: the hotel and time frame of the meetings, a fresh physical description, the exact name he used, the bank he wrote the check on, the exact nature of his claimed relationship to Dalrymple, etc. McKinney and later Drake are presumed to have had dealings with the author after publication (Drake as late as 1905) and those would have yielded useful clues. In your scenario, as I understand it, Drake had to deal with Erdnase's attorney's, at the very least. Just knowing the law firm would have been an interesting detail, now lost to us...

*****************************************
The book did not impinge on the general magic community's conscience until the ad in, what, November? The amateur magic community of that time was quite small and the
books were sold to amateur magicians? No one knows.

Had Martin Gardner been an experienced interviewer then we might have had more information, a better and more detailed description for example, but we dont.

Knowing Erdnases attorney would have yielded no information, given the attorney/client privilege. An attorney would not have even acknowledged Erdnase as a client. As Ive mentioned before, the bank, for similar reasons, would be a dead end as well.

Then theres Dai Vernon, the books Number One disciple and proponent who, apparently, made little effort to track down Erdnase. Drake was the logical place to start. Vernon, who was more than willing to drop a paying silhouette gig and drive hours to hunt down a gambler who might have some insight into a sleight (the Kennedy Center Deal being an example) apparently made little to no effort to find The Master.

In 1933 Vernon was cutting at the Chicago Century of Progress. He had plenty of opportunity to drop by Drakes offices in a search for Erdnase. As best we can determine, he never did. Why was that?

The discrepancies, if there are any that are real, are easily explained by a tired artist and the end of a long day being a bit sloppy on a job that wasnt that important since the author/publisher couldnt afford to pay him to actually draw from life.

And while a good deal of time, discussion and conjecture have been spent on the illustrations not a bit of it brings us any closer to Erdnases identity.

As I said earlier, I did receive an email from someone who claims that the Dalrymplies were related to the Edgertons which may provide a connection to my candidate. Its worth checking out.

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**Bill Mullins** | 09/02/09 06:13 PM | [link] | [filter]

This link shows a Dalrymple cartoon from the Chicago Trib dated 11/26/1902.

I found others in the Trib at 9/12/1902 (from Philly Inquirer), 9/23/1902 (from Philly Inquirer), 10/21/1902 (labelled "Chicago" -- his first for the Trib?), 10/22/1902 (Chi), 10/23/1902(Chi), 10/24/1902(Chi), 10/25/1902 (starting with this one, there is no city below sig), 10/26/1902, 10/27/1902,10/28/1902/ 10/29/1902, 10/30/1902, 10/31/1902, etc . . . They seem to continue until 01/17/1903, after which I can't find any by Dalrymple.

Interestingly, the cartoon for 10/26/1902 shows a right hand and arm (whose sleeve is labelled "Chicago Democracy") holding a hand of five cards: 3 C, A C, J C, 8 C, and K D;
with portraits of Peter Kiolbassa, Louis Altpeter, Tom Barrett, C. W. Rohe, and E. M Lahiff, respectively. The title is "Only a "Four Flush" ". There are no stylistic similarities to speak of between this illustration, and the illoes in EatCT.

Dalrymple's mother was Adelia Dalrymple (born Delia m. Seeley), born ca. 1838–1840. In 1900, she was still alive, living with her daughter and son-in-law Kate and James Byron, in Deming, NM. She married William S. Dalrymple 11/15/1856 in Henry County, IL. I found a Cordelia Seeley living with a family of Herringtons in Niagara County, NY in the 1850 census. The names of minor children are not listed in the 1840 census.

David Alexander | 09/02/09 10:28 PM | link | filter

Dalrymple did not have an easy life, as this article shows:

Washington Post 11/26/1905
Louis Dalrymple, the cartoonist, whose wife is a Baltimore woman, was removed from his home at 138 East 29th Street this afternoon, to a Long Island sanitarium. He is said to be violently insane, and small hope is given for his recovery. His condition had given much anxiety to his friends for several weeks. He brooded, they say, over the troubles caused by his divorce from his first wife, formerly Miss Letitia Carpenter, of Brooklyn. He became violent to-day, and was found wandering in the street near his home.

Dalrymple was married to Miss Carpenter about fifteen years ago, at the time when his work was making him well known to the public. Shortly after the marriage Mrs. Dalrymple obtained a divorce. The court denied Dalrymple the right to marry again in this state and awarded $75 a week alimony to his wife.

Seven years later Dalrymple married Miss Ann Good of Baltimore. The wedding took place in New Jersey. He moved to Greenwich Connecticut. In the years that followed he worked at different times for papers in Chicago, Philadelphia and Baltimore. Then he drifted back to New York. He had become a prey to all kinds of hallucinations, and was so changed that his friends hardly knew him. [Dalrymple was one of the best artists working for Puck and Life in the 1890s-ed.]

Richard Hatch | 09/03/09 11:51 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: This link shows a Dalrymple cartoon from the Chicago Trib dated 11/26/1902.

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Interestingly, the cartoon for 10/26/1902 shows a right hand and arm (whose sleeve is labelled "Chicago Democracy") holding a hand of five cards: 3 C, A C, J C, 8 C, and K D; with portraits of Peter Kiolbassa, Louis Altpeter, Tom Barrett, C. W. Rohe, and E. M Lahiff, respectively. The title is "Only a "Four Flush" ". There are no stylistic similarities to speak of between this illustration, and the illoes in EatCT.

Dalrymple's mother was Adelia Dalrymple (born Delia m. Seeley), born ca. 1838-1840. In 1900, she was still alive, living with her daughter and son-in-law Kate and James Byron, in Deming, NM. She married William S. Dalrymple 11/15/1856 in Henry County, IL. I found a Cordelia Seeley living with a family of Herringtons in Niagara County, NY in the 1850 census. The names of minor children are not listed in the 1840 census.

Bill, great stuff, thanks. The Chicago dates for Dalrymple were news to me and would seem to make it even more unlikely that he had anything to do with illustrating the book, given it was coming off the presses in March 1902. Adelia Seeley in the 1900 Census in New Mexico was also welcome news and may lead to some genealogical progress on that front, thanks! As a caveat, however, on looking at Dalrymple's illustrations and not seeing any stylistic similarity to the illustrations in EATCT, I have 5 other books illustrated by Marshall D. Smith circa 1902-1905 and none of those illustrations bear any stylistic similarity to the technical drawings in EATCT either. Of course, Smith himself did not recognize the illustrations in EATCT, leading some (including Vernon) to question whether he even did them...

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**Geno Munari** | 09/03/09 02:41 PM | link | filter

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* His candidate has (and always has had) the one thing no other candidate has---a deck of cards in his hand. Despite the differences between Marshall Smith’s recollection of what Erdnase looked like (and he couldn’t even remember having illustrated the book at first)

Richard has a very good point here.

With all due respects I find great interest in the research many have provided. Some of you guys really are interesting and I hope sometime to meet you in person.

But Richard’s quote hits home. Not one other candidate, besides Andrews, can be connected to a deck of cards. And after looking at the evidence available to me it is a very compelling argument that MFA was indeed Erdnase.
For instance: Andrews's family having knowledge of his magic books and tricks.

2. Testimony from Harte (Harto)
3. Testimony from Dunham.
4. Testimony from Pratt.
5. MFA's use of a form of anagram on many instances.
6. The police finding books on magic in his belongings. Why would MFA carry books like that around if he was just a card cheat?
7. Nothing more has been heard of the author EATCT, since MLF's death.
8. No one has claimed authorship, nor is there any hint of the author ever signing a copy. Surely, if the person writing the book had lived a normal life someone would have claimed authorship. The author was dead and probably never signed a copy. No other claimies were made by anyone else especially from those who were associated with MFA, such as Pratt et al.
9. It was never reported in the tome TMWWE about the private cipher code book MFA had in his belongings and reported in the newspaper. This topic has not even thoroughly discussed or researched.
10. The comments that Walter Gibson made about Erdnase pointing to MFA.
11. Even Smith's commets about Erdnase were no totally clear in his own mind.
12. MFA like to watch magic acts. (see below about Del Adelphia)

Also Whaley writes of loose ends such as:
1. The Andrews and Walsh families. Connie Barrett says Ed Minkley is unwilling to be interveiwed.
2. Info on George Taylor
3. The allegation about Hilliar's pirated books that he brought to Drake.
4. What were August Roterberg's activities in Chicago around 1901-1902. The Card in Hank effect in Expert was in Roterberg's book, New Era Card Tricks, called Penetration of Matter, and uses the same value and black color card, a 5, in the drawing.
5. Edwin Hood who claimed to be a long time friend of Erdnase.
6. The letters of Harte (Harto) that disappeared and never found. Some letters were bought possibly by Waldo Logan and J. Elder Blackledge.
7. Info on Nulda Petrie/Eva Howard. Why is the name Nulda unique to only her. It does not seem to be used any other person.
8. Julia Darby and why did MFA carry press clippings about her missing trunk.
9. Did Charles Ellis leave the US?
10. Del Adelphia and Hugh Johnston's claime they met Erdnase when they were playing the Empire Theater in Denver. We know MFA caught ever magic act possible. MFA was in Colorado then.

And there are more.....Respectfully. GM
Richard Hatch wrote: Jeff, I agree that the Dalrymple angle is one that could well bear fruit. My understanding is that his death was likely due to syphilis (as mentioned in the link) and perhaps that had something to do with the unusual terms of his divorce (not allowing him to remarry in New York State... for health reasons perhaps?). I have been unable to pinpoint the time when he would have been active working for the Chicago Tribune as noted in one of the articles in your link and elsewhere. If it was circa 1901 and he left abruptly to return east, that would be exceedingly interesting, given his purported "relation" to Erdnase. The fact that his name came up in conversation with Smith and was recalled by Smith 40 years later seems telling. My pet theory (admittedly rather far fetched in the absence of any evidence!) is that Dalrymple provided the initial sketches for the book, then abandoned the project when he left town, forcing Erdnase to contract Smith to complete it. That could explain the stylistic discrepancies, the erratic copyright notices, the conversational reference to Dalrymple, and the fact that Smith was surprised to learn the book had 101 illustrations when he didn’t recall making nearly that many. It would, however, not explain why the title page attributes all the illustrations to Smith, though if the author were concerned about concealing his identity (and I am not convinced he was to any great extent) and was related to Dalrymple, putting the latter’s name on the title page would likely have jeopardized his anonymity more than putting Smith’s name there (though putting a fictitious artist’s name would have provided even greater protection, which is why I have trouble accepting the theories that the author wanted absolute anonymity. If so, putting Smith’s name on the title page was potentially a big risk, in my opinion).

The two big Dalrymple questions I would like answered are: 1) When did he work for the Chicago Tribune? and 2) Who were his maternal grandparents (his paternal genealogy is quite complete, but I know only approximately where and when his mother was born - Niagara County, New York, circa 1839 - and not the names or details of her parents. I also don’t know when or where she died - she is not buried with Dalrymple’s father - and that information might lead to her parents’ names via a death certificate. From Dalrymple’s obituaries, it seems she did not survive him, as she is not mentioned in them as surviving him...). Any help answering either of those questions would be greatly appreciated!

Richard,

I think the Dalrymple connection could be an excellent clue. One of the first things that occurred to me when I first learned of it was that it should be possible to find the names of all the men related, either by blood or marriage, to Louis Dalrymple or his wives who were the proper age in 1902 to fit Smith’s description. I’m sure it would not be a small list but it wouldn’t be huge either. Those of us who don't favor a particular
proving that they could not have been in Chicago at the time the drawings were produced. It wouldn't prove it conclusively but it would lend weight to any proposed candidate if they could be proven to be related to Dalrynple. I am looking into the genealogy as well and will share whatever I can find.

Jeff

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**JeffS** | 09/03/09 10:39 PM | [link] | [filter]

With all due respects I find great interest in the research many have provided. Some of you guys really are interesting and I hope sometime to meet you in person.

Geno,

I feel the same way. This mystery has so many facets and the number of different disciplines that go into investigating it is amazing.
To that end I propose, one of these years, a mini-Erdnase convention in Chicago. I think it would be interesting to have as many people as can make it share their findings and views. New avenues could be discussed and research tasks could be divided up. Also we would be in the right city for further research. Those who could not make it could possibly participate via video chat. This is just my two cents but I'd be interested to know what you guys think.

Jeff

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**Richard Hatch** | 09/03/09 11:50 PM | [link] | [filter]

*Geno Munari wrote:* Not one other candidate, besides Andrews, can be connected to a deck of cards. And after looking at the evidence available to me it is a very compelling argument that MFA was indeed Erdnase.

For instance: Andrews's family having knowledge of his magic books and tricks.

2. Testimony from Harte (Harto)
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7. Info on Nulda Petrie/Eva Howard. Why is the name Nulda unique to only her. It does not seem to be used any other person.

8. Julia Darby and why did MFA carry press clippings about her missing trunk.

9. Did Charles Ellis leave the US?

10. Del Adelphia and Hugh Johnston’s claim they met Erdnase when they were playing the Empire Theater in Denver. We know MFA caught ever magic act possible. MFA was in Colorado then.

And there are more.....Respectfully. GM

Hi Geno, thanks for weighing in on this topic of mutual interest. As you know, I have been rather critical of the MFA theory, though I do find him still to be a "person of interest" in this saga. However, I’ll take a moment to comment on some of your points above:

2. Harte told several people he was in contact with Erdnase. That does not have anything to do with MFA. He told no one that MFA=Andrews. Pratt is the only one who made that connection and deserves credit for leading Gardner to that theory of authorship.

3. Durham said Harto told him he had contact with Erdnase. No connection to MFA from Durham...
he is caught in several lies, such as telling Gardner he knew nothing about any articles in the press about MFA, even though he had already sold the Malted Milk Murder article to Kanter, without ever mentioning it to Gardner. Everything Pratt told Gardner about MFA that can be verified came from that article, including a few things that are not true. It is possible that Pratt knew MFA, though he never claimed to. Instead, he claimed to have been friends with the Taylor brothers, who were friends of MFA. MFA would show the Taylor boys moves, and they would show Pratt. Later Pratt claimed to recognize some of those moves in the book and made the connection (he claimed) that MFA=Andrews. The photo he sold Kanter claiming it was Erdnase is almost certainly a photo of Pratt's older brother. It is certainly not MFA (this is the frontispiece photo in TMWWE). I credit Pratt with being the first to connect MFA to Erndase, but I don't have any high degree of confidence in his testimony, considering it conjecture, based on his reading of the Malted Milk Murder article.

5. Can you give us some examples? MFA gives several aliases in his confession/alibi letters. None of them Erdnase, and I don’t recall that any of them were anagrams of his name either, though I could be wrong.

6. Not sure what this proves since we don’t know what the books were. If one was EATCT, that would certainly be of interest to his case... But MFA's older brother, who went to California to collect his belongings and advised him to lay low in Australia till the heat was off (evidence of a fairly close filial bond, I think) told Gardner he knew nothing about a book his brother was supposed to have written...

7. This is a strong circumstantial argument in favor of MFA, who conveniently died before the book became a best seller...

8. With more than 3 years after publication for MFA to claim authorship and sign a few copies, I’m not sure this helps bolster his case. I know of at least one copy of the first edition that has "E. S. Andrews" written on the title page (reported in an issue of The Magical Bookie). I'd like to find that copy. Doesn’t mean it is a copy signed by the author, more likely an addition by a later owner who recognized or read about the name reversal, but I'd sure like to see it!

9. This is interesting, but not sure where it leads..

10. Gibson’s comments led Gardner to Pratt, who, like Gardner, lived in Philadelphia, so that is a dead end (Gibson’s info came from Pratt). Strangely, in Radner's book on Poker ghosted by Gibson, he quotes from EATCT and credits the authorship to James Andrews, not MFA! Possibly Gibson was confused due to Gardner’s theory of James Andrews being a potential candidate, as published in Gibson’s CONJURERS MAGAZINE prior to the Radner book.

11. Gardner at the time called Smith’s recollection "clear as a bell" and got a very good physical description which remains consistent through subsequent interrogation, and is at variance with the known facts (age and height) of MFA. And Smith is careful to distinguish what he does recall from what he is unsure of...

12. I’m pretty sure this has been discussed before, but Hugh Johnston was just 11 years old when MFA died and the Empress Theater where he recalled meeting Erdnase backstage was not built until two years after MFA died and didn’t change its name to the Empress till several years after that. So if Johnston was introduced to Erdnase back
been long dead.

Phew! Back to packing for the TAOM!
PS: As I see it, here are the strong points in favor of the theory of MFA authorship:
1. Last name Andrews
2. Knowledge of material in the book (though he got caught doing the spread, which is not mentioned in the book). Another way of saying this: he is the only current candidate in whose hands we can place a deck of cards
3. Death in 1905 before the book became popular...
Those pro points must be balanced against the many negative points: Youth and lack of education in contrast to the mature voice and sophisticated original techniques in the book, lack of credible testimony tying him to the book, variance in age and height with the testimony of the only eyewitness to the creation of the book, Marshall Smith. I’ll raise a point on the MFA theory that I don’t think has come up before: There was a nationwide manhunt for MFA after he became the prime suspect in several killings. Surely the police forces at the time interviewed as many known associates of MFA as they could find in their hunt for him. His murder/suicide at the end of that manhunt was a front page story for weeks nationwide, perhaps comparable in our day to the O.J. Simpson saga. Does anyone else find it strange that in their hunt for information on MFA, no one ever identified him as Erdnase (if, indeed, he was Erdnase?) Wouldn’t MFA have found it helpful to use the book (assuming it was one of the ones he had with him when he died) to teach his gambling partner Ellis (whom he tried to murder) better card technique? I believe the police also found several decks of marked cards in his possession. Erdnase discusses marked cards in a dismissive way in his book, would Erdnase have had several decks on him several years later (oh, how the mighty have fallen... The "expert" is caught doing the spread...)?

Richard Hatch | 09/04/09 12:04 AM | link | filter

JeffS wrote: I think the Dalrymple connection could be an excellent clue. One of the first things that occurred to me when I first learned of it was that it should be possible to find the names of all the men related, either by blood or marriage, to Louis Dalrymple or his wives who were the proper age in 1902 to fit Smith’s description. I’m sure it would not be a small list but it wouldn’t be huge either. Those of us who don’t favor a particular candidate could then begin to narrow down the list by physical description or by proving that they could not have been in Chicago at the time the drawings were produced. It wouldn’t prove it conclusively but it would lend weight to any proposed candidate if they could be proven to be related to Dalrynple. I am looking into the genealogy as well and will share whatever I can find.
Jeff

Jeff, this exactly parallels my own thinking, which is how I stumbled upon Edwin
Summer Andrews, my current favorite candidate. If you go to the Illinois Marriage Index
(http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/depar...riage.html) and enter a groom named Andrews and a bride named Seely (one of several variant spellings used by Dalryple's mother), up pop two unions, the second being the marriage of Edwin Summer Andrews to Dollie F Seely in Whiteside County in 1898. At the time I was trying to connect James Dewitt Andrews, an Illinois professor of Post-Graduate Jurisprudence and author of several treatises on the law published in Chicago in the 1890s, to Dalrymple and since he was born and raised in Whiteside County, this seemed worth pursing. But the more I learned about this particular E. S. Andrews, the more he matched the profile of the author based on what I knew (age, places and times of occupation, etc.). Andrews is not a common name and the odds of an E. S. Andrews who may be related by marriage to Dalrymple and moved to Chicago in the fall of 1901 (just prior to the book's publication there) and moved away (to San Francisco) in February 1903, the month the book drops in price from $2 to just $1, that price being offered initially by an obscure magic dealer living on the same street as this E. S. Andrews, just a few blocks north of him (rather than by a big dealer downtown like Roterberg or Vernello) is something I still find incredible if it is just a coincidence (and it could be!). If the Seel(e)y genealogy could be completed to link Dollie to Adelia as cousins or second cousins (close enough to have known each other... both families came from upstate New York and settled in adjoining counties in Western Illinois at about the same time), then I would be convinced that we "have our man" even without being able to place a deck of cards in his hands.

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**Richard Hatch** | 09/04/09 01:49 AM | [link] | [filter]

*Richard Hatch wrote:* 10. Gibson's comments led Gardner to Pratt, who, like Gardner, lived in Philadelphia, so that is a dead end (Gibson's info came from Pratt). Strangely, in Radner's book on Poker ghosted by Gibson, he quotes from EATCT and credits the authorship to James Andrews, not MFA! Possibly Gibson was confused due to Gardner's theory of James Andrews being a potential candidate, as published in Gibson's CONJURERS MAGAZINE prior to the Radner book.

Whoops, quoting myself to post a correction since I can't edit the original. I meant to say (it is late!) that "Pratt, like Gibson, lived in Philadelphia." Gardner, of course, lived in Chicago at that time (1946). At the SAM convention where Gardner arranged to have Marshall Smith make an appearance, Gibson told Gardner that he should get in touch with Pratt, who claimed to know who wrote the book. Gardner contacted magic dealer Mike Kanter, who put him in touch with Pratt, eventually leading Gardner to the MFA theory of authorship by following up on Pratt's hints about MFA (all culled from The Malted Milk Murderer article. NB: This article does NOT mention Erdnase. Pratt does deserve credit for being first to make the Erdnase=MFA connection and leading Gardner to it).
Here's some background on Adelia Dalrymple and her descendants:

She lived, according to the 1900 census, with her daughter and son-in-law, Kate (Catherine E.) and James P. Byron (a druggist and Dr.), and their son, Ralph, in Deming, NM. In 1900, Deming was part of Grant County. In 1901, that part of Grant County split off and formed Luna County, and James P. Byron was the first County Commissioner. He had been a postmaster in Grant county, for various terms between 1883 to 1895 (and possibly longer). Apparently he was a man of some means, for he was an investor in a Deming Savings and Loan, and the Deming Coal Company.

From 1899 New Mexico newspaper: Mrs. J. P. [Kate] Byron returned Wednesday from San Francisco, where she has spent the past two months visiting relatives.

By 1905, J. P. had died, and Kate had remarried to John G. Moir, also a physician and surgeon, also from Deming. The 1910 census shows John Moir and Kate Moir together in Deming, without Adelia Dalrymple in the household. By this time son Ralph is a pharmacist/doctor in Los Angeles. He was born 28 Sep 1882 in Missouri, and died 18 Jul 1965 in LA. His son, Ralph L. Byron Jr., was also a doctor (b. 2/22/1914 in LA, d. 1/9/2005 in Edina, MN). At his death, he had four children, 14 grandchildren, and 7 great-grandchildren.

By the 1930 census, John G. Moir is no longer married to Kate, but has been for two years married to Minnie. (This is odd, since Kate had a sister named Minnie, per 1880 census.) No word on Kate.

This may be fairly off-topic to the main thrust of the thread, but I post it partly in response to JeffS’s suggestion "that it should be possible to find the names of all the men related, either by blood or marriage, to Louis Dalrymple or his wives who were the proper age in 1902 to fit Smith's description."

It would be extraordinarily difficult to do so. If Illinois didn't have an index of 19th century marriages, we wouldn't know Dalrymple's mom's maiden name (and it's possible to find variants in spelling of both her first and last names in official records). In the 1880 census, Dalrymple has a living brother and 2 living sisters at home. We don't know who sister Minnie or brother Charles ended up marrying. We don't know if Louis Dalrymple had any maternal aunts or uncles, or first cousins on his mother’s side. We don't know enough about either of Dalrymple's wives to chase relationships from that point -- what were their maiden names?

We know, for example, from the 1899 NM newspaper that Kate (Louis's sister) had relatives in San Francisco. Presumably, then Louis did as well. Who are they?
"first" names (Kittie, Catherine, Kate, Mrs. J. P. [Byron], and Mrs. J. G. [Moir]); and three last names (Dalrymple, Byron, and Moir). How do you investigate someone when you've only got a 1 in five chance of having the right first name when you're searching?

We don't know much about Louis's father's family -- Did he (William L. Dalrymple) have brothers or sisters? Nieces or nephews?

Even if the relative of Dalrymple for whom we are searching is as close as first cousin, niece, nephew, aunt or uncle, or brother/sister/mother/father-in-law, chasing most of these leads goes straight to a dead end before we can hook them to someone who is otherwise a reasonable candidate for Erdnase. That Richard Hatch even has the coincidence of similar last names is amazing to me -- not that it proves who Erdnase is one way or another, but because he's able to find out that much about a two 19th century families.

We're luck that some of the candidates for Erdnase have anything known about their families, too. W. E. Sanders was from a prominent, wealthy family, well-documented. E. S. Andrews (Richard Hatch's candidate) is somewhat well documented, but I'm sure that Richard could tell you questions he hasn't been able to answer in 10 years of research. And we don't know anything about Todd Karr's E. S. Andrews, short of his name. He could be directly related to Dalrymple, and based on what we know now, we couldn't prove it.

David Alexander | 09/04/09 12:57 PM | link | filter

Bill well explains the difficulties encountered in genealogical research poor, incomplete, inaccurate, or non-existent recordsfamily histories that are fantasies or impossible to prove. The list could go on.

Smith claimed that Erdnase claimed a relationship with Louis Dalrymple. This could be 1) true; 2) a manipulative technique designed to quickly establish rapport with Smith; 3) believed by Erdnase as a family truth but not at all factual; and possibly other scenarios that I haven't considered.

In short, it must be understood that the historic record is always incomplete.

Richard Kaufman | 09/04/09 02:15 PM | link | filter

I think Vernon was pretty clear that he felt Erdnase knew The Spread, and it was an item purposefully left out of the book for the very reason that he was using it.

As for the educated tone of the writing in the book, versus Milton Franklin Andrews' lack of education. I have read things written by people who never went past high-school...
that would reflect the level of writing in Expert at the Card Table. (I won't name names, because some of these people are my friends, or are known in the magic community, and some never stepped into a university or, if they did, never graduated.) Smart people who read a lot can teach themselves to write.

Dustin Stinett | 09/04/09 02:47 PM | link | filter

It's okay Richard. You can use my name. (Hey, Mr. Conklin, you can kiss my big, white, hairy....oh never mind.)

Richard Kaufman | 09/04/09 02:56 PM | link | filter

I wasn't referring to you, Dustin--I don't know your educational background. And who the heck is Mr. Conklin?

Dustin Stinett | 09/04/09 03:01 PM | link | filter

A high school English "teacher" who didn't like me: He claimed I didn't take the final (I did, even had friends who said I was there, but that didn't matter to him or the administrators) and failed me. He was a colossal prick.

For the record, my writing (which I have been doing since I was a kid) is "self-taught" via reading and paying attention. I also learned from my mistakes pointed out over the years by you, Max Maven, Tom Ogden, and others kind enough to tell me.

I'm still learning.

Richard Hatch | 09/04/09 03:29 PM | link | filter

Certainly there are excellent writers who did not have the benefit of higher formal education. Shakespeare and Mark Twain would be two examples. And there are writers who wrote a single masterpiece and published not much else (Harper Lee of TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD comes to mind, though she had extensive writing training prior to that book). So the things we read into the style of the book should only be taken as loose guidelines, I think, that may tell us more about our own prejudices than about the actual author. But I don't think the content and literary style of the book should be ignored in examining the question of authorship. I think they provide a kind of "literary fingerprint" that should be useful if a candidate with other writing samples is proposed. In that regard, MFA's confession/alibi letter does not tend (in my opinion) to support his authorship of the book, even factoring in that he was writing for a different audience under vastly different circumstances... That is why nearly all the MFA supporters ring in a "ghostwriter/editor" to polish his text, which I find an unnecessary and unlikely complication at this stage...
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We're luck that some of the candidates for Erdnase have anything known about their families, too. W. E. Sanders was from a prominent, wealthy family, well-documented. E. S. Andrews (Richard Hatch's candidate) is somewhat well documented, but I'm sure that Richard could tell you questions he hasn't been able to answer in 10 years of research. And we don't know anything about Todd Karr's E. S. Andrews, short of his name. He could be directly related to Dalrymple, and based on what we know now, we couldn't prove it.

Bill,

I agree that it would be a difficult task but not an impossible one. We may not be able to track down every last cousin but I believe that we should give it a try. If nothing comes of it then so be it. If this mystery is ever solved then I suspect that it will be in part because a great many people tilted at a great many windmills along the way.

As to the matter of Kate Dalrymple I thank you for the information that you have provided. That San Francisco connection is definitely worth following up on. I think that as far as her descendents go, it is probably a moot point. Smith said, as I
the most in their early twenties as she was only 19 on the 1880 census. I think the same would be correct for any of Dalrymple's nieces or nephews so I think first or second cousins would be a more likely possibility. I live in West Central Illinois so I am going to do what I can from my end to investigate this further.

JeffS | 09/06/09 02:38 AM | link | filter

David,

You are absolutely correct but with so few clues I think that this one should be followed up on until it dead-ends. It is also possible that a client told Smith that he was related to Dalrymple but Erdnase wasn't that client.

Jeff

Roger M. | 09/06/09 10:01 AM | link | filter

There's nothing on the record to suggest that Smith's recall of Erdnase's reference to Dalrymple isn't accurate.

In order to make some scenarios fit, some have suggested that Smith's memory might be faulty, but there's nothing on record to support that thought.

The consideration that Erdnase might have fabricated the statement for reasons known only to him may simply be too large a presumption to make in the absence of any factual evidence which would lead down that path.

Geno Munari | 09/06/09 10:42 AM | link | filter

While he didn't tell me an awful lot about himself, I'm sure he told me enough to put you on the right tracks if I could remember it.

If you find him, let me know. I am anxious to hear end of story.

Very best,
Marshall D. Smith
2340 Geneva Terrace

[Nota scritta a mano:] The more I look at the front views, the more I am sure they look like Andrews

In Smith's own words he was not sure of his recollection. This is from the Smith-Gardner letters.

Roger M. | 09/06/09 02:10 PM | link | filter
No, your own post repeats that Smith didn't indicate he wasn't sure of his recall, he simply said that he had passed along everything he could remember.

There's a huge difference between saying "I don't remember", and "I've told you everything I can remember".

Smith's memory is only being called into question by those folks that find it the only way to make their case stick.

Geno, I find it difficult to resolve that you want us to think Smith's memory of the event was accurate for those points that you want to support your candidate, and want to display his memory as totally inaccurate for those points which dispute your candidate.

In the end though, there's simply no reason ever been given to doubt Smith's memory of what Erdnase looked like, and what transpired in the hotel room that day.

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**Richard Evans** | 09/06/09 02:40 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

_Bill Mullins wrote:_

We don’t know much about Louis’s father’s family -- Did he (William L. Dalrymple) have brothers or sisters? Nieces or nephews?

Louis Dalrymple’s father, William, was one of eight children born to Jacob and Phoebe Dalrymple (nee Lewis). Jacob Dalrymple (Louis’s grandfather) was himself one of nine children born to Robert and Mary Dalrymple (nee Young). I’ve done some work on this - but have not uncovered anyone in the family tree named Andrews/Sanders.

On a separate note, does anyone know whether James McKinney applied for copyright on behalf of any other author of books that he printed (i.e. was it unusual for him to do so)? Following on from this, if there are other copyright applications made c/o McKinney, are these in the same handwriting as in EATCT? It’s possible that the copyright application may have been made in Erdnase’s own handwriting - and that this is potentially another means of establishing whether a candidate may be Erdnase.

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**Bill Mullins** | 09/06/09 03:57 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

_Roger M. wrote:_ In order to make some scenarios fit, some have suggested that Smith’s memory might be faulty, but there’s nothing on record to support that thought.

Smith’s memory with respect to the number of drawings he did was not accurate.
Roger M. | 09/06/09 05:42 PM | link | filter

We don't know that.

We know how many he thought he did, and how many are in the book, but we don't have any idea whether he drew every single drawing in the book.

There is an equal opportunity for his memory to be 100% correct as there is for there to be doubt.

In other words, still no hard facts pointing towards any reason to doubt Smith's recall.

Bill Mullins | 09/06/09 07:35 PM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote: We don't know that.

We know how many he thought he did, and how many are in the book, but we don't have any idea whether he drew every single drawing in the book.

The frontispiece says "With over one hundred drawings from life by M. D. SMITH" It doesn't say "With over one hundred drawings from life, some of which were drawn by M. D. Smith, and some by another unnamed artist whose style is similar". The book itself says that its illustrator was Marshall Smith, and no one else.

If you want to presume that two or more artists were involved, you have to start deciding that some statements that are clear and direct from the book are wrong. That way leads to madness. You might as well state that Teddy Roosevelt wrote it -- there is no evidence to support such a conclusion, and any evidence that argues against it, you just ignore or say that it is wrong.

There is an equal opportunity for his memory to be 100% correct as there is for there to be doubt.

In other words, still no hard facts pointing towards any reason to doubt Smith's recall.

The hard facts are these. Smith thought he did substantially fewer than 100 drawings. Smith did slightly more than 100 drawings. You can believe anything else you want, but it will be a belief unsupported by evidence.

Roger M. | 09/06/09 10:21 PM | link | filter

I'm not presuming two or more artists were involved at all Bill, and actually agree with the principal point in your post about the potential minefield of deciding some clear
statements are not to be taken at face value.

When it’s suggested that Smith didn’t recall how many drawings he had done, and that idea is then used to then further imply that his memory was in fact faulty, I felt that pointing out that there is another potentially logical explanation that can be drawn without calling his memory into question was a valid process.

In actual fact, like a few others here I suspect that only a few of the drawings weren’t completed by Smith, and that those drawings make themselves somewhat apparent for the viewing.

Of course you’re right though Bill, and I try to refrain from ripping every single statement apart simply for the act of doing it.

I don’t however, subscribe to any implication that there is credible evidence to suggest that Smith had a faulty memory, and believe that the record displays that Smith accurately recalled his meeting with Erdnase in response to Gardner’s solicitation. (your point above can easily suggest that we have no reason to doubt Smith’s statements, as he did make them quite clearly, and he was quite sure of what he was saying when he recalled those points he elaborated on for Gardner).

One thing is for sure, that is this process of talking (posting actually) about it, regardless of who your candidate might be, or how good a memory one might feel Smith had, keeps the project moving forward, and keeps folks thinking out loud.

It’s the thinking out loud that may have the best chance of spiking a new idea, or examining a slightly different path than has been examined to date.

In other words, it’s all good.

More on Dalrymple’s relatives:

From an obit on Louis Dalrymple, _Baltimore Sun_, 12/31/1905, p. 9

The funeral of Mr. Louis Dalrymple, the cartoonist, who died Wednesday night at Amityville, L. I., will be held this afternoon from the home of his brother in law, District Chief Fielding Lucas . . . His wife was Miss Mary Goode, sister of Mrs. Lucas.

Fielding H. Lucas was a fire chief in Baltimore. His wife’s name was Marie. I’ve seen her middle initial as either J. or V., and I’ve seen her mentioned as Dalrymple’s sister, rather than Mary Ann Good’s.
Just a few thoughts on the illustrations and how things may have come to be, please note that I am nowhere near the scholar others in this thread are; these are simply some of my thoughts on this matter.

Let’s start with the Preface, here he states his PRIMARY motive, he needs the money. Perhaps there was a secondary motive?

The contents of the book could not have been put together quickly and are unlikely to have been the author’s effort to get money. ‘Needing the money’ to me presents itself as something with some sense of urgency and I believe he saw his work (asset) as a possible solution. This would lead me to believe that the book had already been completed or nearly completed, perhaps with some plan to publish in the future (secondary motive) but with a sudden need for money the publishing was accelerated.

If one believes the author had students and had refined the text over a number of years, couldn’t one also believe that he had identified during that time exactly what illustrations would be most essential to supplement the text? Perhaps even making rough sketches himself and including in the text the references to these illustrations? I see no reason he couldn’t have already determined what hand positions to illustrate by the time he met Smith. This being the case, the process of going through the book, finding 101 references to the illustrations, assuming the position, and having the artist draw from the correct angle certainly wouldn’t have been too daunting.

I’ll leave it to those who have illustrated books to answer, but I imagine much of the time spent on the process is actually identifying the best angle necessary to illustrate a specific point in the text. I also imagine those specific points aren’t always identified ahead of time and therefore requires careful reading with a student to help identify what parts require additional (illustration) clarification.

No answers in this post, but perhaps these points offer new ways of thinking about the process.

Wonderful thread regardless of the outcome. I imagine it will be a bittersweet day when the riddle is solved, but how fortunate to be the person who finds an old notebook with the text hand written and edited into the concise version we have been left to study.

-johnbodine
Bill Mullins wrote:
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That is going to be a massive amount of cousins to sort through. How many of them have you tracked down? Let me know and I can take a branch that has not yet been done.

Also, has anyone obtained a copy of the marriage license of Louis Dalrymple's parents? I was going to order one but if someone already had it I would rather focus my resources elsewhere.

Thanks,
Jeff

jos | 09/15/09 10:56 AM | link | filter

I found you guys while doing a search for evidence of my great grandfather. I'm pretty sure he's your Erdnase. His name: James Andrews. He was a journalist and professional hoaxer. He called himself a "fakir" and had a fortune-telling head in Coney Island at around the turn of the 19th century. Family legend has it that he wrote a book called "The Confessions of a Fakir." In one of his hoaxes he pretended to be the king of Serbia. Two more bits of info: he graduated from Williams College, and before he was married to my Great Grandmother he was married to Eileen Fargo, the Wells Fargo heiress.

Richard Hatch | 09/15/09 11:07 AM | link | filter
jos wrote: I found you guys while doing a search for evidence of my great grandfather. I’m pretty sure he’s your Erdnase. His name: James Andrews. He was a journalist and professional hoaxter. He called himself a “fakir” and had a fortune-telling head in Coney Island at around the turn of the 19th century. Family legend has it that he wrote a book called "The Confessions of a Fakir." In one of his hoaxes he pretended to be the king of Serbia. Two more bits of info: he graduated from Williams College, and before he was married to my Great Grandmother he was married to Eileen Fargo, the Wells Fargo heiress.

Jos, thanks for contributing! Martin Gardner conjectured that your great-grandfather might have written Expert at the Card Table and published this theory in the August 1949 issue of CONJUROR’S MAGAZINE, which reprinted your great-grandfather’s article "Confessions of a Fakir" from a 1909 Harper’s Magazine. The article was published at about the same time Gardner broke the Milton Franklin Andrews’ theory of authorship, which he then championed. I am personally skeptical that your great-grandfather wrote the book, but would love to have more information on him to check his candidacy against the known facts. What else can you tell us about him?

Richard Hatch | 09/15/09 11:12 AM | link | filter

JeffS wrote:
Also, has anyone obtained a copy of the marriage license of Louis Dalrymple's parents? I was going to order one but if someone already had it I would rather focus my resources elsewhere.

I did obtain this a few years ago. I don't have it handy, but my recollection is that Adelia’s maiden name was spelled in two different ways on the document! I'll try to locate it.
Quite a bit of genealogical work has been done on the Dalrymple line (though there is always more that could be done!), but relatively little on the mother's side. She had a sister who went with her to Illinois from upstate New York in the 1850s and the sister married and had descendants, so that would be another branch to tackle...

Bill Mullins | 09/15/09 11:48 AM | link | filter

Richard Evans wrote: Louis Dalrymple’s father, William, was one of eight children born to Jacob and Phoebe Dalrymple (nee Lewis). Jacob Dalrymple (Louis’s grandfather) was himself one of nine children born to Robert and Mary Dalrymple (nee Young).

Go to THIS BOOK to page 647 for details on Jacob Dalrymple’s family (Louis’s paternal grandfather).
JeffS wrote: That is going to be a massive amount of cousins to sort through. How many of them have you tracked down? Let me know and I can take a branch that has not yet been done.

Thanks,
Jeff

I've traced Louis Dalrymple's paternal line, including cousins. Where I've been able to find spouses’ names, I've traced those too. As always, there are some dead ends, where further details of uncles/aunts have proved impossible to follow. Overall, just over 100 names, but still not complete by a long way.

Would the marriage certificate register the names of the bride and groom’s parents - or witnesses to the marriage? That would be one way of getting Adelia’s parents’ names.

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JeffS | 10/04/09 02:08 AM | link | filter

Richard Evans wrote:

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Would the marriage certificate register the names of the bride and groom’s parents - or witnesses to the marriage? That would be one way of getting Adelia's parents’ names.

Richard,

That is the kind of thing that needs to be done. I would be very interested in seeing the
expanded family tree that you have researched but I understand completely if you want to keep it close to the vest while you’re researching. As to the marriage license Richard Hatch said awhile back that he has a copy around somewhere. I obtained a copy of the marriage record which is not the same as it only lists the people involved, the date, and I believe the person who married them. In this case it appears to be one William Ayers although I am not 100 percent sure I reading the handwriting correctly. I have been told that the marriage licenses at that time didn't have as much information as the ones later on so it may be a dead end but I would also like to see a copy.

Jeff

**Richard Hatch** | 10/28/09 12:53 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Well, someone finally took the "Bible" edition to his house of worship and taped it for posterity:

[http://vimeo.com/6674853](http://vimeo.com/6674853)

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**Matthew Field** | 10/28/09 05:40 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Recorded using the popular "pecker cam".

Matt Field

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 10/28/09 10:07 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

_Richard Hatch wrote:_ Well, someone finally took the "Bible" edition to his house of worship and taped it for posterity:

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posterity or posterior? I suppose we've all done dumb things but do we really want the internet to save them for us for ever and ever amen?

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**John Bodine** | 12/04/09 04:59 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Curious to know if there has been any thought put into the use of acorns on the spine and front of the book. Was this stylized acorn (pair) common? Has anyone come across other books, magic or otherwise, using this acorn? Perhaps from the same original printer?

Finally, there are two of these embellishments on the spine but it appears one of them
For those researching the Dalrymple lineage...

Digging around in some old files I found the following that I received in the late 1990s regarding a Dalrymple-Sanders connection from an amateur researcher with whom I was in contact.

David,

I found the obit of Lewiss father in Cambridge, IL. I noted that W.L. Sanders of Peoria gave the sermon at the funeral. Today I looked at a Peoria City Directory 1886 and found W. Langdon Sanders Pastor of Park Place Baptist Church and Bethany Chapel in Peoria. He was not there very long as was not in the 1888 directory.

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Cambridge, Henry County, Illinois December 31, 1885

Obituary Death of W.L. Dalrymple

After an illness of several months, during which time he had patiently undergone much suffering, William Louis Dalrymple died at his resident here last Sunday morning from dropsy.

Mr. Dalrymple was born in Knox County, Ohio April 7, 1827 and came to this county in 1853 where he has since lived. He entered the office of the county Clerk at that time and among the several county offices has been employed at the court house continuously since and it is said for fifteen years previous to his last illness he had not lost a day from his labors. He was deputy under Circuit Clerk Brainard and when that official left Mr. Dalrymple served out the term. He had also been County Treasurer. He was a most faithful official in the transaction of his duties, and was honored and respected by all of his acquaintances. He had also held the offices of Coroner and Justice of the Peace for many years.

He was married on Nov. 15, 1856 to Miss Adelia M. Seeley, who survives him. They have four children—Louis W., employed on the Graphic at New York City; Mrs. Kittie Bryon of Deming, N.M.; and Charles Rl, and Miss Minnie who are home, all of whom are grown.

Mr. Dalrymple united with the Baptist church at this place in 1873, and was a faithful
and consistent member until his death. The funeral services were held in that church last Tuesday afternoon at 2 o'clock, the Rev. W.L. Sanders of Peoria preaching the sermon, the ceremonies being in charge of the Masonic order of this place, of which deceased became a member in 1858.

Mrs. Geo. Gould of Moline is here this week, called to attend the funeral of her brother-in-law, W.L. Dalrymple.

I think the Seeleys were connected to the Edgertons and that may be the connection to my candidate.

Richard Hatch | 12/19/09 02:17 AM | link | filter

Up next, Erdnase on the Food Channel:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEcY-o7g_ps&feature=fvsr

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhW-tdaC...L&index=11

David Alexander | 12/19/09 11:50 AM | link | filter

Yummy...and the cake looked good, too.

Jeffs | 12/20/09 02:52 AM | link | filter

The only image that I have seen of the first edition is the small one on erdnase.com. If someone could guide me to a better image I would appreciate it. I wouldn't think the acorns would be a clue but you never know. I would guess it was a standard affectation that they could be applied if the customer wished. On the other hand it might have cost extra so they may be there for a reason.

Jeff

Jeffs | 12/20/09 03:03 AM | link | filter

David Alexander wrote: For those researching the Dalrymple lineage...

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**************************

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David,

Thanks for posting this. According the the Illinois Statewide Marriage Index an Emma F. Seeley married a George D. Gould on 1/27/1961 in Henry County, IL. I seem to recall that no one had yet located an obit for Dalrymple's mother. If we can't find that then one for his Aunt Emma may provide some of the same info. I will look around for it.

Jeff

David Alexander | 12/20/09 07:32 PM | link | filter

Jeff,

I notice that one of the Dalrymple daughters married and moved to Deming, NM. I know my candidate was in the New Mexico area for a time as a mining engineer. Maybe he visited them?

The problem with finding widow's obits is that they may have moved in with one of their children and lived a good long time after the death of their husband.

David

Geno Munari | 12/27/09 11:44 PM | link | filter

I know that this post might be jumped on with a reply as "we covered that....", however I may have missed this concept completely, and if I did I am sorry, however I was taught as a child that there is no such thing as a stupid question. Please accept my ignorance if it applies.

So. The scrambling of the name S.W. Erdnase. If the name was Andrews and it was reversed, there are not to many letters of the alphabet that would work to have a somewhat normal sounding name, except using the "se" on the end to complete the name.

So references and research that look for matching candidates that are named E. S. Andrews may be a moot point.

For instance: S.W. Erdna. Then adding different letters such as le giving Erdnale, le, rd, etc. Not many letters will work to form a somewhat legit sounding name. Did we cover this concept?

Disparity | 12/28/09 12:38 PM | link | filter
My personal feeling is that if one is going to flip something around and make a name, one name is about as good as another. In other words, "S. W. Erdna" is about as good a pseudonym as "S. W. Erdnase."

I understand that it was common practice then (and possibly now) to add random letters simply to fill out an anagram or name reversal, but my sense is that (and I know this is completely an extrapolation and wholly unprovable) using an extra "S" and "E" simply to fill out the name would have been unsatisfactory to Erdnase; indeed, it may have been offensive to his sensibilities (as it is to mine). Erdnase was too precise and complete a thinker -- a systemic thinker who dealt in the tiniest of details -- and seemingly always concerned with how every little part contributed to an outcome. I believe that he would no more use any available letters to complete a name reversal than he would put a finger in a certain place during a move "just for the hell of it."

I sometimes wonder just how concerned Erdnase was with protecting his identity. If you're trying not to be found out, simply reversing the letters in your name wouldn't seem to do it. I remember, as a child, when I saw my first copy of The Expert At The Card Table, and I INSTANTLY perceived that the name backwards was "E. S. Andrews." If a child can do it, anyone can.

If anonymity is a prime concern, but one is still vain enough to want his name in there somewhere, then a better path would be to anagram your name first and THEN reverse it. Anyone perceiving the reversal would likely stop there and hunt for one name, when in fact, they should be looking for another. That seems to be more in line with how this character might think.

Jonathan Townsend | 12/28/09 01:24 PM | link | filter

A sufficient amount of intelligent rationalization can get you almost any name as author and any reason for the book and perhaps even the burning down of the publishing house to cover the tracks.

IMHO it has nothing to do with the author(s) or the book itself. It's all about distraction from learning and performing. Our few historians might want to find out why the author etc was not tracked down at the time of publication. There's the lesson IMHO. The rest is ... curious.

Colonel Mustard in the print shop with a bottle of gin.

Disparity | 12/28/09 02:27 PM | link | filter

I dunno...it doesn't seem like anyone with 25,000 posts between Genii and the Cafe needs to be talking to anyone else about being distracted from learning and performance.
Jonathan Townsend | 12/28/09 02:48 PM | link | filter

*Disparity1 wrote:* I dunno...it doesn't seem like anyone with 25,000 posts between Genii and the Cafe needs to be talking to anyone else about being distracted from learning and performing.

You are correct, you don't know.

Our few historians are slowly making progress toward hard evidence of the book’s provenance.

Some folks seem to enjoy fantasies projecting the skill they don't have and the disdain they can't own up to onto a fictional person they can claim as real.

I have a copy salvaged from the fire by an invalid who would not give his name... respect me.

Disparity1 | 12/28/09 03:30 PM | link | filter

This seems like the kind of post that merits a response, but I don't understand about 80% of what you've written. I sense, though, that you're sitting there with hurt feelings.

Apologies.

Bill Mullins | 12/28/09 07:41 PM | link | filter

*Geno Munari wrote:* I know that this post might be jumped on with a reply as "we covered that....", however I may have missed this concept completely, and if I did I am sorry, however I was taught as a child that there is no such thing as a stupid question. Please accept my ignorance if it applies.

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For instance: S.W. Erdna. Then adding different letters such as le giving Erdnale, le, rd, etc. Not many letters will work to form a somewhat legit sounding name. Did we cover this concept?
Two problems with this line of thinking:

1. It goes against Occam's Razor -- "E. S. Andrews" is a more reasonable, logical explanation of "S. W. Erdnase" than any other name.

2. It doesn’t narrow down the avenues of research in any way. If you suppose that the author’s last name was Andrews, the boundaries of the search process are too large for the problem to be solved. Ancestry.com has almost 50,000 people named "Andrews" in their index for the 1900 census.

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**Richard Kaufman** | 12/28/09 07:44 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Occam's Razor: the simplest solution that explains the most is the generally the best.

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 12/28/09 08:02 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Richard Kaufman wrote: Occam’s Razor: the simplest solution that explains the most is the generally the best.

Not sure if that applies so well with deceptive people and/or incomplete information about the context. In this case we almost certainly are dealing with deception at more than one level of the puzzle.

for example: the coin vanished, the magician said they used magic, same as for the other things they did, so it must have been magic. Or sway out "do as I say because I’m your (whatever)" as the explanation and notice how that gets less workable over time. :)

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**Disparity** | 12/28/09 10:33 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Um, no...the "simplest solution" must still be a credible one.

It's a strength of our craft that we optimally leave the audience with no solution but magic for what they witnessed, a solution they will not accept, for they refuse to believe it, but the only one with which they are left nonetheless.

Even if multiple layers of deception are in play, Occam's Razor holds as a general principle (and a good one, although nothing more than that).

If it were otherwise, then all quandaries would be solved, because the simplest solution in every case would be, "it’s magic." Since that’s unacceptable, we’ll have to stay with the true intent behind the principle.
There’s an unstated presupposition or two in action there about access to more complete information in context or a non-trump of other priorities in context. The "how would one know if..." test fails when discussing interpretations of text of unknown provenance. The recent story "Killing Time" offers an amusing example or three for that idea.

IMHO you hit the nail on the head with the words "credible" and "acceptable" - a nail called vanity. No need to get into specifics about things folks claim to be acceptable and credible now ... is there?

It’s magic - and the latest ebook on the subject will be out shortly ;)

* the student is directed to Borges’ 'Three Versions of...' story for example by way of analogy using nested frames. Three versions of Erdnase anyone?

Hi Bill

Interesting response, however in academia, is Occam's Razor dogma? Or just a theorem? The simple way in circumstantial evidence has put many convicted persons to death. 

i.e., He was spotted in the area. He hated the victim. That is simple for a jury to convict.

In many instances the simplest way is the better unless there is fraud or some other reason that we are unaware, or the suspect is just plain innocent.

The basic fact that the name was purposely changed to either confuse or conceal the real name would negate that notion of Occam's Razor.

My only conjecture is simple. How many ways can you write a name backwards that when read makes a somewhat logical name?

This suggestion is not to meant to be argumentive or absolute, but a ponder.

Geno a deeper question might be "who would benefit from offering such an obvious plausible (specious) snipe to hunt?"

\)` Have a read about the darling William of Occam and his dear rusty saw. Even the
wiki article has enough to read between the lines and note the cynicism then and the irony of its use after the middle of the twentieth century.

The tough part of actually using his heuristic is to find well formed and viable working alternatives. In the real world - the story of the measurement of longitude (measurements vs a good clock) seems a pretty good example.

Probably simplest to see the idea as a counter to the how the judge decided cases in the Washington Irving story by weighing the submitted piles of paper.

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Disparity | 12/29/09 11:56 AM | link | filter

Interesting response, however in academia, is Occam's Razor dogma? Or just a theorem? The simple way in circumstantial evidence has put many convicted persons to death.

i.e., He was spotted in the area. He hated the victim. That is simple for a jury to convict.

Geno,

Occam's Razor is neither dogma nor a theorem, unless it's misused as either. It's a principle of logic, and it actually goes beyond, "The simplest explanation is the best." That's just how most people understand it.

The idea (or set of ideas) actually goes much farther in the past than William of Ockham...into the previous millenium, actually.

The core ideas are these:

1) Make as few assumptions as possible.
2) Disregard assumptions that do not affect plausible theories
3) Do not posit matters that lead to complexity without sufficiently answering the question ("plurality should not be posited without necessity")

When faced with more than one possible hypothesis, the actual workable summary of Occam's Razor is, "All other considerations being equal, the simplest explanation tends to be the best."

Not right or correct, just "the best," based on what is known at the moment. Not always, just "tends to be." Not in every case, but "when all other considerations are equal." Occam's Razor is a tool for analysis, not a truth-telling machine.

Applying Occam's Razor to the mystery of Erdnases's actual name would tell us that
the simplest solution is the most favorable one. The odds are that the man's name was really E.S. Andrews. It's not a proclamation of fact; it's just the most likely direction in which we should proceed. Introducing other lettering schemes may turn out to be plausible, but it makes sense to first explore the possibilities with the greatest likelihood.

Applying Occam's Razor at every step in the investigation into the true identity of Erdnase would take us to...well, where Richard Hatch has brought us. It's a useful tool.

Nathan Muir | 12/29/09 06:56 PM | link | filter

Townsend wrote: Have a read about the darling William of Occam and his dear rusty saw. Even the wiki article has enough to read between the lines and note the cynicism then and the irony of its use after the middle of the twentieth century.

I can't believe you are arguing the toss over Occam's razor. Not only that, that you cite Wikipedia as an authoritative source for controversy over a basic principle of scientific inquiry.

Disparity1 wrote:
Occam's Razor is neither dogma nor a theorem, unless it's misused as either. It's a principle of logic, and it actually goes beyond, "The simplest explanation is the best." That's just how most people understand it.

The idea (or set of ideas) actually goes much farther in the past than William of Ockham...into the previous millennium, actually.

The core ideas are these:

1) Make as few assumptions as possible.
2) Disregard assumptions that do not affect plausible theories
3) Do not posit matters that lead to complexity without sufficiently answering the question ("plurality should not be posited without necessity")

A well-stated, concise outline of the principles.

Jonathan Townsend | 12/29/09 08:08 PM | link | filter

Since when does "even the wiki article" imply more than casual reference for our facile readers?
Amusingly, that was one of his principles about presuming the existence of a thing - scripture - in this case the book of E. ;)

**Bob Farmer** | 01/31/10 03:06 PM | [link] | [filter]

There is quite a bit of info on cheating in this new book on the history of poker:

http://www.amazon.com/Cowboys-Full-Stor ... 0374299242

but Erdnase is not mentioned. Hardison is mentioned. Where does Hardison fit into the chronology?

**Bill Mullins** | 02/01/10 12:32 AM | [link] | [filter]

Because magic has a body of literature going back to Erdnase, it is easy to track the book's influence on the art.

Has anyone ever tried to track Erdnase's influence on gambling since 1902? What is the first external reference to EATCT in gambling-specific literature?

**Jonathan Townsend** | 02/01/10 08:50 AM | [link] | [filter]

Bill Mullins wrote: Because magic has a body of literature going back to Erdnase, it is easy to track the book’s influence on the art.

- has this been explored? Erdndase inspired Al Baker, Findley, UFGrant... - not so sure about the book being influential in its time.

Bill Mullins wrote: Has anyone ever tried to track Erdnase’s influence on gambling since 1902? What is the first external reference to EATCT in gambling-specific literature?

Is there such an open literature of card cheating? IMHO it’s close to asking whether the new BSCS curriculum in science improved meth lab efficiency.

**Bill Mullins** | 02/01/10 05:27 PM | [link] | [filter]

Jonathan --

Ever consider making a post that advances the discussion, instead of going off into some weird tangent? Just a thought . . .

**Jonathan Townsend** | 02/01/10 05:41 PM | [link] | [filter]
Bill Mullins wrote: Jonathan --

Ever consider making a post that advances the discussion, instead of going off into some weird tangent? Just a thought . . .

Bill, ever considered learning to make comments directed to a person via private message? Show me a few years of such basics and I'll reevaluate my position on some things I currently read as playbows awaiting rejoinders.

So, is there a card cheats journal like 9600? Old books on how to run the cons in detail?

Jonathan Townsend | 02/01/10 08:45 PM | link | filter

Real question:

How would you compare the magic items in Erdnase to the "Workers" series items of today?

Bill Mullins | 02/02/10 01:55 AM | link | filter

In the hands of a gifted performer, tricks from Erdnase or Workers can be effective. The descriptions in Workers tend to have more useful information about presentation and the mechanics of getting into and out of a trick. There are many sleights in Erdnase which could be updated to accomplish the same purpose. And the Erdnase tricks tend to be a bit "wordy", for lack of a better word.

Jonathan Townsend wrote:

Bill Mullins wrote: Because magic has a body of literature going back to Erdnase, it is easy to track the book's influence on the art.

- has this been explored?

Contained within this very thread is an exploration of how Erdnase has influenced magic since its publication.

Jonathan Townsend wrote: Is there such an open literature of card cheating?

What do you mean by "open" -- is the literature of magic "open"? Not very, I'd say. The journals are limited in distribution, the books had small print runs, there are few research libraries other than personal collections. I believe UNLV has a strong collection of gambling literature, but haven't been there and don't know, and I'd
imagine that it isn't available via interlibrary loan. It's only been in the last decade that so much magic literature has been digitized and made available via CD-ROMs or AskAlexander. I'm not plugged into the gambling scene, and don't know if there is an equivalent situation in gambling literature.

Jonathan Townsend wrote: So, is there a card cheats journal like 9600?

If there were, would that be useful? 9600 is a bunch of script kiddies swapping stories about how they found a password to all the machines at their local Best Buy, near as I can tell. If, on the other hand, there was a journal that described the methods of Gamblers, psychology, reviewed the literature as it became available, gave points on how to improve your play, described the big tournament matches and also the underground and casino games, over a long period of time, then it'd be the gambling equivalent of something like the Linking Ring and would be germane to the discussion.

Jonathan Townsend wrote: Old books on how to run the cons in detail?

David Maurer wrote The Big Con in 1940, and had published in academic journals on the topic before that. No doubt there are others -- searching Advanced Google Books for titles between 1800 and 1950 and the phrase "confidence men" in the book title shows several other likely examples.

Bill Mullins wrote: instead of going off into some weird tangent?

Jon, in your most recent posts on this thread, you've made obscure reference to BSCS, 9600, and playbows. I caught one of them, but I've got no idea WTF you are talking about with the other two. This is what I mean. I felt bad about the post I made earlier, personally calling you out, so I've tried to seriously answer the questions you asked. But in doing so, I've deviated the thread into Jon and Bill one-upping each other instead of down its most recent organic path, as started by Bob Farmer, that being the relationship of Erdnase to gambling. If there was any mention of Erdnase in gambling literature before WWII, I think that might provide an interesting insight on the book from another perspective. That's all I was trying find out.

Jonathan Townsend | 02/02/10 07:16 AM | link | filter

Hypotheses floated on unfounded presuppositions can make for good fiction if you contrive something engaging. Not sure it's a sensible way to approach history, though.

I like the idea of seeing if the Erdnase text left ripples in the sharping community's literature, presuming there exists such a thing. IMHO one might do well to look for ripples in the literature of conjuring due to the Erdnase text and seek similar. I can't
say I've seen such ripples in our literature - or what might be ripples may have also been damped out by the effects of the Hoffmann and Hilliard works. So far "doc" and others online have not mentioned such a body of literature among advantage players - nor do I recall such mentioned in the Erdnase text.

Jim Maloney | 02/02/10 11:06 AM | link | filter

Unless I'm really out of touch, I think you guys mean to be referring to 2600.

As far as "ripples" go, Erdnase definitely had an impact in its time. Just off the top of my head, I know there are several citations to Erdnase in Down's "The Art of Magic", with the reader being directed to that book for instruction on false shuffles and cuts, second dealing, and bottom palming.

-Jim

David Alexander | 02/02/10 11:27 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote:

Jonathan Townsend wrote: Old books on how to run the cons in detail?

David Maurer wrote The Big Con in 1940, and had published in academic journals on the topic before that. No doubt there are others -- searching Advanced Google Books for titles between 1800 and 1950 and the phrase "confidence men" in the book title shows several other likely examples.

In doing some research of my own some time back I spoke with David Maurer's daughter about her father's work. Unlike many academics who were kept their raw research notes and such, Maurer destroyed it all before he died. The only thing remaining, she told me, were the articles and books he wrote.

Jonathan Townsend | 02/02/10 11:28 AM | link | filter

I got tired of reading about where nickle tones from blue boxes work on payphones in Slovenia.

The sort of ripple I look for for is where something is advanced from a specific source. Say where the Power of Faith travels overseas to become the power of thrift subtitled "the girls want to be with the girls". Notice the lack of a version where four wives form a supper/shopping club that meets in secret every second thursday, hey that's today, and all across town.
Jim Maloney | 02/02/10 11:45 AM | link | filter

More ripples: I don't know an exact reference, but I seem to recall that G.W. Hunter published his takes on a couple of the Erdnase shuffles in The Sphinx.

-Jim

Bill Mullins | 02/02/10 12:24 PM | link | filter

There is definitely a body of literature on gambling/sharping, going as far back as "Sharps and Flats" (1894), or even "Gambling Exposed" (1843 by Jonathan Green).

And surely Jon jests when he says "I can't say I've seen such ripples in our literature", referring to Erdnase’s influence (or lack thereof). Is there any other book from that era that has had more influence on card magic?

Jonathan Townsend | 02/02/10 12:40 PM | link | filter

A book by an outsider ( magician in the case of Sharps and Flats ) is not what we're looking for.

Thanks for the citation to the Green book

http://books.google.com/books?id=MrhIAA ... q=&f=false

Curiously the introductions are echoed in the Erdnase text.

Now if you want a book that has ripples down our literature to the present, perhaps Modern Magic would serve as template.

Jonathan Townsend | 02/02/10 01:22 PM | link | filter

PS I wish the Erdnase text had more echos and ripples in our literature. IMHO the text is erudite, concise, forthright in stated opinions and without pretensions to educate or having the best possible methods for the performing magician. Even if all folks got from that text was the habit of refining ones work to have a consistancy of action and an appearance of congruent actions we'd be doing better than we are today IMHO.

Got palaver?

Joe Pecore | 02/02/10 03:35 PM | link | filter
to recall that G.W. Hunter published his takes on a couple of the Erdnase shuffles in The Sphinx.

-Jim

I found an article called "False Shuffles" by G. W. Hunter in the March 1920 issue of Will Goldston's "Magazine of Magic" (which quotes Erdnase).

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**Jim Maloney** | 02/02/10 04:56 PM | link | filter

Yeah, I think that might be what I was thinking about.

Thanks,
Jim

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**Joe Pecore** | 02/02/10 05:34 PM | link | filter

Also, Professor Hoffmann did a long series called "Some Useful Card Sleights" which quotes Erdnase extensively starting in the first issue of the British magazine "Magic Wand" (September 1910).

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**David Alexander** | 02/02/10 05:59 PM | link | filter

I believe that the mention in "The Art of Magic" (1909) was the first reference to Erdnase in magic literature, not counting the ads in magazines.

Anyone know of anything earlier?

I think it unlikely that we could know or be able to measure Erdnase's impact on the sub-culture of card cheats because they were (and remain), secretive. It may be years or decades before some interesting technique leaps from the hands of a skilled mechanic to an interested magician and then a long time before he gives it up to more than a few close friends. In my own experience I can think of several things that I know about and a few that I do that have never appeared in the literature. My experience cannot be unique in magic and mentalism even given the ubiquity of blabbermouths on the Internet.

As was mentioned many screens ago, Erdnase does mention teaching his shuffle system to at least one person, someone he looks down on for not understanding the mechanics of the process. He may have taught others possibly in trade for something they knew or for a fee. Teaching has less risk than doing.

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**Bill Mullins** | 02/10/10 02:15 PM | link | filter
I just noticed that the last line of Si Stebbins' introduction to Si Stebbins' *Card Tricks* reads:

> My reason for writing this book is the money I expect to obtain from its sale.

Curiously similar to Erdnase's reasoning . . .

**Bill Mullins | 02/10/10 03:20 PM | link | filter**

*David Alexander wrote:* I believe that the mention in "The Art of Magic" (1909) was the first reference to Erdnase in magic literature, not counting the ads in magazines.

Anyone know of anything earlier?


A recent book on gambling tricks has been published by S. W. Erdnase, under the title "The Expert at the Card table." It contains a chapter on ledgerdemain.


Any one up in Erdnase system of false shuffles will have no trouble in continuing to shuffle the deck and finish by placing cards on top, instead of below.

**Jonathan Townsend | 02/11/10 09:41 AM | link | filter**

Was there a review published at the time?

**Richard Hatch | 02/11/10 11:33 AM | link | filter**

*Jonathan Townsend wrote:* Was there a review published at the time?

To date, none has been found. The September 1902 mention in the Sphinx is the earliest known mention. It was not advertised in the Sphinx till the November issue (by Vernello, the publisher of the Sphinx). Busby and Whaley argue that the September mention was an editorial plug for the book by editor William J. Hilliar just as he was leaving that job (it was the last issue he edited). They argue that he was the "ghost-editor" of the book, as he was in Chicago at the time the book was in
preparation, knew about copyright law, and worked for Drake at the time (which company began selling first edition copies in 1903 and published its own editions starting in 1905). Personally, I don't find the two sentence mention much of an editorial endorsement, especially without any information on where to obtain it. The book was published in Chicago in March 1902 and the Sphinx was first issued that same month, also in Chicago. If Hilliar had any hand in the production of the book, why did he wait until his departing issue in September to slip in a mention of the book? Makes no sense to me! There are numerous other good reasons to believe that Hilliar had nothing to do with the book, but I suspect those have been discussed earlier in this thread...

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 02/11/10 11:46 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Thanks Richard. I was going to ask about how comment on Erdnase compared to comment on other books of the time to get a sense of how folks saw it back then.

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**Richard Stokes** | 02/11/10 03:46 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

"In doing some research of my own some time back I spoke with David Maurer's daughter about her father's work. Unlike many academics who were kept their raw research notes and such, Maurer destroyed it all before he died."

David Alexander

David, did Maurer's estate ever receive any royalties from the producers of the Sting? The screenwriter David S Ward appears to have lifted the central ideas for his 'original' script from Maurer's book. (Ward's later work did not fare so well.)

Was the Sting a sting?

I wonder who made the most out of the movie deal.

Julia Phillips' nose?

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**Bill Mullins** | 02/11/10 06:42 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Per the LA Times, 5/11/1980:

In the celebrated case of "The Sting," screenwriter (and subsequent Oscar winner) David Ward was accused of appropriating the baе idea of the movie's con game from a 1941 book by David W. Maurer called "The Big Con." . . . Maurer later filed suit. . . . The insurance company decided to settle out of court, and although company officials declined comment on the sum, The Times has learned that the figure was about $600,000. . . .

Ward, who admitted using the book in his research along with other nonfiction sources, vehemently defended the originality of his screenplay.
David Alexander  | 02/10 02:35 AM  | link  | filter

This sort of thing happens which is why production companies hire researchers to "clear" such scripts to avoid lawsuits. Sometimes they do catch potential problems - as per the "The Trouble with Tribbles" and its similarities to Heinlein's "Martian Flat Cats." In that case a bit of charm from Gene Coon and Gene Roddenberry to Robert Heinlein eliminated any potential problem, although Heinlein was never particularly happy about it.


Jonathan Townsend  | 02/10 09:09 AM  | link  | filter

David Alexander wrote: ..."The Trouble with Tribbles" and its similarities to Heinlein's "Martian Flat Cats." ...

[http://www.fastcopyinc.com/orionpress/a ... ibbles.htm](http://www.fastcopyinc.com/orionpress/a ... ibbles.htm)


[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pigs_is_Pigs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pigs_is_Pigs)

Foresight good, research better?

Richard Stokes  | 02/10 01:54 PM  | link  | filter

Thanks Bill for that useful excerpt from the LA Times re. The Sting. I wasn’t aware of the court case, but I’m glad that Maurer received generous compensation.

Richard Stokes  | 02/10 02:22 PM  | link  | filter

$600,000.

Not that it did him much good!

I came across this obituary:

David W. Maurer Is Dead at 75; An Expert on Underworld Slang
Published: June 14, 1981

David Warren Maurer, a professor of English Literature at the University of Louisville and an expert on underworld slang, has been found dead at his home, the apparent victim of a self-inflicting gunshot wound. He was 75 years old.
A deputy coroner in Jefferson County said that Dr. Maurer, who had taught at the university for 37 years, was found dead Thursday night in a shed at his home. He received a doctorate from Ohio State University in 1935 and spent much of his academic career studying the language of criminals and drug addicts.

Dr. Maurer was the author of "Whiz Mob," which dealt with the argot and behavior of pickpockets, and "The Big Con," a book published in 1940 about confidence men. In 1974 he filed a $10 million lawsuit charging that the motion picture "The Sting" and the book of the same name had been copied from "The Big Con." The lawsuit was settled out of court in 1976.

Jonathan Townsend | 02/12/10 02:39 PM | link | filter

FYI
http://books.google.com/books?id=Bsdb7i ... ge&f=false

Bill Mullins | 02/15/10 02:36 AM | link | filter

I don’t recall ever having seen this before:

"Queer Family History," *Boston Daily Globe*; Jan 14, 1894; pg. 1

Milton F. Andrews Said to Have Confessed to Robbing a Cigar Store in Hartford

Hartford, Conn, Jan. 13 -- Soby’s cigar store was entered on July 26, 1893, and property valued at $100 stolen.

There was no clue to the thief until yesterday, when William Goldbaum told the police that Milton F. Andrews had confided in him that he was the thief.

Andrews was arrested and in the police court this morning was held for trial on Monday.

In his pocket was found a package of cayenne pepper and a bottle of drugged whiskey.

Soon after the robbery he left Hartford and went to Philadelphia.

He is a brother of Mrs. Gertrude Judkin, the wife of Prof. Judkin of Boston, who about a year ago murdered her 3-months-old baby.

She is now in an insane asylum.

Milton Andrews' father, Edwin Andrews, left Hartford about 2-1/2 years ago with $2000 in his possession to go to New York and has not since been heard of.
"Found Not Guilty" *The Hartford Courant* Jan 22, 1894; pg. 3
"The burglary case against Milton F. Andrews, charged with breaking into Soby's cigar store last July, was finally nolled, as sufficient evidence to convict could not be secured."

**Richard Hatch** | 02/15/10 10:38 AM | [link] | [filter]

Wow! That clears up several mysteries about MFA, particularly the question of the absent father (his mother was listed in Hartford directors as living alone after a certain point, but not listed as a widow), while adding several others. No direct bearing on the question of authorship, but fascinating nonetheless! I wonder if court or police documents would confirm other known details, such as his height (at least at that date), etc. Would a photo have been taken as a result of the arrest?

**Jonathan Townsend** | 02/15/10 11:21 AM | [link] | [filter]

In his pocket was found a package of cayenne pepper and a bottle of drugged whiskey.

What does one do with a package of cayenne pepper?

... and he was found with a pack of cards, a bottle of whiskey and a package of cayenne pepper. Got the makings of a moment there. Like the final loads for a Chop cup routine.

**David Alexander** | 02/15/10 11:51 AM | [link] | [filter]

*Jonathan Townsend wrote:*

> *David Alexander wrote:* "The Trouble with Tribbles" and its similarities to Heinlein's "Martian Flat Cats." ...

[http://www.fastcopyinc.com/orionpress/a ... ibbles.htm](http://www.fastcopyinc.com/orionpress/a ... ibbles.htm)


[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pigs_is_Pigs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pigs_is_Pigs)

Foresight good, research better?

Well, not quite the full story, Jonathan, as "research better" that I did years ago shows. On page 514 of my book, *Star Trek Creator: The Authorized Biography of Gene*
Roddenberry I detail the following:

In November, 1968 Heinlein made a consignment of items to the University of California Santa Cruz Library. The inventory is typed on Robert A. Heinlein's letter head. Itemized is a television script with the following notation listed:

Items to be filed with number 92 The Rolling Stones.

This is a TV script for Star Trek, The Trouble with Tribbles. It was purchased by Star Trek, then someone in their story department notices a strong resemblance to the chapter Flat Cats Factorial in number 92 The Rolling Stones. The executive producer telephoned me. I waived any possible redress for possible piracy and/or plagiarism. It was produced and broadcast. Ten years earlier I might have sued, but I have learned that plagiarism suits are a mugs game even if you win. Time, trouble, worry and expense.

This is the only copy of the script for The Trouble with Tribbles in the Heinlein Archive and it does not have David Gerrolds signature, but does have a short, penciled notation in Heinleins hand:

I condoned the possible literary piracy. R.A.H.

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David Alexander | 02/15/10 12:06 PM | link | filter

Richard Stokes wrote: $600,000.
Not that it did him much good!
I came across this obituary:

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the motion picture "The Sting" and the book of the same name had been copied from "The Big Con." The lawsuit was settled out of court in 1976.

If I recall my conversation with his daughter correctly, Dr. Maurer had a nasty form of cancer and did not have a pleasant future so he chose a way of avoiding a lot of pain before the inevitable.

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**Bill Mullins** | 02/15/10 11:16 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*David Alexander wrote:* If I recall my conversation with his daughter correctly, Dr. Maurer had a nasty form of cancer and did not have a pleasant future so he chose a way of avoiding a lot of pain before the inevitable.

This is what happened also with the great character actor Richard Farnsworth, right after he starred in the movie "Straight Story".

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**Richard Kaufman** | 02/15/10 11:24 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Farnsworth starred (his only starring role other than Straight Story) in a movie called The Grey Fox. Wonderful film, shamefully not available on DVD.


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**Bill Mullins** | 02/16/10 12:50 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

It was a wonderful movie, and used to be available on VHS tape. Worth looking up.

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**Bill Mullins** | 02/16/10 02:15 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Richard Hatch wrote:* Wow! That clears up several mysteries about MFA, particularly the question of the absent father (his mother was listed in Hartford directories as living alone after a certain point, but not listed as a widow), while adding several others. No direct bearing on the question of authorship, but fascinating nonetheless! I wonder if court or police documents would confirm other known details, such as his height (at least at that date), etc. Would a photo have been taken as a result of the arrest?

The mention of "Mrs. Gertrude Judkin" allows a new avenue for research on MFA's family. Hers is a tragic story. Anna (or Annie, as it is sometimes seen) Gertrude Andrews was MFA's older sister. She had been a teacher, and she married William L. Judkins, an art teacher from Boston, in Hartford on 4 Aug 1891 and they moved to Boston. Approximately May of 1892, they had a son Edward, and on 2 Jan 1893 in Boston. More to come.
symptoms of insanity, she tried to smother the boy. She was not successful, so she then shot him with a revolver. She then tried to shoot herself, but the gun failed to discharge. She tried to suffocate herself with an unlit gas jet, but that didn't work either. While she was trying to stab herself with a table knife, her husband walked in on her and stopped her. A week later she was found not guilty because of insanity and went to the Westboro Asylum for the insane.

One article about the case says she was born in Corinth NY. Another says "Mrs. Andrews [MFA’s mother] thinks her daughter has been made insane by overwork. Mrs. Judkins’s grandmother was insane for a time from the same cause." This same article said she had a brother Edwin. This was probably Alvin E. Andrews. Another states Alvin as her father’s name, and said he "died some years ago." The 1870 census shows an Alvin P. Andrews as head of the family (MFA had not yet been born).

David Alexander | 02/16/10 12:28 PM | link | filter

Given the lack of diagnostic tools available at the time it is possible that Mrs. Judkin suffered from a severe case of post partum depression. Today we know that about 13% of women who give birth have a variety of PPD symptoms.

Depression has a tendency to run in families so there may be an underlying genetic predisposition. That and/or her hormones may have been severely out of balance, or her thyroid may have been malfunctioning.

Steve V | 02/18/10 01:47 AM | link | filter

Cayenne pepper is considered an herbal cure and preventive for a lot of things.

Matthew Field | 02/18/10 06:01 AM | link | filter

Steve V wrote: Cayenne pepper is considered an herbal cure and preventive for a lot of things.

Such as bland pizza.

Steve V | 02/18/10 03:05 PM | link | filter

Yes! Seriously they used it for all kinds of stuff, they thought it could restart a heart after a heart attack.

One thing about Erdnase, there are a lot of poker players here in Nevada who don't care about magic who read the book.
Cayenne pepper in your food will open up your sinus if they are blocked up.

"On Custer Hill", a POEM by Wilbur Edgerton Sanders.

The book it is from (_Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana, Vol 7_) has a biographical note on Sanders, and says: "He prepared much of the manuscript for Volume II of the Contributions, 1896, and had charge of the publication of that volume from page 140 to its completion."

So, W. E. Sanders is the only one of the major candidates for authorship of EATCT that was known to be an accomplished and experienced writer.

Hmm...looks like I may need to dust off that stylometry/authorship software I was working on a few years back and compare this to the Erdnase text.

-Jim

From what I read, these analyses need several thousand words to be of any use. It might be better to use Sanders' text on Mine Timbering, which is available on Google Books. HERE

Hey, Bill, that's very interesting! Thanks for posting the link to the poem and the other information. I suspect David Alexander already had this information (he's been researching Sanders for years and has had help from the Montana Historical Society), but it was news to me. Since it has published work by Sanders prior to and closer to the writing and publication of Erdnase, it may provide a better match in style than the book on Mine Timbering that he edited for publication in 1907. That has contributions by him, but in a scientific style that (to my ear) don't have much in common with Erdnase, though admittedly written for a very different audience. Mine Timbering does have a double copyright, as I recall, reminiscent of the unusual triple copyright in Erdnase....
The Google Book version reminded me that not only does Mine Timbering (which was reprinted last year, likely as a print on demand book) have the double copyright (USA and Britain) but the editorial preface references Canadian publications so the editor (Sanders) would certainly have known the proper Canadian copyright information reflected in Erdnase.

**Bill Mullins | 02/27/10 11:25 PM | link filter**

Actually, if you discount the differences in vocabulary in a Mining text and in EATCT, Mine Timbering might be a good book for a stylistic comparison. Both are instructional texts, written at a high level for readers who are conversant with the subject. Both have sufficient length that a comparison should be useful.

If a computer comparison won't work with these, I don't know what you'd have to use to get a better comparison -- it's not likely that another book on playing cards will turn up that we know was written by W. E. Sanders (or Edwin S. Andrews, or E. S. Andrews, or M. F. Andrews, or Edward de Vere . . . )

**Joe Pecore | 02/28/10 12:49 AM | link filter**

For fun, I quickly ran rough copies of the two text (Mine Timbering and EATCT) through the free Signature Stylometric System (http://www.philocomp.net/?pageref=human ... =signature).

I got the Mine Timbering in text format from http://www.archive.org/stream/minetimbe ... g_djvu.txt).

Here is a slideshow of the results: http://s845.photobucket.com/albums/ab11 ... =slideshow

For a more serious analysis, it would need a clean copy of the text from both books.

**Bill Mullins | 02/28/10 01:44 AM | link filter**

There is, no doubt, some useful work to be done by computer analysis of Erdnase and various other texts, but it will take some real work.

You need clean texts which have been carefully proofread a stray period can skew sentence length analysis, which is a common tool.

There needs to be a set of control texts works of similar complexity and form against which Erdnase and test texts may be compared.
compared against the others to see if the texts are internally consistent (if chapter 1 and 2 of Erdnase are different from each other, then the fact that either of them is different from a third test text doesn't prove much).

Remember also that while Sanders was an editor of _Mine Timbering_, much of it was written by others (I think he only wrote one chapter).

---

**David Alexander** | 02/28/10 11:08 AM | link | filter

Sanders was well-educated both from home tutoring, Phillips Exeter Prep School, and Columbia School of Mines. He was an experienced writer who had kept a personal journal from a young age in addition to later writing that he did both for business and pleasure.

The Mine Timbering material is dry and impersonal engineering where Erdnase is writing in a personal style - "an unlicked cub with a fat bankroll..."

It is also possible (and likely) that Expert was written over a period of time with things written as time and interest permitted. His mood at the time may be reflected in what he wrote.

---

**Geno Munari** | 02/28/10 07:30 PM | link | filter

I found this information, which may be tongue and cheek, however interesting.

Bruce Elliott wrote in The Phoenix, Oct. 11, 1946.

There are wild and to date unconfirmed rumors that Audley Walsh and John Scarne have found Erdnase's widow and bought the original holograph of the man's chef d'oeuvre. Quite a hunk of magicana

This was before December 10, 1946: Martin Gardner writes Marshall D. Smith, H. C. Evans & Co., and the Canadian Office of the Minister of Agriculture regarding Erdnase.


December 13, 1946: Gardner interviews Smith.

(From Richard Hatch's timeline)

I wonder how many others, prior to Martin Gardner, were trying to solve this mystery.

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**Bill Mullins** | 03/08/10 05:37 PM | link | filter

Earlier I posted that M F Andrews was arrested in 1894 for robbing a cigar store in
"arrested once when he lived in Holyoke, Mass., for breaking a letter box with a firecracker."

I've written to the Records division there to see if they still have anything on him.

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**Bill Mullins | 03/09/10 07:41 PM** | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Your Tax Dollars at Work:

Check [This Page](#)(about two-thirds of the way down, search the page Ctrl-F for "Erdnase") for a govt Erdnase grant.

I'd sure like to get $15k for Erdnase purposes.

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**Richard Kaufman | 03/09/10 08:09 PM** | [link](#) | [filter](#)

The grant is to a theatrical company and is to go toward the production of a show on the subject.

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**David Alexander | 03/10/10 02:16 AM** | [link](#) | [filter](#)

The production was supposed to have happened two years ago. From the description it will put forward the idea that the "real" Erdnase murdered both Nulda and Milton Andrews and made it look like a murder/suicide.

Perhaps the "real" Erdnase will be given a nice aria to sing as he kills both Nulda and Milton, arranges things to look like a murder/suicide and then vanishes leaving the bodies in a locked room.

It sounds silly.

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**Bill Mullins | 03/12/10 02:27 PM** | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Notes on Sprong

John Sprong told Dai Vernon that he found out from Drake that Erdnase's real name was Andrews. Vernon wrote this up in his "Vernon Touch" column in 1970, but didn't say when Sprong told him this. He did say that he pestered Drake for months to get more info, and Richard Hatch points out that Vernon would have had this opportunity when he was in Chicago for the 1933 World's Fair, so the Sprong-Vernon conversation probably happened before 1933.

Vernon (in the same column) says that Sprong's real name was Myers, and he worked
for the post office. The 1930 census has a John C Sprong, b. ca. 1866 in Holland, working for the post office and living in Chicago. He was in the 1920 census as well, but at a different address. So maybe he moved from Chicago to Michigan and back to Chicago. Vernon could be wrong about the Myers name he got several other details wrong in this column.

No one named Sprong was found in either the 1920 or 1930 census in Ludington MI.

He received a marriage license to wed Laura Peters on 11/20/1890 in Chicago.

An 1893 registry of govt employees states that Sprong was born in Germany, not Holland.

Sprong died in Cook County 17 Apr 1939. His obit (Chi Trib, 4/18/1939 p10) did not list any children surviving him.

David Ben | 03/12/10 02:39 PM | link | filter

Vernon was in Chicago in 1919, and in 1922. He knew Sprong from those early days, so as early as 1919.

Bill Mullins | 03/12/10 02:44 PM | link | filter

Busby/Gardner/Whaley state in the annotated bibliography in "The Man Who Was Erdnase" that Gardner's Jan 1958 True Magazine article "The Murdering Cardshark" is the first English language mention in print that M F Andrews is Erdnase (I believe they mention a French periodical as the first mention anywhere).

In the Oakland Tribune for 9/5/1956 p E 29 in a column called "The Daily Knave" (probably written by Fred Braue), it says: "S. W. Erdnase was for half a century a name to conjure with. Since the 1902 publication of The Expert at the Card Table dozens of persons have attempted to penetrate the pseudonym which cloaked the identity of the author of this famous book which outlined the methods of professional gamblers. It was not difficult to conclude that his name was Andrews but what was the given name? Who was he? For 50 years Erdnase' Chicago publisher was plagued with inquiries, but always professed that his records failed to reveal the author's true identity. . . . Now, after half a century, it is claimed that Erdnase' identity has been learned. His name is said to have been Milton C. Andrews, and he is thought to be buried in San Mateo County. Paradoxically, the disclosure has been made not through the efforts of his compatriots, the gamblers, but by two sleight-of-hand experts, Martin Gardner and Jay Marshallto whom, cheating at cards is absolutely unthinkable."
Bill Mullins | 03/16/10 07:05 PM | link | filter

Google Books has Vol 8 of "The Caledonian". In the Jun 1908 issue, on p 115, is an account of the banquet of the Canadian Club of New York, held at the Hotel Astor on May 14. Among the attendees (p. 117) is S. W. Erdnose.

I and others have searched high and low for evidence of anyone, anywhere, whose real name was/is Erdnase. It doesn’t exist. To find, only six years later, a name which sounds equally contrived but only one letter off seems somehow significant.

(And this is the only place I’ve found the name -- it isn't elsewhere in census records, newspaper archives, Google books, etc. It may be a dead end, research wise.)

Richard Kaufman | 03/16/10 07:37 PM | link | filter

Probably some amateur magician with a sense of humor.

Don Knox | 03/16/10 07:59 PM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: Probably some amateur magician with a sense of humor.

And a great sense of smell, too!

Jonathan Townsend | 03/16/10 08:40 PM | link | filter

?

http://books.google.com/books?id=4uARAA ... 08&f=false

Richard Kaufman | 03/16/10 09:00 PM | link | filter

And what’s your point Jonathan--if you've looked at the document to which you’ve linked you’ll see the name S.W. Erdnase in the left-hand column, 4th line, p.117. That’s what Bill said. Does the link tell you or anyone else anything? No.

Jonathan Townsend | 03/16/10 09:13 PM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: And what’s your point Jonathan--if you've looked at the document to which you’ve linked you’ll see the name S.W. Erdnase in the left-hand column, 4th line, p.117. That's what Bill said. Does the link tell you or anyone else anything? No.
Sorry, I got stuck between asking if it might have been a typo and frustrated at being unable to grab the page for direct inclusion and abandoned the post (and it posted).

I wanted the image to ask if it’s legit compared to a physical copy anyone here might have and then to ask if any of the other names attending were known to be magicians.

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**Jim Martin** | 03/16/10 10:09 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* And what's your point Jonathan--if you've looked at the document to which you've linked you'll see the name S.W. Erdnase in the left-hand column, 4th line, p.117. That's what Bill said. Does the link tell you or anyone else anything? No.

Actually, it appears to read 'S.W. Erdnose'. (I expanded the font size - either a typo or an '-ose').

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**Richard Kaufman** | 03/16/10 11:24 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Of course it's legit! Do you think Google just happened to scan a copy of some obscure journal that had been doctored? That's just bizarre.

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**John Bodine** | 03/17/10 12:46 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Jonathan's inquiry as to whether or not other magicians are mentioned is a valid direction to pursue. I would also add it would be worth looking at names who might have been associated with Todd Karr's candidate or perhaps known gamblers of the time/place.

As for legit, I think Jonathan was referring to the scan/OCR, asking to compare it to a paper copy to see if the OCR accurately captured the letters. Easy to make mistakes with that technology.

Nice digging Bill!

- johnbodine

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**Larry Horowitz** | 03/17/10 03:25 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Richard,

While anything is possible, I would find it odd that a magician would make a joke with the name when the book was only recently published and not yet a major influence. Nor for that matter do I think the matter of the identity of the author had risen to the
point where the joke would get traction.

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**Dustin Stinett** | 03/17/10 03:56 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Erdnase was already well-known in magic in 1908. It had been being advertised in *The Sphinx* for quite a while by then. I'm guessing that the common notion that The Professor somehow “introduced” the book to magic might be at work here. That is not the case at all. He did, however, stress its importance.

Dustin

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**Bill Mullins** | 03/17/10 04:28 PM | [link](#) | [filter]

*Jonathan Townsend wrote:* Sorry, I got stuck . . . at being unable to grab the page for direct inclusion . . . I wanted the image to ask if it’s legit compared to a physical copy anyone here might have and then to ask if any of the other names attending were known to be magicians.

The Page

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**Magic Newswire** | 03/17/10 08:51 PM | [link](#) | [filter]

Erdnose is an anagram for Red Nose. I wonder if his real name was Rudolf? ;­­-) Sorry, I could not help myself.

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**Richard Evans** | 03/17/10 09:24 PM | [link](#) | [filter]

Interesting find, Bill.

The article in The Caledonian is an account of a dinner held by the Canadian Club of New York. Have a look at the constitution and membership of that club in 1885:


Members include one Saram R Ellison MD, founder of the SAM.

Then take a look at Article VI of the constitution.

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**Richard Kaufman** | 03/17/10 09:50 PM | [link](#) | [filter]

Dr. Ellison, eh? That's interesting.
By the by, David Alexander's candidate for Erdnase had something to do with the nose in the hidden meaning. "S.W. Erdnose" is possibly a typo. Or not.

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**David Alexander** | 03/18/10 12:39 AM | link | filter

Pointed out originally (I believe) by Thomas Sawyer in a privately printed monograph, in German "Erd Nase" means "earth nose." My candidate was a mining engineer who graduated from the Columbia School of Mines. He studied German and Latin.

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**magicam** | 03/18/10 02:43 AM | link | filter

Feeling lazy. If either of these were previously posted, my apologies. Go to the web page in question to see all the web links embedded in the relevant article.

From [http://blogs.knoxnews.com/silence/archi ... in_1.shtml](http://blogs.knoxnews.com/silence/archi ... in_1.shtml):

**Saturday Morning Mystery: Who Was S. W. Erdnase?**

Published in 1902, The Expert at the Card Table is apparently the classic text on card manipulation, also known as cheating. The author wrote under the pseudonym of S.W. Erdnase. A hundred years later people are still searching for his true identity.

Erdnase is such as awkward false name that it seems reasonable to guess that it’s a reversal or some other anagram of the author’s true name. The Wikipedia entry names Franklin Andrews and Wilbur Edgerton Sanders as candidates for being Erdnase, and ends with this teaser:

> Research for an upcoming documentary has uncovered correspondence between noted physicists and authors Stanley Wesley Stratton and Robert Andrews Millikan on the subject of conjuring and crooked gambling. In 1896 Stratton suggested a textbook on the subject. Further evidence suggests that Millikan and Stratton hired Professor Hoffman to write the book based (partly) on notes they provided.

An August 16, 2000 Wall Street Journal article by Rachel Emma Silverman, "Into Thin Air: Writer Reveals Magic Tricks, Then He Disappears" gave popular coverage to Erdnase. I don’t have access to the article, but summaries say it mentions Erdnase candidate Wilbur Edgerton Sanders, as well as a James Andrews and an Edwin Sumner Andrews.

Todd Karr has much more information about what is known and what is supposed about Erdnase. He offers his own best guess as to the author’s true identity:
On November 23, 1901, shortly before the publication of The Expert at the Card Table, the Fort Wayne News reported on a scam perpetrated in Kokomo by a stranger giving his name as E. S. Andrews of the Brandon Commercial Company, Chicago. The news report stated that the con man had a clever collections-agency scheme that succeeded in bilking forty local merchants and physicians.

Andrews had come to Kokomo three weeks prior and convinced the businessmen and doctors to hire him to collect their debts. Each participant paid Andrews a membership fee of $15 (or about $900 total). The newspaper reported that before leaving, Andrews collected several accounts from debtors, all of which he took with him, the merchants or physicians receiving nothing.

We thus have a candidate whose name is a precise reversal of the pseudonym S. W. Erdnase, a con man based in Chicago who was clever enough to swindle businessmen and doctors, and someone who appears to have had over $900 in his pocket just before The Expert at the Card Table was published.

Another article lists several candidates, and claims that "erdnase" would translate to "earth nose" in German. That could be a clue pointing towards mining engineer Wilbur Edgerton Sanders, though it seems like a bit of a stretch.

Posted by Les Jones on February 3, 2007 at 1:14 PM


- Whatever Happened to S.W. Erdnase?

When poring through old records in search of your ancestors, you might keep an eye open for a few more names. S.W. Erdnase has been missing for a long time. Professional and amateur magicians alike will quickly recognize the name of S.W. Erdnase. In 1902, he published a book called, "The Expert at the Card Table." In vivid detail and elegant prose, the book revealed the secrets behind intricate card tricks and quick-fingered cheating techniques.

Erdnase obviously was a pseudonym, one that has never been revealed. Erdnase never made public appearances and never wrote another book - at least not under that name. Yet for nearly 100 years, the book has never vanished from print. It has sold hundreds of thousands of copies worldwide and been translated into many other languages. It has become the bible of card magic.
Chatsworth, Calif., paid $10,259 in an eBay auction for a first edition of the "Expert" signed by its illustrator. The auction also included some of the illustrator's letters, which contained clues to the identity of Erdnase.

"Everyone loves a good mystery," says the 44-year-old television scriptwriter and amateur magician. The sale made a splash inside the world of magic and ignited a new wave of Erdnase research.

S.W. Erdnase was almost certainly a pen name. But for whom? Conferences, books, magazine articles and monographs have all attempted to unmask Erdnase. Every Erdnase hunter has his own pet theory. Some believe the author was someone named "E.S. Andrews" - the name spelled backward. Magicians trawling census records, magician-society membership rosters, and other documents have yet to find an E.S. Andrews with deep card knowledge and the education necessary to write such an articulate book. Then there's the question of whether such a clever master of deception would succumb to something so obvious as the old backward-name trick.

The pioneer of Erdnase research is Martin Gardner, an 85-year-old author and mathematics columnist. He began in 1946 by interviewing Marshall D. Smith, the book's illustrator. Unfortunately, the artist remembered very little about Erdnase, whom he had last seen in 1901. But the details he did remember remain the key clues for Erdnase hunters. According to Mr. Smith, Erdnase was a handsome, well-bred East Coast man with unusually soft, well-pampered hands. He was about 5 feet 6 inches tall and about 40 years old. The illustrator couldn't remember the author's name but thought it might have been Andrews. The author also claimed to be related to Louis Dalrymple, a popular turn-of-the-century cartoonist, according to the illustrator.

Mr. Gardner corresponded with other magicians who said they had known Erdnase, conducted lengthy archival research, and by 1949 believed he had cracked the case. Erdnase, he claimed, was a man named Milton Franklin Andrews, found dead in 1905 following a grisly murder-suicide in a San Francisco apartment. In many ways, Mr. Andrews seemed a good fit. A well-bred, East Coast gambler, he died soon after the book's publication - providing a nice explanation for the silence surrounding the author. But Mr. Andrews was also much taller than the man Mr. Smith recalled. And an 18-page letter written by Mr. Andrews and found after his death was nowhere near as eloquent as "The Expert."

Some professional magicians refuse to believe that a murderer penned the card-trick masterpiece. That notion helped spur another theory: that the book was ghostwritten, perhaps by Mark Twain, a childhood chum of Mr.
Mr. Hatch, who brokered the eBay sale, thinks E.S. Andrews might be short for James Andrews and is investigating a man with that name. He also is focusing on another candidate, a railroad worker named Edwin Sumner Andrews, whose wife shared Louis Dalrymple's mother's maiden name of Seeley. The book dealer spends at least two hours a day searching magic-society archives, census records, Library of Congress authorship lists, and genealogy Web sites for men named Andrews who fit the author's profile. Earlier this summer, he spent several days of his family vacation digging through the genealogical archives in Salt Lake City. However, Hatch still has not located the proof that he seeks.

David Alexander has approached the Erdnase puzzle another way. Last winter, the magician and former private detective from Long Beach, Calif., assembled a "forensic profile" of the type of man who might have written the book, then conducted a complex linguistic analysis of the book's title page. He thinks S.W. Erdnase was really W.E. Sanders. Alexander came to that conclusion by studying the book itself. One Erdnase trick was a card shift called the "S.W.E. Shift," named for his initials. A shift is a furtive card action in which top cards are moved to the bottom of the deck. Performing a "shift" on the initials S.W.E. results in W.E.S.

Mr. Alexander's search through Library of Congress records and census reports turned up an Erdnase contender named Wilbur Edgerton Sanders. Mr. Sanders, a mining engineer born in Akron, Ohio, in 1861 but educated at Philips Exeter Academy, fits the profile. (In German, "Erdnase" means "earth-nose," which Mr. Alexander deems significant.) Mr. Alexander is currently reading Mr. Sanders's diaries, dated from 1875 to 1890, and believes the writing style is similar to that of Erdnase. The diaries are filled with mundane details of 19th-century life, including meals, chores and family relations, and so far make no mention of card tricks. But that, too, could be a ruse. The best tricks, after all, are those that are never revealed.

When researching old census records, death records or other sources of genealogy information, keep an eye open for a 5 foot 6 inch magician born around 1860.

**Bob Coyne** | 03/18/10 06:24 PM | link | filter

That's a great discovery Bill...and right there on the internet too!

Regarding David Alexander's candidate (Wilbur Edgerton Sanders), here's an interesting google books link I just found to the 25th anniversary yearbook of the Columbia School of Mines. Sanders was deemed the unofficial class poet and historian
and wrote retrospective poems and bios about his classmates (including himself) in the yearbook. I didn't find any smoking guns to connect him with Erdnase, but there were a couple of intriguing references. In particular here's part of a poem Sanders wrote about a classmate Johnson who was at the time (1910) producing shells for warfare, but which Sanders puns to mean the shell game and in the process mentions faro and poker and cheating.

Come, Johnson, cease your naughty ways,  
Make simple faro, poker plays  
Or roulette e'en, but stop this craze  
For playin' the "Shell game."

However, Johnson, when I learn  
The shell game played by your concern  
Is not the western game I yearn  
To see played on the square,  
[...]

There's also an interesting part where Sanders refers to himself (who he calls "Billy Sanders") with a continuing refrain of "Bill, yer kaint fule me" (you can't fool me). The context isn't magic but "kaint fule me" = "can't fool me" is suggestive of it.

"It sufficeth to say that only the innate and in(co)herent modesty of the objective subject of this "story of a life" prevents the Class Historian (officially when writing of Billy Sanders) from dealing in higher superlatives than these hereinafter detailed, specified and contained, to wit: lie air young an' beautifullest an' fair; he hez caroty face an' a freckled hair; he seems pure an' nobil ez he kin bebut, nikkumarouse, Bill, yer kaint fule me ! He hez wondrous grace in hiz nether pegs, when he pir-hoo-etts on hiz rear hind legs: an' he thinks he's sum with hiz hullaballoo; but he kaint fule meknow him thoo an' thoo! He hez tears in hiz eyes when he talks uv him; what he sez uv him, sure it ain't so slim; but I sez ter him, with hiz reinekaboo, naow yer kaint fule meso yer jess gaow tew ! An' ter h'ar him talk uv ther pace he's set; an' uv what he's done, fer he's braggin' yet; what a bad man he, an' so Woolly! Gee! but I know yer, Bill, an' yer kaint fule me!"

http://books.google.com/books?id=pURGAA ... 22&f=false

Bill Mullins | 03/19/10 02:31 PM | link | filter

Bob Coyne wrote: Regarding David Alexander's candidate (Wilbur Edgerton Sanders), here's an interesting google books link I just found to the 25th anniversary yearbook of the Columbia School of Mines.

I had found this book a couple of weeks ago, and forwarded the link to David
Alexander. I was "sitting on" the info until after next week, when I'm giving a short presentation "Martin Gardner and the Search for Erdnase" at the 9th Gathering for Gardner.

One comment on the book: Sanders gives his height in his autobiographical sketch as 5'9". This is somewhat higher than Marshall Smith remembered Erdnase as being.

Also, I've found Sanders' passport application from 1918. It includes his signature, which doesn't look like the handwriting on the copyright application for Expert. Of course, that doesn't prove anything, since the application could have been filled out by someone at McKinney, who printed the book, and whose address Erdnase gave on the copyright application.

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**Bill Mullins** | 03/19/10 02:49 PM | [link] | [filter]

Also, the passport application says that Sanders had a crooked little finger on his left hand. If it could be shown that this was congenital, or from an accident before 1902, I would think this would almost conclusively rule out W. E. Sanders as the author. Smith didn't remember it, nor does it show up in the illustrations in the book. Of course, it could have happened after 1902. The only picture I've seen of Sanders' hand is the one in Alexander's article in Genii Jan 2000, which is inconclusive. The finger doesn't appear bent, but it is separate from the rest of the hand. Perhaps the original photo has more detail.

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**Bob Coyne** | 03/19/10 04:40 PM | [link] | [filter]

Interesting about Sanders having a crooked finger on his left hand. I wonder if he got caught cheating and someone performed the appropriate punishment :-)

Regarding Sander's height, in addition to the 5'9" that he gives here, there's also the fact that he was the bow on the Columbia crew team. Bowmen tend to be the smallest/slightest of the rowers in the boat. So it at least seems compatible with Smith's recollections.

I found some other miscellaneous info about Sanders from the "The Miner" yearbooks in the 1880's when he was enrolled as a student (I don't think these aren't available on the internet yet). There were a few peripheral references to poker type things (eg. a poker club), but nothing tying any of them to Sanders. There was also in one of them a short parody "extract" of the Odyssey with "crafty Ulysses" dealing a game of five card draw poker to Penelope and Telemachus. Ulysses wins of course :-) Given Sanders' literary bent it seems possible he wrote it, but the attribution I think was "B.W." which I guess could match Billy Wilbur (since he seems to refer to himself as Billy) though perhaps that's a stretch.
I've been meaning to look at more stuff in the Columbia University archives regarding Sanders when I have time. (I've been in contact with David Alexander about all this.) There were other student publications at the time that might have some references to him.

btw, one other circumstantial link between Sanders and Erdnase that I haven't seen mentioned before is the trick "Divining Rod" in EATCT which has a mining/prospecting theme.

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**Bill Mullins | 04/02/10 01:50 PM | link | filter**

Houdini's copy of the first Drake edition is scanned and online at the Library of Congress [HERE.](#) Beware, though -- the file is huge (89 MB).

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**Todd Karr | 04/08/10 01:33 PM | link | filter**

Please check the Buzz section for an announcement of our new e-book version of Erdnase for the iPad!

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**Bill Mullins | 04/23/10 11:09 PM | link | filter**

There is a Drake softbound edition on ebay right now: [HERE](#)

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**Jeff Pierce Magic | 04/23/10 11:35 PM | link | filter**

There's a new hardback Dover edition available on Amazon. 130 pages with forward by MArtin Gardner.

Jeff

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**David Alexander | 04/23/10 11:45 PM | link | filter**

Interesting to note that presumably Drake had the copyright page retypeset. Compare the copy on eBay with the Houdini copy. The one on eBay seems clearer and better typeset. The second one with slightly different verbiage was sloppily typeset with bubbles in the metal that broke cutting out parts of the letters.

One makes sense, "Entered according to the Act of the Parliament of Canada..." as opposed to "Entered according to the Act of the Parliament of Congress,..." even though it was only copyrighted in the US. Probably a less than literate linotype operator. There also seems to be a printers' union indicia on the Houdini copy and not...
Also interesting to note that Drake added what appears to be an entire signature of ads for his other books.

Bill Mullins wrote: There is a Drake softbound edition on ebay right now: HERE

However, while the seller is describing this copy as a 1902 first edition, it is not the actual 1902 first edition (which wasn't softbound) nor the 1905 drake softbound first edition (which had a yellow cover).

The seller has been repeatedly informed of this fact by various people and yet refuses to update his ebay listing. eBay has been contacted about it and has done nothing. Now the wait begins for the identification of the ultimate buyer, who will then be greatly saddened to learn that he was unceremoniously and consciously scammed by an unscrupulous seller. But of course, since the seller has a high eBay feedback score, eBay won't care and won't do anything.

To be fair, it's getting more apparent that the buyer is a shill (ref his comments to me).

Ian

Regarding the listing that sold this week, eBay does not have the resources to police every listing to ensure what is pictured is what is as described, that is the sellers responsibility. 100 million listings makes that a pretty difficult task.

In this case, if the buyer receives the item and realizes this is NOT a first edition (paperback or otherwise) they can file a SNAD (Significantly Not as Described) claim against the seller, return the item, and receive a full refund. This is a relatively painless process and the buyer protection offered by eBay offers very solid protection for buyers.

John Bodine wrote: Regarding the listing that sold this week, eBay does not have the resources to police every listing to ensure what is pictured is what
is as described, that is the sellers responsibility. 100 million listings makes that a pretty difficult task.

Of course. Unfortunately, they also don't seem to have the resources to actually read reports of infractions sent to them, since we had sent a number of reports about the seller being aware that he was mis-labeling what was being sold.

Until, equally obviously, they had more than enough resources to process the reports of the seller for harassment and auction interference, and to do so within hours of the report.

Funny how power sellers get the red carpet, even when cheating others out of hundreds of dollars and being reported for it.

Richard Kaufman | 05/06/10 03:45 PM | link | filter

I can tell everyone that thanks to this thread, the buyer in the auction was aware that the item was not as advertised, and returned it. So, good job all around!

Ian Kendall | 05/06/10 04:19 PM | link | filter

Yay. That means the seller still got stung for costs, and is still left with a 30 dollar book he paid 700 dollars for (so he told me...)

Bet he wishes he hadn't been so snarky to Jason now :)

Ian

Jeff Pierce Magic | 05/06/10 04:45 PM | link | filter

Did anyone notice on the Houdini copy on the title page that next to the authors name is hand written "Samuel Robert" the "S.W." in erdnase are marked out and there is a symbol under the E in erdnase. Just thought this might be interesting if this is in Houdinis handwriting.

Jeff

Bill Mullins | 05/06/10 05:04 PM | link | filter

Jeff Pierce Magic wrote: Did anyone notice on the Houdini copy on the title page that next to the authors name is hand written "Samuel Robert" the "S.W." in erdnase are marked out and there is a symbol under the E in erdnase. Just thought this might be interesting if this is in Houdinis
An earlier bibliographer/cataloguer misidentified the author as Samuel Robert and the error spread throughout libraries. Search elsewhere in this thread for "Samuel Robert" for details.

The double dot under "Erdnase" is standard library notation meaning that for cataloging purposes, this is the correct place to start the author's name. In some Asian languages, for example, it may be ambiguous which part of the author's name is the "last" name, and so librarian, upon acceptance of a new book, will make such a note on the title page to remove the ambiguity.

Jeff Pierce Magic | 05/06/10 08:09 PM | link | filter

Thanks Bill.

Jeff

John Bodine | 05/12/10 07:45 PM | link | filter

Sebastien, it's a very complicated ecosystem and with 100 million active users and an equal number of items on the site policing is complicated. That being said, people are working on these problems every day. PM me if you have any questions or suggestions, I am always looking for ideas and now hold an interesting position at the company.

Now to keep this on topic, how would people feel about an Erdnase price guide and comprehensive list of editions and variations? What if that information was crowdsourced, following the Wiki model? I would certainly be happy to contribute and enter the prices I have paid for various editions. This would then serve as a resource for collectors and a reference for potential sellers.

This too has the problem of possibly increasing prices, transparency can do that, but could also help reduce prices by more appropriately setting expectations.

Jeffs | 07/02/10 12:49 AM | link | filter

John,

I would be interested in this, mainly for information on the various editions, but the value information would be very useful to those currently collecting. I have seen many
Also, currently posted on youtube is part of an interview with Martin Gardner that appears to come from the Ackerman set, which I don’t own so I cannot verify that. The part I watched was interesting, not as much for the information it contained but just to hear the story from Gardner’s mouth. I don’t know if it was posted with permission or not but it was a very interesting thing to listen to. What this reinforces is that I really need to scrape together the hundred bucks to buy that set or find someone willing to sell me their copy of the disk with the Erdnase info on it.

Joe Pecore | 07/02/10 07:53 AM | link | filter

John Bodine wrote: Now to keep this on topic, how would people feel about an Erdnase price guide and comprehensive list of editions and variations? What if that information was crowdsourced, following the Wiki model?

Feel free to use MagicPedia. Many editions are already listed there: http://geniimagazine.com/wiki/index.php ... Card_Table.

I can help break out the editions into it’s own wiki page for this purpose.

Jonathan Townsend | 07/02/10 09:21 AM | link | filter

Has anyone had the text tattooed on yet - or how about engraved on the head of a pin? Have the illustrations been used in teaching art or (or as clip-art) by art students for hand models? Is there a companion volume on the specifics of applying the techniques described and/or helpful meditations one might use when learning the works? One might consider that half the point of a tombstone is what one can learn or do with the rubbings.

I propose we call such derivative works "Urdnase" and encourage such things.

That passage in the Kalush book about questions unasked about Houdini which became unanswerable in 1962 struck home here - and I’d like to see us make better use of the past before it becomes archeology.

John Bodine | 09/28/10 05:24 PM | link | filter

Anyone seen this work by Richard Wiseman? Thoughts?

http://www.richardwiseman.com/erdnase.html

Leonard Hevia | 09/28/10 05:35 PM | link | filter
Mr. Wiseman posted it on this thread about several years ago. It's probably about ten pages back on this thread.

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**John Bodine** | 09/28/10 07:09 PM | link | filter

Thanks Leonard, i guess by thoughts i meant any new thoughts or leads on this. In my haste i clearly left the intent out.

i'd also be interested in any developments from Todd Karr and Dick Hatch!

-johnbodine

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**Leonard Hevia** | 09/29/10 06:16 PM | link | filter

Understood John. Wiseman's work is definitely interesting. I know that David Alexander is currently studying the diaries of his candidate Wilbur E. Sanders. The pond is still right now...

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**Roger M.** | 09/30/10 11:02 AM | link | filter

It's been linked to a few times before, but Mr. Wilbur E. Sanders epic tome on Mine Timbering provides an interesting opportunity to compare language use while this thread goes through a slow period:

http://www.archive.org/stream/minetimbe ... 0/mode/2up

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**Geno Munari** | 10/10/10 03:57 PM | link | filter

For Richard Hatch-

You wrote in an early post, quoted here:

"The earliest known advertisement for it is in the Sphinx in November 1902. (It is briefly mentioned in the September issue.) What was he doing with copies in the meantime? The first edition copy in the Houdini collection at the Library of Congress had been Adrian Plate's copy, and written in Plate's handwriting (at least I believe it to be Plate's handwriting!) at the bottom of the title page it says "Sold by James McKinney and Company" and gives their Chicago address. How did Plate, in New York, know this? I assume he might have seen an advertisement for it in the non-magical press. I'm looking for such an ad. If anyone spots it, please let me know!"

(Genii Forum Post by R. Hatch Feb. 7, 2003)
Did you ever get any more info on this post?

On another topic:

In Erdnase's EACT: In the magic section there are many inclusions about mentalism or "Methods for Determining a Card Thought of" and then further on, "A Mind-Reading Trick", and further on, he writes, "Or he may assume the power of mind-reading", which is about a pre-arranged deck.

There is really a lot of information on mind reading etc. in this book of gambling sleights and legerdemain. If the collaborator, and if there was a collaborator, he or she must have had a good deal of knowledge about this subject.

Why would the main writer, who appears to be a hard core player, "because he needs the money", dabble or include mind reading in this book about cheating at cards?

Erdnase was a player and pretty unlikely to have performed mental magic. But he may have.

So the collaborator of EACT may have had a good deal of knowledge about mind reading.

Harto (Harte) could have been the collaborator as reported by many sources. He was a mentalist. Here is the listing in Magicpedia:

James S. Harto was a professional magician that performed a mind-reading act as "Chandra, The Mystic".
His first performance as at the Bristol Museum in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1886.

Interesting because Worcester was not so far away from the home of MFA.

The above are just notes and ideas that may have some interest to some of you. No dogma or proven points. Any thoughts?

Oct 10, 2010

John Bodine | 10/11/10 08:16 PM | link | filter

Has anyone researched the E.S. Andrews who wrote "Andrews' Mercantile Protective Method" in 1889 as mentioned in the Sessional Papers of the Parliament of Canada?

http://books.google.com/books?id=WTxOAA ... ws&f=false

Or the creator of the E.S. Andrews' (Chicago) Knee Splint referenced here? c1890
Richard Hatch | 10/19/10 11:45 PM | link | filter

Geno, no additional information on the Adrian Plate/James McKinney connection or possibly non-magic ads for the book predating the November 1902 Sphinx ad.

John, those are both new "E. S. Andrews" references to me and the second seems particularly interesting, given both the "Chicago" reference and the fact that the Knee Splint looks rather like a card hold out!

John Bodine | 10/22/10 02:04 PM | link | filter

i think the Dr. E.S. Andrews is a bit too old but a doctors hands would certainly be kept in good shape. He had 3 sons, 2 of which i've found names for and neither was an E.S. but perhaps the third son...

On a separate note... i believe Marshall Smith attended the SAM convention in May of 1947. Any idea how many people attended and if he had other contact with magicians? i'm curious to know how many copies of the book he may have signed.

And finally, yesterday was Martin Gardner's birthday, certainly someone we owe thanks to for his part in the Erdnase puzzle - a puzzle he was unable to solve before his passing.

-johnbodine

Roger M. | 10/31/10 08:37 PM | link | filter

One thing the new iGenii access has allowed is the ability to re-read, in a linear format, some of the finest of the columns that have appeared in Genii over the years.

One of those columns is The Giorgio Letters by Tony Giorgio.

Long time readers of Genii will recall that Giorgio began the series of columns with a somewhat withering attack on Erdnase's credibility. He vacillated initially.......finally deciding that Erdnase was in fact a magician, and had never moved under fire.

His statement is unequivocal by the end of the initial series of columns.......Erdnase was a magician masquerading as a hustler.
ALL of Giorgio's columns.
I have to admit that I have mixed views on Giorgio's opinions and statements, but that he continually backs up his opinions with actual examples and hard evidence of why he thinks Erdnase wasn't a gambler or hustler......but rather a magician.

I should point out that I have consummate respect for Tony Giorgio, and that the weight of his statements as to why he thinks Erdnase wasn't a hustler seem to acquire more impact when read "all at once"......as iGenii lets us now do.

I temper Giorgio's opinion with my own opinion that Giorgio definitely was "making hay" with his initial columns taking Erdnase and those who "worship" Erdnase to task. In fact, it would be fair to say that "The Giorgio Letters" got their initial traction by Giorgio's unrelenting "attack" on the dogma surrounding EATCT.
Nothing scores readers than somebody "taking the piss" out of a dogmatic piece of text. I will submit though that Giorgio hardly "came up with" this theory just to get a column in Genii.......as he argued endlessly with his friend Dai Vernon about this very topic years before he ever wrote for Genii.

So, the "making of hay" may be fairly offset by Giorgio's undeniable authority on the subject and re-begs the question..............."could Erdnase have in fact been a magician?"

The question has been asked many times before, but personally I've always felt it to be a ridiculous question when I heard, or read it being posited.

Reading "The Giorgio Letters" one after the other this weekend, the weight that Tony Giorgio puts behind his overall argument seems to be weight that can't be simply ignored..........and weight that has never been credibly addressed or rebutted, something Giorgio gleefully points out in a recent "Giorgio Letters" column.

I suggest folks with iGenii access read The Giorgio Letters in their entirety, and then ask the question:

"Could Erdnase have been a magician"?

Personally, I'm just asking the question.......if anything, my mind is far more open after reading Giorgio's writings than it was before reading them, but I'm not convinced one way or the other just yet.

It might be fair to say that Tony Giorgio's work in his series of columns on who Erdnase might have been has never been fairly placed in the overall context of the search for the author of EATCT.

Glenn Bishop | 10/31/10 09:19 PM | link | filter
I also have the opinion that Erdnase was a magician. And I think that he may be one of the first magicians playing the part of the magician/card shark.

Cheers!

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**Jeff Pierce Magic** | 11/01/10 01:25 PM | link | filter

John I also stated a few pages back that I thought he might be a doctor, although I had nothing to back it up with, just a hunch.

There were over 1200 attends at the 1947 SAM convention in Chicago.

Jeff Pierce

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**John Bodine** | 11/03/10 05:31 PM | link | filter

Thanks for the information on the SAM Convention Jeff. I remember seeing a picture, maybe in TMWWE, of Smith with several magicians, signing copies of the book. Would love to get more information about the convention, handouts, etc. but imagine most of it is in the Gardner-Smith correspondence or TMWWE. Time to go reread.

As for magician vs. gambler, my money is on gambler. Working the cellar but exploring several other areas of advantage play. To describe with such clarity the moves in the book, the psychology and timing of those moves, and recognize that much of their original work was not suitable for the table and therefore moving those pieces to the legerdemain section - in my opinion places the author more as a gambler than magician. But before passing final judgment, I'll go reread the Giorgio letters.

johnbodine

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**Sebastien L.** | 11/08/10 02:49 PM | link | filter

Roger, have you read Steve Forte's article on Erdnase in Genii? It is also available on the Genii archive and may prove illuminating.

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**Roger M.** | 11/08/10 06:51 PM | link | filter

I have read that article......but it was long enough ago that your suggestion above causes me to to read it once again tonight.

Further to my thoughts above, the gist of my post is that, if one accepts Giorgio as one of the few "real" hustlers......then his many dozens of comments as to why Erdnase wasn't a hustler should likely be addressed for the record.
It's not obligatory of course :) , and there are many who might suggest that Erdnase purposely threw in some distinctly "wrong" terminology to further conceal his tracks.

I've spent 40+ years firmly on the "he was a gambler" side of the equation.....but I do hold Giorgio high in terms of respect, and consider him one of the very few true hustlers to have put his thoughts down in the popular press.

I believe one would have great difficulty with all of the "Giorgio Letters" in hand at once, and being called upon to refute each of Giorgio's points (and he made perhaps 60-100 different ones). If anything, reading them all on iGenii has made me more open minded than I was prior.

...............but off now to re-read the Forte Genii article.

__________________________

**elsielefe** | 11/08/10 09:47 PM | link | filter

"how would people feel about an Erdnase price guide and comprehensive list of editions and variations? "

I propose we call such derivative works "Urdnase" and encourage such things.

__________________________

**greg manwaring** | 11/11/10 10:39 AM | link | filter

On a side note, has anyone here handled decks from back in Erdnases' era and compared it with the decks that we're used to handling today? In terms of size, card stock, etc. Were moves harder to execute on the card stock from back then? I'm just curious.

__________________________

**Richard Kaufman** | 11/11/10 11:42 AM | link | filter

Decks from 1910 are pretty much the same in feel as now.

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**greg manwaring** | 11/11/10 01:07 PM | link | filter

Thanks Walt, uh, I mean Richard!! ;)

__________________________

**Richard Kaufman** | 11/11/10 03:50 PM | link | filter

In collecting DeLand material, I've also had a chance to handle decks of cards from the period. They were coated (shellac, I think) with a nice finish and handled very well.
Having briefly reviewed Giorgio's comments, and knowing the name by reputation only, I must say I was extremely surprised and even disappointed by many of his observations.

I did appreciate and agree with a lot of what he has to say but, in my opinion, a significant amount of his tearing down required first the erection of straw men...

As one example, consider his comments regarding using the top palm to palm off a setup of 20 cards or more. Granted, Erdnase doesn't specify a complete strategy for using his palming system to gain an advantage, but I think it is pretty clear to anybody who studies the book that Erdnase had something rather more sophisticated in mind:

He references games other than Poker throughout the book and, for example, there are games where you can bust a player by ensuring he receives just one high/low card - a stack of 4 cards is enough to bust, or at least have information on the cards held by the first 4 players. If you can't win in the long run with that kind of advantage, you shouldn't be in the game.

Further, there are games where the cards are dealt 2 at a time to players, 3 at a time etc. (as opposed to rounds of single cards) thus significantly shortening the "stack size to benefit" ratio.

Even if my specific examples are flawed it is still incorrect, in my opinion, to assume that Erdnase would have advocated the palming of a 20 or 30 card top stock and then use this assumption to ridicule him.

In anticipation of the inevitable - yes I am aware of Mr Giorgio's lofty reputation and this is not an attack on his character nor his expertise. I just happen to disagree with some of his analysis and I hope I have provided enough evidence to back up my reasoning.

There are several signs in the book that Erdnase taught gambling techniques - eg p22, teaching a blind shuffle in 5 mins, p24 the size of hand doesn't matter, p73 refering to instructing certain players.

Of course, this doesn't prove that he was a gambler himself.

But, from my reading, I'm not convinced he performed card tricks; eg p 172 he doesn't say "I'm giving you my patter", he says he has 'garnished' the tricks to show the part that patter plays.
Nor do I see any sign that he taught the tricks to others.

p122 convinces me that he did perform the 3 card monte as an entertainment. Although the comment there about bearing repetition, and the comment on p119 about amateurs entertaining friends suggests to me that's what he did.

El Mystico,

It has long been said that the conjuring section was written by someone other than Erdnase. That would explain the inconsistencies you site.

Hi Ryan;

Sorry, I wasn't very clear.

I've followed most of the debates about Erdnase over the years; I know the two author theory.

I think I was trying to make two points.

First - in terms of Georgio's claims that he wasn't a gambler - the signs are in the book that he taught gambling techniques.

Second - if the magic section was written by someone else, he picked someone who doesn't seem to have mixed much with other magicians, didn't teach card tricks, and seems to have performed as an amateur.

Lots of "seems" in there I know!

The erection of the Straw Man is an excellent point Magic Fred.

Reading your post caused me to go back and re-read a few things myself.
Ah, ok, I see now. I forget who was supposed to have written the magic section but I'm sure it's in this thread somewhere. Maybe Max Holden?

Interesting thoughts though.

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**Magic Fred** | 11/17/10 07:56 PM | link | filter

To me, it is abundantly clear that the same man wrote both sections of the book.

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 11/17/10 10:21 PM | link | filter

Was that another straw man erection?

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**Magic Fred** | 11/18/10 04:45 AM | link | filter

I must confess that I have no idea what you are referring to.

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**Magic Fred** | 11/18/10 02:16 PM | link | filter

Another example is in using known facts about Milton Franklin Andrews to discredit Erdnase and his book.

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**Magic Fred** | 11/20/10 03:46 PM | link | filter

If anyone's interested, there are also ample grounds to doubt Mr Giorgio's "strongest" piece of evidence - that of Erdnase's language.

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**Bill Mullins** | 11/20/10 08:26 PM | link | filter

Where does Giorgio describe issues with Erdnase's language?

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**Magic Fred** | 11/20/10 08:29 PM | link | filter

In his Genii columns. He says it's his strongest evidence to suggest that Erdnase was not a gambler.

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**Bill Mullins** | 11/20/10 08:39 PM | link | filter

I supposed you were talking about his Genii columns. Which one is my question --
He mentions it throughout, But for example:

"Perhaps the most persuasive evidence in support of my contention that the author of Expert was a magician and not a card cheater is found in the language employed by the author."

-August 2003

I'm certainly listening..............

Thanks. But his argument is one of opinion: "I don't think Erdnase sounds like a gambler." Which is hard to refute, and hard to support with evidence.

I think Erdnase was a writer.

I don't think people write something as long as Expert, especially something as technically demanding, without being a writer first. I think he was a writer who enjoyed practicing and doing (but not necessarily performing) sleight of hand. I think he studied gambling and magical techniques, as so many do who enjoy practicing and doing sleight of hand. He collected what he learned, and developed many ideas on his own, and wrote a book.

I should point out that I am not a really serious student of the subject, and I have no real argument to advance my opinion. But I know this: whoever it was that wrote the book, the only fact we know absolutely for sure about him is that he wrote a book.

He supports his argument with what he believes to be evidence. Therefore it is very easy to refute (or at least attempt to) either by presenting contradictory evidence or by demonstrating that his evidence is flawed.

Just because something is voiced as an opinion does not mean it can not be convincingly shown to be wrong, or at least likely to be wrong. The phrase "just my
should certainly have realised by now!

Giorgio points out evidence that suggests the author of the book was certainly a gambler. He also presents evidence that the book must have been written by a magician. Therefore he concludes that the author enlisted the help of a gambler, thus explaining those portions which make it plainly obvious that the author was intimately familiar with gamblers and the world of hustling.

I, however, feel his logic in arriving at his conclusions to suggest a magician is flawed. If it can convincingly been shown to be the case, then we are left only with compelling evidence that Erdnase was in fact a gambler.

Of course we can never be completely sure, but if the arguments don't stand up then there is no reason to believe that the book was written by a magician. I believe there are strong grounds to believe that the book was written by one man, and that he was a gambler.

I have already highlighted one example which I believe refutes Mr Giorgio's claims that Erdnase was not writing from experience regarding his system of palming, and I believe I can cast similar doubt on most of the evidence used to conclude that he was a magician.

The language issue, for example, (assuming Mr Giorgio is correct that Erdnase does not use the terms one would expect) can be easily explained due to the fact that Erdnase informs us that he is entirely self taught. Therefore, it would be logical to assume that he did not socialise with such company where he would have picked up the common hustling terms of the times.

It is also quite probable that Erdnase dabbled in magic, and was at least familiar with a number of the classic texts of the time, thus explaining how certain phrases from the magicians world may have crept into his vocabulary. Not having been schooled by hustlers, he would have had no impulse to strictly segregate his language used when talking about the two different branches.

In short, I do not believe the language used supports the conclusion that the book was written by a magician.

Magic Fred 11/21/10 04:11 AM | link | filter

I would find it difficult to disagree with any of that, except for my contention that he was certainly a gambler.

In fact, it is the same reasoning that is largely responsible for my conclusion. His cheating "systems" are just as beautiful and elegant as his writing style. So as it would
be logical for an accomplished writer to conclude that Erdnase was also an expert in that field, it is logical for a gambler to conclude that his cheating expertise comes from "professional" experience.

I do believe, however, that the true artistry in his methods has been somewhat clouded by the recent projects proclaiming to have brought his techniques to life in video format. They are not a fair reflection of what is described in the book.

P.S. Is there a problem with the quoting feature? I can't seem to get it to work. I hope it's clear which posts I am responding to.

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Ryan Matney | 11/21/10 02:55 PM | link | filter

So, if you think the same man wrote both sections of the book and this man was also a gambler that was familiar with working real games and cheating to make money, then why all of the card presentations with elaborate patter? What use would those ever be to a real gambler who wanted to hide his skill?

Also, there are several instances in the magic section that suggest he did in fact perform card tricks pretty often. And the fact that he included a sleight that belonged to Houdini and some of the other magic suggests that he had a subscription to Mahatma or Stanyon’s Magic or at least had read them.

I’m not an Erdnase scholar at all but I also remember there being a famous exclusion of a gambling technique that was popular at the time. Someone could chime in and help me here as I can not find where I read this bit.

Vernon asserted that because Erdnase "betrays no confidences" he does not explain the currently (at that time) popular technique and surely knew of it.

But to my mind, that would also strongly suggest that he did not move in gambling circles and did NOT know about the current technique. Being self taught as he proclaimed, why would he?

Just to play devil’s advocate as I do not have a strong opinion on this, but doesn’t that suggest a magician with an armchair interest in gambling?

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El Mystico | 11/21/10 03:05 PM | link | filter

Are we getting a picture of a loner?

Someone who didn’t know other gambling cheaters; which explains why he spends so little time discussing working in conjunction with partners - which I understand is the
And why his knowledge of magic is limited to a few books.

PS Ryan - what are the suggestions that he performed card magic quite often? Yes, I can believe he did three card monte as amateur entertainment. but other examples?

Jonathan Townsend | 11/21/10 03:11 PM | link | filter

? we have a picture of a few poorly conducted interviews, much hard work done collecting potential leads and one burnt down printing house.

I give about as much weight to the interviews as those done with the ex mrs hofzinser about his magic and apparatus - though hold hopes that there has not been sufficient time for all trails back to the original text we call "erdnase" to have been plowed over by the progress of time and passing on of those who may have useful information on the matter.

What's the consensus about the conjuring section following the advantage play section as regards it's connection in writing content and thematic continuity of ideas from one venue to another?

Ryan Matney | 11/21/10 03:43 PM | link | filter

I'm out of my depth trying to have a conversation about this but here goes:

I'm assuming that he performed magic because of the type of material in the magic section. Where exactly does one do the traveling cards, certainly not at a poker game or after one. This is a platform piece. Or at least it is a bit more formal.

What use are the various think of a card effects to a gambler?

Having said that, the inclusion of the SWE shift (the only sleight named after the author) and 'The Three Aces: make me think that he did much in the way of anything for real people. None of it reads to me like someone who performed for people.

I think he was an educated man who did magic as a hobby and was interested in gambling enough to fancy himself a gambler, study the written works of the day and think of a few original techniques of his own.

Could the whole book be an armchair fantasy of some upper class wannabe card hustler?

PS Where did Erdnase get the color change attributed to Houdini when the published sources came after Erdnase and why is attributed to Houdini when Erdnase published it?
Joe Pecore | 11/21/10 04:24 PM | link | filter

> re: Where did Erdnase get the color change attributed to Houdini
I believe it was reported that Erdnase's color change is the same as the "New Colour Changes, Fourth Method" published by Selbit in "The Magician's Handbook" in 1901, which he credits Harry Houdini for having shown it to him.

Richard Kaufman | 11/21/10 04:32 PM | link | filter

There are two printed earlier references to Houdini: the one above, plus one other I can't recall.

Eric Fry | 11/21/10 05:53 PM | link | filter

Giobbi cites Selbit and "Elliott's Last Legacy," which Houdini fiddled with. Obviously, we can't trust the latter book. But I'm not sure that even Selbit credits Houdini for creating the move. What he really says is: "For the knowledge of the movement I am indebted to my friend Mr. Harry Houdini..." That could mean simply that he learned of the move from Houdini.

Richard Kaufman | 11/21/10 08:27 PM | link | filter

The point is that the move was in existence and done before it was published by Erdnase. It might well have been Houdini’s creation--he was quite good with a deck of cards. You'll find some remarks about that in Gaultier's Magic Without Apparatus.

Magic Fred | 11/22/10 04:06 AM | link | filter

In my view, the "betray no confidence" line speaks precisely to the point that he was self taught. He didn't betray any confidences because nobody took him into their confidence and taught him the ropes, so to speak.

Other than Vernon's speculation, I see no reason to believe that this line suggests he was holding back things that he had been taught.

I believe Erdnase certainly was interested in magic. Probably, but not necessarily, after he quit gambling. It seems likely to me that he performed, at least, for family and friends and there is evidence to suggest that he certainly witnessed a number of magic acts.

His familiarity with magic and his lavish patter does not, in my view, make it less likely that he was a real gambler at some stage in his life.
The S.W.E. Shift is a wonderful piece of engineering and, when done properly, can come frighteningly close to being invisible. As Erdnase admits, it is not perfect but I would certainly not ridicule him for including it.

It demonstrates his thought process and objectives beautifully. Compare with the standard two handed shift and you begin to see the direction Erdnase was heading when striving to devise a shift "appearing as coincident card table routine; or that can be executed with the hands held stationary and not show that some manoeuvre has taken place."

There is no unnatural movement to get the little finger inserted further into a break. There is no awkward dip of the left fingers (essential when sitting at a table). The packets pass through the minimum space possible in transposing and do so with lightening speed and almost completely silently. Above all, the hands seem to remain completely at rest and under no tension whatsoever.

The move is certainly worthy of study, and thus an important inclusion in the book.

RE: I think he was an educated man who did magic as a hobby and was interested in gambling enough to fancy himself a gambler, study the written works of the day and think of a few original techniques of his own.

Sincerely not wanting to sound patronizing, but this betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of the work. The case for him having real world gambling experience is SO convincing that even Mr Giorgio must create a phantom "second man" to account for it.

Erdnase earns our trust in so many ways. His comments regarding the system of palming and his various shifts, for example, turn out to be absolutely accurate once you have mastered them.

Various comments throughout prove that he himself has an intimate understanding of the path to mastering each particular technique.

I often marvel at his perseverance and trust in his own thought process. I'm sure the S.W.E. shift looked like trash the first time he did it too... though he did have the advantage of having mastered the "Longitudinal Shift first, a factor neglected by most.
RE: So, if you think the same man wrote both sections of the book and this man was also a gambler that was familiar with working real games and cheating to make money, then why all of the card presentations with elaborate patter? What use would those ever be to a real gambler who wanted to hide his skill?

This is a straw man of sorts. The answer is "those" would be of absolutely no use to a real gambler who wants to hide his skill.

It does not follow, however, that Erdnase was therefore not a gambler who wanted to hide his skill.

Perhaps his interest in magic was as a private pastime. Do you know of any accomplished magicians today who do not perform in public? I do.

Perhaps (least likely) he had a career in magic after he quit the gambling scene.

Perhaps, and in my view most likely, he was just naturally interested in the subject and liked to entertain friends and family occasionally.

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Magic Fred | 11/22/10 05:44 AM | link | filter

RE: I’m not an Erdnase scholar at all but I also remember there being a famous exclusion of a gambling technique that was popular at the time. Someone could chime in and help me here as I can not find where I read this bit.

I suppose you are referring to "the spread"? I think it is largely due to Vernon latching on to this omission that it has become a popular quote for people.

I’d say, however, that there are many many more techniques omitted by Erdnase that were in heavy use at the time.

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Jonathan Townsend | 11/22/10 10:02 AM | link | filter

Magic Fred, the introduction states that that his techniques were of his own invention and 'we betray no confidences'... so it's likely that if he was shown anything he kept it to himself.

I appreciate you textual analysis as regards the rhetoric of the book. Have you read Umberto Eco's similar discourse on Victor Hugo as regards the geography of Paris?

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Glenn Bishop | 11/22/10 10:32 AM | link | filter
the book and self published it was that He needed the money. If he could do the info that he published in 1902 why could he not find a game - and use his system to get the money!

I think that Erdnase was a player just because of the way he wrote about - being taken with a short deck. But being a player doesnt make him a professional card cheat. But he could have learned about cheating and worked on cheating moves in a self education in the school of hard knocks as I think the book suggests - while on the road.

I also think that Erdnase was a magician - I dont know if he was a professional magician. But because the magic section - the magic has several little bits of business - such as making the moment - so he could palm cards - little things like that in my opinion are learned while on the job.

As far as being a professional magician - I dont know. He could have been a drawing room performer that performed parties and other social event kind of shows. I would guess that to make a living doing close up card magic in 1902 - one must take into consideration - what was the market for a magician in 1902. Magicians performed drawing room shows and early vaudeville?

Also I think that Erdnase must have had a job where he traveled - working for the railroad as I think was talked about in this thread - or performing as a small time drawing room performer - would fit this profile. Being a man that traveled I think fits into his - learning from many people - watching and meeting people such as meeting gamblers on trains if he worked for the railroad - also going to the town saloon and playing in saloon games while he was on the road - while working for the railroad (doing magic as a hobby and learning about card cheating).

If he was an early vaudeville performer - I have heard many stories from many performers that played cards between shows. I think that even Walter Scott who played in a group that performed in vaudeville played cards between and after shows.

I think that Erdnase was a small time performer - scratching out a living - who worked on a book that he did not have the money to publish or promote - so he self published it and did the best that he could - by putting an add in the Sphinx magazine to sell the book to magicians. Two parts of the book are written in the form of a demonstration - the section of Three card monte and the 12 card stock.

Perhaps Erdnase wrote them this way - through his experience of doing both these items as part of a drawing room performance. I dont know - one can only read the book and profile and take an educated guess as to what kind of a man Erdnase was. Magician or gambler.

Just a few thoughts and opinion.
Magic Fred | 11/22/10 10:45 AM | link | filter

RE: Magic Fred, the introduction states that that his techniques were of his own invention and 'we betray no confidences'... so it's likely that if he was shown anything he kept it to himself.

Absolutely. I was merely making the point that this line does not necessarily mean that he was holding back or knew more than he published. The "betray no confidences" remark would not be a contradiction even were the book to represent the extent of his knowledge.

RE: I appreciate you textual analysis as regards the rhetoric of the book. Have you read Umberto Eco's similar discourse on Victor Hugo as regards the geography of Paris?

Nope. ;)

Ryan Matney | 11/22/10 03:55 PM | link | filter

Every question or point made can't be a 'straw man' For one, I'm not arguing with you.

It's apt that Erdnase is referred to as the cardman's bible. Like the 'other' bible, one seems to get out of it whatever one is looking for. You can start at your desired position and work backwards to reach it.

It has become almost a Rorschach test.

Everyone has long held that the book was published anonamously to hide the identity of a real card cheat. Maybe someone who was protecting their good name or family.

My question is, Is there a real reason that the book was not an anonamous fantasy by someone who was wealthy and educated enough to be embarrassed by wanting to be a gambler?

Magic Fred | 11/22/10 04:11 PM | link | filter

RE: Every question or point made can't be a 'straw man' For one, I'm not arguing with you.

The comment regarding the magic tricks being of no use to a gambler seemed to suggest either that somebody would claim the contrary, or that this would somehow prove that Erdnase was not a gambler. An opinion you asserted later in your post, so I assumed you were building up to it using this to support your view. Sorry if I misinterpreted.
It's apt that Erdnase is referred to as the cardman's bible. Like the 'other' bible, one seems to get out of it whatever one is looking for. You can start at your desired position and work backwards to reach it.

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I disagree. Erdnase is extremely explicit and precise in both his message and language. His book has not been translated, updated or otherwise tampered with over the years. The same cannot be said for the "other" bible. You are right though, that some people seem to be able to read the book and get absolutely nothing out of it. Mr James I'm looking at you.

My question is, Is there a real reason that the book was not an anonymous fantasy by someone who was wealthy and educated enough to be embarrassed by wanting to be a gambler?

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And again the answer is yes. There are several very good reasons. The evidence to suggest he was a gambler with real world experience is almost overwhelming. I have referenced some of this evidence in my previous posts.

I would never be so arrogant as to say "I know" but I am as convinced of Erdnase's background in gambling as I am, say, in the non-existence of the flying spaghetti monster ;)

Magic Fred | 11/22/10 04:54 PM | link | filter

RE: RE: Every question or point made can't be a 'straw man'

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Ironically, this too is a straw man since I did not claim that every question or point was a straw man.

;)

No, every point is not a straw man but many of the issues raised by Giorgio are. As is using the fact that the card tricks are of no use to a gambler as a reason to suggest that the author was not one. Who ever said that the card tricks *would* be of use to a gambler? And why on earth would it suggest that the author wasn't a gambler?

I know it sounds tedious, but it is important to highlight such logical fallacies in a discussion like this.

John Wilson | 11/22/10 04:59 PM | link | filter

'If I may add a few more thoughts - Erdnase said in his book or the reason that he
info that he published in 1902 why could he not find a game - and use his system to get the money!'-Glenn Bishop

Remember what Erdnase says about "pretty money". He would still need a stake to play in a game if he could find it. Going bust happens to every gambler I ever heard of at least once. I would imagine that Erdnase is no different.

Richard Kaufman | 11/22/10 05:18 PM | link | filter

Perhaps "Erdnase" was a good writer but a lousy cheater.

Ryan Matney | 11/22/10 06:45 PM | link | filter

Quote: Ironically, this too is a straw man since I did not claim that every question or point was a straw man.

No, but you did call everything Tony Giorgio said that you disagreed with a straw man. And then what I said as well.

You seem to really WANT to believe Erdnase was an expert gambler who really cheated in real games. Does this make the techniques taught more valid to you?

I'm sure you will call this a straw man as well, (There needs to be a moratorium on this phrase on the forum)

However, consider this: If someone handed you the book shuffled up and you read the magic section first, would you still assume he was a gambler? Judged purely by content and without the introduction.

By the way, I don't think it's a straw man to say that a real gambler in 1902 would have no use for victorian card tricks with flowery patter. Some of the effects are more than just casual tricks for family and friends. The cards to pocket is a platform piece, for example.

When you say he was self taught and all was his material are you implying that he worked out the bottom deals, palms, culls, and everything else on his own?

He was most certainly not entirely self taught when it came to magic tricks, why would you assume he was when it came to the cheating techniques?

Anyway, I have it on good authority that Erdnase had never heard of Norman Beck, so...
John Wilson | 11/23/10 12:41 AM | link | filter

I think that there is good reason to suspect at least the influence of a second author for the magic section. Note that in the gambling section he refers to "Charlie's pass". In the magic section the name is corrected. The patter for the "Exclusive Coterie" sounds nothing like the voice of the gambling section. e.g. "Don' worry bout no two han's boss." We begin with a bit of a ruffian and end up with a pompous Victorian sleight of hand artist. Do you imagine that a person who speaks like the patter in the magic section would ever make the mistake of calling it "Charlie's pass"? I can't see that happening.

David Alexander | 11/23/10 12:56 AM | link | filter

John,

The quote you use from the first section is Erdnase writing in what was considered a Negro dialect in those days, specifically imitating a "colored attendant." It was not Erdnase speaking in his own voice.

T Baxter | 11/23/10 01:21 AM | link | filter

...and "Charlie's Pass" appears to just be a misprint or typo.

- T. Baxter

elsielefe | 11/23/10 01:24 AM | link | filter

"There are several signs in the book that Erdnase taught gambling techniques - eg p22, teaching a blind shuffle in 5 mins, p24 the size of hand doesn't matter, p73 referring to instructing certain players."

Wow, cool, thank you for the great information.

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The Legend Marilyn Monroe Classic Art Reproduction

John Wilson | 11/23/10 02:50 AM | link | filter

David,

I know that he is not speaking in his own voice. He is taking advice from the speaker. The speaker is telling him not to waste time running up two hands, that the mark will most likely play any hand dealt to him. I don't see anyone who speaks of the "feminine
are not from the author of the gambling section.

**Ryan Matney | 11/23/10 03:06 AM | link | filter**

I agree with John as well as for the reasons I cited myself.

In my opinion, either someone else wrote the conjuring section of the book or Erdnase was not the gambler others have mad ehim out to be if he wrote both sections.

I, personally, can not reconcile that the same man wrote both sections without calling for a reevaluation of the mythos.

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**Magic Fred | 11/23/10 03:21 AM | link | filter**

No, but you did call everything Tony Giorgio said that you disagreed with a straw man. And then what I said as well.

I was merely starting with the straw men in Giorgio's articles. I mentioned one as an example. Not everything I disagree with there is as a straw man.

You seem to really WANT to believe Erdnase was an expert gambler who really cheated in real games. Does this make the techniques taught more valid to you?

On the contrary, I believe I approach the question in a completely unbiased manner by carefully considering the evidence. It is others who seem to have a preconceived notion and will not be convinced otherwise regardless of the evidence presented.

I'd happily change my mind if I ever came across any convincing evidence to the contrary. So far though, it all points to him being a gambler.

However, consider this: If someone handed you the book shuffled up and you read the magic section first, would you still assume he was a gambler? Judged purely by content and without the introduction.

Had I read the magic section, and only the magic section I would have assumed he was a magician. What does this prove? It is a rather pointless example. Had I then gone on to read the rest of the book I would have changed my mind, as the content of the artifice section contains compelling evidence that he was a gambler.

So like I said before, I believe he was a gambler who either did magic as a hobby or turned to it later after quitting the gaming scene.
By the way, I don't think it's a straw man to say that a real gambler in 1902 would have no use for victorian card tricks with flowery patter.

It is if you are using it to counter my (or anyone else's) case that Erdnase was a gambler. Nobody is saying a real gambler would have use for them. Anyway, this neither harms the case for him being a gambler or furthers the case for him being a magician so it is another form of logical fallacy too ;)

Some of the effects are more than just casual tricks for family and friends. The cards to pocket is a platform piece, for example.

I would thoroughly agree. Most of the tricks were intended for the parlour setting. I still don't agree that this gives us any insight into whether or not Erdnase had real gambling experience.

When you say he was self taught and all was his material are you implying that he worked out the bottom deals, palms, culls, and everything else on his own?

Yes. Perhaps with a small amount of book learning thrown in. I do not believe he was specifically taught by another cheater. Maybe he saw the work, kept his mouth shut and went from there.

Magic Fred | 11/23/10 03:35 AM | link | filter

Personally, I see a distinct similarity within the two sections. Especially in the technical descriptions. I am open to persuasion though, but so far I have not come across anything to convince me that the author of the first section was not the author of the second.

The only objection could be his patter, but here he is merely displaying his creativity in assuming the role of a magician. I don't find it inconsistent that somebody who is such a good writer, with an obvious interest in magic, may be able to enjoy himself in coming up with such colourful patter lines.

Although this really isn't a sticking point in the debate. Erdnase may even have been an accomplished professional magician at one point in his life. He may have asked for some help in coming up with stories for the tricks. This doesn't detract from the evidence that suggests he also had a working knowledge of the hustling scene.

I wouldn't argue strongly either way on the magician question. I don't believe there is enough evidence to argue convincingly what his involvement in magic was. I am almost completely certain, however, that he was a gambler at one point in his life and I think the evidence is entirely convincing.
RE: You seem to really WANT to believe Erdnase was an expert gambler
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May I respectfully suggest that, in this thread, we stick to debating the message and not the messenger. God knows, that can get ugly fast.

RE: ...that the mark will most likely play any hand dealt to him....
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A little off topic, but this is not entirely accurate. He is making the point, not that the mark will play any hand, but that it is "sods law" that the mark will get a good hand anyway.

Ryan Matney | 11/23/10 01:25 PM | link | filter

Quote: The only objection could be his patter, but here he is merely displaying his creativity in assuming the role of a magician. I don't find it inconsistent that somebody who is such a good writer, with an obvious interest in magic, may be able to enjoy himself in coming up with such colourful patter lines.

He only has an "obvious" interest in magic if you begin with the assumption that he wrote the magic section. This is working backwards to make a case. If you have doubts, as I do, that he wrote the magic section then what is there in the gambling section that shows he has an obvious interest in magic?

As I said, I do believe that the choice of material is objectionable as well as the patter being inconsistent.

And, if you believe that Erdnase is merely displaying his creativity in assuming the role of a magician, why can't that cut both ways? He could equally be a magician assuming the role of a gambler. Or a broke writer assuming the role of both.

Jonathan Townsend | 11/23/10 01:30 PM | link | filter

Or... off the top of my head I don’t recall the erdnase text containing any discussion of how the material described was proved effective in situ. Beyond the mention of paying to sit at card games and being taken in the introduction - looking for the other side of the lesson book - similarly for the conjuring section.
RE: He only has an "obvious" interest in magic if you begin with the assumption that he wrote the magic section. This is working backwards to make a case. If you have doubts, as I do, that he wrote the magic section then what is there in the gambling section that shows he has an obvious interest in magic?

As I said, I do believe that the choice of material is objectionable as well as the patter being inconsistent.

And, if you believe that Erdnase is merely displaying his creativity in assuming the role of a magician, why can't that cut both ways? He could equally be a magician assuming the role of a gambler. Or a broke writer assuming the role of both.

You are arguing in circles now. It is a reasonable course of action to begin with the assumption that we can take the work on face value. Without any investigation there is no reason to suggest that there were two authors involved, otherwise both would be credited as having written the book.

(So yes, we begin with the assumption that he wrote the magic section and then we see if there is any evidence to suggest that he didn't. I haven't seen any such evidence.)

The next step is to then make the suggestion that Erdnase was not a gambler but a magician and provide some reasoning for making that claim. It is this line of reasoning that I was refuting with my points regarding him having an interest in magic. Just because the author was able to write convincingly about magic, does not mean that he was not a real hustler. Even were the book written by 5 different people, there is no evidence to suggest that whoever wrote the card tricks was not a real gambler. Just as there is also no evidence to move you from the position of "don't know" when considering the question "was he a chess master?"

Regarding demonstrating his creativity, I was not stating necessarily what I believe to be true, just highlighting why the arguments presented do not support the view that Erdnase was not a gambler.

The question of two authors is a different matter. I have yet to see any convincing evidence suggesting different authors were involved. I do, however, see a mountain of evidence indicating that the two sections were written by the same person. Everything from the language, tone to the thought process, the philosophy and the attitudes are all entirely consistent across both sections of the book. He has a real talent for writing and I find it practically impossible to believe that it would not be painfully obvious were he not responsible for the whole book.

Once again, though I know this point will be ignored yet again, there is ample evidence to support the idea that he was a cheater with real world experience and thus not a
even Mr Giorgio must introduce a phantom gambler consultant to reconcile the overwhelming evidence that the author was the real deal.

So, in summary:

- there is compelling evidence to suggest that the author of the artifice section was a real gambler with real world experience.
- there is no evidence to suggest that the author of the artifice section was NOT a real gambler.

- there is compelling evidence to suggest that the whole book was written by the same person.
- there is no evidence to suggest that different authors are responsible.

- there is no evidence in the legerdemain to suggest the author was a gambler.
- there is no evidence in the legerdemain section to suggest the author was NOT a gambler.
- there is convincing evidence in the legerdemain section to suggest that the author had experience performing magic.

Jonathan Townsend | 11/23/10 02:34 PM | link | filter

"It is a reasonable course of action to begin with the assumption that we can take the work on face value."

Not IMHO. We have a text, two less than informative attempts at interview and a burnt down printing house. Treated as a forensic matter - not sure even 'follow the money' has helped so much in this matter of tracing the text back to it's source.

Magic Fred | 11/23/10 02:38 PM | link | filter

RE:Not IMHO. We have a text, two less then informative attempts at interview and a burnt down printing house. Treated as a forensic matter - not sure even 'follow the money' has helped so much in this matter of tracing the text back to it's source.

So what should we do? Start with the assumption that the author was a chess master?

My point is that it is reasonable to start essentially with no assumptions actually. The title page says "by S.W. Erdnase" not "By S.W. Erdnase and friend" so why not start there and then if we are going to suggest that two people wrote the book, provide some evidence.
I'm proposing we start without assumptions - go from what is - and I encourage all in/from the area where that printing house was to scour for diaries, family letters etc that offer primary evidence. And this time - with the experience of the Hofzinser and Robert-Houdin interview history to work from - let's be nicer to those interviewed - they might still remember something of use or have some old stuff lying around that would help in the search.

The title page says "by S. W. Erdnase". So you are going to start by looking for a S. W. Erdnase?

Or can we use Bible Code on the text and look for clues to the design of a Jules Verne era machine that can alter luck in the room at which it is pointed? Reasonable is just another word for common rationalization. Not well reasoned nor even backed by evidence.

Facts please. What's a "reasonable" assumption to one may well be a "just so" fiction to another. Real historical work aside for the moment - I'd settle for a novel combination of tropes from the armchair experts and the rest who can't do a convincing double lift, false transfer or figure out how to test their s - which are IMHO about as consistent, congruent and convincing as their sleights - so often accompanied by crude flinches, tells and just short of Dug the Dog's startling "Squirrel!"

* and no i don't believe the book slipped in from an alternte mirror universe ala the TV show The Fringe where a typewriter seen in a mirror appeared to have typed a Mr. Andrews name backwards. ;) But you will notice how that "theory" accounts for far more of the "facts" of the matter than other supposed theories offered so far. :D

Well (as far as I can tell from your, let's say, interesting prose) aren't we saying the same thing?

Perhaps I used the word assumption when I shouldn't have. Our starting point is that we have a book primarily on card cheating with a section on magic, written by one S.W. Erdnase. ALL of my points have been based on facts - the contents of the book.

I have yet to see any evidence to suggest that there was more than one author involved. I have, however, seen ample evidence to suggest both sections were written by the same author.
MagicFred, I almost wish I could relocate to the area and do some searching/interviewing myself to find out more about the printing house, what else they published and the neighborhood lore.

Richard Hatch | 11/23/10 06:19 PM | link | filter

Jonathan, James McKinney & Company was not a publishing house, but a printer. They are presumed to have printed Erdnase because the copyright statement gives the author's address in care of them. According to a note at the bottom of the title page of Adrian Plate's first edition copy (now part of the Houdini Collection at the Library of Congress), McKinney was also selling copies. I have one other book they printed, a children's fantasy book, bearing no resemblance to The Expert in format, content or style.

Ryan Matney | 11/23/10 11:18 PM | link | filter

Richard,

What is your stance on authorship of the two sections? You think it's possible the magic section was written by someone else or 'advised' by someone else?

Richard Hatch | 11/24/10 12:50 AM | link | filter

Ryan, taking the book at face value (assuming the author can be believed...), he clearly had experience gambling as he recounts having been a victim of cheating on several occasions. That does not mean that he was a professional gambler or a card cheat himself, though that is certainly one possibility.

I sense a change in outlook, though not in authorship between the two sections of the book. In the first, he writes as a knowledgeable insider, someone who has been active as a participant and observer. He refers frequently to "the expert" and "the fraternity" in a way that seems to imply that he is himself such an expert, possibly even a member of the fraternity.

However, in my reading of the legerdemain section, he seems to position himself as an outsider: He notes that all the magicians he has seen and all the magic books he has read advise the use of the pass, rather than a more natural system of blind shuffles such as discussed in the first half. In my reading, this places him outside the magic fraternity, an interested "outsider" looking in.

My armchair speculation (and I admit that is all it is!) is that he was a compulsive gambler as a youth until he realized he was being cheated. He then made a careful study of cheating methods and exchanged his compulsion for gambling into a
himself, though that is certainly possible.

His interest in manipulation extended to card conjuring, as he mentions (as noted above) studying the literature and watching the performances of magicians. He was almost certainly not a professional magician, since we would almost certainly have encountered references to him from colleagues had that been the case. He certainly seems to have had some performing experience, however, given his comments on three card monte (which he favors as an exhibition for entertainment than its use as a con game, even though he places it at the end of the artifice section rather than in the legerdemain section).

His reference to the back palm once having gotten him out of trouble has been speculated by Vernon to have been in the context of a card game, rather than a performance, and that is certainly possible.

So, to summarize, I think he was someone who gambled at one time, got cheated, and became fascinated with all kind of card manipulation as a result. He says he holds not grudges against the fraternity (of gamblers) which seems to imply he was not counting himself as one of them, but he is also not worried that his book will increase their lot. Nowhere does he indicate that his methods should be used to cheat, nor does he even generally provide a context for doing so. Instead, he describes the manipulations involved, which I assume was his own great interest, more than their use to "get the money".

According to the recollection of illustrator Marshall Smith, when interviewed by Martin Gardner in 1946, the author presented himself as a reformed gambler. The tone of the book is, however, not the moral one of other reformed gamblers, writing an expose to warn of the evils of gambling. But if he were himself "reformed" in the sense of being no longer active as a player for whatever reason, that would certainly explain why he wrote a book rather than simply seek out a game when he "needed the money".

This is an excellent analysis. The only real disagreement I would have is that, once understood, it is clear to me that his techniques and systems were refined through actual experience in cheating at cards.

On face value, and given the demonstrations of Mr James and Mr Ackerman, I completely understand why a scholar might happily conclude it to be the work of an armchair enthusiast. Once mastered and seen in context however, it is difficult for me not to be convinced that this is a result of real world experience in cheating.

It is, however, infinitely easier to swallow than a theory of the book being written by a magician with no gambling experience. It just does not stand up to the evidence.
Apologies if this has been mentioned, but the ever great Richard Wiseman has a new candidate.

http://www.richardwiseman.com/erdnase.html

No further info, but Wiseman's contention is quoted in a lovely looking Italian pdf file sponsored by The National Library Braidense.

Ryan Matney asked:

"Richard, What is your stance on authorship of the two sections? You think it's possible the magic section was written by someone else or 'advised' by someone else?"

I've often felt (but I cannot prove) that the minor discrepancies in tone in the two sections of the book can be attributed to the fact that Erdnase wasn't really "writing" the Legerdemain section -- he was largely copying it.

Several of the moves in the Legerdemain section were not original to Erdnase, but had been published in the few years just prior to his book. (The SWE shift, Open shift, Longitudinal shift and a few of the transformations are the exceptions.)


Diagonal Palm Shift - Erdnase himself mentions that previous versions are in print, although in my opinion Erdnase's version is far superior to what had come before him. (See Sachs p. 96)

The Palm Change - The move belongs to Adrian Plate. See New Era Card Tricks.

The Double-Palm Change -- Hoffmann's Modern Magic or Tricks With Cards.

First Transformation -- Selbit's The Magician's Handbook
Fifth Transformation - Selbit.

The Slide - Here, language gives Erdnase away. Sachs was the only other book from that period to use the word "slide" instead of "glide."

Favorite Sleights for Terminating Tricks - Many of these are right out of Sachs. I suspect that when Erdnase writes of a method being a "favorite" he's not talking necessarily about his own preferences, but the fact that it is a favorite amongst other magicians of the day. Just a suspicion based on the reading.

Of the 13 named effects that close the book, none were original to Erdnase. Most can be found in Sachs, in Roterberg, in Hoffmann, or in other literature of the day.

So...was there another "author" of the magic section? Well, in a sense, yes! In fact, there were several. I believe, though I have no evidence for it in the strictest sense, that having clearly read the magic books of the day (which did include actual descriptions, influenced Erdnase’s writing much more than reading the gambling books of the day, which almost never included actual descriptions of the moves. In the first section of the book, his "true" writing voice is more apparent, because he was describing things to a level of detail that hadn’t really been done before. In the second part of the book, he was merely re-writing things he’d already read descriptions about. That may have effected the length of his explanations, the jargon used, and the level of detail, just to name a few things. This might be especially true if the gambling section was written first, and the magic section added later as some here suspect.

Anyway, just some food for thought.

Jason

PS: There are several candidates for popular gambling moves that Erdnase didn't include. The Spread is only one.

Others include the tabled Hop, the Countdown, and the strike second deal. All were in use (and already in print) in Erdnase’s time.

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**Roger M.** | 12/13/10 01:25 PM | link | filter

Re: Richard Weisman's new candidate.

It’s interesting that, besides Herbert’s wives name forming the anagram "S.W. Erdnase" in reverse, so too does Herbert’s sisters name!

Eliza Shipman Andrews
Depending on where Herbert's (and Eliza's) brothers lived and/or worked, this could possibly include Edwin Norton Andrews, Cornelius Andrews, and Alfred Hinsdale Andrews in the list of potential candidates as well......each of them having a sibling connection to S.W. Erdnase as an author's name (their sister's name reversed).

Even if Herbert is the only one that appears to have lived and worked in that area of Chicago, having both his sisters, AND his wife's name reverse to precisely S.W. Erdnase seems more than coincidence :)

the reference here: [http://www.tqsi.com/cgi-bin/igmget.cgi/... man?I12838](http://www.tqsi.com/cgi-bin/igmget.cgi/... man?I12838)

.........now, who can put the deck of cards into Herbert's (or possibly his brothers) hands?

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Jonathan Townsend | 12/13/10 01:30 PM | link | filter

What would it mean for him to write such a book (did he have time/opportunity/context?)
Were that book to be remaindered what else was he doing to support himself?

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Bill Mullins | 12/13/10 01:44 PM | link | filter

Wiseman's candidate is not new; he mentioned it in this very thread two years ago: [HERE](http://www.tqsi.com/cgi-bin/igmget.cgi/... man?I12838)

Jason England used to have a web page with illustrations of the various editions of EATCT. It's gone, but remnants are [HERE](http://www.tqsi.com/cgi-bin/igmget.cgi/... man?I12838)

It listed only 1 Spanish edition, a 1992 version from Frakson. The Spanish National Library lists two others, from 2008 and 1998 (also from Frakson).


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David Alexander | 12/13/10 06:35 PM | link | filter

I applaud Jason's research. It has always been my opinion that the conjuring section was there to disguise the book's real purpose: a primer on cheating with cards. Jason's observations clearly explain the lack of Erdnase's voice in the second half of the book.

This ploy worked reasonably well until the 1930s when a local sheriff seized the plates
and stock from a Mid-West printer. That was the one that made the papers. We have no way of knowing how many other local authorities seized copies to give the impression they were fighting corruption, or if any copies were ever seized by anyone else.

**Bill Mullins | 12/13/10 11:15 PM | link | filter**

David Alexander wrote: This ploy worked reasonably well until the 1930s when a local sheriff seized the plates and stock from a Mid-West printer.

Are you being literal when you say "made the papers"? I've never known the details of the sheriff-seized-the-plates story.

**Richard Hatch | 12/14/10 12:53 AM | link | filter**

I would also like to see the documentation on the reported seizure of the plates. Here's what Busby/Whaley says (p. 336) regarding the Frost edition (after Drake and before Powner): "The Frost publishing Company lasted about five years until the firm was forcibly closed and William H. Frost arrested. The plates for The Expert were confiscated by the sheriff." A footnote indicates this information came from undated work notes of Martin Gardner and cites his 1947 and 1951 articles on Erdnase. I asked Gardner about this but he was unable to recall the details or documentation regarding it. I'm not a lawyer, but I don't know what laws would be violated by publishing a book on cheating at cards. I would think it would be protected speech, since it is not "pornographic" or likely to incite a riot, etc. It would be great if this "episode" could be clarified/verified!

**Jonathan Townsend | 12/14/10 09:26 AM | link | filter**

Had the conjuring section been designed as a distraction from the advantage play content one might also expect it to be featured more prominently in the title of the work and perhaps also frame, if not sit entirely before, the table play content - which might as well hide as a sort of appendix to caution the unwary entertainer who might get invited into a game >???

Sceptically,

Jon

**John Bodine | 12/14/10 06:58 PM | link | filter**

I don't have my notes in front of me but further evidence suggesting the author focused efforts first on the Artifice section come from a study of the shifts.
First, he states that a shift has yet to be devised... yet many of the shifts are stated as original to the author. Most of these shifts (all but 1) appear in the Legerdemain section, discarded as not being workable at the card table. Further study of these and one sees that he is systematic in his approach, working the deck in different directions, finding shifts for each type of break/step one might encounter.

Add to this his note that magicians tend to use the shift even though there are better options (overhand shuffle) and it becomes clear to me that his true passion is the card table, moving items from that space to magic only because of the natural crossover and connection based on cards as the common tool.

Add Jason's fantastic work cited above, and i think the existing facts move us closer to a card player, or at least one who seriously studied what goes on at the table, and not a seasoned magician.

johnbodine

Or a magician pretending to be a card player/sharp. Like that would ever happen.

Cheers!

Jonathan Townsend

From what I've gotten as reports by way of non-magicians, the game breaks up quickly after some attempts to muffle laughter and glances around the table after a casual mention of card tricks. Still getting used to having non-magicians show me their interpretations of strip out shuffles or false deals as they tell me that the person they had at the game that night did them very well.

Geno Munari

I would like to post a poll, but I don’t think the software here allows it anymore, so I poise the question:

Have you read the book by Whaley, Busby and Gardner, *The Man Who Was Erdnase*, ?
Geno Munari wrote: Have you read the book by Whaley, Busby and Gardner, *The Man Who Was Erdnase*,?

Yes!

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**Jeff Pierce Magic** | 12/24/10 11:07 AM | [link] | [filter]

Yes I have also.

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**Roger M.** | 12/24/10 12:22 PM | [link] | [filter]

Many times!
(and reference it regularly still).

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**Richard Hatch** | 01/03/11 03:29 AM | [link] | [filter]

The new Potter and Potter Auction catalog is now available on line and mimics the style of the first edition Erdnase (a copy of which is featured on the front cover). I particularly enjoyed the "Preface". The catalog can be seen here:

[Click here.](http://www.potterauctions.com/LinkClick ... &tabid=949)

While we're on the subject of cheeky Erdnase parodies, here is my humbly offered contribution from MonkeyShines Volume 2.

**Erdnase preface**

Best,

Doc

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**Richard Kaufman** | 01/03/11 09:42 AM | [link] | [filter]

Gambling stuff aside, everyone interested in rare magic books should study the...
catalogue very closely. It's filled with lots of great books, including signed editions by Vernon and Slydini.

**magicam** | 01/03/11 04:23 PM | link | filter

*David Alexander wrote:* ... It has always been my opinion that the conjuring section was there to disguise the books real purpose: a primer on cheating with cards. This ploy worked reasonably well until the 1930s when a local sheriff seized the plates and stock from a Mid-West printer. That was the one that made the papers. We have no way of knowing how many other local authorities seized copies to give the impression they were fighting corruption, or if any copies were ever seized by anyone else.

*Richard Hatch wrote:* I would also like to see the documentation on the reported seizure of the plates. Here's what Busby/Whaley says (p. 336) regarding the Frost edition (after Drake and before Powner): "The Frost publishing Company lasted about five years until the firm was forcibly closed and William H. Frost arrested. The plates for The Expert were confiscated by the sheriff." A footnote indicates this information came from undated work notes of Martin Gardner and cites his 1947 and 1951 articles on Erdnase. I asked Gardner about this but he was unable to recall the details or documentation regarding it. I'm not a lawyer, but I don't know what laws would be violated by publishing a book on cheating at cards. I would think it would be protected speech, since it is not "pornographic" or likely to incite a riot, etc. It would be great if this "episode" could be clarified/verified!

Alas, with David Alexander's untimely passing, we may never know the source he used for his comments. But in reading the Busby/Whaley quote, I wonder if either they or Gardner read too much into this information. For starters, if done legally, the seizure of a person's assets by a sheriff or other law enforcement entity would require a court order, usually in the form of a writ. If researching this purported event, I'd first investigate the records of the court which had jurisdiction if the sheriff was actually the one who did it, it would likely be county records.

The legal seizure of someone's assets could be done under a variety of circumstances, such as (1) pursuant to a voluntary or involuntary bankruptcy wherein the asset confiscation was done to satisfy creditors, (2) pursuant to a singular adjudicated debt wherein the property was seized to satisfy the lone creditor, or (3) to satisfy a tax debt to a governmental entity. The first two examples relate to civil proceedings and thus would not involve arrest. Depending on the circumstances of the tax debt, if fraud were involved, then perhaps both civil (asset seizure) and criminal (arrest for fraud on the government) proceedings could be implicated. An arrest in connection with a
prison was long gone and people were not arrested for failure to pay their private debts; the only example of an arrest done in connection with a civil proceeding that I can think of would be an arrest in connection with contempt of court, and that is very rare. If an arrest actually took place and was legal, absent the sheriff actually catching the publisher breaking the law, an arrest warrant would be needed and again, court records may be helpful on this question.

Bottom line: without the underlying documentation in hand, it’s difficult to know if these purported events related specifically to EATCT (as David Alexander and Busby/Whaley imply), or something of a broader nature. And as we know, the fact that something is published in the newspaper doesn’t make it true. Or there could be spin to the story. Who knows, maybe the newspaper editor didn’t like Frost and chose to highlight the confiscation of the immoral EATCT material to leave the reader to infer that the seizure was related to such material, when in fact it wasn’t.

Jeff Pierce Magic | 01/03/11 05:22 PM | link | filter

Looking through this most recent catalog I noticed two books that used the familiar EATCT upside down triangle on the preface page.

The first gambling book is item #40 on page 11, printed in Chicago in 1890.

The second item number 273 page 51 which also might have a chicago connection printed in 1905.

Both are right around the time of EATCT

Jeff Pierce

Bill Mullins | 01/03/11 06:23 PM | link | filter

Ted Pierce Magic wrote: The second item number 273 page 51 which also might have a chicago connection printed in 1905.

This book is from Sweden -- not much of a Chicago connection. I think the upside down triangle motif is just a common design of the era and not much should be read into it.

magicam | 01/03/11 09:51 PM | link | filter

The "familiar EATCT upside down triangle" type set-up has been used since books were first printed from movable type.
The rare *The Story of Erdnase* by Wilford Hutchinson Jr is currently on ebay.

One of the original 6 copies, the author a member of the Magic Circle.
I believe there may have been a second run of 6 as well..........my memory is hazy though.

Nothing new, and pretty much duplicating what was postulated in *The Man Who Was Erdnase*, but considered one of the major collectibles by Erdnasophiles who focus on the written word.

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I just learned that there was a Spanish language version of the Vernon book "Revelation": [Here](http://www.librosdemagia.com/catalogo.php?bsq=vernon)

Not to be nitpicky, but this is a translation of the earlier edition, REVELATIONS. I have a copy and it is a nicely done paperback, very reasonably priced. Here's a link to the publisher's website for easy ordering: [http://www.librosdemagia.com/catalogo.p...](http://www.librosdemagia.com/catalogo.php?bsq=vernon)

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*Roger M. wrote:* The rare *The Story of Erdnase* by Wilford Hutchinson Jr is currently on ebay.

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*Ebay*

Closed at $1532 -- wow.
Bill Mullins | 01/20/11 03:36 PM | link | filter

In 1945, the *American Weekly* Sunday supplement had a "true crime" article about Milton Franklin Andrews, Bessie Bouton, William Ellis and Nulda Oliva. It doesn’t reference Erdnase. This is the article that was read by Edgar Pratt and provided fodder for the tales he told Martin Gardner which led to Gardner and Bill Woodfield identifying MFA as Erdnase.

It’s online at Google News archives: [HERE](https://news.google.com/news?hl=en&lr=&ned=en&safe=active&source=ogp&site=news&start=0&num=10&ct=pm&filter=0&docid=P93l4i7Jz14u6F:AHd9R1H5&output=rss&input=rss)

By the way, I’m surprised that the article about stylometry and *Expert at the Card Table* in the most recent *Genii* hasn’t brought any comment.

Richard Hatch | 01/20/11 06:03 PM | link | filter

Hey, thanks for tracking down that online version. The one reproduced in THE MAN WHO WAS ERDNASE is very small type and hard to read, plus missing a chunk or two. It took me a couple of years of searching on eBay to pick up a hard copy. Pretty much everything Pratt told Gardner about MFA that is accurate and a few things that aren’t are in this article, so my theory is that Pratt read the article (it appeared in the Philadelphia paper, where he lived, and the copy in TMWWE has Pratt’s handwriting on the top) and made the deduction that this gambler/cheat named Andrews was Erdnase and started to tell magicians at Kanter’s that he knew who Erdnase was, etc. Which lead Gardner to him, and eventually lead Gardner to the same theory. Pratt does not claim in his correspondence with Gardner to have actually known MFA, but that he knew the Taylor brothers (pals of Pratt’s from Providence, Rhode Island) who knew MFA. His is (according to him) one degree removed from MFA. What MFA showed the Taylor brothers, they showed Pratt and he later recognized this as stuff in Erdnase. At least, that is his story as I read it. I don’t trust Pratt’s testimony at all on this issue. And Pratt is the one who made the claim to Gardner that Harto had been involved in adding the legerdemain material, another claim that is suspect, and which the recent stylometry article has some bearing on. I enjoyed the article, to the extend that I understood it!

Terry | 01/20/11 08:29 PM | link | filter

Here is an inquiry David Alexander posted (3/15/97) re Andrews:

[http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ance…linois.htm](http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ance…linois.htm)

Misc sites:

In Dai Vernon's "Vernon Touch" column in *Genii*, Oct 1970, p.68, he describes putting a trick together on the fly for Dr. J. W. Eliot which requires reversing one card in a deck. He says: "Executing the Erdnase reversal with one hand, I reversed one card on the bottom of the pack while making the gesture."

What is the Erdnase Reversal?

He is probably talking about the one-handed transformation - the one that reverses a card to the bottom.

Also it's probably because Erdnase doesn't write that the card ended reversed on top of the deck and the figure 90 shows the face of the card drawn by the thumb.

Thanks.

Denis says: "He is probably talking about the one-handed transformation - the one that reverses a card to the bottom." The "One Hand. First Method" Transformation moves a card from the top to the bottom, but the figures (Figs 89 and 90) and the text indicate that the card does not turn over. In the "Second Method", immediately following, a card does turn over, but it ends up at the top of the deck, not the bottom.
"Transformations. One Hand. Second Method." He says: "this move is extremely useful for secretly reversing a top or bottom card . . ." As described by Erdnase, the move only applies to moving a bottom card to the top into a reversed state. But it is trivial to see how the action could be used to move a card from the top to the bottom and reverse it.

And this (Second Method) is one of the moves that Erdnase claims ownership for "The following process is another of our innovations"

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**Bill Mullins** | 01/25/11 01:57 PM | link | filter

In the description of the "Transformations. One Hand. First Method" Erdnase uses the word "fingerends" where I would have said "fingertips." (This is probably something of a typo, as this is the only place that the word appears in the book, but elsewhere he uses the phrase "finger ends" several times.)

The recent stylometric analysis of Erdnase in *Genii* measured the relative use of common words. Another method of analysis measures the use of uncommon words (I believe this was how Don Foster identified Joe Klein as the author of *Primary Colors*). Searching other magic writings for "fingerends"/"finger ends" and other less-common words and phrases from Erdnase may prove fruitful in identifying the author.

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**Bill Mullins** | 01/30/11 02:06 AM | link | filter

First, congratulations to the winner (and consignor) of Lot #9 in today’s Potter and Potter Auction. The 1st edition copy of Erdnase went for $5000, plus buyer’s premium. I’ll continue to be content with my Dover edition. Martin Gardner’s copy went for more than $10k, but in included correspondence with the illustrator, Marshall D. Smith. Is this a record price for only the book?

Second, I just ran across an interesting article in Google News Archives from 1903. In it, an anonymous gambler describes how easy it is to cheat magicians at cards, because they think they know so much but it fact don’t. "Why, the easiest money I ever made was off those ‘now you see it, now you don’t’ Willie boys." He describes using the pass, second dealing, bottom dealing and riffle stacking a deck to fill out his opponents’ and his own hand.

The gambler is never named, and in fact may be a figment of the author’s imagination, a device to frame the story. The reason the article is so interesting, though (besides the descriptions of play), is the author of the story (which is reprinted from the *New York Commercial Advertiser*). His full name is not given, but his initials are (at the end of the article): S. W. E.

I’d love to look over some other issues of that paper from 1902 and 1903 -- I wonder if
Check out the article: [HERE](#)

**Geno Munari | 01/30/11 02:32 AM | link | filter**

Good job Bill. This is very interesting. I see that the initials are written in the reverse of what you said, E.W.S. Superb!

**Bob Coyne | 01/30/11 02:09 PM | link | filter**

Interesting! What a great find!!

One thing that I noticed is that the writer describes the strike second deal whereas Erdnase describes the push-off second. And the culling/stacking in the article is via riffle shuffling rather than overhand shuffling as in Erdnase. Though the idea of culling and stacking 25 cards as part of a shuffle is an obvious bit of exaggeration. I don't think these preclude the author of this article from being Erdnase, but they do raise a question.

Assuming the writer (E.W.S.) is Erdnase (S.W.E.) it seems likely that "the little chap" the gambler refers to at the end whose "work is so clean cut that it will deceive another magician" could be Erdnase himself. We know Erdnase was short from Marshall Smith's recollection.

**Richard Evans | 01/30/11 03:16 PM | link | filter**

Very interesting find, Bill. It seems the St Joseph Gazette filled it's pages with articles of interested that had been published elsewhere. The end of the article 'Clever Magicians are the easiest of Marks' indicates that it was originally published in the New York Commercial Advertiser. I wonder whether the original has any indication of the author's name other than 'EWS', or if the piece was accompanied by an advert for a book?

On a separate note, it's interesting to speculate whether the magician (the 'little chap') whose card skills are as expert as a professional player is referring to the author himself.

**Bob Coyne | 02/01/11 12:22 AM | link | filter**

One thing that occurred to me is that if one assumes that this writer (E.W.S.) is Erdnase (S.W.E.), then it adds to the plausibility that David Alexander's candidate Wilber E Sanders (W.E.S.) is the real Erdnase. The scrambling of initials is something you have to accept to equate Sanders with Erdnase. So finding another instance of it...
tied to Erdnase fits the pattern and seems pretty significant.

It would have been interesting to hear David’s reaction to this new article you’ve uncovered. It’s such a shame he’s no longer with us.

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**Bill Mullins** | 02/01/11 01:39 AM | link | filter

Don’t get me wrong -- I don’t believe that the writer of this article is Erdnase. This is just a really unusual coincidence,

For one thing, you call easily tell the writing styles are dissimilar (without using the stylometric analysis as was described in the most recent Genii). Erdnase wrote mostly in the 1st person plural voice, for example.

Also, this gambler makes heavy use of Riffle stacking, which doesn’t really show up in EATCT (Erdnase does some riffle controls of single cards and slugs, but doesn’t stack -- he even says “The possibilities of the riffle, for all practical purposes at the card table, are limited to retaining the top or bottom stock”).

Bob -- why do you think the description of the second deal is a strike? It seems very much like the (push-off) second deal described in Erdnase.

Which brings a question. Where is the first description of the push-off second deal in print?

On another subject, [HERE](#) is another contemporary description of gambling sleights. It has, I believe, the first known photograph of a second deal, predating the one in the Ritter book by 3 years. Also a bottom deal. (And the subject, Alfred Benzon, played a small role in Vernon’s search for Allen Kennedy and the center deal -- See Karl Johnson’s book.)

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**David Ben** | 02/01/11 11:13 AM | link | filter

Bill

I don’t think the gambler in question did any riffle stacking. It was nothing more than a poker demo, much like the Vernon poker demo years later. You can’t riffle stack those combinations of hands. If he did as demonstrated, the deck would have been set up. The seal means nothing. It was common technique to call out for deck and have the set-up deck provided to you by the bartender or waiter. It is unclear who, in fact, shuffled the cards, prior to the dealing. Either way, the gambler was just as guilty in creating a story about his skill with cards as the magicians he complained about who
I also believe he was using a strike second. (Although the technique had been around for decades, I believe the term "strike" was coined by MacDougall in a magazine expose of technique.) He drops down the top card, describes his brief as 1/16th of an inch. He is also dealing consecutive seconds, something that push off was not particularly well-designed to do. It is interesting that the writer spots the gambler's change in tempo when he describes him doing the deal work -- a major tell.

Fascinating article. It also suggests that if the gambler was Sanders - David Alexander's candidate - then he was definitely not Erdnase, as I believe the author of the Expert of the Card Table would not have demonstrated his work in this manner.

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**Ryan Matney** | 02/01/11 06:11 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Can we freely discuss the findings of the article in the February Genii or should we wait until most people have a chance to read it?

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**Richard Kaufman** | 02/01/11 06:36 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Yes, feel free to discuss.

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**Glenn Bishop** | 02/01/11 07:14 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Hey Bill thanks for the link to an interesting read.

The demo in the story reminded me of the Erdnase 12 card stocking demo in the book Expert at the card table. My guess is that he worked with a stacked deck- or a new deck but had a way to stock a set up (if needed) from the new deck order.

The 12 card stock in Erdnase has inspired several of my own routines. One routine I use a riffle shuffle (triumph) to cull and stack 12 cards from a slug.

Cheers.

---

**Bob Coyne** | 02/01/11 09:42 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Bill, it definitely sounds like a strike second -- here's his description: "the gambler dealt several cards, each tie drawing down the top card and returning it to place as soon as he had caught the edge of the second." Since he's drawing down just the top card (and not two cards), it wouldn't be a push-off second. This is repeated later when he also talks about the size of the brief "I do not drop the top card more than the sixteenth of an inch. That keeps the second card from showing."
On the writing style...I don't think the difference in writing style precludes Erdnase given that it's delivered by a character in a story (the gambler). The writer could just be mimicking what he thought was a plausible speaking style to fit the role, much like Erdnase does with the stylized speech of the "colored attendant" of a clubroom. If the writer is Erdnase, then it would be perfectly fitting that he put himself in the story as "little chap" mentioned at the end...and that fellow never speaks. All pure speculation of course.

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 02/08/11 12:50 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Ryan Matney wrote:* Can we freely discuss the findings of the article in the February Genii or should we wait until most people have a chance to read it?

Also curious to read others reactions to the findings of this round of textual analysis.

On the technical side, can one do further parsing to get something close to an ANOVA on the text for phrases (vocabulary choices etc)?

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**Bill Mullins** | 02/13/11 10:41 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*David Ben wrote:* I don't think the gambler in question did any riffle stacking. It was nothing more than a poker demo, much like the Vernon poker demo years later.

Maybe not, but the description was:
1. a sealed deck is produced
2. someone shuffles it
3. it is given to the gambler
4. he "rips" (riffle shuffles) it several times
5. he deals out several set-up poker hands

Sounds like riffle stacking to me.

If you want to make the argument that the entire article was a figment of the author's imagination, or that the gambler's actual actions were not what he described, I won't strongly disagree. But the article as written is a description of (an incredible display of) riffle stacking.

---

**Bill Mullins** | 02/13/11 11:05 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I've been watching the Wesley James Erdnase disc 1, which is a conversation between Simon Lovell and James about the book. Not much new there to people who have followed the forum. But I'm definitely going to take a look at the disc 2 interview.
1. James suggests that Erdnase came to Chicago for the 1893 World's Fair (I believe he said it was held in 1898, though). While possible, I think another possible explanation for Erdnase's presence in Chicago is that it was a hub of passenger travel on the ships that sailed the Great Lakes. (Others have mentioned Chicago's position as a center of passenger rail travel to the western United States).

2. James suggests that Milton Franklin Andrews had Marfan's Syndrome (a disease which wasn't recognized until 1896). MFA was tall and had a sunken chest, which is consistent with Marfan's, but his other health issues aren't necessarily signs of the disease. I can't find any evidence that stomach problems like he had are related to Marfan's, and his facial appearance doesn't seem to me to be so gaunt as to suggest the disease (such as the actor Vincent Schiavelli's was, and possibly Abraham Lincoln). I'd never heard anyone else ever link MFA to Marfan's, and it's an intriguing possibility. Did this originate with James?

**Bill Mullins** | 02/14/11 12:38 AM | link | filter

In addition to the mistake about the date of the Chicago World's Fair, James says that:

1. The check from Erdnase to Marshall Smith was $100,
2. It was check #1 from the account,
3. And that Smith remembered the bank it was drawn on.
4. Also, he claims that Todd Karr's candidate for the author, the swindler E. S. Andrews, was in fact named James Andrews.

I don't believe any of these propositions are supported by evidence.

**David Ben** | 02/14/11 12:48 PM | link | filter

Bill

I don't believe that the entire article was a figment of the author's imagination, nor that the gambler's actual actions were other than described. The gambler, however, did not riffle stack those hands. He may have said that he was doing that, that being his patter - like a demo deal. He could not have done the actual stacking on the fly. I do not believe any player - past or present - including Mr. Forte, could riffle stack those hands in that manner from a sealed deck. The simple answer is that the deck was stacked, resealed, called for and then false shuffled. The false shuffle could have easily been done by an accomplice. So, it was a demonstration of "riffle stacking" to impress a reporter - not actual riffle stacking. It was a scam.
I completely agree with David.

I would add the possibility of a deck switch.

If I recall the story correctly, Dad Stevens in showing Vernon the riffle stack, commented that no gambler would stack the kind of hands claimed in this article.

**Bill Mullins** | 02/14/11 04:38 PM | link | filter

David -- I think you and I are talking around each other a little bit.

You've described a series of actions taken by the gambler, and the person who shuffled the deck before handing it to the gambler (we'll presume this person is a confederate of the gambler). You say these actions are a series of false shuffles, and the real work was ringing in a pre-stacked deck.

This kind of deception is what I meant when I said "the gambler's actual actions were not what he described".

All I'm saying is that the gambler wanted the reporter to believe he was stacking the deck by riffle shuffling. The actions he took were consistent with actual riffle stacking (except for the fact that the hands that he dealt were too complicated for actual riffle stacking work -- but the reporter, and the reporter's readers, wouldn't have known that).

The only reason this is worth discussing, I think, is because it is such an early description of riffle stacking (whether it is real or fake).

**David Ben** | 02/14/11 05:11 PM | link | filter

Sorry, Bill, if I misunderstood you.

**Bill Mullins** | 02/14/11 06:25 PM | link | filter

No apologies necessary, I could certainly have expressed myself better the first time around.

**Glenn Bishop** | 02/15/11 03:45 PM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:*

*David Ben wrote:* I don't think the gambler in question did any riffle stacking. It was nothing more than a poker demo. much
like the Vernon poker demo years later.

Maybe not, but the description was:
1. a sealed deck is produced
2. someone shuffles it
3. it is given to the gambler
4. he "rips" (riffle shuffles) it several times
5. he deals out several set-up poker hands

Sounds like riffle stacking to me.

If you want to make the argument that the entire article was a figment of the author's imagination, or that the gambler's actual actions were not what he described, I won't strongly disagree. But the article as written is a description of (an incredible display of) riffle stacking.

Perhaps it is hard to tell but here is another way it might have worked.
1. a sealed deck is produced
2. someone shuffles it
3. it is given to the gambler
4. he "rips" (riffle shuffles) (Cold Deck) it several times
5. he deals out several set-up poker hands

He may have cold decked and said he was stacking the cards.

Just a thought.

________________________________________

Jason England | 02/17/11 12:46 AM | link | filter

I can think of at least one way to duplicate what the reporter saw with a high degree of similarity in most instances:

Bring out a deck that is sorted into the 13 values (i.e. four Kings, then four Queens, etc). This can be resealed if necessary to make it appear new for anyone that cares.

Legitimately shuffle this deck two times, breaking at half each time and using the smoothest shuffles possible.

Peek and second deal as you go around the table (or use a marked deck). If you're "talking" the reporter through the demo as you deal (so that he can write down the results), you'll have plenty of time to figure out who to give the seconds to and when.

Finish the deal as best you can and either claim the win or give a partner credit for receiving the winning hand.
I just tried this and got 3 full-house hands and set of trips (just like the gambler in the story), but wasn't able to quad my own hand.

I don't submit this as the method used in the story. I only mention it because it's a possible method that would meet the "criteria" presented in the story without switching decks or false shuffling at any point.

It's a variation of the "reporter got conned" solution, but without anything as exotic as a deck switch or advanced shuffle work.

Jason

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**Glenn Bishop** | 02/17/11 10:05 AM | [link] | [filter]

If I may add - New deck order of the cards was different in those days. However because the deck was shuffled before it was handed to the gambler - it makes me think cold deck.

Cheers!

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**Geno Munari** | 02/17/11 11:25 PM | [link] | [filter]

This reminds me of an effect Jimmy Grippo would perform with a brand new sealed deck. It was one of my favorite routines and a great opener. I wrote it up in his book, The Magic of Jimmy Grippo. The effect has been around and I believe it may have appeared in the Ency. of Card Tricks???? or elsewhere, but clearly not presented in Jimmy"s style. Here it is:

A CLASSIC POKER EFFECT

This effect dates back to the early gambling halls. Jimmy Grippo likes to use it as a gambling demonstration and tells of an old time gambler named Chuck Johnson that does the dealing.

EFFECT: The magician opens a fresh pack of cards and gives them an inspection explaining how they are packaged at the factory. He then shuffles the cards and allows the spectator to cut the cards as many times as he likes. The performer then deals out to a seven handed game of five card poker, including himself.

In the dealing he explains how the old sharper, Chuck Johnson, dealt from the bottom of the deck. He does this on two occasions showing the move simply by taking the card off the bottom, rather than actually trying to deceive the onlookers. Everyone has a Full House including the dealer. Jimmy then says, "Since I took a couple of cards off the
and looks at them with a poker face and reveals a Straight Flush.

METHOD: In this old classic the subtle method of using the factory's packaging enables the performer to achieve the effect. Most cards from United States Playing Card Co. come packaged as follows. From the top down, Ace through King, Ace through King, King through Ace and King through Ace. Use the pretext of showing everyone that the cards are in order from the factory. Hold the deck face up in the left hand and deal them face up on the table Ace through King and then the second suit Ace through King. Place the remainder of the cards as is, right on top of the tabled cards. Make sure that you do not disturb the order of any card. The cards are now in the following order, the deck in a face down position: Ace through King, Ace through King, Ace through King and Ace through King. If your cards are already in this order you're set. If not, you must devise a system that appears plausible to put them in that order.

The cards can now be false shuffled by any manner so as not to disturb the cards. The cards can now be legitimately cut by a spectator, since cutting will not disturb the arrangement.

Begin dealing out seven hands of poker, including yourself as the seventh. Deal around one round and begin the second, but when you take your card on the second round (the fourteenth card) you explain that old cheaters take one off the bottom. Just simply take one off the bottom, rather than actually deal a bottom to deceive anyone. If you should care to deal an undetected bottom deal you can approach the effect from a different viewpoint and not explain that you are using cards off the bottom of the deck. This is up to you. Continue dealing and deal out a third round and then begin a fourth, but on the fourth round when you take your card, again take the bottom card and complete the deal. Jimmy likes to ask anyone if they would like to exchange their hands without looking. This is a strong part in the effect and will give a good build up. The hands must also be changed so no one will notice that the cards are in a sequence. Everyone then can expose their hand to reveal a Full House including the dealer. Jimmy will then either show his Full House or discard the odd card and count his three of a kind for four of a kind. This is done at a pace without stopping or giving the spectator a chance to question what has taken place. Jimmy now says," I know that all was not fair." He throws his hand away and says," You don't mind if I deal myself five cards off the top of the deck, do you?" Deal the next five cards from the top of the deck. Pretend to rearrange them, and turn them over showing a Straight Flush.

NOTE: After dealing out the seven hands, sight the top card to make sure you have enough cards for the straight flush, if not cut the deck until you have enough cards.
Geno, thanks very much for sharing that routine - brilliant.

**JeffS | 02/24/11 01:04 AM | link | filter**

I recently read *The Book of William* by Paul Collins about the story behind the First Folios of Shakespeare. It seems it was commonplace back then to print extra copies of the title pages of books and use them as advertisements. This was in 1623 so it predates Erdnase by quite a bit but the title page is very descriptive of what's inside and it would solve the issue of how it was advertised. If Erdnase did have some kind of occupation that involved travel it would be nothing for these to appear on bulletin boards of magic shops, clubs etc. around the region with contact info to send for a copy.

It is just a theory but have any title pages been found separate from the book itself?

**Jonathan Townsend | 02/25/11 09:56 PM | link | filter**

apropos of what we now know - and in memory of David Alexander and Gene Roddenberry: [http://www.aintitcool.com/node/48645](http://www.aintitcool.com/node/48645)

enjoy the image and mention. Maybe someday we'll learn more about Roddenberry.

sometimes the fantasy is more fun when you make it happen :)

**Bill Mullins | 03/10/11 07:34 PM | link | filter**

Milton Franklin Andrews has been the "standard" candidate for having written *The Expert at the Card Table* for a long time. Other people have been proposed as the author, but the advantage that MFA has always held is that he was known to be familiar with a deck of cards. Other prominent candidates have had interesting circumstantial similarities to the author (usually because of a similarity of their name to "S. W. Erdnase"), but most of them don't have any known associations with or interests in playing cards. I know, for example, that one reason David Alexander spent so much time researching W. E. Sanders' private papers was looking for evidence of skill with the pasteboards.

I'm pretty familiar with what is known about who I consider to be the top three other candidates for having written *Expert*: W. E. Sanders (proposed by David Alexander), Edwin Sumner Andrews (proposed by Richard Hatch), and the con man E. S. Andrews (proposed by Todd Karr); and I have made modest contributions to what is known about each of these three individuals. Mostly of my research has been done by searching through digitized full-text databases free ones like Google Books and Google News Archives. and subscription ones like ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
Newspaper archive, and others. Content is being added to most of these databases all the time, so it is productive to revisit past searches occasionally.

I just (yesterday) found something I consider to be pretty exciting not up there with Bill Woodfield’s 1949 telegram to Martin Gardner saying that Milton Franklin Andrews is "definitely our man", but it is clear evidence that one more of the major candidates was in fact a card player:

San Francisco Call 1/13/1911 p 4
MYSTERY OF THE "PIPPINS" SOLVED

Ed Andrews Can No Longer Dodge Session by Trip to Watsonville

EDWARD ANDREWS of the Pere Marquette has always boasted of a method, all his own, of being able to escape a game of cards when he does not feel so inclined. His excuse has always been that he had to journey to Watsonville and see about a shipment of "Pippins." A few days ago friends from the other side of the bay saw him in Market street conversing with several young women. It happened that there was to be an evening at cards in an Alameda home that very evening and when Ed reached home he was requested over the telephone to join in the games. "Very sorry," he said, "but I am going to Watsonville in about an hour to see about a shipment of 'Pippins.'" "How about the three 'Pippins' you were seen talking to this afternoon?" was returned to him over the 'phone. When the story came out at the club yesterday afternoon William F. Schmidt of the Missouri Pacific, who makes frequent trips to Watsonville, remarked that it was funny that he had never thought of Andrews' idea.

There is a minor error in the article Edwin is referred to as "Edward". But this is the same person that Richard Hatch identified over a decade ago. Edwin was in fact working for the Pere Marquette railroad at this time. He lived "on the other side of the bay", in Oakland CA. He is known to have travelled to Watsonville. He ran in the same circles as William F. Schmidt (they were both members of the "Transportation Club", a social organization of railroad executives).

Although the article talks about Andrews ducking a game of cards, it is clear that the other participants expected that he would be able to join them he must have been a regular player. I submit this as strong evidence that Edwin Sumner Andrews played cards at a recreational level. It is no smoking gun, and there is much that isn't said here that would be good to hear. There is no evidence that Andrews cheated, or knew any sleight of hand moves. We have no knowledge that he was familiar with card magic, or
played cards, which is more than we know about either W. E. Sanders or the con man E. S. Andrews.

**Roger M.** | 03/10/11 07:48 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Excellent research Bill!.....very exciting stuff.

You've definitively put cards in the hands of one of the three "big" candidates.

I see this as somewhat of a turning point in the search, and a tip of the hat to Richard Hatch for locating Edwin as a candidate in the first place.

To write about a man "escaping" a game of cards seems a major indicator of a serious card player.

Personally, I read into this snippet that Edwin Andrews was a **well known** card player.......or else why write the article in this fashion?

I've been an active card player for years, but can't see somebody writing something like this about me based on my once a week poker game.

The language in the article (and the very fact that it was written focused on "getting away" from the card table) would almost imply that Edwin Andrews was at the card table on an **very** regular basis, and was further **well known** locally as a card player.

Interested to hear what Richard Hatch thinks about this exciting find.

**Richard Hatch** | 03/10/11 08:10 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Bill Mullins is a genius at ferreting out information from digitized searches. This is pretty exciting, thanks, Bill!

**Richard Hatch** | 03/10/11 10:55 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

This E. S. Andrews stayed at the Hotel Jerome in Aspen in September 1899 (thanks, Bill, for that reference, too!). Eric Mead performs regularly at the Hotel Jerome (built 1889). Coincidence?

Actually, I’m hoping perhaps Eric can see if there is a guest book dating back that far so we can compare E. S. Andrews’ handwriting with that on the copyright application (I do have E. S. Andrews’ signature on his marriage certificate, so it may not add anything, but you never know what you will find until you look...)
Perhaps this image helps explain the humor in the "Pippins" remark:  
http://images.cloud.worthpoint.com/wpim ... ffded5.jpg

Incidentally, this E. S. Andrews’ interest in apples may have been genuine, as by 1920 he is listed in the census records as being a fruit farmer in San Jose (he died there in 1922, possibly explaining the non-renewal of the copyright a few years later...)

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**Geno Munari** | 03/11/11 01:24 AM | link | filter

Bill
That is very interesting information and wonderful research. I really enjoy your zeal.

Richard,
There is no evidence that he was a gambler or magician. Playing Whist, Honeymoon Bridge and other parlor games is not the same thing as going for the money.

Perhaps there may be some connections to some magicians that he knew? And assuming there were other writers to Expert, are there any connections or clues to these persons?

And for "the non-renewal of the copyright a few years later", that is a real speculative conjecture. Same as saying that is why MFA didn’t renew his copyright. (If he was the copyright holder)

Also what were his statistics: i.e. height, weight etc.

And did he travel to Chicago? Or have any connections in an around the area? Friends of other hustlers, etc.

I think he could be a good candidate, but still, "Can we put a deck of cards in his hands"?

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**Richard Hatch** | 03/11/11 01:50 AM | link | filter

Hi Geno. You are right that Bill’s new information about Edwin S. Andrews, the train agent, does not show he was a gambler or cheat. But it certainly gets him a step closer to that direction. Incidentally, there is no internal evidence that the author of the book was a cheat. Nowhere does the author say that he won money using the methods described in the book. He does admit in several places to having been cheated. Three Card Monte, while in the Card Table Artifice section, is presented as entertainment, not as a way to win money. That doesn’t mean he wasn’t a card cheat, but one can’t prove that he was from a careful reading of the book. That Erdnase was, at one time, a gambler is clear from the anecdotes he gives, but not that he was a cheat himself. He makes frequent references to "the expert" and "the professional" but it is not clear that
On Edwin S. Andrews’ other circumstantial qualifications, may I suggest you check out the excellent DVD set on Erdnase that Houdini’s Magic Shop sells? Lots of good information there, including the fact that he lived in Chicago from 1888 till 1896, working as a clerk for the Chicago & NW RR. He was transferred to another gambling center, Denver, in February 1896 and remained based there (with frequent trips to Chicago) until October 1901, when he transferred to DeKalb, Illinois, though he actually lived in Oak Park, an enclave of Chicago. Thus he arrived in Chicago just in time (if he’s the author) to open a new bank account there and find the illustrator to finish the book for publication in March 1902. He is transferred to yet another gambling center, San Francisco, in February 1903, the very month that an obscure magic company, the Atlas Novelty Company, which was on the same street he lived on, just a few blocks north of him, begins to sell the book for half price. Born in 1859, he is the age recalled by Marshall Smith (40-45 circa 1901). From the one photo I have found, he is also likely the right height (he is smaller than his teenage children and about the same height as his wife, not the very tall (especially for the time) height of 6’ 1.5” that was one of Milton Franklin Andrews’ (just 29, only two weeks older than the illustrator, who recalled a man more than a decade older than himself) most conspicuous features. I think he’s a great "circumstantial fit" and if I could prove that he was related to Louis Dalrymple in a straightforward way (I found him looking for relatives of Dalrymple named Andrews, but can’t yet complete the necessary genealogy. Would welcome help there!), I’d say "case closed." Absent that, however, I agree that he is just one of several "persons of interest" in this mystery. Milton Franklin Andrews remains the standard to beat, being the only candidate to date that was known to have some of the necessary skill set (cheating knowledge), is named Andrews, and conveniently died just a few years after the book’s publication, neatly explaining his subsequent anonymity. The facts that MFA is not the height or age recalled by the illustrator and does not seem to have the "voice" of the book (based on the surviving samples of his writing) do no rule him out. But I think Bill’s revelation has significantly boosted the Edwin S. Andrews candidacy.

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**Bill Mullins** | 03/11/11 11:42 AM | [link] [filter]

*Geno Munari wrote:* I think he could be a good candidate, but still, "Can we put a deck of cards in his hands"?

????

The whole point of my post was to show that yes, we can put a deck of cards in his hands.

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**Roger M.** | 03/11/11 11:58 AM | [link] [filter]

"Can we put a deck of cards in his hands?"
i guess i'm wondering why this article would have been written in the first place. Was there a real "mystery" that was needed to be solved? i highly doubt someone dodging a game occasionally would merit an article in the newspaper, but i don't know enough about the circulation or popularity of these people.

Lots of information on Andrews in that database, wonderful find!

Brad Henderson | 03/14/11 04:37 PM | link | filter

"EDWARD ANDREWS of the Pere Marquette has always boasted of a method, all his own, of being able to escape a game of cards when he does not feel so inclined."

This may be reading too much into things, but I find the word choice of "method" and the phrase "all his own" to be interesting. We don't know if "method" was the author's word choice or if was he merely repeating the phraseology used in the boast by Andrews? If I knew nothing about magic (no comments, please) and I was going to formulate a sentence conveying this meaning, I am not sure I would use the word "method." "Ruse" maybe. "way" possible. "Technique" likely. But "method?" Maybe - but maybe not.

"Method" is of course used repeatedly throughout Expert. Perhaps (like the old Carroll Priest telepathy phone call trick) this is a case of the reporter repeating a particular word used by his subject.

But, more interesting perhaps, is the fact he chose to clarify the ruse as being of his own device. He is "betraying no confidence". And, if I recall - not being nearly the expert on the Expert as many here all - that Erdnase himself makes habit of calling attention to ideas of his own devising.

Perhaps I am seeing rabbits in the clouds, but those two things stuck out to me.
Magic Fred wrote: RE:Not IMHO. We have a text, two less than informative attempts at interview and a burnt down printing house. Treated as a forensic matter - not sure even 'follow the money' has helped so much in this matter of tracing the text back to it's source.

So what should we do? Start with the assumption that the author was a chess master?...

I suggest starting with the text, respecting the results of the analysis we have to date (see genii article) and from that formulate hypotheses which address the components of the text. It would not likely hurt to presume that some amount of consideration was given to the matter of the text's presentation when the text shows evidence of much considered phrasing.

Bill Mullins | 03/14/11 10:18 PM | link | filter

If, like me, you found JT's post above to be something of a non sequitur, it may be helpful to know that he is reaching back nearly four months to a post HERE.

I can explain what he does. I cannot explain why.

Jonathan Townsend | 03/14/11 10:51 PM | link | filter

Bill, I'm going from the article in this month's issue of genii magazine - the one about the authorship of the text. Why? Sometimes I wonder too. Though if folks want to go back to an old post on the matter - I stated my hypothesis here in response to Pete's post.

I hold that "ERDNASE" is a composite work, with at least two components and perhaps more than a few hands in the writing.

Grant McSorley | 03/21/11 10:23 AM | link | filter

While the SF Call article is interesting, I'd be careful about reading too much into it. As the rest of the column deals with bits of news and info concerning the rail industry, it may just be that Andrews was popular among his co-workers or a friend of the author and that the anecdote was more of a ribbing than anything else. I don't think it was intended to be particularly newsworthy or indicates that Andrews was a big time card player.

Also, out of curiosity, what percentage of the population would have been regular card
players (e.g. once or twice a week) in 1911? I’d assume it was be pretty high among single men.

Bill Mullins | 03/21/11 12:52 PM | link | filter

Grant McSorley wrote: While the SF Call article is interesting, I’d be careful about reading too much into it.

Agreed. This is no smoking gun, just an interesting tidbit -- but one which links Edwin S. Andrews more strongly to Erdnase than he was before.

Also, out of curiosity, what percentage of the population would have been regular card players (e.g. once or twice a week) in 1911? I’d assume it was be pretty high among single men.

Edwin S. Andrews was not single. But your question is valid, and probably unanswerable. I’d be interested in knowing how many decks of cards were sold in the U.S. in 1902, per capita, compared to today.

Roger M. | 03/21/11 02:52 PM | link | filter

Sorry, I'll have to put more into the article than Grant does.

The concept of an article about a lumberjack, miner, accountant, whatever........that makes very specific mention ("at length" relative to the entire article) about a mans technique for avoiding a game of cards is (IMO) more than just a passing reference to something commonly written about.

It's like a 1902 article saying Joe Blow dresses up in ladies clothing, and then asking "OK, that doesn't mean anything, besides, how many men dressed up in ladies clothing in 1902"?

OK........maybe not exactly like that, but you get the point :)

Grant McSorley | 03/21/11 10:38 PM | link | filter

Just to be clear, Bill, I'm not trying to be dismissive of your or Richard's research, I find it all fascinating and it's definitely a step in the right direction.

Roger, I understand your point, but considering the story is from a gossip column for railway men, I thought the point was more about Andrews going to see his young "pippins" than getting away from the cards, but I've been wrong before.

Grant
Grant McSorley wrote: Just to be clear, Bill, I'm not trying to be dismissive of your . . . research,

I didn't think you were. I'll be the first to admit that this isn't the same as a diary entry saying "My new book on cheating at cards just came out".

Bill, even that would hardly prove authorship. It might suggest some involvement in the project or that the writer presumed to claim a form of ownership which would be valueable in this investigation.

I'm still wondering what a "pippin" is and whether they wore women's clothes.

Are we willing to forge artifacts to create a fictitious historical figure? Or perhaps this continued discourse about a single person who never was will help us out later when we get on to belief formation and mythmaking?

See the Borges story for an outline or ask your clever neighbors who prattle in Klingon.

From Websters "pippin: a crisp tart apple having usually yellow or greenish-yellow skin strongly flushed with red and used especially for cooking."

Thanks - I was wondering as the text in question

His excuse has always been that he had to journey to Watsonville and see about a shipment of "Pippins." A few days ago friends from the other side of the bay saw him in Market street conversing with several young women.

left me puzzled as to the writer's use of scare quotes to signal allusion and/or inuendo.

Looks like it can also mean "[Informal]- A person or thing that is admired."
Jonathan Townsend wrote: Bill, even that would hardly prove authorship. It might suggest some involvement in the project or that the writer presumed to claim a form of ownership which would be valueable in this investigation.

Maybe it wouldn't be proof, but it would be so persuasive when combined with the circumstantial evidence already found by Richard Hatch that I would treat it as proof.

Are we willing to forge artifacts to create a fictitious historical figure?

Nobody's talking about forging anything. Why do you raise such a wild tangent? And who is the "fictitious historical figure"?

Or perhaps this continued discourse about a single person who never was will help us out later when we get on to belief formation and mythmaking?

Who, again, is the "single person who never was"? Erdnase existed -- he wrote a book. Andrews existed -- he was in the papers.

See the Borges story for an outline or ask your clever neighbors who prattle in Klingon.

Again, where do you get this stuff? As Norm Peterson once said to Cliff Clavin, "What color is the sky in your world?"

Jonathan Townsend | 03/22/11 03:27 PM | link | filter

Bill,

It seems to me that the study of the text itself pretty much put a "no" to any further fretting over a single author.

Not knowing the Borges story is, at this point and after being referenced a few times here, IMHO kinda sad. Here's a link to a discussion. The creation of an artificial culture by way of forged artifacts and well intended interpolations/extrapolations is discussed there and actually happening in our real world, Klingon being one example. Not sure if the original of the Borges work is in the public domain though it is on various sites in text format. There are treasures in the literature of the fantastic which inform much in our craft. Just because we have folks who think they live on Uqbar here does not mean the rest of us don’t catch the flights of fancy when they happen.

Cliff Claven and Norm Paterson are also fictitious characters. Or is there a special entrance to the Bull and Finch that leads to "Cheers" in your world?
Roger M. | 03/22/11 04:15 PM | link | filter

Pointless.........utterly pointless.

Bill Mullins | 03/22/11 05:52 PM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote: It seems to me that the study of the text itself pretty much put a "no" to any further fretting over a single author.

Disagree. Disagree STRONGLY. The text represents itself as a single work, by a single author. I’ve read many of arguments for the position that two or more people were responsible, and don’t find them persuasive.

Let me be careful, here. I am not stating that only one person is responsible for book. I am stating that those who argue otherwise have not proved their case. And since the book itself indicates only 1 author, then the presumption should be 1 author. Any other theory of authorship is suspect ab initio, and must overcome that problem.

Not knowing the Borges story is, at this point and after being referenced a few times here, IMHO kinda sad.

If my lack of familiarity with your oblique allusions to an Argentinian poet saddens you, then that’s too bad. My leisure reading is driven by factors other than "What arcane references did JT make today?" If your reading of Erdnase makes you think that more than one person wrote it, I’d love to hear your reasoning, and debate (in the best sene of the word) the position with you. That would be a much more constructive use of this thread than figuring out why you think Klingon has anything to do with "The Expert At the Card Table".

Jonathan Townsend | 03/22/11 06:17 PM | link | filter

Kindly turn to page 72 of the article to the statistical analysis of the text itself.

We are agreed that there is a text, that there was a publisher, a burnt publishing house, a couple of reported and dubiously performed interviews... and lots of Andrews in the world that might have had some part in inspiring the name used as "author" of the text.

Artifacts like checks, signed registers and applications are useful here. Is there even one check or note from the author (or even agent for) to the artist or publisher or ... ?
Roger M. wrote: Pointless........utterly pointless.

IMHO it’s pretty telling, almost a thematic apperception test for magicians who can read.

Richard Kaufman | 03/22/11 06:33 PM | link | filter

Jonathan, please stop writing stuff that exists at such an esoteric level that it makes no sense to most of us.

Bill Mullins | 03/22/11 10:12 PM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote: Kindly turn to page 72 of the article to the statistical analysis of the text itself.

Unfortunately, the article by Wiseman and Holmes represents more of a start of an investigation, than the end of one. The graph on p. 72 of the Feb 2011 issue is difficult to understand, and I don’t think any real conclusions about authorship can be drawn from it. The authors assert that the data presented in their Fig 1 shows that Sec 3 and part of Sec 1 are more stylistically similar to each other than to the rest of the book, and thus are likely to have been written by the same author. But Fig 2 indicates that the same part of Sec 1 is more similar to a third author (Gerritt Evans) than it is to the Sec 3 of Erdnase (which is more similar to the writings of Edwin Sachs than to the other parts of Erdnase). So, is Sec 3 (the card tricks) written by the same author as the remainder of the book; or by Edwin Sachs; or by the person who wrote Sec 1a (who may or may not have been Evans, or copied from him)?

And how close together would Sec 1a/3 have to be to the rest of the book stylistically to indicate that the author was the same person? Wiseman and Holmes put quantitative values on their stylistic distance measurements, but don’t tell us at what point the numbers get so big that they indicate different authors.

Where is their control analysis? What if you subjected a book with a single, known author, like one of Richard Kaufman’s books (or perhaps someone with a more distinctive voice, like Racherbaumer) to this sort of analysis - would the results show similar variations in style? How big is the "spread" of a talented writer of a book of similar size and topic - more or less than that shown by the analysis of Erdnase?

Further, I would submit that the way they have divided the text into smaller groups, particularly within Sec 3, skews the results. Sec 3 has 3 distinct authorial voices:

a. Patter -- much more flowery language than elsewhere in the book. Within quote
marks.
b. Straightforward expository text (such as that between the words "Card Tricks" on p 171 of most standard editions and "Patter and execution" on p 172).
c. Direct instruction -- commands within parentheses in the Card Tricks section. Many articles ("a", "an", "the") are omitted here, and that would corrupt any statistical analysis of the frequency of small words. (This omission is a stylistic preference exercised by the author; and not due to the fact that one author uses the words with a different frequency than another).

Note, for example, that the Patter of the card tricks is the only place in the book where the author uses the first person singular pronoun "I" everywhere else he uses the editorial "we". Again, this should be accounted for in any statistical analysis of small word frequencies

Wiseman and Holmes' failure to segregate the text by authorial voice in the Card Tricks section, as opposed to separating it into contiguous blocks of text, has perturbed their results.

And despite these critiques (which I've discussed with the authors when the article came out), I think this is an important analysis and needed to be done. EATCT should be compared to itself and to other relevant works with as many tools as possible, and by as many investigators as possible.

Jonathan Townsend | 03/22/11 10:43 PM | link | filter

Maybe this program will help with further explorations.

Bill Mullins | 03/22/11 11:44 PM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote: Maybe this program will help with further explorations.

Maybe it will. We await, with bated breath, your results.

Geno Munari | 03/23/11 01:32 AM | link | filter

Quoting Bill Mullins, "Disagree. Disagree STRONGLY. The text represents itself as a single work, by a single author. I've read many of arguments for the position that two or more people were responsible, and don't find them persuasive."

Well spoken yet there are facts you can't disprove. Common sense may sway you. This gambler had more than 101 drawings made about his sleights on all the moves in
the set-up deck (Eight Kings). Maybe because the writing was completed after the first section was finished by a different writer? It just doesn't follow. Non sequitur. Why would a hard core player write about a set-up deck that had zero chance of "getting the money"? The writer could have never used the set-up deck material for poker, could he? Non sequitur.

And please don't destroy this sentence because it is not exactly as written in Expert. Harte performed very close to Andrews as a mind reader; he lived about 60 miles away. He may or may not have written the 8 Kings section. Yet he had a mind reading act. Many pages in Expert are devoted to this subject. A gambler would not even have knowledge of this unless he was a magician or had magician friends, and more likely a magician who really knew his set-up deck.

This is interesting. Yet you et al have this mission to dismiss these facts. Harte (Harto) had a connection to Erdnase. Yet because Hatch says no, you et al dismiss this connection.

The Man Who Was Erdnase has all of the points and footnotes that you et al have not disproven.

Joe Pecore | 03/23/11 04:31 AM | [link] [filter]

I briefly tried that Textual Analysis system on the Erdnase and the Mine Timbering text last year: [http://www.geniimagazine.com/forums/ubb ... Post216808](http://www.geniimagazine.com/forums/ubb ... Post216808)

John Wilson | 03/23/11 06:03 AM | [link] [filter]

At least, to me, the difference in the voice from the "card table artifice" and "legerdemain" sections is readily apparent. The voice in the latter section is not the type of voice usually found in the type that might be capable of the voice in the first part. I have no proof of this from mathematical analysis of the text in any manner. All I know is what god damned gamblers sound like versus magicians and the single author theory loses weight for me, personally...

Jonathan Townsend | 03/23/11 08:08 AM | [link] [filter]

*Bill Mullins wrote:*

*Jonathan Townsend wrote:* Maybe this [program](http://www.geniimagazine.com/forums/ubb ... Post216808) will help with further explorations.

Maybe it will. We await, with bated breath, your results.

It falls to others to prove the text is not an assembled work proffered by the publisher - Occam’s razor and all that.
Let's imagine this situation as if in detective fiction: It's no great leap to have Doyle's version, "The Missing Expert", include an early moment where Holmes points out the mystery of the title page. Watson notices the reversed name option and Lestrade goes running off to round up any likely Andrews. For now I go with the Garden of Forking Paths version and will be there waiting for you with "bated breath".

Sceptically yours,

Jon

Jonathan Townsend | 03/23/11 08:43 AM | link | filter

Edit - that probably should be "Death and the Compass" as model story. Perhaps our next generation will find this matter reads more like an Adams "Dirk Gently" story after the dust settles.

Magic Fred | 03/23/11 09:16 AM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote:
It falls to others to prove the text is not an assembled work proffered by the publisher - Occam's razor and all that.

Fail.

Jonathan Townsend | 03/23/11 09:27 AM | link | filter

Magic Fred wrote: Fail.

That word is about what I feel like writing whenever I find a flight of fancy in place of a reasoned argument.

Kindly offer a better hypothesis as regards the origins of the text in question.

Magic Fred | 03/23/11 09:42 AM | link | filter

I have explained at length in previous posts. Briefly, following Occam's Razor (which suggests eliminating all unnecessary assumptions) would indicate that the book had one author, who was also the publisher, who also needed the money for some unknown reason.

There is no reason at all to assume, without evidence, that S.W. Erdnase (whoever this refers too) was not the sole author.
The burden of proof (especially according to Occam) lies with those who want to introduce the idea that the book was a collaborative effort.

---

**Magic Fred** | 03/23/11 09:43 AM | link | filter

*Jonathan Townsend wrote:*

*Magic Fred wrote:* Fail.

That word is about what I feel like writing whenever I find a flight of fancy in place of a reasoned argument.

Kindly offer a better hypothesis as regards the origins of the text in question.

Quite right, please excuse me. Previous reasoned arguments have been blindly ignored. I fancied an alternative approach for a moment.

---

**Jonathan Townsend** | 03/23/11 09:46 AM | link | filter

The burden of proof must rest with one who wishes to introduce a person other than the publisher in this matter. Did Vernon meet the author? Did Gardner? Did the Illustrator?

...that S.W. Erdnase (whoever this refers too) was not the sole author...

Fail?

Nicolas Bourbaki

---

**Magic Fred** | 03/23/11 09:48 AM | link | filter

*Jonathan Townsend wrote:*

that S.W. Erdnase (whoever this refers too) was not the sole author...

Fail. Really. Laughably.

ROFL,

Nicolas Bourbaki

So, according to Occam's Razor, this post was written by multiple authors?
Keep digging.

Jonathan Townsend | 03/23/11 09:53 AM | link | filter

_Magic Fred wrote:_

_Jonathan Townsend wrote:_

that S.W. Erdnase (whoever this refers too) was not the sole author...

Fail. Really. Laughably.

ROFL,

Nicolas Bourbaki

So, according to Occam’s Razor, this post was written by multiple authors?

Keep digging.

Why yes "Magic Fred" - there appear to be at least two authors in the post you cited and quoted.

Per policy at this BBS each participant is expected to be a distinct person.

While I am digging deeply into the denial and vanity of some - this is not to diminish the magic or even the value of the text in question.

Kindly consider the matter as understood (material evidence in hand) as set in a detective story. Where would you expect it to go? I’d go right to the fire at the publishing house and see a very simple story.

Magic Fred | 03/23/11 10:01 AM | link | filter

Forgiving my incompetence in using the quoting feature, most readers will get the point I was making.

A point which has been explained, and thoroughly substantiated.

Happy to leave it to the readers to decide if Occam's Razor would suggest a single author, or the assumption of multiple authors.
While I am digging deeply into the denial and vanity of some - this is not to
diminish the magic or even the value of the text in question.

You overestimate yourself, sir.

---

**Pete McCabe** | 03/23/11 10:15 AM | [link] | [filter]

Just for the record, Occam's Razor is helpful when trying to choose which of several hypotheses to explore, but it can never be used as a point in an actual (i.e. formal, logical) argument, as it carries no weight whatsoever. It never proves anything.

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**Magic Fred** | 03/23/11 10:25 AM | [link] | [filter]

_Pete McCabe wrote:_ Just for the record, Occam’s Razor is helpful when trying to choose which of several hypotheses to explore, but it can never be used as a point in a actual (i.e. formal, logical) argument, as it carries no weight whatsoever. It never proves anything.

Absolutely. I was pointing out the absurdity of invoking Occam's Razor in reference to assumptions about the authorship. Taken at face value, there was one author who decided to use a pseudonym.

Applying Occam's Razor would favor this hypothesis over the one of multiple authorship...

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**Roger M.** | 03/23/11 10:50 AM | [link] | [filter]

**Geno Munari wrote:**

The Man Who Was Erdnase has all of the points and footnotes that you et
al have not disproven.

The problem with your theory is that MFA couldn't write a *single* word that would (or could) be mistaken for some of other well crafted text as written by Erdnase in EATCT.

"The Man Who Was Erdnase" is an important, but grossly flawed book. If it was researched in such a way that it wasn't flawed........this thread would have ended years ago, and we'd all be agreeing that MFA was Erdnase.

That's simply not the case, and the book doesn't hold up to incisive investigation.

I posted this example of a letter written by MFA, then some text from EATCT here on the Genii Forum in 2008 as an example of exactly why the book fails on this one major point. In both examples, the topic is referenced to "shooting", so similarity in topic would highlight similarities in writing style ....... as obviously not the case here.
S.W. Erdnase:
"...the jars to our pocketbook caused far less anguish than the heartrending jolts to our insufferable conceit".

"Boldness and nerve are also absolutely essential. Ability in card handling does not necessarily insure success. Proficiency in target practice is not the sole qualification of the trap shooter. Many experts with the gun who can nonchalantly ring up the bull's eye in a shooting gallery could not hit the side of a barn in a duel. The greater the emergency, or the greater the stakes, the greater the nerve required".

"We have not been impelled to our task by the qualms of a guilty conscience, nor through the hope of reforming the world. Man cannot change his temperament, and few care to control it".

M.F. Andrews:
"I caught her playing sneak on me and going to the Alhambra Hotel district, in which she became a well known character. We split up several times on the strength of it, but each time I took the bag of diamonds".

"As I realize my life is at stake, and as I am a crack shot, being an old-time bear hunter in the Maine woods, whoever tries to get me, make your will".

"In Holyoke, Mass., I have a wife living. I wish I had a divorce".

"I have consumption, heart failure, lots of crushed ribs and catarrh of the intestines. One month in jail and I would be dead as a herring".

(To which I added my own thoughts):
........Anybody who think the same person wrote these samples might consider seeking remedial english lessons.
It’s obvious they were written by different people, and when this information is taken in consort with M.D. Smiths memory of what S.W. Erdnase actually looked like, M.F. Andrews as a candidate becomes what he’s always been, an obvious distraction in the search for the identity of our friend S.W. Erdnase.

Occams Razor seems to require that one deduce their answer by making the fewest assumptions possible.

So given a book, indicating a single author on the title page........Occams Razor suggests one work with the "single author theory" until provable evidence suggests otherwise.
The textual analysis in last month's Genii magazine was enjoyable and very interesting as presented, but it really is just the opening salvo in that field of investigation.

Jonathan Townsend | 03/23/11 10:55 AM | link | filter

It's precisely that "face value" matter of authorship that is put in question by the use of a fairly obvious fiction in place of the author's name (or authors), the inclusion of a magic section and the oddly set introduction. It's also the lack of direct evidence of checks/documents of a distinct person to put in the place of an author (or even delegate/agent) that puts the question to the fore in my analysis.

We agree there was a printing house. We agree there are mentions of royalties and some memories recalled long after by an artist. What I'm doing is going to the hard facts and then weighting in the recollections etc as if this were a detective story.

This is our detective story. We have a text and some records and some good ideas. From there it's very hard not to get into fiction and creative writing. I have a conservative lean on matters historical. When given a choice of author is printer or author is distinct but no evidence - i go with the simpler, while not rejecting any flights of fancy as satisfying fiction as long as we keep them distinct from our historical concerns.

Magic Fred | 03/23/11 11:28 AM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote: It's precisely that "face value" matter of authorship that is put in question by the use of a fairly obvious fiction in place of the author's name (or authors), the inclusion of a magic section and the oddly set introduction. It's also the lack of direct evidence of checks/documents of a distinct person to put in the place of an author (or even delegate/agent) that puts the question to the fore in my analysis.

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This is our detective story. We have a text and some records and some good ideas. From there it's very hard not to get into fiction and creative writing. I have a conservative lean on matters historical. When given a choice of author is printer or author is distinct but no evidence - i go with the simpler, while not rejecting any flights of fancy as satisfying fiction as long as we keep them distinct from our historical concerns.
kind as to substantiate them.

- what is your line of reasoning to suggest that an obvious pseudonym casts doubt on the NUMBER of authors?

- what specifically about the inclusion of a magic section might suggest favoring multiple authors? It suggests a number of things to me, none of which is a higher probability of multiple authors.

- what specifically do you find odd about the introduction, and how might this suggest multiple authorship over a single author? How and why does it add weight to one hypothesis over the other?

- why would the lack of evidence for the existence of a distinct person suggest that there were multiple authors any more than it would suggest that there was a single author? I see no way to justify this as a logical line of reasoning....

"we can’t find the supposed author, therefore it must have been written by several authors (none of whom we can find either!)"

It just doesn't follow.

I don't see what point you are trying to make regarding the presence of a printer. It is a book, yes there is a printer. In what world does it follow that there is therefore a higher probability that the book had multiple authors?

I also do not concur that the multiple author hypothesis is the simpler of the two.

Disregarding the actual contents of the book itself (which convinces me overwhelmingly that the book was written by one man), I have not yet seen a single piece of evidence to lend weight to either side of the debate.

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**Bill Mullins** | 03/23/11 11:49 AM | [link] [filter]

Tony Giorgio has written about both magic and gambling. He must, therefore, be two people.

Likewise Jim Swain, Darwin Ortiz, etc., etc. . . .

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 03/23/11 11:54 AM | [link] [filter]

My recent posts are about treating the text as something assembled by the printer. That the printer sent someone to meet the artist to demonstrate some sleights for the
Jonathan Townsend wrote: My recent posts are about treating the text as something assembled by the printer. That the printer sent someone to meet the artist to demonstrate some sleights for the first section.

flights of fancy...

Jonathan Townsend wrote:

My recent posts are about treating the text as something assembled by the printer. That the printer sent someone to meet the artist to demonstrate some sleights for the first section.

flights of fancy...

yes, I will review to see if that could have been the printer himself.

Fred, folks, picture yourselves as characters in a detective story. Some Sherlockian observations are welcome. Not sure about the comedy of Lestrade or bumbling of Watson.

Any statistical findings from using that program on random samples of erdnase text yet?

Bill Mullins wrote: That the printer sent someone to meet the artist to demonstrate some sleights for the first section.

But what about the illustrations for the magic section(s)? Did the printer send someone else to demonstrate those (not supported by Smith's recollections)? Or did the same person model for those illustrations as well? (If so, then he was competent in gambling sleights as well as conjuring -- therefore why couldn't that person have been able to write competently both the gambling and conjuring sections of the book?)
Jonathan Townsend wrote: My recent posts are about treating the text as something assembled by the printer. That the printer sent someone to meet the artist to demonstrate some sleights for the first section.

flights of fancy...

yes, I will review to see if that could have been the printer himself.

Perhaps the illustrator was a plant, and his recollections were purposely obfuscated. Seems to comply with your application of Occam’s Razor, and your reasoning in general.

Bill Mullins | 03/23/11 12:23 PM | link | filter

Geno Munari wrote: Yet there are no drawings on the sections on mentalism, i.e. the set-up deck (Eight Kings). Maybe because the writing was completed after the first section was finished by a different writer? It just doesn’t follow. Non sequitur.

There are no drawings on the section of mentalism/8K because the topic (mentalism) is one that doesn’t lend itself to explanation via artwork.

Jonathan Townsend | 03/23/11 12:24 PM | link | filter

Billfred,

Do you believe the magic section is of a piece with the advantage play section? A graduate course? The entire calendar of options set before the advanced student?

Jon

Bill - I’m likely in agreement about illustrations not being needed in the mentalism section. I’m in the middle of a huge reading of Clarke for the "magic/technology" item but will review that in in the erdnase text.

Magic Fred | 03/23/11 01:24 PM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote: Billfred,

Do you believe the magic section is of a piece with the advantage play section? A graduate course? The entire calendar of options set before the
Jon

Again your logic is flawed. The Legerdemain section probably isn't, and probably wasn't intended to be, a "post-graduate" course. Nor was it intended to present "the entire calendar... " Or maybe it was. Either way, so what?

This no more suggests multiple authors than it suggests one author who was a gambler with an interest in magic.

If you are suggesting the magic section indicates a less accomplished author... then I'd suggest that this no more indicates multiple authors than a single author who knew more about gambling than he did about magic.

At face value, the book was written by a gambler who had some sort of interest in card tricks. I have yet to see a shred of even mildly persuasive evidence to suggest anything to the contrary.

Analysing the language, tone and attitudes, I find both sections to be convincingly consistent. Overwhelmingly so.

Jonathan Townsend | 03/23/11 01:41 PM | link | filter

Still conflating the arguments.

I posted that IMHO the tricks section does not justify inclusion or a pseudonym and that it felt out of place given the nature of the introduction.

One might argue that a book which was congruent to the introduction would describe the observed hows and their tells rather than offer instruction on how-to or why.

Magic Fred | 03/23/11 01:47 PM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote: Still conflating the arguments.

I posted that IMHO the tricks section does not justify inclusion or a pseudonym and that it felt out of place given the nature of the introduction.

Yes, and even were this verifiably true, how would it suggest multiple authors more than it would suggest a gambler who knew more about cheating than he did about magic? Or a gambler who thought that adding a section on card tricks might help
increase sales?

I just don’t see how any of this increases the probability of there being multiple authors over a single author.

---

**Magic Fred** | 03/23/11 02:03 PM | link | filter

You still haven’t substantiated any of your reasoning. You have given a number of points and made a leap in each case to the assertion that the case for multiple authors has been advanced.

I posed some questions in a previous message, which you completely ignored.

Let’s break it down then. One of your unintelligible arguments was regarding the use of a pseudonym.

"...put in question by the use of a fairly obvious fiction in place of the author’s name ..."

Please explain how this furthers the case for multiple authorship.

I don’t believe it does, and I don’t believe you would argue that it does. I can only guess that you are suggesting that the use of such an obvious pseudonym indicates that it wasn’t used in order to hide anybody’s identity. If that is the case, then please clarify and we can move on to your other claims of evidence for multiple authorship.

P.S. I think the pseudonym tells us absolutely nothing. In the absence of further evidence we just don’t know why someone would decide on such a thing. Of course, he (if it was a single author) would not be so naive to think that nobody would crack his code... but maybe he was more concerned about his name coming up in searchable indexes or something like that? The simple reversal would be adequate to relieve such concerns. But we don’t even need a logical reason... maybe he just wanted to, maybe he was paying homage to a favourite author in some other discipline who published under a reversed name.

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 03/23/11 02:19 PM | link | filter

maybe that’s just more fantasy, Fred.

If we stick to the facts - what is simpler than a printer cobbling together a manuscript and selling it?

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**Magic Fred** | 03/23/11 02:26 PM | link | filter
Jonathan Townsend wrote: maybe that’s just more fantasy, Fred.

If we stick to the facts - what is simpler than a printer cobbling together a manuscript and selling it?

Dear god. Given the contents of the book, almost anything is simpler...

Sticking to the facts, what on earth would cause you to jump to that assumption?

How's this for simpler: a gambler wrote a book on cheating and added a section of card tricks to help increase sales.

Keep digging my friend, keep digging.

Jonathan Townsend | 03/23/11 02:38 PM | link | filter

Let’s go with the gambler hypothesis. A few games winnings with those hard won skills compared to what one might gain in royalties on a book - so, IMHO not an advantage player.

That puts two further hypotheses to the test as well- from which you may conclude...
1) hard won skills tested how?
2) introduction is to be taken at face value?

Magic Fred | 03/23/11 03:34 PM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote: Let’s go with the gambler hypothesis. A few games winnings with those hard won skills compared to what one might gain in royalties on a book - so, IMHO not an advantage player.

That puts two further hypotheses to the test as well- from which you may conclude...
1) hard won skills tested how?
2) introduction is to be taken at face value?

Still avoiding all previous questions.

You are basing this whole thing on the assumption that a real gambler couldn't possibly "need the money."

A pretty flimsy case, that needs no refutation from me! Others, if they have the patience and will, may knock down this assumption for you. For now, I'm happy to rest my case. I think the decision will be unanimous...
I'm not pleading a case Magic Fred. Just exploring a simple hypothesis - what if the printer did it. No magic unfound expert named "erdnase". The hook of a reversed name rejected as bait for the "clever" spat out and "Andrews" left as "whatever" to be addressed later as detail rather than central mystery. Free to examine the text and untangle its mysteries wherever they lead.

My issues with the text are simply about the text as a whole. IMHO it's cobbled together. The introduction does not relate to the approach of the advantage section or justify the inclusion of the tricks section IMHO.

Add into the situation that there's no direct evidence for an author (beyond what appears to some as a reversed name on the page once) - I'm fine with my hypothesis.

---

Fair enough, then let's move on to: what if Edwin Sachs did it?

---

Interesting idea about other magicians. I expect to explore that area after the Clarke project. If folks have Sachs's work in text form they can try out that program and see what sort of textual statistical match it comes up with. My plan on that is to start with random snippets of various sizes from the erdnase text and look at what it finds in comparison to get a base measure of within text variance. Similarly for other known texts. Then if meaningful within text measures are evident I would go for between text measures and between author measures.

---

What if Houdini did it?

---

Jonathan Townsend wrote: maybe that's just more fantasy, Fred.

If we stick to the facts - what is simpler than a printer cobbling together a manuscript and selling it?

If you had any understanding of the work at all, you’d appreciate that it is absolutely impossible for it to have been "cobbled" together.
throughout the book.

The author establishes sound objectives in both the art and the science of handling playing cards. Not only is the language consistent throughout the work, but the philosophy and the scientific engineering of moves are equally persistent.

Analyze the introductory remarks of each of the two sections. The language is consistently distinctive, elegant and accomplished.

Explain to me the specific objectives and solutions evident in the engineering of the Erdnase one handed shift (card table artifice) and the S.W.E. shift (legerdemain) and explain how these can possibly be the work of two different authors.

Master the material in the book. Then you may understand. There is absolutely nothing "cobbled" about it.

The evidence is extremely convincing. The book is the work of a single author. The author had extensive experience in gambling and cheating. He was interested in magic at least to the extent that he was familiar with some texts of the time, and his comments regarding the back palm practically prove that he had seen an elegant manipulation act, or performed one himself (I favor the former).

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 03/24/11 07:52 AM | link | filter

There is no evidence "Magic Fred". And that’s the start of the mystery.

"S. W. Erdnase" is IMHO just a bit of bait for those who imagine themselves clever, a red herring, a literary playbow or an invitation down a cognitive rabbithole.

When I’m done with the Clarke thing I will re-re-re-re-re-reread the erdnase text and continue my explorations there. In the mean time - the ECT project remains, IMHO, still doable but more difficult now with Chosse gone - and remains a much more productive effort for this community. Again IMHO.

---

**Magic Fred** | 03/24/11 07:55 AM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote: There is no evidence "Magic Fred". And that's the start of the mystery.

Funny man.

Plenty of evidence throughout the pages.
Thanks, I do prefer to amuse rather than to confront or denigrate.

"Evidence" requires both a chain of custody and provenience - otherwise it’s just an artifact of some sort. All we have is a text, a printing house and a couple of reported interviews. Basically two or three tales told by the self-interested and a book sold by a printing house that failed.

Till magic has a much better track record of recovering lost history than the Robert-Houdin and Hofzinser and ECT works demonstrate it's really not worth asking for trust or respect on those matters IMHO.

Again, findings from the text and actual documents from real people in context are welcome additions to the project of solving this mystery. With the "erdnose" scan in google finding we are, IMHO, also very close to pranksters adding specious items into the mix. Let's hope the lazy on the \b\tard side are slower than those who waited so very long to get serious about finding the origins of the erdnase text.

Check your dictionary.

You are on your own when you suggest there is no evidence to be found within the pages of the book.

Never before have I encountered such a consistently low ratio of "substance to gibberish" from a single person.

Seriously, it’s a struggle to stop the eyes glazing over.

I’m happy to concede though, that it might be a result of my own shortcomings. Perhaps you are a literary genius and I am just not up to appreciating the clarity with which you make your points.

I’ll bow out now, because I simply and honestly can’t extract anything meaningful from your excessively extravagant prose.

Magic Fred wrote: What if Houdini did it?

Himself - that would be quite a surprise. Anyone got anything from him that shows
signs such writing? IMHO it would be more likely that any involvement would be by way of having the work done than as author himself.

Still that is a provokative thought. What else would have to be true for him to be the author of that text? Big smile here for the suggestion as avenue to consider even if only as a flight of fancy. :)

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**richardmagic101** | 04/01/11 06:53 PM | link | filter

The name sw erdnase is acctually a sudonym for E S Andrews spelled backwards.

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**Gordolini** | 04/01/11 07:25 PM | link | filter

and decoding the name using a polyalphabetic substitution Cryptograph it spells April Fools Day....

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 04/01/11 07:40 PM | link | filter

When I type Erdnase into the quick reply box the spell checker flags it and offers me Eridanus, Eraser, Ordinance and Erase. Yet I don't entirely trust using the Firefox spell checker as a magic oracle to find true names from specious text.

The possibility that the pseudonym used on the title page of the book refers to a person named Andrews is IMHO too obvious and even so we have yet to find a suitable person with that name whose writing, reputation or artifacts link them to the text of the book.

Still a fine piece of writing and well worth the effort to study.

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**Bill Mullins** | 04/01/11 08:40 PM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote: The possibility that the pseudonym used on the title page of the book refers to a person named Andrews is IMHO too obvious

If the author's name wasn't Andrews, what was it? And if it was something other than E. S. Andrews, why would the author use a pseudonym which leads so obviously to "E. S. Andrews"? These are questions which need to be answered before rejecting "E. S. Andrews" (or, possibly, anagrams of it) as the name of the author.

and even so we have yet to find a suitable person with that name whose writing, reputation or artifacts link them to the text of the book.
reputation or artifacts link them to the text of the book. That being the case, it makes some sense to focus on the smaller set of potential candidates -- the one named "E. S. Andrews".

Jonathan, several times you have mentioned a desire for artifacts, diaries, or some other hard physical proof. It's unrealistic to expect to find them, and unrealistic to reject any evidence that isn't based on them. All of us who are interested in the identity of the author would welcome such unequivocal evidence, but it isn't currently known, likely doesn't exist, and probably won't ever be found. In the meantime, we settle for best circumstantial evidence.

This is a "preponderance of the evidence" search, not a "beyond reasonable doubt" search.

Jonathan Townsend | 04/01/11 09:28 PM | link | filter

:) it's okay Bill, most likely where we disagree is about proceeding from the name on the page. I just happen to feel drawn to treat that as a detail rather than a great clue. Outside of that wrinkle (still feels like a too obvious/perfect/trap to me) I'm all for following any avenue that looks hopeful toward finding the origins of the text and maybe even a single talented author.

Richard Hatch | 04/04/11 06:05 PM | link | filter

Erdnase presentations schedules at the upcoming MCA weekend:

http://magicol.wordpress.com/2011/04/04 ... -yadrutas/

Roger M. | 04/05/11 10:25 AM | link | filter

I'm choked I can't attend this.

Does the MCA put out any sort of "post show" documentation, books or catalogs on the events that took place?

Richard Kaufman | 04/05/11 10:50 AM | link | filter

Roger, join the MCA and you will receive Magicol. That will dampen your disappointment.

David Ben | 04/05/11 12:27 PM | link | filter
For those interested in Erdnase, you will be pleased to know that the August issue of Magicol will feature several articles related to the book. It will be a very special issue. It will only be made available, however, to subscribers of Magicol.

Roger M. | 04/06/11 10:23 AM | link | filter

I shall be subscribing (which I'm guessing is also joining) the MCA forthwith!

John Bodine | 04/06/11 07:35 PM | link | filter

i for one would love to see discussions and lectures of this nature put online for all to see, follow the TED model. i suspect attendance would not decrease, but instead the interest in subscriptions would in fact increase. At any rate, as one of a short list of Erdnase collectors i am very sad i won't be able to attend.

johnbodine

magicam | 04/07/11 08:14 AM | link | filter

John, I hear ya, but it costs money to get this stuff created and printed. Do you subscribe to Magicol? If not, I can tell you that $40/year for 4 issues (about 340 to 400 pages per year) chock full of very interesting articles of collecting and historical interest, and well designed to boot by the talented Michael Albright, is a bargain. Other than the writing of one regular contributor (who's a certified bibliomaniac and just won't shut the hell up about books) I devour every word of every issue and learn tons of stuff.


David Ben | 04/07/11 10:46 AM | link | filter

John, I don't believe that the TED model is a good or fair model for the MCW. I have spoken at IdeaCity, based on the TED model, and have agreed to the copyright common for my presentation to be posted on the TED website. (My presentation, by the way, was on the Riffle Cull.) TED presentations are basically focused on ideas, ideas and subjects that are presented in 18 minutes or less. Generally, much less. They are meant to be conversation starters, initially for the delegates who attend, and now theoretically, for a much wider audience. The people who attend the TED conference, which number in the 1000s, pay up to $3,750 for the privilege of attending, and the conference receives hundreds of thousands of dollars, if not more, in the way of corporate sponsorship. None of the speakers are paid, and they are not meant to be reimbursed even for their hotel or travel expenses. The primary purpose of TED is networking.
As for online viewing, people pay around $500 for live-streaming of the presentations. Only afterward, and sometimes much afterward, are a portion of the presentations made available to the general public online.

So, to have the Magic Collector Weekend Conference presented on the TED model, we would have to charge thousands of dollars for people to attend, not reimburse anyone for their hotel or transportation charges, pay absolutely nothing for talent, restrict the length of presentation to 18 minutes or less, and charge for the online streaming of the event, and then consider releasing a portion of the programming for the general populace.

I understand that your probably meant that, by the TED model, access was free to those on the internet, but my argument is that it is not free, that someone has to paid for it. Magicians have been spoiled by the quality of conferences and conventions, and the price point to attend them, particularly when compared to what other non-magic associations or forums charge for business-related conferences. I do not believe they will pay for much more. Also, I don’t believe the bump you imagine in attendance or subscriptions will be sufficient.

If you are really interested in Erdnase, you will consider subscribing to Magicol to receive the Erdnase-related issue or acquire a copy on the secondary market. The magazine is bargain, as Clay Shelvin has suggested, because it is heavily subsidized like most magic magazines, by the many people donating time and talent to make each issue happen.

I’m not trying to single you out so please do not take offense. I have just heard so much about the ”TED model” over the past few years and, having participated in it, wanted to bring some clarity to what it is - and isn’t - at least from my experience.

John Bodine | 04/07/11 12:30 PM | link | filter

Hi David and Clay,

i immediately subscribed to Magicol when i heard about the article. i have no problem whatsoever supporting magazines of this nature, creators, and contributors, authors, publishers, etc.

i would love to continue the discussion on the TED model but don’t feel it is appropriate in this message thread. Another day for certain.

johnbodine
Off Topic:

Richard.....how about a MCA/Magicol forum here on Genii?

A place to discuss Magicol articles, MCA conferences, etc.

I think some of the value of the TED model (at least the ones that appeal to some folks) is the ability to not only access the source material, but also the ability to continue to develop and discuss those ideas somewhere else beyond the TED conference.

The Magic Cafe has half a dozen (or more) forums that focus on outside organizations.......I can see a Magicol forum here on Genii as being very well received, likely becoming the place for scholarly discussion related to the history of magic and related crafts.

I don't know how David feels about such an idea, but now that I'm a member of the MCA, it would certainly work for me!

Anyway, just a thought.

BTW, I didn't know Magicol was designed by Michael Albright until Clay pointed it out above. To me, that's a huge selling point in addition to the contents of the magazine itself.....as MA's an absolute genius when it comes to design. I also didn’t realize that each issue was so big. I was an MCA member many moons ago, and the issues were (at that time) rather tiny.

Richard Kaufman | 04/07/11 03:20 PM | link | filter

I'll leave it Mr. Ben--but I like the idea.

Bill Mullins | 04/07/11 06:31 PM | link | filter

Magicol is a much better journal than it used to be (and that's not a slam on the old version).

Rather than the "TED model", I'd like to see more magic events use the Essential Magic Conference model -- make DVDs of panels available after the fact.

I can't make it to the LA Conference on Magic History, the Yankee Gathering, MCA Weekend, 51 Faces North, etc. (at least, I can't make it to all of them) -- but I'd be willing to buy DVDs of the panels and discussions (and lectures and performances, if the magicians involved wanted to disseminate their material).
History week? I hope that it was recorded for posterity.

Thank you very much.

The upcoming (April 20th) Christopher auction has one of Dr. Jacob Daley’s copies of Erdnase (apparently a rebound copy of the 1937 Drake edition) listed: http://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/8964836
Curious (to me) that the silhouette of Daley is by Jeanne Vernon rather than Dai. I knew she was an artist, but didn’t realize she shared that particular skill with her husband (I assume he taught her, as he did several others).

A number of paintings by Marshall D. Smith, Erdnase’s illustrator.

The Marriage Record of Milton Franklin Andrews. His mother’s maiden name was Johnson and his in-laws family name was Whitcomb (may be useful for checking relationship with Dalrymple).

And THIS is Edwin Sumner Andrews’ marriage license. I believe Richard Hatch has had a copy of this for years, but now it’s online for anyone who wants.

Congrats Bill, that’a a totally cool find.
Are there living relatives to help out with the family tree process?

Very cool, Bill. I do have a question about the Edwin Summer one though. Illinois has a marriage index that you can search here: http://www.ilsos.gov/GenealogyMWeb/marrsrch.html and it lists Edwin S as marrying Elizabeth Crosby in 1883 and then an Edwin Summer Andrews marrying Dollie Seely. I had heard of the Seely surname as related to Erdnase but had never heard about this earlier marriage. If both marriages are Edwin Summer do we know what happened to Elizabeth? It is probably too much to hope for that she divorced
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Elizabeth died on May 1, 1897, leaving Edwin a widower with two young children. He married Dollie a year later on July 6, 1898. I have a hard copy of the first and second marriage certificates (obtainable from the State of Illinois), but if a digital copy of the second becomes available online, please let me know (it is double sided. One side is reproduced in my original article on this topic in the December 1999 issue of MAGIC).

Jason England wrote:

I have recently been put in charge of a large number of editions of Erdnase that I’m trying to place in good homes.

No first editions or hardback Drake editions (sorry) here, but lots of other tough to find editions of the book, including at least one foreign edition. All are in good to excellent shape considering their ages.

If you’re a collector of the various editions/printings of EATCT, please contact me at the email address below. Just replace the AT with the appropriate @ symbol.

Thanks.

Jason

jasonATjasonengland.com

Joe Pecore wrote:

Be sure to watch Kaufman's "More Genii Speaks" video in electronic version the June 2001 Genii for an interesting announcement about Erdnase. :)

Richard Hatch | 05/06/11 11:04 PM | link | filter

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I've never watched one of the "More Genii Speaks" videos. Where are they and how does one access them?

Jason

erdnasephile | 05/15/11 07:36 PM | link | filter

Jason:

Go on ask Alexander and access the latest issue of Genii magazine.

In Richard's Genii Speaks column, you will see an icon on the top of the page labeled "More Genii Speaks" (with a picture of Richard and an "eye" icon labeled "Watch") and click on it.

For example, see page 11 in the May 2011 issue--it's at the top of the page.

Richard Kaufman | 05/15/11 07:42 PM | link | filter

You have to be a subscriber in order to view the digital edition of Genii. If Jason is a subscriber, he has never sent us his email address and is not in the electronic database which allows subscribers to activate their iGenii accounts.

I know who Erdnase is, and when you get our September issue, all of you will know, too.

Steve Bryant | 05/15/11 07:46 PM | link | filter

Will any of us know this Saturday morning?

Richard Kaufman | 05/15/11 07:58 PM | link | filter

No.

Roger M. | 05/16/11 12:27 AM | link | filter

So this isn't any part of the MCA presentations?

Wherever it comes from, I prefer to be my own judge of the evidence, as we've already been down this road once with Gardner/Busby/Whaley. They had "indisputable" evidence as well.
I do eagerly await the various bits of proprietary Erdnase information coming out over the next little while, from the MCA and now from Genii.

Richard Kaufman | 05/16/11 12:44 AM | link | filter

Not part of the MCA.

Of course each person will their own judge of the facts. There will always be those who dispute the evidence of any candidate. But this candidate's evidence is pretty strong ... really strong. Short of a signed contract with the printer, I don't think it's going to get any tighter.

Mike Vance | 05/16/11 12:51 AM | link | filter

Richard, I picture you in the center of a feeding frenzy at MCA. Good luck!

Let's hope the MCA hasn't approved any enhanced interrogation techniques. :)

Jonathan Townsend | 05/16/11 08:43 AM | link | filter

Much enjoying this latest cause for folks to go all "shivering with anticipation" over that book.

Best wishes for the rest of the buildup and reveal in September's issue.

_j_

El Mystico | 05/17/11 08:05 AM | link | filter

Do you guys know about Erdnase - the opera?

http://www.gavinbryars.com/work/inprogr ... as-erdnase

Roger M. | 05/17/11 09:59 AM | link | filter

Most do, the work it's based on has been around for a while.

If you don't have it already, and want that "Erdnase vibe" on a Sunday morning while drinking your coffee, pick up Bryars "A Man in a Room, Gambling".

I listen to it quite often............my 13 year old daughter on the other hand........not so
Bill Whaley tells us (in The Man Who Was Erdnase) that Mickey MacDougall came up with the term "mechanic's grip" in his 1939 book Gamblers Don't Gamble. Historical lexicographers (like those who edit the Oxford English Dictionary) always search for the first printed use of a word or phrase when researching. Gamblers Don't Gamble was published Feb 23 1939. But Life magazine, in their Feb 6 1939 issue, had an article about gambling and included a few pages of MacDougall demonstrating some sleights, and it used the phrase two weeks ahead of MacDougall's book (although it's pretty obvious that they got it from MacDougall). So, Life, not MacDougall, gets credit for the first use in print of the term (unless someone finds an earlier citation).

Jonathan Townsend | 05/17/11 12:30 PM | link | filter

Bill, was that in a quote or borrow from the text of the book or an interview ... ? *thinking that the filing for copyright and the manuscript text was long done before Life did their article*

Bill Mullins | 05/17/11 11:35 PM | link | filter

Jon If you re-examine my post, you will see that I cleverly provided a link to the Life article just so you can investigate questions like these. RTFA.

But to save you the trouble of doing the even the minimal effort required, Ill tell you that the copyright date of the book is the same as the publication date.

Lexicographers use dated written examples as a standard. The Life article came out before the book, so it wins. This doesnt mean that Life invented the term (as I pointed out above, its clear that they got it from MacDougall), just that they got into print first. It is an arbitrary standard, but has the virtue of being workable.

If you should find the manuscript, and it is dated before Feb 6, 1939, let me know and Ill give you the email address of the OED so you can report it.

Jonathan Townsend | 05/18/11 08:12 AM | link | filter

At home we used to get Life Magazine, a weekly - and that got me wondering about the dates in question being those of publication or copyright filing in the matter of precedence brought up.

The article also cites another magazine, Cosmopolitan as currently running more about cheating at the time - intersting - google brought up some from 1939 linked to
Hearst - so there's more to find.

Roger M. | 05/20/11 12:41 AM | link | filter

'ya know.........considering the length of this thread, how long it's been running for, and some of the strong opinions held by some of the regular posters, I'm frankly amazed!

Richard has basically said "Erdnase has been found", I posted commenting on his statement...........and then we totally changed subjects and carried on as if it was nothing new worth discussing!!

Are there really no comments on RK's statement of this pending announcement/article?

Brad Henderson | 05/20/11 01:48 AM | link | filter

Wasn't karr about to make an announcement about his guy. Maybe this is it.

Magic Fred | 05/20/11 01:58 AM | link | filter

Perhaps we have finally reached our fill when it comes to hype in magic (as if!) ... I suppose most are waiting to see if Mr. K. actually has anything of substance before getting excited about it.

Me, I'm guessing it's going to be some kind of satirical piece.

I'll keep an open mind though. If Mr. K. actually can prove the identity of the author beyond any reasonable doubt, then maybe he'd make a good candidate for an inaugural "Nobel Prize" of magic, or some such.

Then again, maybe not. It seems to matter very little to most.

Wouldn't you rather see someone actually do the moves from the book?

Jonathan Townsend | 05/20/11 08:04 AM | link | filter

MF - agreed about seeing the material described in that book done in such a way as to be both deceptive and effective.

IMHO the magic market is, by and large, about hype for hobbyist and armchair expositionists so what's a little more hype as entertainment for this summer along
The notion of a magic based Nobel type prize... founded by someone who invented and deployed a hugely destructive force that will haunt humanity for generations (dynamite in Nobel's case) so perhaps we should call it the "Valentino"?? The "expose it so they will have to invent new and better stuff" meme that reduces mystery to trivia and lifetimes of work in performance to amusing semifiction for readers?

The question of why some in our craft would wish to treat a "non-father" figure person as if they could be a father figure ... is IMHO well worth the work to explore.

Is there corollary to "self fulfilling prophesy" about things that could never be and so are safe to pursue?

We found "Waldo" - so why not "Erdnase" as well?

---

**Geno Munari** | 05/20/11 09:38 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Roger M is correct. Looking back into the massive submissions and replies on ERDNASE in this forum, it seems like we all went in "silence of the lambs".

I am eagerly awaiting to ponder the material that Richard is sandbagging. It should provoke even more conversation.

Interesting though, that I certainly believe that he can't be the only Christopher Columbus on this voyage. His crew has kept it close to the vest.

---

**Roger M.** | 05/20/11 10:04 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I agree with Geno.......somebody, or a few "somebodies" are keeping this news a very well secured secret.

Normally, there'd be at least some buzz out there, and with the Magic Collectors weekend taking place, I'd have suspected even *more* chatter!

Jon, perhaps you're in the wrong thread. This thread is about Erdnase the man. If you don't want to be part of the simple joy that this Mr. Erdnase "discovery process" brings to some folks.......(myself included, be it hype or reality), then this is the wrong thread for you.

The "**Let's Keep it Honest**" award goes to Magic Fred for reminding us all that Steve Freeman still hasn't made a DVD :)

---
Silence of the Lambs Geno?

Christopher Columbus was on his way to India.

Roger, "erdnase" is a string of characters - perhaps a reflection of "andrews" in some sense - but to impute humanity upon such is a form of magic I have yet to study.

As to authorship of the text of the book with that character string in place of a person's name - open minded here and looking forward to reading what Richard has to offer on the subject comes the September issue.

The piece on Erdnase will not be satirical. It's research-based reporting.

As I wrote somewhere else, the only single piece of evidence that would be conclusive is a contract between the candidate and the printer of Expert at the Card Table. Letters wouldn't be conclusive since anyone could have claimed to be the author and written to his friends about it.

The identity of S.W. Erdnase can only be ascertained through circumstantial evidence, but no candidate has ever been put forth that a genuinely convincing case could be made for.

Until now.

Richard Kaufman wrote: Letters wouldn't be conclusive since anyone could have claimed to be the author and written to his friends about it.

True. Unless there were letters written prior to publication giving details that would have only been known to the author at the time.

The printer probably had many contracts with other customers. Are there any of these contracts available to compare the paragraphs, clauses and of course signatures, to the alleged Erdnase contract?
The paper should also be similar as well as natural errors found in printer’s type. Printer’s type is subject to defects just from the constant pressure and impression count. The paper grain of other contracts could also be compared.

Are there any errors in the contract’s proof? Are the same errors on the same fonts that are published in the Erdnase first edition? These errors are like fingerprints. Also, there may be fingerprints still on the contract.

Clearly this will be dicernable if allowed to examine the actual contract, rather than a digital impression. A new modern dating method could pinpoint the exact year of the paper manufacture. Does the paper have watermarks that indicated wherein the stock was manufactured? One can then go and check the records of paper manufacturers.

And one more thing, in the US Copyright office we know that the copyright application was signed by a member of the printing company. Does the handwriting match?

And there are many more forensic and investigative questions to be applied. I hope Richard et al are ready for this.

---

**Magic Fred** | 05/20/11 11:54 AM | link | filter

"Jon, perhaps you’re in the wrong thread. This thread is about Erdnase the man...."

Well to be fair, the thread was started to discuss the contents of the book and recommended approaches to its study...

Has it now become the official "Who the **** was Erdnase" thread? If so, I'll gladly butt out because I really couldn't give a ****.

;)

In all seriousness though, I hope Mr. K’s candidate can be identified as a card player. It would take some seriously weighty evidence to disabuse me of the notion that our suspect had first had experience of that about which he writes.

---

**John Lovick** | 05/20/11 12:12 PM | link | filter

Geno,
conclusive evidence.

He said he has convincing evidence, but not conclusive evidence. Therefore, I think we can safely assume there is no contract to submit to forensic study.

---

**Bob Coyne** | 05/20/11 04:12 PM | [link] | [filter]

This is really exciting to hear! I can't wait to read the article.

---

**Mike Vance** | 05/20/11 04:43 PM | [link] | [filter]

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To be fair, knowing who the man is may change the way the text is interpreted.

Also, the mystery of Erdnase is hard not to talk about. This is a group of people who like to know secrets, and this is a pretty big one. I can't wait for the article either.

---

**Magic Fred** | 05/20/11 05:15 PM | [link] | [filter]

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Well you kind of took me out of context by excluding my subsequent comments... but that's ok. Personally, it wouldn't change a thing for me were I to discover who the author was. The work stands on its own merits.
But yes, of course it’s interesting. For me, only mildly so as I’m much more interested in the contents of the book. Others are more interested in the identity of the author.

It reminds me of Hitchins remarking that it matters little to him if Socrates actually existed or not, as the principles and conversations attributed to him stand on their own, and wouldn’t need to be reinterpreted were we to suddenly discover that the works were actually written by a mentally unstable criminal or something.

---

**Mike Vance** | 05/20/11 08:18 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Fred,

Didn’t mean to take you out of context. Just trying to make a point. No offense intended.

I agree that the book is very important. It should be studied and learned, as should a number of other books.

However, I’m equally captivated by the mystery; I love a good mystery. I don’t know that finding out Erdnase’s identity will allow us to completely reinterpret his book, but it should allow some additional context for those that love reading the book.

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 05/20/11 08:40 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

The provenance of a text is crucial to its interpretation. An argument in support of that position is described [here](#). The story cited to illustrate and discuss the matter is IMHO well worth the reading as well.

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**Don Hendrix** | 05/20/11 11:25 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I am also very anxious to read the article; however, I kind of feel about Erdnase the same way that I do about Shakespeare. We may never know who wrote the works attributed to Shakespeare, but the important thing is that someone did, and that someone was a genius.

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**Mike Vance** | 05/20/11 11:55 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Yes, that someone was definitely a unique and gifted individual. Erdnase, that is; not Shakespeare. OK, Shakespeare, too. :)

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Mike Vance wrote: Fred,

Didn’t mean to take you out of context. Just trying to make a point. No offense intended.

I agree that the book is very important. It should be studied and learned, as should a number of other books.

However, I’m equally captivated by the mystery; I love a good mystery. I don’t know that finding out Erdnase’s identity will allow us to completely reinterpret his book, but it should allow some additional context for those that love reading the book.

Quite alright, your quote just made it appear that I was being a complete [censored], as opposed to a mildly playful one...

The Shakespeare analogy is a good one too. In terms of what I personally get out of Expert, and where it has taken me, it matters not who penned the words.

I do appreciate though, that those who read the book more for its literary significance than to learn a near perfect system of card artifice, will be much more excited than I at the prospect of learning its provenance.

But I will admit to my own dirty little curiosity...perhaps the mystery can finally be laid to rest. Bated breath though? No. ;)

Good thread.

Bill Mullins wrote: Bart Whaley tells us (in The Man Who Was Erdnase) that Mickey MacDougall came up with the term "mechanic's grip" in his 1939 book Gamblers Don’t Gamble. Historical lexicographers (like those who edit the Oxford English Dictionary) always search for the first printed use of a word or phrase when researching. Gamblers Don’t Gamble was published Feb 23 1939. But Life magazine, in their Feb 6 1939 issue, had an article about gambling and included a few pages of MacDougall demonstrating some sleights, and it used the phrase two weeks ahead of MacDougall’s book (although it’s pretty obvious that they got it from MacDougall). So, Life, not MacDougall, gets credit for the first use in print of the term (unless someone finds an earlier citation).

Bill, I have done a great deal of research into the life and career of Michael MacDougall and found your above post to be of interest (although it seems to be a sort of non-
sequiter to this thread on Erdnase). Would you consider it incorrect to say that MacDougall coined the term "mechanic's grip"? The Life magazine article is the first time the term appeared in print (in a 1938 American Weekly article, MacDougall refers to it as the "gambler's grip"). There was no writing credit listed in the Life article. I believe that it would have been a collaboration between a staff writer, and MacDougall himself.

Jason England | 05/23/11 01:19 AM | link | filter

Gentlemen,

I have the Life magazine mentioned as well as the Cosmopolitan issue(s) that are referenced in the Life article.

The article in Life appears to have been indeed written by a staff writer, but there is no concrete evidence that I can find. The Cosmopolitan article is split between the Feb and Mar issues but clearly list MacDougall (as told to J.C. Furnas) as the author. The Cosmopolitan article(s) also state that they are an excerpt from the book Gambler's Don't Gamble, MacDougall's first book.

I've always maintained that MacDougall coined the term "mechanic's grip" and was the first to caution the public to be on the lookout for it. Scarne eventually did the same thing.

The Cosmopolitan article seems to be the actual first publication of the term, as it predates the Life article by a few days.

Jason England

Brad Jeffers | 05/23/11 03:13 AM | link | filter

Jason, The Cosmopolitan article does predate the Life article by six days, but nowhere in the Cosmopolitan article does it mention the term "mechanic's grip".
I, like you, have always attributed the term to MacDougall. Vernon was of the same opinion, making mention of this in his Revelation videos.
I was just wondering if it is ever correct to say that a magazine coined a phrase. Bill states that "historical lexicographers always search for the first use of a word or phrase when researching" and that the term "mechanic's grip" first appeared in Life magazine. But what does this mean - that the coining of the term should therefore be credited to Life magazine? It would seem to me that the coining of a phrase can only be attributed to a person, and that person, in this case, is clearly Mickey MacDougall.
As to the usefulness of the book, I have to say that it is definitely not a good recommendation for a young person attempting to learn sleight of hand. This was one of my first magic books as a kid, and I was very frustrated at trying to learn most of the sleights. My enthusiasm for learning magic was seriously dampened as I believed at the time that a real magician had to master all of these techniques. I have recently re-read the book and find it less daunting, but still "advanced." I am no expert at cards.

As far as the author goes, I read some 50 years ago that he was a gambler named E. S. Andrews (the reverse of S. W. Erdnase), but at least one person has already suggested that name.

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**Magic Fred** | 05/23/11 06:55 AM | link | filter

*LeMarq wrote:* As to the usefulness of the book, I have to say that it is definitely not a good recommendation for a young person attempting to learn sleight of hand...

I concur. As would the author.

"...it may enable the skilled in deception to take a post-graduate course in the highest and most artistic branches of his vocation."

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**Bill Mullins** | 05/23/11 04:54 PM | link | filter

I was just wondering if it is ever correct to say that a magazine coined a phrase. Bill states that "historical lexicographers always search for the first use of a word or phrase when researching" and that the term "mechanic's grip" first appeared in *Life* magazine. But what does this mean - that the coining of the term should therefore be credited to Life magazine? It would seem to me that the coining of a phrase can only be attributed to a person, and that person, in this case, is clearly Mickey MacDougall.

At this date, it is impossible to know who "coined" the phrase "mechanic's grip". Did MacDougall do so? Did he pick it up from someone else? There is no way of knowing. All we can know now is that the *Life* magazine article is the first documented occurrence in print of the term, that has so far been discovered. Someone (MacDougall or someone else) may have used it in print before then. Perhaps we'll find it, and antedate this usage (as the *Life* article antedates Gamblers Don't Gamble.) Someone (MacDougall or someone else) may have used it verbally before then.

I agree that the *Life* usage almost certainly came from MacDougall himself. There's no reason to think that the staff writer for the article or the editor for that article came up with it on his own. It's just that we can't know.
It is obvious that MacDougall should get credit for spreading and popularizing the term if it existed before 1939, it was obscure, and *Gamblers Don’t Gamble* pushed it into the mainstream.

That’s why I tried to be precise in what I said that the first printed occurrence is important within a particular field (lexicography), and *Life* currently is that first documented occurrence.

It strikes me that there are certain similarities between this, and the provenances of certain sleights and tricks - whoever got something into print first may not have been the originator. (Which is why I made the post in the first place sorry if it seems to some to be a "non sequitur").

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**Geno Munari | 05/23/11 10:10 PM | link | filter**

The mechanics grip is an interesting term derived from the word mechanic, meaning card mechanic. Before Las Vegas and Reno had legal gambling there weren’t many honest games to be found. Then even after gaming became legal almost every casino had a bust out dealer referred to as a mechanic.

My cousin Frank Schivo, was one of the original owners of the Club Bingo, that eventually became the Sahara Hotel. Right out of high school I moved to Las Vegas and wanted to get in the gaming business. I enrolled in Nevada Southern, which is now called UNLV and got a job at the Sahara as a busboy in the dealers room (break room) and loved every minute of it. I met many dealers and got to know what they drank on their break and had it ready by the time they sat down for a 20 minute break-time.

Bunny Johnson was a cracker-jack bust out 21 dealer who worked in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Bunny used to say about Jackson Hole, When the season is short, so is the deck.

Bill Sharp was another great deuce dealer. Bill had an airplane and he would be hired to fly all over the country to get the money for various casino operators. Nate Yovis was another extremely skilled blackjack dealer from Detroit. He could deal a second as good as anyone. In Detroit they had a game called Stuss, a form of blackjack where 1, 2, 3, and even 4 people could play on one hand.

I wanted to learn the business so I listened to everything they talked about and asked questions. Finally, one of the guys agreed to teach me to deal. There weren’t any gaming schools per se as there are today. You HAD to have a friend teach you. The first thing on their agenda was to teach you to protect the game and be a polished as possible. The term mechanics grip was a key word that Nate used many times. The mechanics grip was used as the main way to hold the cards as you pitched them to a
were hidden and the top card could not be seen. Upon paying and taking bets, the cards would be shifted deeper into the base of the 3rd and 4th fingers so the thumb and first fingers could be utilized for the action.

For the next round of play the cards would be pushed back into the mechanics grip and fanned at the rear with the right finger (for a right handed dealer) and then pitched again.

The Life article says, Beware dealer who holds cards thus. The fact of the matter is that every dealer holds the cards this way in a hand held blackjack game or poker game. The writer of this story just did not understand the operations of hand held dealing.

The article then shows dealing from the bottom and the first finger of the left hand is curled under the deck. A good bottom dealer doesn’t hold the deck as Life portrays.

Bill you are right. Life Magazine may have used the term first in print, but the writer nor Life had no idea of right or wrong procedure in my opinion.

There are many more terms that the mechanics used that never appeared in print until John Scarne started writing about gambling. For instance the toppit was basically a device called a sub. That is a tail of a shirt turned up into a catch-all and pinned to the belt line. The operator would simply pull in his gut and chips could be deposited into the secret device. (Scarne did not write about this item.)

There were many skilled mechanics that never were arrested and basically invisible as to what they really did. They roamed the country and dealt to get the money.

I doubt that Nate ever heard of Mickey MacDougall and am sure that he was a skilled dealer long before Mickey ever surfaced. However Mickey was great at getting PR, which is what he was all about.

Jimmy Grippo commented to me about MacDougall several times after we were playing with gambling moves. Jimmy seemed to think he blew his own horn a little too loud and was not capable of doing the moves he wrote about. Scarne felt the same.

Jason England | 05/24/11 04:31 PM | link | filter

Brad,

You’re right about the term not appearing the in Cosmopolitan article. I was remembering the photos of the second and bottom deals that appear in the 2nd part of that article (the March issue).
Thanks for the correction.

Jason

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**Bob Farmer** | 05/25/11 06:23 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Geno:

Great notes--keep going! There's a *Genii* column there.

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**Roger M.** | 05/25/11 10:19 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Geno, that's some of the most interesting stuff I've read in a long while.

Excellent picture of a time long past......and I'd like to read a lot more.

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**Matthew Field** | 05/25/11 12:09 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Many thanks for this, Geno. Most enjoyable.

Matt Field

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**Bill Mullins** | 06/06/11 03:15 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Stratton and Millikan

From 2006 until 2008, the Wikipedia entry for *Erdnase* contained the following:

Research for an upcoming documentary has uncovered correspondence between noted physicists and authors Stanley [sic] Wesley Stratton and Robert Andrews Millikan on the subject of conjuring and crooked gambling. In 1896 Stratton suggested a textbook on the subject. Further evidence suggests that Millikan and Stratton hired Professor Hoffman to write the book based (partly) on notes they provided.

[Note: the mans name is Samuel Wesley Stratton I presume Stanley is a typo.] Richard Hatch recently alluded to this theory in his presentation at the most recent MCA meeting in Chicago, and Steve Bryant also brought it up (in a second hand fashion, referring to Hatchs talk) in his most recent *Little Egypt Gazette* posting.

For various reasons, I always assumed this addition to the Erdnase entry was a hoax, or possibly even the work of a troll. Before the theory gains any more traction, Id like to discuss those reasons.
1. The addition was originally made on April 1, 2006. April Fools day is a traditional day for pulling pranks. It was made from IP address 86.132.171.39, which is currently assigned to British Telecom (I dont know how to research to whom it was assigned 5 years ago).

2. Ive made detailed searches through Ask Alexander, and I cant find any reference in any magic literature referring to Stratton or Millikan in a conjuring context. The only way either of them comes up is that some of the Long Beach Mystics went to Millikan High School in Long Beach, and several magic shows have been held there.

3. Ive read a great deal of biographical material on both men, and found nothing to indicate that either was the least bit interested in gambling, magic, cards, or anything else related to the Erdnase book. Both men were public figures (Millikan was awarded a Nobel prize; Stratton ran the National Bureau of Standards, and later, MIT), with biographical articles published about them. Millikan wrote an autobiography. Both were mentioned prominently and often in national newspapers. The Tech, the student newspaper of MIT, is online and has extensive coverage of Stratton both when he took office and when he died. Both had obituaries circulated when they died. Both have archival material, including personal papers and correspondence, deposited in various research libraries.

Stratton and Millikan definitely knew each other. They co-wrote A College Course of Laboratory Experiments in General Physics Chicago: The Univ of Chicago Press, 1898 LINK. They were both members of the Physics Department of the Univ of Chicago in the late 1890s, and served on the National Research Council together during WWII. They moved in many of the same circles and had many friends in common.

I can find no evidence or record of correspondence with Hoffman from either man.

Both men had many prominent friends (a Whos Who of American science in the first few decades of the 20th century) who wrote prolifically about them and corresponded with them. None of their friends seems to have mentioned that either of them played cards, or performed magic, or gambled, or practiced sleight of hand.

These men left large paper trails, and there is no mention of anything like what you would expect the author of Expert at the Card Table to have done left in their wakes.

4. Both men were very busy developing their careers in physics during the 1890s, the time youd expect them to be playing cards if they were (singly or collaboratively) Erdnase. A grad student in physics may have time to play an occasional game of cards, but not to develop the body of work that Expert represents.

5. The documentary mentioned above seems to have gone nowhere. At the time the Stratton/Millikan theory was revealed I couldnt find anything else about the...
documentary, and haven't been able to do so since.

The only evidence supporting the idea that either Stratton or Millikan had anything to do with Erdnase is an anonymous, unsupported Wikipedia entry, and that entry is not at all consistent with what we know about the men, or can be otherwise documented.

I think Stratton and Millikan should be ignored as author candidates from here on out.

Jonathan Townsend | 06/06/11 03:29 PM | link | filter

think Stratton and Millikan should be ignored as author candidates from here on out.

Barring any correspondence from/to Angelo Lewis I'd also drop that line of inquiry as a prank with the mention of 'Hoffmann'.

Richard Hatch | 06/06/11 05:30 PM | link | filter

I agree with Bill that the posting was likely a prank/hoax. My interest in it was only rekindled the night before my presentation at the MCA weekend in Chicago this past May, due to speculation concerning the upcoming article about Erdnase in the September GENII. So I took another look to see what I could find out about the Stratton/Millikan theory. The best I could do on short notice (a few hours late at night at the hotel!) to develop it was to note that Millikan's middle name was Andrews (his mother's maiden name, I believe), his first name was Robert, Stratton's first name was Samuel (not Stanley, as rendered in the original Wikipedia posting) and in 1904 Drake had issued a catalog attributing the book to "Samuel Robert Erdnase", which has never been satisfactorily explained (the Library of Congress listed that as the author's name for several decades as a result). As Bill noted, both were active in Chicago at the time the book would have been in preparation (though I believe Stratton went to Washington in 1901 to head up the Bureau of Standards) and Millikan was there when it was published. The closest thing I could find in their co-authored 1898 textbook to Erdnase was a reference to overcoming friction. I think it incredibly unlikely that a Nobel Prize winning Physicist (Millikan was the first to measure the charge on an electron) and a future President of MIT would have written such a book. Fantasizing about the possibility though did lead to one ironic thought: Martin Gardner as a teenager had ambitions of attending Caltech in order to study physics there, one of the main attractions being the presence there of Robert Millikan. He might have ended up studying with Erdnase! Instead, he went to the University of Chicago and studied Philosophy.

Geno Munari | 06/07/11 08:07 AM | link | filter
I appreciate you never ending work to find out the true facts about a topic. If you had not looked into this it may have gone unnoticed. Who knows how long it would have taken to have someone question this statement. I know this may sound like a stretch, but eventually there are many people who will believe this is the truth. As it was, it was generated three more times.

There are good and bad researchers. There are good and bad collectors. You are one great researcher.

Bill Mullins | 06/17/11 12:37 AM | link | filter

From an ad in the current (July 2011) issue of Genii -- http://erdnaseum.com/

Bill Mullins | 06/20/11 11:26 AM | link | filter

One of the variant editions of The Expert at the Card Table is Card Secrets Exposed, a reprint sold by KC Card Co. and others. See HERE for an ad for what may be that book.

Bill Mullins | 07/01/11 09:22 PM | link | filter

When Magic Makers release the Wesley James Erdnase videos, the package included a copy of the book. Was it a new printing/edition, or just a copy of a stock edition (Dover, for example)?

Richard Hatch | 07/02/11 02:49 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: When Magic Makers release the Wesley James Erdnase videos, the package included a copy of the book. Was it a new printing/edition, or just a copy of a stock edition (Dover, for example)?

They issued their own reprint. You can see the cover of their edition in this photo: http://www.marketmagicsshop.com/cart/ind ... ductId=680

Bill Mullins | 07/08/11 07:26 PM | link | filter

Thanks, Richard. Anybody got one of these they want to get rid of?

Also, this 1905 ad from Stanyon's Magic HERE uses an illustration of the book that isn't consistent with any edition I've ever seen (different font for the title, and a King of Clubs instead of the King of Hearts as usually seen). I wonder if it represents an edition
Bill, pretty sure that Stanyon got that cut from Roterberg's catalog ad copy (don't have it handy to double check). I am not aware of any edition with the King of Clubs cover as shown, particularly from that early date (there are later paperback editions with no suit). My guess is that the artist changed the red heart to a black club since the ad would run in black and white (and a black heart would not look as good). Roterberg is presumed to have gotten his first edition copies from Atlas Trick and Novelty Co (Emil Sorensen, aka E. S. Burns) whose company and inventory he purchased. Of course, this copy appears to be a paperback, which would have been a Drake at that time so Stanyon could have been getting those directly from Drake, or perhaps also from Roterberg, who had close relations with Drake (as they reprinted one of his books).

This site was updated recently, offering an additional clue: http://www.erdnaseum.com/

Erdnase was hiding in the bushes?

Leonard, Not just any bushes, the ones near Silver Springs!

I moved here in 1984. Never had a chance.

Silver Spring (singular) is in Maryland. Silver Springs (plural) is in Florida. I am sure that there are other communities with similar titles.

And similar bushes perhaps?
we will all know in a couple of weeks

I'm surprised Genii's announcement that it was going to expose Erdnase's identity hasn't led to a bit more fun speculation on this site. I have no smoking gun, but have decided to take a stab at identifying Erdnase to see if can stir things up a bit.

Compare these two passages:

There is no branch of conjuring that so fully repays the amateur for his labor and study as slight-of-hand with cards. The artist is always sure of a comprehensive and appreciative audience. There is no amusement or pastime in the civilized world so prevalent as card games, and almost everybody loves a good trick. But the special advantage in this respect is that the really clever card-handler can dispense with the endless devices and preparations that encumber the performer in other branches.

And:

Among the various branches of the conjurer's art none will better repay the labor of the student, whether artist or amateur, than the magic of cards. It has the especial advantage of being, in a great measure, independent of time and place. The materials for half its mysteries are procurable at five minutes notice in every home circle, and even in the case of those tricks for which specially prepared cards, etc., are requisite the necessary appliances cost little and are easily portable-two virtues not too common in magical apparatus.

The first excerpt is from Erdnase, the second from William Hilliar's Modern Magician's Handbook. Again, look at these two excerpts. First the Erdnase from his introduction:

A colored attendant of a "club-room," overhearing a discussion about running up two hands at poker ventured the following interpolation: "Don't trouble bout no two han's, Boss. Get yo' own han'. De suckah, he'll get a han' all right, suah!"

Next, from a column in the Sphinx by Hilliar:

Across the street an old colored woman stood beside her lunch stand. "Yes-sum. Dar air no use talkin," she said to a passerby. "I feel mighty queer tonight. I dun know dat spooks is 'roun yere. Yas-sum, I got a feelin' dat the debble is prowling aroun."
The Hilliar column ran in the September 1902 edition of The Sphinx in which Hilliar first mentions The Expert at the Card Table. Could this be a subtle hint at his own authorship?

Hilliar was the first editor of the Sphinx. He was also a prolific magic writer, ghostwriter and plagiarist. He was a good enough magician to substitute for Thurston on one of his Chicago shows. He was in Chicago at the right time.

The scenario in which he would be Erdnase would run something like this. He sells the idea for a book about cheating at gambling to Drake. However because of the Comstock Law in effect at the time - I spoke about the Comstock Law at the last Magicana Conference, and the talk is to be published in a future edition of Magicol - both publisher and author needed to remain anonymous and used Erdnase as a double pseudonym to cover both of them.

Of course this theory loses the anagram in the name. Still it will be remembered that when Jeff Busby ran a computer analysis of Erdnase's writing he found a very close identification with Hilliar's style. Perhaps the computer was on to something. Hilliar had the knowledge; he had the experience as a writer; he has the rather amoral sensibility, and he was in the right place at the right time.

--Hurt McDermott

Jonathan Townsend | 07/28/11 06:16 PM | link | filter

Maybe he was writing across the street from a place that had Andrews in the name and saw its reflection. IMHO the name is wild goose chase bait. Today one might use the word snipes in such a pseudonym ;)

Anyway, I for one am keeping an open mind and eager to read what's offered in the September issue.

Richard Hatch | 07/28/11 07:53 PM | link | filter

SwanJr wrote: I'm surprised Genii's announcement that it was going to expose Erdnase's identity hasn't led to a bit more fun speculation on this site. I have no smoking gun, but have decided to take a stab at identifying Erdnase to see if can stir things up a bit.

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computer was on to something. Hilliar had the knowledge; he had the
experience as a writer; he has the rather amoral sensibility, and he was in
the right place at the right time.

--Hurt McDermott

Hurt, the quotation on card magic which you attribute to Hilliar was actually
plagiarized by Hilliar from Professor Hoffmann's MODERN MAGIC, p. 11 (the
introductory remarks to Chapter II). It would not be surprising that Hoffmann's
writing style might have influenced Erdnase, who admits to studying works on
conjuring. I personally find it extremely unlikely that Hilliar had anything to do with
the writing or publishing of Erdnase. The circumstantial case in his favor is as follows:
He was in Chicago at the time (working for both Frederick J. Drake and for the
Vernelos, as editor of The Sphinx), he had knowledge of copyright law, he had
experience as a ghostwriter, he obviously had knowledge of magic and literary
experience as an editor. Conspiring against his active involvement are the following
points: He arrived in Chicago rather late in 1901 (I believe in December) and was busy
starting the Sphinx, passing books onto Drake for publication and cobbling together
the Magicians Handbook for them, not to mention performing. The first issue of the
Sphinx came out in March 1902, at almost exactly the same time that Erdnase was
submitted for copyright. Yet it is not mentioned in the Sphinx until the September
issue you cited, a full six months later. The mention is a cursory two line notice: "A
recent book on gambling tricks has been published by S. W. Erdnase under the title
"The Expert at the Card Table." It contains a chapter on ledgerdemain [sic]." This
hardly sounds like an editorial endorsement by an interested and informed party. He
doesn't give the correct title, he doesn't tell where it can be had, he doesn't even give
any details or opinion of the content. That was Hilliar's last issue as editor. It was not
until two months later, in the November issue, that the first ad for it appears. In
contrast, the first issue of the Sphinx has a full page back cover ad from Hilliar's other
employer, Frederick J. Drake, advertising their line of books. Most significantly,
Hilliar did not die until 1936 (a suicide) and was active in the magic community that
entire time, writing a gossip column on magicians' activities for the Billboard for
much of it. In one of his Billboard columns he mentions meeting a fellow at Felsman's
in Chicago and being reminded that he had translated Robert-Houdin's Cardsharpening
book. He said he'd forgotten having done so. Perhaps not surprising (as Houdini
it to the attention of Drake and adding his name on the title page as translator! My point here is simply that he had a habit of taking credit where none was deserved, so why would he not brag about having written what by then was widely regarded as a masterpiece of the conjuring literature? I simply cannot imagine that he would not have told the world about his involvement with the book during that entire period, had there been any.

The Busby/Whaley computer analysis of the text was way ahead of its time, but crude by today's standards. It found that the confession/alibi letters of Milton Franklin Andrews were a close match to the text of Erdnase, and it found that the writings of Hilliar were also a close match for Erdnase. Logically, one could then argue that the letters of MFA might have been ghost written by Hilliar, an absurdity.

I believe Steve Burton years ago compared Hilliar's description of the glide (or slide?) to the one in Erdnase and found them completely at variance (though he found that of Edwin Sachs, note the initials!, to be very close to Erdnase).

I am convinced the book was written by an American (he gives that as his nationality on the copyright application and the style implies it, and the illustrator recalled him as such), Hilliar was an Englishman. Busby argues that he edited the book for MFA, but that presupposed that the book was written by someone unable to write well himself. I don’t think we have evidence to support that claim yet and find the ghostwriter/editor supposition an unnecessary complication at this point.

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SwanJr | 07/29/11 04:49 PM | link | filter

Richard,

Thanks for the clarification on the plagiarism from Prof. Hoffman. I admit Hilliar is a dark horse. If the time for trying to identify Erdnase on one's own might not be drawing to a close, I would have undoubtedly waited for more evidence. R. F. Foster and Roterberg tempt me as well, which is funny, because you would point out that not one of them is an American, though Roterberg may have considered himself one.

Still, I'll stick with Hilliar provisionally. I also just want to clarify that I’m not suggesting Hilliar as an editor but as the sole author.

--Hurt McDermott

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Richard Kaufman | 07/29/11 04:54 PM | link | filter

We're sending the September issue to the printer on Monday, I hope to have the digital version online on August 10th. On that day subscribers can read the story.
Let the games begin!!!!

JMD

Richard Hatch wrote: The Busby/Whaley computer analysis of the text was way ahead of its time, but crude by today’s standards. It found that the confession/alibi letters of Milton Franklin Andrews were a close match to the text of Erdnase,

Any "analysis" that finds similarity in the letters of MFA to the text of Erdnase is suspect from the get-go. The style (if you can call it that) of the unsophisticated letters pales in comparison to the erudition of the text. More than the differences in appearance in MFA as compared to Erdnase (as described by Marshall Smith), more than the youth of MFA compared to the wisdom-of-age from the text, this dissimilarity is the biggest hurdle to jump in saying that MFA wrote "Expert".

I didn’t think that anyone still believed that Milton Franklin Andrews wrote Expert.

Did Martin Gardner ever move off that position?

Richard Hatch wrote: I didn’t think that anyone still believed that Milton Franklin Andrews wrote Expert.

Geno Munari, Bart Whaley, Jeff Busby, probably most audience members after attending Guy Hollingworth’s performance of EXPERT AT THE CARD TABLE. He is still the only known card cheat named Andrews from the period in question, which weighs heavily in his favor, if one is looking for a card cheat named Andrews...

This site was updated recently, offering an additional clue: http://www.erdnaseum.com/
Lenard Hevia wrote:
Erdnase was hiding in the bushes?

Maybe the clue was He was hiding in the Brush, that is William Brush

Could not resist that. Haha

Rick Ruhl | 07/31/11 11:27 AM | link | filter

My big questions. These are a YES or NO question only ;)

Is there a smoking gun in the article?

Are we 100% sure this is Erdnase?

Is this proved beyond a shadow of a doubt?

Frank Yuen | 07/31/11 12:06 PM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: Of course each person will their own judge of the facts. There will always be those who dispute the evidence of any candidate. But this candidate's evidence is pretty strong ... really strong. Short of a signed contract with the printer, I don't think it's going to get any tighter.

Richard Kaufman wrote: The piece on Erdnase will not be satirical. It's research-based reporting.

As I wrote somewhere else, the only single piece of evidence that would be conclusive is a contract between the candidate and the printer of Expert at the Card Table. Letters wouldn't be conclusive since anyone could have claimed to be the author and written to his friends about it.

The identity of S.W. Erdnase can only be ascertained through circumstantial evidence, but no candidate has ever been put forth that a genuinely convincing case could be made for.

Until now.

Leonard Hevia | 07/31/11 12:15 PM | link | filter
We can scratch out MFA in the upcoming issue. I’m wondering if Genii's answer is one of the candidates proposed by Erdnase scholars. Was it Todd Karr’s candidate? David Alexander’s? If David was wrong, at least we know more about Wilbur Sanders. David was studying Sanders’ diaries before he passed away. Is it Richard Hatch’s candidate? Mr. Hatch’s level of research was amazing. I can’t believe it would be someone from left field. The suspense is killing me.

Richard Kaufman | 07/31/11 12:22 PM | link | filter

You’ll all know soon enough. The issue goes to the printer tomorrow.

Chris Aguilar | 07/31/11 01:37 PM | link | filter

Perhaps RK was giving us a broad hint with his non sequitur in the current video comments in "Genii Speak".

"Wilbur" that is, probably referring to David Alexander's candidate "Wilbur Sanders".

Or perhaps not.

cage | 07/31/11 01:56 PM | link | filter

Since there is still time for idle (idol?) speculation, I'll chime in with my favorite candidate: L'Homme Masque. Like most things that come from the mind of Juan Tamariz, I think it's brilliant. It reminds us we are looking for someone who hid his identity--not someone who was likely to leave a dramatic confession. And it's silly. Erdnase, after all, is a dead man who obviously said everything he wanted to say about the subject of manipulating playing cards. How seriously should we take that?

This is a wonderful thread. I'm glad to see it perking up again.

Rick Ruhl | 07/31/11 02:28 PM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: You’ll all know soon enough. The issue goes to the printer tomorrow.

LOL, I didn't ask who it was.. I just wanted the yes or no questions answered.

You are SUCH a tease ;)

Rick Ruhl | 07/31/11 02:31 PM | link | filter
with my favorite candidate: L'Homme Masque. Like most things that come from the mind of Juan Tamariz, I think it's brilliant. It reminds us we are looking for someone who hid his identity—not someone who was likely to leave a dramatic confession. And it's silly. Erdnase, after all, is a dead man who obviously said everything he wanted to say about the subject of manipulating playing cards. How seriously should we take that?

This is a wonderful thread. I'm glad to see it perking up again.

This thread is 8 years old... and now we should finally find out. The question is like in a trial. Is the proof beyond a shadow of a doubt. Will this once and for all end all the questions?

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**Tom Frame** | 07/31/11 02:43 PM | link | filter

And if we can prove his identity, will we feel disappointed that the mystery is solved?

---

**Leonard Hevia** | 07/31/11 02:56 PM | link | filter

The answer will arrive in our lifetime. Many magicians who were interested in solving the mystery passed on without ever knowing.

I won't be disappointed.

---

**Geno Munari** | 07/31/11 03:17 PM | link | filter

I think that this new information will be interesting and prompt a great deal of discussion, very much like the other candidates discussions. The facts and statements of these entries have churned up passionate fever. This new information, which our Grand Lama Chief Genii handicaps away from the field, will be under a great big microscope that all of the participants of this forum are peering into. I welcome the new candidate.

And on a another note: Somewhere back in this thread somebody suggested an Erdnase Get-together or Summit. I would be willing to sponsor the event and provide the meeting facility and discussion areas for the event. Anyone interested. It would be fun to meet face to face and exchange theories about the candidates etc.

Anyone game for this idea?

---

**Rick Ruhl** | 07/31/11 04:33 PM | link | filter

*Geno Munari wrote:* I think that this new information will be interesting and
prompt a great deal of discussion, very much like the other candidates discussions. The facts and statements of these entries have churned up passionate fever. This new information, which our Grand Lama Chief Genii handicaps away from the field, will be under a great big microscope that all of the participants of this forum are peering into. I welcome the new candidate.

And on a another note: Somewhere back in this thread somebody suggested an Erdnase Get-together or Summit. I would be willing to sponsor the event and provide the meeting facility and discussion areas for the event. Anyone interested. It would be fun to meet face to face and exchange theories about the candidates etc.

Anyone game for this idea?

Lets do it.. Id be in if work cooperates

Richard Hatch | 07/31/11 04:34 PM | link | filter

Geno Munari wrote: Anyone game for this idea?

I'm up for it. I’d propose calling it the "Erdnaseum" but someone has beat you to that...

Geno Munari | 07/31/11 05:03 PM | link | filter

Great!

How about calling it:

1) ?

2) Erdnase ?

3) E= ?

Bob Coyne | 07/31/11 06:03 PM | link | filter

Chris Aguilar wrote: Perhaps RK was giving us a broad hint with his non sequitur in the current video comments in "Genii Speak".

"Wilbur" that is, probably referring to David Alexander's candidate "Wilbur Sanders".
Good catch! I bet you’re right. It seems possible David had some additional evidence for his candidate that is now coming out. In any case, I always thought Wilbur Edgerton Sanders (David’s candidate) was the most likely (and interesting) of those proposed. I guess we’ll find out soon.

Roger M. | 07/31/11 06:39 PM | link | filter

*Geno Munari wrote:*
Anyone game for this idea?

I’d be there, especially if it was in Vegas.
In the void that is considered "indisputable hard proof", I’m currently considering this Genii article and its candidate as just that, another "candidate".

I’d love to be proven wrong though, and finally see the face to go with the name (that is, if I haven’t already seen it).

Larry Horowitz | 07/31/11 08:44 PM | link | filter

Gino,

This thread is one of the greatest things on the web, bar none.

It has been educational in not only the discussion of Erdnase but aspects of history, gambling, art, research technology and much more. A conclave of the many contributors would be an important event.

I would love to attend.

Larry

Bill Mullins | 07/31/11 11:45 PM | link | filter

*Bob Coyne wrote:  It seems possible David had some additional evidence for his candidate that is now coming out. In any case, I always thought Wilbur Edgerton Sanders (David’s candidate) was the most likely (and interesting) of those proposed. I guess we’ll find out soon.*

While Sanders is an interesting candidate, once you take away the fact that W. E. Sanders is an anagram for S. W. Erdnase, is there anything that could be called evidence that he wrote *Expert at the Card Table*?

If the upcoming article has something like that, it will be a feather in the cap of
Well played

Richard Hatch wrote: ‘m up for it. I’d propose calling it the "Erdnaseum" but someone has beat you to that...

Almost an anagram for Ad nauseam :D

Bill Mullins wrote: While Sanders is an interesting candidate, once you take away the fact that W. E. Sanders is an anagram for S. W. Erdnase, is there anything that could be called evidence that he wrote Expert at the Card Table?

Other suggestive/supporting evidence for Sanders (as David described out in his article and elsewhere):
1) height matches Smith’s recollection
2) age matches Smith’s recollection
3) Education level, intelligence, and writing ability matches what we’d expect from the author
4) Sanders interest in dialects and regional speech patterns (Erdnase shows this in the book)
5) Erd-nase in german can be translated as "earth nose" (sanders was a mining engineer)
6) Sanders interest in wordplay with his own name (evidenced in his diaries where he wrote his name as "WES ANDERSon")
7) Sanders was the victim of some sort of scam (erdnase refers to suffering the same)

Obviously nothing definitive in the above, but these help build the circumstantial case.

A couple things I’ve noticed/discovered beyond these:
1) Erdnase has a mining-themed trick called "the divining rod"
2) Further evidence that Sanders was short (matching Smith’s recollection) is that he was the "bow" on the rowing team in college which is typically the smallest/lightest person on the team.

Richard Hatch wrote: Here are the points in favor of W.E. Sanders that I listed in my summary of candidates...
at the recent MCA weekend:

W. E. Sanders is an anagram of S. W. Erdnase, with the same initials shifted
Right age (as recalled by the illustrator)
"Right" height range (59, 160 lbs. in 1910)
Authored/edited books and articles, some with a Canadian copyright
As a mining engineer, he would have opportunities for card play
Well educated: Phillips Exeter Academy, Columbia School of Mines, Class of 1885
Mining engineer, Erd-Nase = Earth-Nose in German
Championed by David Alexander (a very thoughtful investigator!)

On the negative side, I am not aware of any relationship to Louis Dalrymple, nor have
I seen any published writing samples that sound anything like Erdnase. I think if any
of the plausible candidates could be closely linked to Dalrymple or convincingly
shown to "sound" like Erdnase, it would greatly boost their candidacy.

---

**Bob Coyne** | 08/01/11 10:48 AM | link | filter

*Richard Hatch wrote:* On the negative side, I am not aware of any
relationship to Louis Dalrymple, nor have I seen any published writing
samples that sound anything like Erdnase. I think if any of the plausible
candidates could be closely linked to Dalrymple or convincingly shown to
"sound" like Erdnase, it would greatly boost their candidacy.

Actually, I think the word choice and stock phrases used by Sanders/Erdnase are often
very similar. Here are some examples culled from Sanders’ published writing that
struck me as sounding like Erdnase (with the equivalent examples from Erdnase):

erd: but it has been MY VERY GREAT GOOD FORTUNE to discover...
sanders: we know the VERY GREAT AND GOOD FORTUNE we had in studying under
you

erdnase: I have mapped out a plan of experiment and study that will in time, I TRUST,
enable me...
sanders: However, I TRUST I shall be able so to mix the joyous with the serious as to
yield a proper "blend" suited to every palate

sanders: during the following year he took A POST-GRADUATE COURSE in Civil
Engineering
erdnase: it may enable the skilled in deception to take A POST-GRADUATE COURSE
in the highest and most artistic branches of his vocation

erdnase: An INTIMATE ACQUAINTANCE with the modus operandi of card table
artifice
sanders: the INTIMATE ASSOCIATIONS which in youths of generous minds form a mutual regard

sanders: the average mining engineer
erdnase: the average card player

sanders: Has "MADE GOOD" at the bar, where he shines
erdnase: he coolly proposes to "MAKE GOOD" by transforming the wrong card

erdnase: It is almost AN AXIOM that a novice will win his first stake.
sanders: this latter is AN AXIOM in mining during this period of development, and should be invariably followed where possible.

erdnase: The first described is AN EXCELLENT ONE for retaining either the top or bottom stock...
dernase: The position is AN EXCELLENT ONE for ordinary dealing, and should never be changed.
dernase: The latter position is AN EXCELLENT ONE when it is necessary to make a shift that is apparently a simple cut ...
dernase: It is AN EXCELLENT MANNER of holding the deck for the true shuffle...
sanders: this joint is without doubt AN EXCELLENT ONE when, and only when, .... the entire pressure comes upon the frame comes from the direction a or c.

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**Edwin Corrie** | 08/01/11 12:39 PM | link | filter

Some of the other evidence is interesting, but I still find the "earth nose" idea a bit tenuous. Surely it would be almost too much of a coincidence if someone was able to rearrange the letters of his name to come up with an anagram that was an obscure reference to his profession in another language which he (presumably) didn’t speak.

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**Leonard Hevia** | 08/01/11 12:59 PM | link | filter

Bob. You convinced me. If Wilbur Sanders isn’t Erdnase, it’s one hell of a coincidence that both these men favor the same type of phrases.

---

**Magic Fred** | 08/01/11 01:07 PM | link | filter

*Bob Coyne wrote:*
Actually, I think the word choice and stock phrases used by Sanders/Erdnase ...

This line of reasoning might also lead to the conclusion that Paul Gordon is, in fact,
Just a light chiding, very interesting quotes and no offence intended.

Richard Kaufman | 08/01/11 01:26 PM | link | filter

I used to be Harry Lorayne, too.

Magic Fred | 08/01/11 01:30 PM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: I used to be Harry Lorayne, too.

:grin:

Bill Mullins | 08/01/11 02:44 PM | link | filter

Bob Coyne wrote: Actually, I think the word choice and stock phrases used by Sanders/Erdnase are often very similar. Here are some examples culled from Sanders' published writing that struck me as sounding like Erdnase (with the equivalent examples from Erdnase):

erd: but it has been MY VERY GREAT GOOD FORTUNE to discover...

sanders: we know the VERY GREAT AND GOOD FORTUNE we had in studying under you

Theodore Roosevelt: It is my VERY GREAT GOOD FORTUNE to have the right to claim that my blood is half Southern and half Northern . . .

erdnase: I have mapped out a plan of experiment and study that will in time, I TRUST, enable me...

sanders: However, I TRUST I shall be able so to mix the joyous with the serious as to yield a proper "blend" suited to every palate

Theodore Roosevelt: I TRUST I need hardly say how great it is my pleasure at speaking in this historic capital . . .

sanders: during the following year he took A POST-GRADUATE COURSE in Civil Engineering

erdnase: it may enable the skilled in deception to take A POST-GRADUATE COURSE in the highest and most artistic branches of his vocation

Theodore Roosevelt: Probably most young fellows when they have graduated from college, or from their POST-GRADUATE COURSE, if they take any, feel pretty dismal
erdnase: An INTIMATE ACQUAINTANCE with the modus operandi of
card table artifice

sanders: the INTIMATE ASSOCIATIONS which in youths of generous
minds form a mutual regard

Theodore Roosevelt: A railway-mail clerk is required to show a knowledge of the
railway systems along the route where he is to serve, a tolerably INTIMATE
ACQUAINTANCE with the geography of the United States. . .

sanders: the average mining engineer
erdnase: the average card player

Theodore Roosevelt: Very few students of naval history will deny that in 1812 the
AVERAGE American ship was superior . . .

sanders: Has "MADE GOOD" at the bar, where he shines
erdnase: he coolly proposes to "MAKE GOOD" by transforming the wrong
card

T. Roosevelt: I did not make a strong effort to MAKE GOOD afterwardT. Roosevelt: but
never in one case has he MADE GOOD the promise of his platform.

erdnase: It is almost AN AXIOM that a novice will win his first stake.
sanders: this latter is AN AXIOM in mining during this period of
development, and should be invariably followed where possible.

T. Roosevelt: It is almost AN AXIOM of naval life that the successful commander is . . .

erdnase: The first described is AN EXCELLENT ONE for retaining either
the top or bottom stock...

erdnase: The position is AN EXCELLENT ONE for ordinary dealing, and
should never be changed.

erdnase: The latter position is AN EXCELLENT ONE when it is necessary to
make a shift that is apparently a simple cut ...

erdnase: It is AN EXCELLENT MANNER of holding the deck for the true
shuffle...

sanders: this joint is without doubt AN EXCELLENT ONE when, and only
when, ... the entire pressure upon the frame comes from the direction a or
c.
T. Roosevelt: Munro Ferguson's suggestion as to how you should make what communications we have to make IS AN EXCELLENT ONE.

Other quotes:
"and the WHOLE CALENDAR OF social and industrial injustice"

He liked magic:
"Today, after lunch, Mother took Ethel, Archie and Quentin, each with a friend, to see some most wonderful juggling and sleight of hand tricks by Kellar. I went along . . ."
(letter to his son, 1904)

He was 43 in 1902, an accomplished author, and had lived out west amongst poker players. Some would say he was "Machiavellian". He referred to having had political meetings in a "club room".

Except for the fact that TR lived in Washington DC in the winter of 1901-02 (he was president then), which would have made it difficult for him to get the book published in Chicago, it is obvious that he wrote "Expert at the Card Table".

[/sarcasm off]

Don't be convinced by a list of post-hoc coincidences. They are easy to find and construct. Martin Gardner's writings about numerology, and his alter ego Irving Joshua Matrix, show that this is folly.

Richard Kaufman | 08/01/11 03:01 PM | link | filter

Well, it's obvious that Theodore Roosevelt wrote Expert at the Card Table.

Bully for you Bill!

Richard Hatch | 08/01/11 03:10 PM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: Well, it's obvious that Theodore Roosevelt wrote Expert at the Card Table.

Bully for you Bill!

Teddy Roosevelt's daughter Alice was an accomplished magician, specializing in card tricks. And one candidate, James DeWitt Andrews was a good friend (self described as such) of Teddy Roosevelt. Coincidence?

Bill Mullins | 08/01/11 03:33 PM | link | filter
his Montana ranch. His hunting partner, John Willis, had previously been a professional gambler.

Richard Kaufman | 08/01/11 03:59 PM | link | filter

Well, I think you fellows have stumbled across the truth. Just think, every Teddy bear in every home provided evidence of the author of Expert all along.

Pete McCabe | 08/01/11 04:46 PM | link | filter

The Erdnase gathering should be called the "N.O. Itnevnoc"

Bob Coyne | 08/01/11 05:12 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote:

Bob Coyne wrote: Actually, I think the word choice and stock phrases used by Sanders/Erdnase are often very similar. Here are some examples culled from Sanders’ published writing that struck me as sounding like Erdnase (with the equivalent examples from Erdnase): [...] 

Don’t be convinced by a list of post-hoc coincidences. They are easy to find and construct. Martin Gardner’s writings about numerology, and his alter ego Irving Joshua Matrix, show that this is folly.

These correspondences weren’t meant as convincing evidence that the two are the same (though I think it does add some support to that claim). Instead, they were offered to argue against Richard Hatch’s fairly strong assertion "nor have I seen any published writing samples that sound *anything* like Erdnase".

As to your use of Theodore Roosevelt (TR) quotes similar to Erdnase. A few points:

1) There’s a *much* larger corpus of text authored by TR to draw upon than for Sanders (who wrote a single technically-oriented book and a few miscellaneous articles). So clearly, it would be easier to find matching examples with TR. If you found someone with comparable literary output as Sanders, it would make a more convincing case. Of course there are many other variables like the genre of writing etc that will have a big effect on language use. The fact that my examples were found in a relatively small set of texts (Mine Timbering (talk about a dry subject) and a few more lively writings of Sanders) I think the correspondences to Erdnase are actually fairly striking.
2) Your TR examples miss some of the significant combinations and nuances.
- the coupling of TAKE/TOOK with "post-graduate course" in sanders/erdnase versus
  GRADUATED FROM (in TR). i.e. "TAKE a degree" is idiomatic and a different usage.
- "I trust" paired with ABLE/ENABLE (in sanders/erdnase) versus with I NEED (in TR)
- The "scare quotes" around "MADE/MAKE GOOD" in Sanders/Erdnase versus none
  (in TR)

3) Even ignoring the above two points and taking your examples at face value, at best
that would indicate that one might not want to *rule out* TR as Erdnase based *solely*
on his writing style. i.e. every piece of evidence can add to or subtract from the case for
a given candidate. For Sanders as Erdnase, I think the similarity in use of language
actually adds to the case (rather than subtracts as Richard Hatch seems to feel).

btw, Following up on the "MAKE/MADE GOOD" examples above, it seemed to me
(when looking at this originally a couple years ago) that both Sanders and Erdnase
used lots of scare quotes. It would be interesting to find out if they're statistically more
frequent than the norm from that era. There are many statistical tests of that sort that
could be performed.

Actually I think one of the strongest pieces of evidence for Sanders to date is Richard
Kaufman's "wilbur" non-sequitur pointed out in an earlier post. I think that really
gives it away. :-)

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**Magic Fred** | 08/01/11 05:16 PM | link | filter

*Pete McCabe wrote:* The Erdnase gathering should be called the "N.O.
Itnevnoc"

Not with the candidates proposed so far it shouldn’t!

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/01/11 09:25 PM | link | filter

Bob Coyne -- The TR quotes weren’t meant to prove TR as an authorial candidate, nor
to disprove W. E. Sanders as one. They are only meant to show that coincidences aren’t
as unlikely as they may initially seem, and similarities in the works of two separate
authors are easy enough to find.

Yes, TR has a much larger body of work to choose from. But, he was the first name I
pulled out of a hat; I was able to match every Erdnase/Sanders quote to something
similar in TR's writings; and it wasn't particularly hard to do so.

I'm pretty sure that if I took authors with more limited outputs, I'd be able to find
similar phrasings in a similar way. It won't prove anything other than if you take two
The body of Skeptic literature is full of taking sets of coincidences that are purported to "prove" something, and deconstructing them. And unfortunately, much of the evidence for the major candidates for being the author of "Expert" is just that -- sets of coincidences. I've done my share of chasing these, and even identifying some new coincidences -- I once sent David Alexander some newspaper articles that showed W. E. Sanders had been in some legal trouble in the early 1890s, to help establish that he was something of a "rogue" (but not to the extent of Todd Karr's E. S. Andrews); and I demonstrated that Hatch's E. S. Andrews was a card player. Listing coincidences is fun, and it is, in a very limited way, circumstantial evidence. But it isn't solid enough evidence (in my mind) to say that one or the other was the author of "Expert".

I'm really looking forward to the new article in the Sept Genii because I'm hoping that it will provide something more solid than further parallels between the life of someone whose name is Andrews or Sanders or such, and what we believe to be the life of Erdnase.

---

**Mike Vance** | 08/01/11 10:05 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

For the Erdnase gathering, how about we hold the event at Erdnase's childhood home? Maybe near his birthday?

I think that the only thing that would be 100% proof for some people would be a signed publishing contract. However, if the contract is not forthcoming, I guess the question we need to ask is: "How much evidence, documented and/or circumstantial, would it take to convince you that it is one candidate in particular?" Would satisfying Todd Karr's checklist ([http://www.miraclefactory.net/mpt/view...e=articles](http://www.miraclefactory.net/mpt/view...e=articles)) be enough for you? How high is the bar that needs to be cleared? I know the level of proof will differ from person to person, but I'm curious what it would take. How would YOU respond?

9 days left!

---

**Bob Coyne** | 08/01/11 10:34 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Bill, I with much of what you say above. But as I said before, I never claimed that the parallel wording examples were anything like solid evidence or proof. I *do* think they're suggestive though and provide counterexamples to Richard Hatch's assertion that Sanders' use of language didn't sound at all like Erdnase. Also, I think it would be more difficult than you think to line up texts in a similar way when their sizes are more comparable. i.e. Picking TR as an example makes a nice demonstration but doesn't really show much given its huge size compared with Sanders.
That's interesting about Sanders being in legal trouble and something of a rogue.

I'm really looking forward to the Sept Genii article too. I hope/expect to find out much more about Sanders when I read it :-)

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cage | 08/01/11 11:12 PM | link | filter

The problem with a coincidence is that it looks _exactly_ like a meaningful correspondence. And a meaningful correspondence looks _exactly_ like a coincidence. But two coincidences? Three? A dozen? More? To quote David Alexander's article in Genii, January 2000: "At some point the idea of endless coincidences becomes unreasonable and the evidence, even though circumstantial, becomes overwhelming."

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Bob Coyne | 08/01/11 11:18 PM | link | filter

This was already mentioned a while ago in this thread, but one other interesting piece of support for Sanders (showing at least superficial familiarity/interest in gambling/cheating) is this poem he wrote about a classmate for this 25th college reunion:

Come, Johnson, cease your naughty ways,
Make simple faro, poker plays
Or roulette e'en, but stop this craze
For playin' the "Shell game."

However, Johnson, when I learn
The shell game played by your concern
Is not the western game I yearn
To see played on the square,
[...]

---

Jonathan Townsend | 08/02/11 09:06 AM | link | filter

IMHO the Karr checklist is an interesting read, entertaining etc though not a solid foundation to build a case. I've put in a few italicized comments simply challenging the presuppositions.

The Basic Evidence
The most (ONLY) solid evidence we have are the book itself and (interview* reports of) the 1940s recollections of its illustrator, artist Marshall D. Smith. These two sources offer us the following basic possibilities:

1. The author may have been named E. S. Andrews, reversing his name to spell S. W.
Irrelevant. Consider the public trademark name/person of "Betty Crocker." Looking for someone of that name who was a good cook would likewise turn up lots of close partial matches the further one stretched the anagram taffy.

2. Based on the level of subtlety in his explanations, the author seems to have been highly skilled in psychology, deception, and of course gambling. possibly: the author and person (or persons) relating the subject need not be the same person. Such is part of the literary craft involving narrators.

3. The author (or agent thereof) had some connection with Chicago, where the book was printed and published, and would most likely have been in the Midwest at the time of the books publication in 1902.

4. Erdnase had knowledge of the law or access to legal advice, judging from the elaborate copyright notices throughout the book. Just because technical text is included in a work does not imply that any particular hand in that text's accretion was skilled in any particular trade or area of expertise. By way of absurd/extreme example consider: Does the artist also transmute base lead into the rest of the metals he uses to make is paints? Does he likewise make and stretch his own canvases?

5. The author may be characterized as intelligent (the prose is direct and perceptive), ambitious (based on the scale of the book), and meticulous about detail (he misses very few nuances in his explanations and appears to have hand-corrected, or asked someone to correct, many of Smiths drawings to improve their accuracy). Erdnase also seems to have lacked pity for the victims of con games (as we read in his book). This looks like a cold reading bit. Kindly see Eco on Hugo for more about how the writer can greatly enlist the reader by way of willing suspension of credulity and even into complicity in creating fictitious worlds.

6. Erdnase also seems to have been in need of money at times, as he points out at the end of his introduction. As mentioned above, Marshall Smiths illustrations seem to have been crudely altered by an amateur, an indication perhaps that Erdnase did not have sufficient funds to commission professional corrections. While these claims are consonant with the introductory statement about the author's purpose in writing the book they are not self consistent with the claims of expertise and competence purported to be discussed in the book. Why sell a book on fishing to raise a few dollars when one can catch ones own fish?

7. Smith described Erdnase as well-spoken and gentlemanly, short of stature, with a pleasant, smooth tone. Smith claims to have met a person. The rest is questionable inference. Is there any additional evidence or corroborating evidence of this event - second party?
recalled.

*Smith claims to have met with a person. The rest is questionable inference.*

9. Smith also said that Erdnase had mentioned a family connection to artist Louis Dalrymple.

*More hearsay from Smith. Wasn’t there a Smith person also associated with making sure the newspapers reflected the correct data and perspective on historical events?*

...  

11. Magician James Harto, based in Indiana, claimed to have been friends with Erdnase and to possess letters he received from Erdnase. *While an interesting story this too is unsubstantiated and less interesting than the story of Santa Claus or the Easter Rabbit who may also be advantage players at the card table.*

The propensity to look at a pile of circumstantial evidence and make claims of truth is one of our less admirable traits. Does it really only rain when you don’t bring your umbrella?

Additional findings and stories are welcome as far as I’m concerned. I like stories and also curious to find out what happens when there is a settled certainty on the origins of the “erdnase” text.

Much enjoying the suspense,

Jon

*See Royal and Schutt (or similar) on the art of interviewing and interrogation.*

---

Bob Coyne | 08/02/11 10:42 AM | link | filter

*Jonathan Townsend wrote:* The propensity to look at a pile of circumstantial evidence and make claims of truth is one of our less admirable traits. Does it really only rain when you don’t bring your umbrella?

Jonathan, I don’t think anyone here is making claims of truth. Given the sparsity of the so-far-existing evidence, it’s really all about hypothesizing about what’s most likely. Any of the candidates could easily be disproven (or proven) by some strong new data/evidence without anyone having to revisit their world view. And presumably that’s what will happen in a few days when the article comes out.

Also, I’d actually modify your statement and say that the propensity to look at a pile of circumstantial evidence and *form hypotheses* is one of our *most* admirable traits. That’s a key part of the process by which we attain knowledge.
Bob, I'm with you about hypothesis formation (when accompanied by testing) as *most* admirable.

_How can you know if X_

_How can you know if anything but X_

Around here we still have statements like: _If you had any understanding of the work at all, you’d appreciate that it is absolutely impossible for it to have been "cobbled" together._ posted regularly. Not sure what the hypothesis is though IMHO the evident presuppositions don't look too sanitary. Just because everyone has an "opinion" does necessarily imply the community is best served its expression** in public. IMHO we have much room for improvement separating what we might bluster about for audiences and how we address each other when away from the folks looking to be entertained and deceived.

Ultimately what one knows depends on what one chooses to believe. I find the process of story/myth formation of interest. Folks may have noticed I distinguish between the artifacts and the interpretations, development of a story and the way that story is defended. Not challenging any of the artifacts or actual historical research here.

In some world Sachs wrote the book,

Jon

PS what's the distance between any two of the many worlds? ;)

** yup he went there with the joke.

---

_Bill Mullins_ | 08/02/11 11:24 AM | link | filter

Jon -- why are you so dismissive of Marshall Smith's statements?

---

_Jonathan Townsend_ | 08/02/11 11:47 AM | link | filter

_Bill Mullins wrote:_ Jon -- why are you so dismissive of Marshall Smith’s statements?

Where specifically have I made any statment about Marshall Smith? Sceptical of reports given by magicans as second hand uncorroborated evidence - especially after what happened with Hofzinser's wife and Robert-Houdin's wife (by way of Houdini no less) - you betcha.

Stories are fine. As stories. I like stories.
Another erdnaseum teaser video ("where's erdnase's office?") has appeared on youtube:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXzDdoOrULA

Edwin Corrie | 08/02/11 12:21 PM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote: Sceptical of reports given by magicians as second hand uncorroborated evidence - especially after what happened with Hofzinser's wife and Robert-Houdin's wife (by way of Houdini no less) - you betcha.

Stories are fine. As stories. I like stories.

According to Magic Christian's recent research, the story about Hofzinser's manuscripts was itself one of these "reports given by magicians as second hand uncorroborated evidence":

Important new facts:
His widow did not burn the manuscripts after his death like reported by O. FISCHER. http://www.hofzinser.com/hofzinserlife_en.html

Magic Christian's book has completely changed a lot of what we thought we knew about Hofzinser.

Rick Ruhl | 08/02/11 12:23 PM | link | filter

Like I said earlier, if the article has the 'smoking gun', then all the speculation is over.

Frank Yuen | 08/02/11 12:24 PM | link | filter

I think the problem lies with calling the Karr checklist "evidence". Evidence by definition is something that furnishes proof. What Mr. Karr has actually supplied is a list of clues. When looked at in that light I think it is a fine beginning to the investigation into Erdnase's true identity. I have a problem with a few of the items but most of them are perfectly logical assumptions to make in order to hopefully get started on the right track.

Richard Hatch | 08/02/11 12:29 PM | link | filter

RE: Richard Kaufman's braying of "Willlllbbburrr" at the end of the online MORE GENII SPEAKS video: Taking it at face value as a reference to one of Richard's favorite
that show was longtime charter Magic Castle Member Lou Derman. Derman was one of Dai Vernon’s best friends. Vernon idolized Erdnase. Coincidence?

Ted M | 08/02/11 02:49 PM | link | filter

By Jove!

Erdnase was a talking horse?!!

Jonathan Townsend | 08/02/11 03:01 PM | link | filter

Can you imagine 'that' voice on the phone saying "can you work from a model if I send one over, and take dictation? I'll send my secretary Wilbur over with a draft":D

Rick Ruhl | 08/02/11 03:17 PM | link | filter

we need another GOOD hint..

cage | 08/02/11 04:13 PM | link | filter

Hmm... "Authentic chocolate malt..." M.F. Andrews was known as "The Malted Milk Murderer."

Chris Aguilar | 08/02/11 04:35 PM | link | filter

Hm. I wouldn't be surprised if RK and a few others aren't throwing out multiple red herrings at this point.

That's what I would do if I had an article like this coming out and wanted to further stoke interest.

Brad Henderson | 08/02/11 04:36 PM | link | filter

I had a chocolate malt last night. Perhaps I am erdnase

Now all you need is a picture of me holding a deck of cards in one hand, a dq shake in the other, and it's settled.

Richard Kaufman | 08/02/11 04:38 PM | link | filter

Mmmm ... I love DQ! Nothing beats a chocolate dip!
Larry Horowitz | 08/02/11 05:41 PM | link | filter

I got it! That final clue from RK did it.

DQ= Dairy Queen

Dairy=milk=wholesome

Queen=woman

The elusive author is one of The Andrew Sisters

Mike Vance | 08/02/11 07:56 PM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: Mmmm ... I love DQ! Nothing beats a chocolate dip!

Maybe Richard is leading us astray here. Should we be considering other restaurant connections besides DQ? What about Burger King?

Rick Ruhl | 08/03/11 01:25 PM | link | filter

Larry Horowitz wrote: I got it! That final clue from RK did it.

DQ= Dairy Queen

Dairy=milk=wholesome

Queen=woman

The elusive author is one of The Andrew Sisters

no no!

Dairy=milk=boobs=woman

So we are looking for a woman's woman

Rick Ruhl | 08/03/11 01:26 PM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: Mmmm ... I love DQ! Nothing beats a chocolate dip!

You are really enjoying this, aren't you?
Rick Ruhl wrote:

Larry Horowitz wrote: I got it! That final clue from RK did it.

DQ= Dairy Queen
Dairy=milk=wholesome
Queen=woman

The elusive author is one of The Andrew Sisters

no no!

Dairy=milk=boobs=woman

So we are looking for a woman's woman

Mae West?

She came up around that time.

Leonard Hevia | 08/03/11 11:53 PM | link | filter

We seem to be entering a period where mysterious figures are finally being identified:

http://news.yahoo.com/fbi-found-db-coop ... 00392.html

Richard Kaufman | 08/04/11 12:13 AM | link | filter

Sometimes, I order a vanilla cone with cherry dip at DQ.

Mike Vance | 08/04/11 12:53 AM | link | filter

Rick Ruhl wrote:

Richard Kaufman wrote: Mmmm ... I love DQ! Nothing beats a chocolate dip!

You are really enjoying this, aren't you?

I think he really is.
Leonard Hevia wrote: We seem to be entering a period where mysterious figures are finally being identified:

http://news.yahoo.com/fbi-found-db-coop...00392.html

yup

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/12/1...98607.html

Rick Ruhl | 08/04/11 08:08 AM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: Sometimes, I order a vanilla cone with cherry dip at DQ.

There are some keywords in here..

You didn't say Dairy Queen, you said DQ.....

Jonathan Townsend | 08/04/11 08:58 AM | link | filter

That was the punchline to one of the few jokes they bleeped on The Gong Show. "What do you call a milkman in high heels?".

Just a couple of weeks till we get more on the erdnase authorship. In the mean time is someone gonna suggest it's a Ralph Ellison type Invisible Man who was there for so much of the play yet unobserved?

Richard Kaufman | 08/06/11 11:17 AM | link | filter
My original opening paragraph of "Genii Speaks" in the September issue cited several instances of people whose real identities would likely never be known--"D.B. Cooper" being one of them. Good thing I cut it out!
That's a really beautiful cover.

Thanks.
The issue gets stitched Monday and mails Tuesday. Digital edition should be up Wednesday.
Is that a real silhouette of The Man Who? Can we guess who it is?

Richard Kaufman | 08/07/11 12:38 AM | link | filter

Oh yes, that’s the real silhouette.

Bob Coyne | 08/07/11 12:57 AM | link | filter

Aha! I’ve seen that picture before! It will be fascinating to read the evidence.
Not to interrupt the discussion of what I am sure will be a well-received issue of *Genii*, but . . .

There is currently on ebay [LINK] a copy of William Hilliar's book *Card Sharper Their Tricks Exposed*. The front cover is _very_ similar stylistically to the front cover of the pictorial hardback Drake edition (the 1st Drake edition??). Both include silhouetted figures, and the artwork is mostly black, with spot red color. This isn't too surprising since both were contemporaneously printed by Drake, but it struck me as worth noting (especially given the speculation that Hilliar may have ghosted portions of Erdnase).

Now back to your regularly scheduled anticipatory discussion.

Another clue at [http://erdnaseum.com/](http://erdnaseum.com/)

Curiously, there are two typos (intentional?) in the spelling of "Erdnase" in this clip: It is captioned "Want to visit Erdanse's office?"

And then the video says: "Where was Erndase's office?"

Another clue, perhaps?

I can't make head or tail out of those Erdnaseum clues. The Genii cover clue on the other hand...

If I buy some writing as work for hire, can I alter it and/or put my name on it as author?

Jonathan Townsend wrote: If I buy some writing as work for hire, can I alter it
Yes you can. What are you paying?

**Bob Coyne** | 08/07/11 11:28 AM | link | filter

Yet another erdnaseum clue has appeared...this time on Erdnase's hobby. Multiple clues are pointing in the same direction.

http://erdnaseum.com

**Leonard Hevia** | 08/07/11 11:33 AM | link | filter

"No man but a blockhead ever wrote except for money."

Samuel Johnson

**Pete McCabe** | 08/07/11 01:29 PM | link | filter

Sam Johnson lived before Facebook and Twitter, but he still nailed it completely.

**Jonathan Townsend** | 08/07/11 01:49 PM | link | filter

  *Leonard Hevia wrote:* "No man but a blockhead ever wrote except for money."

  Samuel Johnson

Consider that in context of our attention based economy

**Leonard Hevia** | 08/07/11 02:11 PM | link | filter

Pete/Jonathan--Your posts reminded me of that cartoon of the guy panhandling on a city street corner. Instead of asking for money, his sign said "Need hits on my blog."

One thing's for sure, Erdnase was no blockhead. A rock collector? I wonder who that could be...

**Rick Ruhl** | 08/07/11 03:41 PM | link | filter

  *Bill Mullins wrote:* Not to interrupt the discussion of what I am sure will be a well-received issue of Genii, but . . .

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edition??). Both include silhouetted figures, and the artwork is mostly black, with spot red color. This isn't too surprising since both were contemporaneous printed by Drake, but it struck me as worth noting (especially given the speculation that Hilliar may have ghosted portions of Erdnase).

Now back to your regularly scheduled anticipatory discussion.

Bill, look at this

http://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/735093

Richard Kaufman wrote: Thanks.
The issue gets stitched Monday and mails Tuesday.
Digital edition should be up Wednesday.

grumble.. torture.. send me the FLV file and Ill put it up! LOL

Hilliar had nothing to do with Expert at the Card Table.

As David Alexander mentioned way earlier in this thread, the Montana house that Wilbur Edgerton Sanders grew up in is now a B&B. Here’s the link to it.

http://www.sandersbb.com/sanders.htm

It looks like two of the Erdnaseum videos were shot there.

What is interesting to me about the speculation as to who Erdnase himself was is the absence of any public speculation as to who has apparently found the smoking gun. That is, is he/she one of the usual scholars (and, if so, is doing a bang up job at keeping mum) or a new kid on the block?
New kid on the block.

**Leonard Hevia** | 08/07/11 08:29 PM | link | filter

I believe everyone interested in Erdnase is privately speculating on the who and how of the smoking gun. If it’s W.E. Sanders, I imagine David Alexander may have found something in Sanders’ diaries or possibly some other piece of evidence that put gambling and a deck of cards in Sanders’ hands.

It’s possible David was planning to spring it on us at the MCA gathering in Chicago this past May. There was an Erdnase lecture at the MCA. Fate intervened and perhaps David’s widow passed the papers on to Genii.

**Jonathan Townsend** | 08/07/11 08:41 PM | link | filter

I’m pondering what it would mean to find a letter describing the magic market and books of trick/mechanical how-to vs a teaching type book and how to get such a book into the market so close to the Hoffmann and Roteberg items.

**Richard Kaufman** | 08/07/11 08:47 PM | link | filter

The article we are presenting is an original piece of work from a new author.

**Frank Yuen** | 08/07/11 09:11 PM | link | filter

Richard, is the Marty in the videos the author?

*Bob Coyne wrote:* As David Alexander mentioned way earlier in this thread, the Montana house that Wilbur Edgerton Sanders grew up in is now a B&B. Here’s the link to it.


It looks like two of the Erdniseum videos were shot there.

Bob, where are you seeing anything that indicates the Erdniseum videos were shot there? There doesn’t appear to be an ice cream parlor at the B&B nor did the web site show any piano or office photos.

**Doc Dixon** | 08/07/11 09:14 PM | link | filter
the Montana house that Wilbur Edgerton Sanders grew up in is now a B&B. Here's the link to it.

http://www.sandersbb.com/sanders.htm

It looks like two of the Erdnaseum videos were shot there.

Excuse the partially off topic post, but your mention of the late Mr. Alexander made me remember (once again) how much wit and experience he added to this forum. Still missed.

DD

Richard Kaufman | 08/07/11 09:28 PM | link | filter

Yes, he is still missed.

Bob Coyne | 08/07/11 09:37 PM | link | filter

Frank Yuen wrote: Bob, where are you seeing anything that indicates the Erdnaseum videos were shot there? There doesn’t appear to be an ice cream parlor at the B&B nor did the web site show any piano or office photos.

1) The rock collection in the erdnaseum "hobby" video is in the hallway of the house (see the guest remarks section). And here’s a separate photo in flickr to it that's very clearly the same as in the video.

http://www.flickr.com/photos/stefohnee/ ... otostream/

So this one is for certain.

2) The wainscotting in the room of the erdnaseum "sing" video is of the same style as to that in rooms in the house. The B&B does have a piano (it's listed/advertised in other links for the B&B). So this one isn't certain but seems very likely to me.

Leonard Hevia | 08/07/11 09:54 PM | link | filter

Bob--are you certain, or not certain?

I'm beginning to wonder if the proprietors of the Sanders Bed and Breakfast keep a copy of The Expert at the Card Table in the drawer of each bedroom.
Well, Vernon considered it his bible.

Frank Yuen | 08/07/11 10:04 PM | link | filter

Good catch on that Flickr photo Bob. If you look fast in the "sing" video you can also see what looks like a monogram of an S on the window of the door. It will be interesting to see the new evidence that was found that would make Richard say, "Short of a signed contract with the printer, I don't think it's going to get any tighter." Can't wait for the 10th!

Rick Ruhl | 08/07/11 10:10 PM | link | filter

Bob Coyne wrote:

Frank Yuen wrote: Bob, where are you seeing anything that indicates the Erdnaseum videos were shot there? There doesn't appear to be an ice cream parlor at the B&B nor did the web site show any piano or office photos.

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Look at the bottle in the pic and the one in vid.. second shelf..on the right

100% match

Leonard Hevia | 08/07/11 10:31 PM | link | filter

Will the print run of the September Genii be higher? It may be the highest selling issue ever.

Rick Ruhl | 08/07/11 10:35 PM | link | filter
Another pic

http://yanoun.org/mont_vigi/victims/images/sanders.jpg

Chris Aguilar | 08/07/11 10:36 PM | link | filter

I've lightened up the rock collection frame from the "What was Erdnase's hobby" clip and as mentioned, it seems to be an exact match for the flicker photo at the Sander's house.

![What was Erdnase's hobby?](http://yanoun.org/mont_vigi/victims/images/sanders.jpg)

Flicker photo taken at Sander's house.

Richard Hatch | 08/07/11 10:38 PM | link | filter

Rick Ruhl wrote: Another pic

http://yanoun.org/mont_vigi/victims/images/sanders.jpg

I'm guessing that is a photo of the father, not the son.

Rick Ruhl | 08/07/11 10:39 PM | link | filter

A chapter in a book that W E Sanders wrote in 1910

http://books.google.com/books?id=WYs-AA ... rs&f=false

Bob Coyne | 08/07/11 10:41 PM | link | filter
Frank Yuen wrote: Good catch on that Flickr photo Bob. If you look fast in the "sing" video you can also see what looks like a monogram of an S on the window of the door. It will be interesting to see the new evidence that was found that would make Richard say, "Short of a signed contract with the printer, I don't think it's going to get any tighter." Can't wait for the 10th!

I think you mean the "S" on the door window in the "hobby" video (not the "sing" one) when Marty comes in to show the rock collection. Yeah, I noticed that too...another piece that fits together.

btw, If you want more proof that the article is about Sanders... the silhouette picture on the Genii cover that Richard posted is made from a particular photo of Sanders. You can find it online in google books by searching for: wilbur edgerton sanders columbia reunion

I can't wait to read the article also! I wonder what the new evidence is...

Chris Aguilar | 08/07/11 10:59 PM | link | filter

Bob Coyne wrote: btw, If you want more proof that the article is about Sanders... the silhouette picture on the Genii cover that Richard posted is made from a particular photo of Sanders. You can find it online in google books by searching for: wilbur edgerton sanders columbia reunion

I can't wait to read the article also! I wonder what the new evidence is...

You're right.

Looks just like the Image on the upcoming Genii Cover.
Richard Kaufman | 08/07/11 11:16 PM | link | filter

It’s not him.

Bob Coyne | 08/07/11 11:27 PM | link | filter

    Richard Kaufman wrote: It's not him.

Wow, this is getting really interesting!

hmmm...since we know the Sanders house is where Erdnase's rock collection is kept, then it's likely that Erdnase is another member of the family (other than Wilbur). He had some brothers. Interesting twists going on here!

Chris Aguilar | 08/08/11 12:26 AM | link | filter

Richard,

Are you saying that you used the image of Sanders on the cover as a throw off of some sort?

Because when I overlay the known photo of Sanders with the Genii cover, the match is exceptionally close.
And the Holy Ghost???
I'd probably do best to wait a week or two to post this, but I'd probably forget. So pardon the interruption.

**HERE** is a 1904 letterhead from Frederick J. Drake, who sold (or at least advertised) 1st edition copies, and published later editions, of *The Expert At The Card Table*.

J. Milton Trainer (VP) was married to Frederick’s sister. His primary occupation seemed to be real estate development; it's not obvious he had any role other than figurehead within Drake's company. Likewise Chas. H Baldwin

Wm. Young Stafford edited *Toasts and After Dinner Speeches* published by Drake. (Online **HERE**; see the Erdnase ad on p 184)

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**Asser Andersen** | 08/08/11 01:20 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Bob Coyne wrote:*

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* It's not him.

Wow, this is getting really interesting!

hmmm...since we know the Sanders house is where Erdnase’s rock collection is kept, then it’s likely that Erdnase is another member of the family (other than Wilbur). He had some brothers. Interesting twists going on here!

Richard could also be answering a previous question whether Marty in the videos is the author of the article in *Genii* :)  

---

**Chris Aguilar** | 08/08/11 01:23 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Asser Andersen wrote:* Richard could also be answering a previous question whether Marty in the videos is the author of the article in *Genii* :)  

Good catch.  
RK did not say "It's not Wilbur Sanders".  

---

**Rick Ruhl** | 08/08/11 07:21 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Richard,  

Was Erdnase Wilbur Sanders?
Rick Ruhl 08/08/11 08:12 AM | link | filter

Second question, yes or no:

Does the cover article of the September 2011 issue of Genii Magazine support the position that Erdnase was Wilbur Sanders?

Mike Vance 08/08/11 11:34 AM | link | filter

First, does anyone really believe that Kaufman is going to tip the name two days before the article comes out? Come on people. You can give up on the direct questioning.

Secondly, regarding:

*Leonard Hevia wrote:* I believe everyone interested in Erdnase is privately speculating on the who and how of the smoking gun. If it’s W.E. Sanders, I imagine David Alexander may have found something in Sanders’ diaries or possibly some other piece of evidence that put gambling and a deck of cards in Sanders’ hands.

It’s possible David was planning to spring it on us at the MCA gathering in Chicago this past May. There was an Erdnase lecture at the MCA. Fate intervened and perhaps David’s widow passed the papers on to Genii.

This article is completely new research, not David Alexander’s work. Whether or not it is an extension of David Alexander’s work will become apparent on the 10th.

2 more days!!

Leonard Hevia 08/08/11 11:55 AM | link | filter

Thanks for the heads up Mike. When I wrote that post and submitted it, the Chief Genii had already posted a minute or two ahead of me that it was a new kid on the block. If it’s W. E. Sanders, I’m certain that whoever discovered the new information must have leaned on at least some of David and Richard Kyle’s work.

The author of this new article sees far because he stands on the shoulders of giants.
Chris Aguilar | 08/08/11 11:56 AM | link | filter

Richard was clear that the silhouette on the cover was Erdnase.

The overlay of that cover image with a known image of W.E. Sanders seems to pretty convincingly show that one image was derived from the other. Even the lighting (highlights) matches precisely.

Perhaps I’m mistaken, but the evidence shown so far (rock collection, cover image/Sanders photo, etc.) has convinced me that we will be reading new evidence supporting W.E. Sanders as Erdnase in two days.

Bob Coyne | 08/08/11 12:25 PM | link | filter

Aside from learning Erdnase's identity, it'll be interesting to see whether the new research illuminates various other issues such as:

1) Was Erdnase primarily a gambler or magician?
2) Were there any magic publications due to him under some other pseudonym?
3) Any accounts of his gambling experiences?
4) Any influences on his work (who he learned from, etc)
5) Were there multiple authors of EATCT? Maybe he had a gambling partner who he worked with.

I guess it's unlikely we'll learn much of this sort of thing, but one can hope :-)

Rick Ruhl | 08/08/11 12:45 PM | link | filter

Mike Vance wrote: First, does anyone really believe that Kaufman is going to tip the name two days before the article comes out? Come on people. You can give up on the direct questioning.

he's gonna answer my questions the day it comes out. I knew that.. LOL... he doesn't owe me money so I dont have anything to blackmail him with, except for those pictures at the 1982 IBM convention.....

We all finally know the answer, now to read the proof.

Mike Vance | 08/08/11 01:11 PM | link | filter

Rick Ruhl wrote: he's gonna answer my questions the day it comes out. I knew that.. LOL... he doesn't owe me money so I dont have anything to blackmail him with, except for those pictures at the 1982 IBM
Those ’82 pictures sound interesting... :)

Rick Ruhl | 08/08/11 01:22 PM | link | filter

Mike Vance wrote:

Rick Ruhl wrote: he's gonna answer my questions the day it comes out. I knew that.. LOL... he doesn't owe me money so I don't have anything to blackmail him with, except for those pictures at the 1982 IBM convention....

Those ’82 pictures sound interesting... :) 

Interesting, but it wasn't pretty! LOL

Bob Coyne | 08/08/11 07:13 PM | link | filter

Richard Hatch wrote: Curiously, there are two typos (intentional?) in the spelling of ”Erdnase” in this clip:
It is captioned ”Want to visit Erdanse's office?”

And then the video says: ”Where was Erndase's office?”
Another clue, perhaps?

I was wondering about that too. I think they're almost surely intentional. The question is what they mean. Maybe there's evidence that Erdnase considered using these two pseudonyms before settling on Erdnase.

John Cox | 08/08/11 07:51 PM | link | filter

I can't believe I'm so interested in something that has nothing to do with Houdini.

Wait! Unless...

:)

Joe Pecore | 08/08/11 07:56 PM | link | filter

John Cox wrote: I can't believe I'm so interested in something that has nothing to do with Houdini.
Well, The Erdnase Change, a color change from Expert at the Card Table, is the same handling credited to Harry Houdini, in Selbit’s The Magician's Handbook (New Colour Changes, Fourth Method) (1901) and later in Elliott’s Last Legacy (1923) under "Two Effective Moves by Houdini".

______________________________

**Leonard Hevia** | 08/08/11 08:41 PM | link | filter

We all know that Erdnase told Marshall D. Smith that he was related to the famous editorial cartoonist of the day Louis Dalrymple. A loose end here is W. Sanders’ connection with Dalrymple.

Did the "New Kid on the Block" discover this connection? Could this be the smoking gun?

______________________________

**Mike Vance** | 08/08/11 08:50 PM | link | filter

Even if he did discover it, would that be considered a smoking gun?

______________________________

**Frank Yuen** | 08/08/11 08:52 PM | link | filter

I believe David Alexander already had the connection or at least new of a connection but had yet to verify it conclusively. He mentions earlier in this thread receiving the info from a genealogy board.

______________________________

**Richard Hatch** | 08/08/11 11:31 PM | link | filter

*Frank Yuen wrote:* I believe David Alexander already had the connection or at least new of a connection but had yet to verify it conclusively. He mentions earlier in this thread receiving the info from a genealogy board.

I believe that David's original GENII article on Sanders mentions that a Reverend Sanders officiated at the funeral of William Dalrymple, the father of Louis. That seemed a bit weak at the time.

______________________________

**Richard Hatch** | 08/08/11 11:33 PM | link | filter

*Bob Coyne wrote:*

*Richard Hatch wrote:* Curiously, there are two typos (intentional?) in the spelling of "Erdnase" in this clip: It is captioned "Want to visit Erdanse’s office?"
Another clue, perhaps?

I was wondering about that too. I think they're almost surely intentional. The question is what they mean. Maybe there's evidence that Erdnase considered using these two pseudonyms before settling on Erdnase.

Bob, David Alexander's original research did indicate that Sanders engaged in anagramatic wordplay with his name in his diaries. If these two variants are among them, that would be a very interesting development!

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**Pete McCabe** | 08/09/11 01:37 AM | link | filter

I'll tell you what would be a smoking gun Sanders' (or anyone's) diary with "S. W. Erdnase" written in it somewhere.

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**Frank Yuen** | 08/09/11 05:02 AM | link | filter

*Richard Hatch wrote:*

*Frank Yuen wrote:* I believe David Alexander already had the connection or at least new of a connection but had yet to verify it conclusively. He mentions earlier in this thread receiving the info from a genealogy board.

I believe that David's original GENII article on Sanders mentions that a Reverend Sanders officiated at the funeral of William Dalrymple, the father of Louis. That seemed a bit weak at the time.

On Dec. 20, 2006 David Alexander posted this:

"By the way, I’ve learned that my candidates family is related to the Dalrymple family through an uncle, or so I was informed a few years ago by someone off a genealogy bulletin board."

and then on Nov 23, 2007 posted this:

"All that and one other thing: some time back someone sent me info linking Wilbur's family with the Dalrymple family. I have to follow that more closely, but it looks good."

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**Mike Vance** | 08/09/11 06:44 AM | link | filter

I can't wait to see what you guys think about the article tomorrow. It's an incredible read that I'm sure you'll love. I know I enjoyed it.
This is going to be fun to watch unfold.

---

**Rick Ruhl** | 08/09/11 07:36 AM | link | filter

*Mike Vance wrote:* I can't wait to see what you guys think about the article tomorrow. It's an incredible read that I'm sure you'll love. I know I enjoyed it.

This is going to be fun to watch unfold.

How did you get to look at an early copy? Do you have something on Richard? LOL

---

**Mike Vance** | 08/09/11 10:38 AM | link | filter

*Rick Ruhl wrote:*

*Mike Vance wrote:* I can't wait to see what you guys think about the article tomorrow. It's an incredible read that I'm sure you'll love. I know I enjoyed it.

This is going to be fun to watch unfold.

How did you get to look at an early copy? Do you have something on Richard? LOL

The author is a good friend of mine. I also helped edit the article a little for him as well as dismantle a desk (check out the digital Genii for the explanation of that one). You guys are in for a real treat tomorrow.

---

**Roger M.** | 08/09/11 10:55 AM | link | filter

I'm sorry, but if the big "reveal" contains additional conjecture, or even hard proof that Sanders was Erdnase, it's not a derivative (or "new") bit of work........**it's David Alexanders work.**

Sanders is David Alexanders candidate.

It's somewhat insane to imagine that anybody working with Sanders as a candidate wasn't 100% working on the back of David Alexanders hard won research.

Coming up with something "new" is fine, and credit can certainly be given for whatever "new" is put to print..........but this isn't "new" work if it's Sanders being probed.
David Alexander (whom I exchanged emails on the topic over quite a few years) was tireless in his research.

Sanders is David's work, and is David's candidate. I doesn't matter what's "added" (if anything)......it doesn't change the fact that it’s David's hard work that got us there.

If it’s not Sanders, but somebody he knew, or another member of his family.......same as the above........it was David’s gig.

Nobody would even know who Sanders was if it wasn’t for David.

Rant over. (it may not even be Sanders, although that does appear to be Sanders on the cover......).

---

**Rick Ruhl** | 08/09/11 10:59 AM | link | filter

[quote=Mike Vance]

I also helped edit the article a little for him as well as dismantle a desk (check out the digital Genii for the explanation of that one). You guys are in for a real treat tomorrow.

[/quote]

The draft of expert in the card table was hidden in a secret drawer on the site of the Resolute Desks? Shades of National Treasure Book 2.

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**Mike Vance** | 08/09/11 11:37 AM | link | filter

Roger,

I don’t think anyone is trying to take anything away from Alexander. He and his research were very much respected in this process.

Supposing for the moment that Sanders is the guy, then the process could be likened to a criminal case. A detective, Alexander (figuratively and literally, in this case), identifies a suspect and collects evidence. This then passed on to the prosecutor, who collects additional evidence and prosecutes the case to obtain the conviction. The case doesn't get closed without both parties. And, while they may both feel some ownership, neither one has anything in isolation.

Again, I haven’t heard anyone try to take anything away from Alexander during this process. His work has been very much valued and respected. And, yes, Alexander may have identified the suspect, but he unfortunately passed away before he could
As you will see, this is not just a few new bits of information. Then you could rightly call it derivative of Alexander’s work. This was exhaustive and extensive research that stands on its own. I haven’t heard anyone denigrate Vernon by calling his card handling derivative just because Erdnase came first. Alexander rightly deserves respect, but it is insulting to presume that other do not.

Maybe Isaac Newton put it best when he said, "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."

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**Carlo Morpurgo** | 08/09/11 11:44 AM | [link] | [filter]

*Roger M. wrote:* I’m sorry, but if the big "reveal" contains additional conjecture, or even hard proof that Sanders was Erdnase, it’s not a derivative (or "new") bit of work........it’s **David Alexanders work.**

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If it's not Sanders, but somebody he knew, or another member of his family........same as the above........it was David's gig.

Nobody would even know who Sanders was if it wasn't for David.

Rant over. (it may not even be Sanders, although that does appear to be Sanders on the cover.......).
I strongly object to this line of reasoning...If the candidate is Sanders and there is hard (or harder) new proof that he was the one, then this IS new crucial work, period. Whoever did the work (perhaps David himself) must be duly credited, whether it’s a continuation of David’s research, or a new independent finding.

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**Bob Coyne** | 08/09/11 11:51 AM | [link] | [filter]

*Roger M. wrote:* I'm sorry, but if the big "reveal" contains additional conjecture, or even hard proof that Sanders was Erdnase, it's not a derivative (or "new") bit of work.......it's David Alexanders work.

Sorry, this is very harsh and just wrong. It's like saying that any of the myriads of advances made in classical physics *are* the work of Newton, or that the people who sent a rocket to the moon didn't do anything new because it all depended on the application of Newton's Laws. Of course, David made the huge breakthrough of identifying Sanders as a candidate and finding some interesting circumstantial evidence. His thinking and research that led to Sanders and the case he built for Sanders as a candidate was brilliant. But if this new work goes significantly beyond that, then it should also be celebrated as new and important.

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/09/11 11:55 AM | [link] | [filter]

The issue is being mailed today.

The digital edition should be online sometime tomorrow, but it will probably be noon or later in the day.

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**Chris Aguilar** | 08/09/11 11:59 AM | [link] | [filter]

Did anyone before David Alexander opine that the anagram might be something other than "Andrews"?

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**Mike Vance** | 08/09/11 12:04 PM | [link] | [filter]

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* The issue is being mailed today.

The digital edition should be online sometime tomorrow, but it will probably be noon or later in the day.

Woo hoo!

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/09/11 01:15 PM | [link] | [filter]
Thomas Sawyer, who's been writing and thinking about Erdnase for a lot longer than I have, weighs in.

Richard Hatch | 08/09/11 01:36 PM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:* Thomas Sawyer, who's been writing and thinking about Erdnase for a lot longer than I have, weighs in.

Hey, thanks, Bill, that was neat. Anyone else disagree with Sawyer's statement: "Now, if you absolutely had to choose one of these guys as being S.W. Erdnase, I think everyone would agree that it would be the guy in the center."? I have no problem with the fellow in the lower right corner being him (E. C. Howells. Same initials as Edwin C. Hood of H. C. Evans & Co. Coincidence?) based on appearance alone, especially as Smith described the author as being clean shaven and the others in those photos are quite heavily bearded... A moot point since none of them is Erdnase, but I wondered why Sawyer finds the image of Foster in a line up of Erdnase candidates so attractive?

Jonathan Townsend | 08/09/11 02:23 PM | link | filter

*Chris Aguilar wrote:* Did anyone before David Alexander opine that the anagram might be something other than "Andrews"?

Chris, there's been extensive exploration over the last thirty odd years on that and about anything else that could be done in an armchair on this topic. David Alexander did a fine job of pursuing a "reasonable" avenue toward logical candidates and even though he selected one as seeming most likely as detailed in his feature article he continued to be active in the process as you can read from his posts.

IMHO there's little to be gained in getting argumentative about "who gets credit" till we read the discussion and the crediting given - in just a few days.

Chris Aguilar | 08/09/11 02:45 PM | link | filter

Jon,

I wasn't trying to get into some crediting kerfuffle. As I haven't really followed this "Erdnase Hunt" that much over the years, I was curious if other anagram (but non "Andrews") candidates have been put forth before D. Alexander.

Rick Ruhl | 08/09/11 03:10 PM | link | filter

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* The issue is being mailed today.
probably be noon or later in the day.

Are you gonna let the cat out of the bag at midnight? Like a midnight showing of a movie?

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/09/11 06:38 PM | link | filter

S

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/09/11 06:38 PM | link | filter

W

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/09/11 06:38 PM | link | filter

E

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/09/11 06:51 PM | link | filter

Now let's all do the Shift.

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**Geno Munari** | 08/09/11 07:02 PM | link | filter

Regarding: "..do the shift", and the two other initial hints from Richard:

That was directly from David Alexander's article in 2000 or thereabouts.

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/09/11 07:20 PM | link | filter

W

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/09/11 07:20 PM | link | filter

E

---

**Richard Kaufman** | 08/09/11 07:20 PM | link | filter

S

---

**Chris Aguilar** | 08/09/11 07:28 PM | link | filter
from Richard:

That was directly from David Alexander's article in 2000 or thereabouts.

Right.

"David Alexander" wrote: A "shift" is a secret action with cards, moving the top block of cards to the bottom. If we follow his instructions in the "S.W.E. Shift" and move or shift the "S" in "S.W.E." to the bottom (instead of simply reading it backward), we get the initials "W.E.S." which are, exactly, the initials of one of the remaining two names contained in the anagram. So, in his own words, S.W Erdnase tells us his real name through the use of Artifice Ruse and Subterfuge. The true name of The Expert at the Card Table is:

W.E. Sanders

Rick Ruhl | 08/09/11 07:39 PM | link | filter

Chris Aguilar wrote:

Geno Munari wrote: Regarding: ".do the shift", and the two other initial hints from Richard:

That was directly from David Alexander's article in 2000 or thereabouts.

Right.

"David Alexander" wrote: A "shift" is a secret action with cards, moving the top block of cards to the bottom. If we follow his instructions in the "S.W.E. Shift" and move or shift the "S" in "S.W.E." to the bottom (instead of simply reading it backward), we get the initials "W.E.S." which are, exactly, the initials of one of the remaining two names contained in the anagram. So, in his own words, S.W Erdnase tells us his real name through the use of Artifice Ruse and Subterfuge. The true name of The Expert at the Card Table is:
Which is what Richard just said... WES!!!!!!!!!!

**Richard Kaufman** | 08/09/11 07:44 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I really hated "Mr. Ed."

**Rick Ruhl** | 08/09/11 07:50 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

But will we hate Wilbur?

**Bob Coyne** | 08/09/11 08:37 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

The lead-up to the article (Mr Ed clue, Erdnaseum videos, Genii cover preview, etc) and ensuing discussion here was great fun. It definitely helped build the excitement and raise the level of anticipation. I, for one, can't wait for tomorrow to finally read it! Congratulations ahead of time to everyone involved!

**Rick Ruhl** | 08/09/11 08:40 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Richard, after the reveal, I feel this thread should be locked. It started in 2003 with a massive amount of information passed. it had now come full circle and we need to start a new thread.

This has been an amazing journey. Richard and I are near the same age, so this has been a lifetime mystery.

The journey has ended and a new chapter begins.

Part II, W E Sanders IS S W Erdnase.

Rick

**Leonard Hevia** | 08/09/11 08:42 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I have a black and white snapshot of Vernon, Jay Ose, and Fawcett Ross posing next to Mr. Ed, the palomino horse. Vernon is patting it on the neck, Ose is looking down at the horse's face, and Ross is staring at the camera. If only Vernon knew how close he was to the answer he had been seeking for many years.

In his January 2000 *Genii* article, David wrote "Many questions remain unanswered, many areas need to be explored." He would have been the first person to acknowledge
I want to thank Richard Hatch and Todd Karr for publishing their research. Reading their results was...fun.

---

**JohnCox** | 08/09/11 09:30 PM | link | filter

Joe Pecore wrote:

*JohnCox wrote:* I can't believe I'm so interested in something that has nothing to do with Houdini.

Well, The Erdnase Change, a color change from Expert at the Card Table, is the same handling credited to Harry Houdini, in Selbit's The Magician's Handbook (New Colour Changes, Fourth Method) (1901) and later in Elliott's Last Legacy (1923) under "Two Effective Moves by Houdini".

Oh, that's cool. Didn't know that. Thank you, Joe.

I'm convinced. :)

---

**Richard Hatch** | 08/09/11 09:45 PM | link | filter

I've gotta say that I am surprised by the number of people who seem willing to accept the conclusions of an article they haven't yet read. I, for one, am reserving judgement until I have a chance to read the article. Greatly looking forward to it, regardless, and to the discussion in engenders.

---

**Richard Kaufman** | 08/09/11 09:53 PM | link | filter

Just finished recording my "More Genii Speaks" video, and now have to import it into iMove to top and tail it. Then will now upload it, plus all the other audio and video to our printer. Hopefully things will fall into place nicely and we'll be live tomorrow.

Just a note: while the issue may appear to be available in our iPad app tomorrow, it's possible that the audio and video might not be converted and placed by then. So, while you can download and read the issue, if you try and play a video and find that nothing happens or it freezes up, that's why. If you delete that version of the September issue and download it again the next day, the video and audio should play without problem. Or it might work the first time tomorrow. Who knows?

I don't know. I only work here.

But I wanted you to be able to read it as soon as possible instead of waiting another day...
Richard Kaufman | 08/09/11 09:55 PM | link | filter

Richard Hatch is absolutely correct: everyone has to make up their own mind after reading the piece as to whether the evidence is sufficiently convincing. It is to me, but your mileage might vary. I'm sure there will be dissenting views, and so the thread will remain open.

Chris Aguilar | 08/09/11 10:25 PM | link | filter

Richard Hatch wrote: I've gotta say that I am surprised by the number of people who seem willing to accept the conclusions of an article they haven't yet read.

I'm not really seeing that.
For instance, if I quote David Alexander supporting his candidate, that doesn't necessarily mean that I support his candidate without more (or convincing) evidence.

Bob Coyne | 08/09/11 10:45 PM | link | filter

Chris Aguilar wrote:

Richard Hatch wrote: I've gotta say that I am surprised by the number of people who seem willing to accept the conclusions of an article they haven't yet read.

I'm not really seeing that.
For instance, if I quote David Alexander supporting his candidate, that doesn't necessarily mean that I support his candidate without more evidence.

Right -- I think much of the agreement being expressed here is on what the various pre-release clues point to (WE Sanders)...i.e. who the article is about. That's a very different matter than agreeing with the article itself, which can't be done before actually reading it. I do hope and expect, however, that the article makes a convincing case. We'll soon find out!

Richard Kaufman | 08/09/11 11:06 PM | link | filter

You want a candidate who did card magic.
You want a candidate who played cards a lot.
You want a candidate who matches M.D. Smith's description.
You want a candidate who has a connection to Dalrymple.
You want a candidate with a good reason to remain anonymous.
styles readily.
You want a candidate who knew Del Adelphia.

[David Byron](https://example.com) | 08/09/11 11:33 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

_Edwin Corrie wrote:_ Some of the other evidence is interesting, but I still find the "earth nose" idea a bit tenuous. Surely it would be almost too much of a coincidence if someone was able to rearrange the letters of his name to come up with an anagram that was an obscure reference to his profession in another language which he (presumably) didn't speak.

The "earth nose" factor is, imo, one of the _strongest_, not weakest, corroborating factors. Anagrammatists often calculate as many combinations as possible in search of one _that has some topical relevance_. This is done _especially_ with personal names. Likewise, it's hardly a stretch that a student at Exeter would have some exposure to elementary German.

(BTW, the Sanders faction should start pronouncing "Erdnase" correctly. Three syllables, long 'a', schwa. ;)

[Bob Coyne](https://example.com) | 08/09/11 11:57 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

_David Byron wrote:_ The "earth nose" factor is, imo, one of the _strongest_, not weakest, corroborating factors. Anagrammatists often calculate as many combinations as possible in search of one _that has some topical relevance_. This is done _especially_ with personal names. Likewise, it's hardly a stretch that a student at Exeter would have some exposure to elementary German.

It's likely that Sanders knew some German since it was a primary language for engineering texts back in those days. He would probably have to learned it to get his engineering degree. I also think David Alexander had some explicit evidence that Sanders studied German.

[Leonard Hevia](https://example.com) | 08/10/11 12:43 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Yes Bob, David wrote "In the summer of 1879 he attended the Wooster School of Language where he studied Greek, two classes of Latin, and German."

At the age of eighteen, this guy spent his summer cooped up inside various classrooms studying languages instead of playing outside and chasing girls.

The Del Adelphia connection is interesting. I wonder if the NKOTB has uncovered more information on this. Is there correspondence or a candid photo of both these
Richard Kaufman wrote:
You want a candidate who did card magic. You want a candidate who played cards a lot. You want a candidate who matches M.D. Smith’s description. You want a candidate who has a connection to Dalrymple. You want a candidate with a good reason to remain anonymous. You want a candidate who was not only a writer, but a writer who would could switch styles readily. You want a candidate who knew Del Adelphia.

Proof beyond a shadow of a doubt. Would hold up in court.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/10/11 11:37 AM | link | filter

I’m looking forward to reading more about the candidate, his other writing and how this text fits in with the rest of his life.

El Mystico | 08/10/11 12:33 PM | link | filter

This is going to be odd for those of us outside the US and still relying on paper copies: to be reading the discussion on this (until now) contentious topic, without yet having the evidence.

Richard Kaufman | 08/10/11 12:47 PM | link | filter

The digital issue will be active shortly.

Bill Mullins | 08/10/11 01:00 PM | link | filter

It just came up.

Richard Kaufman | 08/10/11 01:10 PM | link | filter

The digital issue is NOW live!

NOTE: If you are using the iPad, do NOT check the box to also download multimedia because those files are not ready yet. (You can delete the issue from your iPad tomorrow, then re-download tomorrow and they’ll be there.) I don’t want your issue to freeze up, so don’t attempt to utilize any audio or video until tomorrow. But you CAN read the issue now.
Frank Yuen | 08/10/11 01:37 PM | link | filter

Off to do something I hate - reading text on the computer.

Steve Bryant | 08/10/11 02:12 PM | link | filter

Fascinating.

Chris Aguilar | 08/10/11 02:16 PM | link | filter

Excellent article. Answers many questions/motivations in a clear, logical manner.

Frank Yuen | 08/10/11 02:41 PM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: You want a candidate who did card magic.
You want a candidate who played cards a lot.
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You want a candidate with a good reason to remain anonymous.
You want a candidate who was not only a writer, but a writer who would could switch styles readily.
You want a candidate who knew Del Adelphia.

Wow! An excellent article and a fascinating read. The only one of the above that doesn’t really have strong evidence would be that he knew Del Adelphia but the opportunity to know him certainly appears to be there. May I suggest Richard, that you invite Mr. Demarest to join our discussion here?

aofl | 08/10/11 02:42 PM | link | filter

Compelling. He must certainly leap to the forefront of S.W.E. candidates.

Still... it is circumstantial evidence.

Mike Vance | 08/10/11 02:45 PM | link | filter

Frank Yuen wrote: Wow! An excellent article and a fascinating read. The only one of the above that doesn’t really have strong evidence would be that he knew Del Adelphia but the opportunity to know him certainly appears to be there. May I suggest Richard, that you invite Mr. Demarest to join our discussion here?

I believe he already monitors the discussion here.
So how many people are swayed? When I first read it (I got a small head start, and it's been hard to sit on it), I said "I'm convinced. [Marty's] made a believer out of one person." Some of that was giddiness at seeing such a fascinating article about a subject that I hold great interest in (some would say, too much interest . . .) But it was also recognition of the strong case made by Demarest. This is good work.

Over the years, I've gone from believing that Erdnase will never be found -- that the lifestyle that leads one to write a book about excellence at a cheating at cards is a solitary, a-social, lonely pursuit, and it does not tend to leave the sort of documentary trail that one could call "proof" -- to being amazed at the coincidences in the lives of the major candidates with what we know (or think we know) about Erdnase, and thinking that one of these guys will eventually win out. Then I go back again.

Up until a week ago I probably felt that Edwin Sumner Andrews was the strongest candidate, but I still wouldn't say that he was more likely than not to be Erdnase. Now W. E. Sanders holds that position; and I would say that he more likely was Erdnase than was not. But we still don't have documentary evidence tying him to the book, or knowledge that he actually cheated, or performed sleight of hand. The book is about cheating and sleight of hand, and those are important missing pieces -- so much so that MFA has remained a "person of interest" despite all the obvious reasons not to think he wrote the book. I still think there is room to establish someone else as a stronger candidate.

So, I've backed off (a little) from my first reaction. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being evidence of the level of a signed contract between Sanders and James McKinney; 1 being speculation that Mark Twain wrote it), I'm putting Sanders at an 8 (with sincere surprise that such a strong case could be developed). I still put Hatch's Andrews at about a 5, Karr's Andrews at maybe 3-1/2, MF Andrews at a 2, and other suggested names (Hilliar, Harto, R. F. Foster, etc.) farther down the scale.

Great article, great issue!

It's a very well written article, and Marty is to be congratulated for getting it published, and the interest folks obviously have in reading it. It's most definitely a keeper, and I'm very pleased to have it on my (digital for now) shelf.
I take away the following after having read and re-read the article a half a dozen times.

At least 50% of the article is a well written restatement of what David Alexander wrote for Genii, combined with (well written) material culled from this very ERDNASE thread.

Although very detailed, the only real hard evidence presented that would qualify as "new" and/or revealing is the fact that Erdnase wrote "Mutus Nomen".... in his notebook.
Simply penning Mutus Nomen down in a note book and being a hard core card magician dont always go hand in hand.
Having said that, this in and of itself is quite a major find, but not a smoking gun that would let us say Sanders was Erdnase.

The fact that Sanders played a few games like Whist and Coon-Can would pretty much make him like the rest of the guys living in Montana at the time.......they all liked to play cards. Playing cards was one of the (if not THE) most popular social activity at the time.
Marty himself writes in this article: "cards were everywhere in Montana during the late 19th century"
.........so this wouldn't qualify as "hard" evidence that Sanders is Erdnase.

Del Adelphia lived in Montana, and so did between 250,000 and 300,000 other folks in that same time period.
This wouldn't go very far in implying that Sanders met or knew Del Adelphia. More than a quarter of a million people living in one state cant (and doesnt) result in everybody knowing each other.
So Adelphia living in Montana doesnt lead us anywhere close to a place where we can call Sanders Erdnase with conviction.

Sanders wrote his name in various forms in his notebooks, moving the letters around and apparently being interested in combinations of the letters in his name. This is certainly new and powerfulbut I dont see S.W. ERDNASE written anywhere in those notebooks, so I dont find it conclusive..but do find it extremely interesting.

....Sanders matched M.D. Smiths description of Erdnase in appearance.. Yes he did, as Alexander pointed out years ago in his Genii article.

....Sanders was a writeryes he was, we knew that from that same Genii article, and this thread as pointed out by Alexander.

So in the end, we know what we knew before, with the addition of the fact that Sanders wrote Mutus Nomen in one of his notebooks, and liked to scrawl his name with the letters juggled around, or at least even if he didn't like to do it, he did it once or
twice as shown by Marty in this article.

Frankly, I've long held that David Alexanders candidate and Richard Hatch's candidate were quite equal in their possibilities as having authored EATCT. Marty's article certainly keeps them neck and neck and possibly may convince some folks that Sanders should be moved to the front of the line in terms of Erdnase candidates.

I find Richard Hatch's candidate, and some of the evidence that Richard has presented previously to be at least as compelling as that presented in Marty's article. Possibly more so if one were to actually stand back and examine all the facts. Richard Hatch's candidate comes a lot closer to actually having the book in his hand (literally) than does Mr. Sanders.

A great article, one of the best I've ever read in Genii but it convinces me of nothing I wasn't already long convinced of, and certainly doesn't result in my affirmation that Sanders was Erdnase. Sanders remains a very highly ranked candidate, but then he was a very highly ranked candidate 24 hours ago...or a few years ago for that matter.

The take-away? I would quote from Marty's article directly, from the closing paragraphs..."If he wrote "The Expert" (emphasis mine).

Bravo on the article Richard and Marty!! As a long time fan of Erdnase and his book, this is a treat without equal in terms of entertaining, enjoyable, and well researched reading.

Tom Frame | 08/10/11 05:15 PM | link | filter

This is a marvelous article! Congratulations to Marty, David and Richard. I'm a believer.

Chris Aguilar | 08/10/11 06:39 PM | link | filter

I especially enjoyed the concrete Dalrymple connection and the very logical reason for desiring anonymity.

As mentioned in the article, this likely isn't the last information to come on this subject from Marty.

IrishMagicNews | 08/10/11 07:12 PM | link | filter

Richard, is there a way to see this article without being a subscriber. Would love to be...
able to pay a one off charge for this issue if it allowed me access to a digital edition?

Respectfully,

Brendan

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**David Ben** | 08/10/11 07:16 PM | link | filter

Hopefully the next issue of Magicol will provide some clarity to this debate. I am in the process of assembling the issue for layout now.

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/10/11 07:20 PM | link | filter

Sorry, Brendan, but there is no way to view the article if you're not a subscriber other than by purchasing a single copy of the regular magazine and having us send it to you.

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**Jeff.Prace** | 08/10/11 08:16 PM | link | filter

Richard, when will the single issue be for sale?

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/10/11 08:18 PM | link | filter

Now!

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**Leonard Hevia** | 08/10/11 08:42 PM | link | filter

Thanks for the great posts Bill and Roger. Your thoughts on this new article are insightful. Was there any mention in the article on the Sanders-Dalrymple connection? Any compelling evidence on this?

I know that Richard Hatch lectured on Erdnase at the MCA back in May. Will he publish any new findings since his 1999 article in *Magic*?

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**Chris Aguilar** | 08/10/11 08:44 PM | link | filter

Leonard Hevia wrote: Was there any mention in the article on the Sanders-Dalrymple connection?

Yes. And even an illustration.

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/10/11 08:44 PM | link | filter
Yes, the Dalrymple connection is given in the article (Dalrymple's illustration of Sanders' father is shown).

**Leonard Hevia** | 08/10/11 09:15 PM | link | filter

Thanks guys! That information is unbelievable!

**Chris Aguilar** | 08/10/11 11:13 PM | link | filter

After watching the "More Genii Speaks" I have to give a shout out to my friend **Tommy Brown** for being the first person that I know of to suss out Richards "Wiiiiillllbur" clue.

I hadn't watched that particular clip when Tommy asked me if it meant what he thought it meant (i.e. Sanders). After watching it (and remembering Sanders from the 2000 Genii article) I agreed and then asked Tommy if he minded my mentioning the clue here :)

**Bob Coyne** | 08/10/11 11:36 PM | link | filter

*Chris Aguilar wrote:* After watching the "More Genii Speaks" I have to give a shout out to my friend **Tommy Brown** for being the first person that I know of to suss out Richards "Wiiiiillllbur" clue.

I hadn't watched that particular clip when Tommy asked me if it meant what he thought it meant (i.e. Sanders). After watching it (and remembering Sanders from the 2000 Genii article) I agreed and then asked Tommy if he minded my mentioning the clue here :)

Yes, that wiiiiillbur clue really set off the whole chain of events leading to being able to interpret some of the other clues from Richard and Marty. Of course that part was all fun and games. The real thing is the new research and article itself which certainly delivered the goods. I was spellbound reading it.

**Bob Coyne** | 08/10/11 11:50 PM | link | filter

*Chris Aguilar wrote:* As mentioned in the article, this likely isn't the last information to come on this subject from Marty.

Yeah, that caught my eye too -- the intriguing possibility of ongoing research turning up more information on Sanders/Erdnase, and maybe leading to a book on the subject. The article didn't mention any "future work" -- i.e., what leads haven't been followed vet. etc. It would be nice to know what those are if any!
BTW, Mark Twain's name has come up a couple of times previously in regards to Erdnase.

In 1895, Twain gave a lecture in Butte, MT. He visited Helena, and on Aug 6 had his picture taken with Wilbur F. Sanders, W.E.'s father. It's a small world.

If you watch the video supplement to the Erdnase article, you'll see Marty display that photograph of Twain with Wilbur Fisk Sanders.

You can see the photo of Wilbur F. Sander with Mark Twain online here (scroll down): http://www.lifelikecharm.com/Broadwater_misellany.htm
This link was posted in this thread back in 2007. Also in the photo is Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of UNCLE TOM'S CABIN, another possible influence on Erdnase, given his quoting of dialect...

One of the Erdnaseum clues was "where did Erdnase hide?". I read the article a couple times and don’t remember anything related to that. Did anyone notice anything answering that?

Bob Coyne wrote: One of the Erdnaseum clues was "where did Erdnase hide?". I read the article a couple times and don't remember anything related to that. Did anyone notice anything answering that?

Ok, I found it -- there's a sentence in the article about how Sanders at one point hid from patrolling Native Americans in the Blackfeet Indian Reserve. (The same paragraph also answers the "What did Erdnase sing" question.)

The Wikipedia entry on Erdnase has been edited to include the statement:

"Genii Magazine in September 2011 has proof that his real identity is W. E. Sanders."
Seems a bit too strong a statement to me.


Richard Hatch | 08/11/11 02:18 AM | link | filter

For those who can't access the GENII article online yet, here's a link to the Dalrymple cartoon featuring (among many others) a caricature of W. F. Sanders (W. E. Sanders father):
http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/art ... _00579.htm

Richard Hatch | 08/11/11 03:05 AM | link | filter

http://erdnaseum.com/ has been updated with info about the upcoming symposium. Should be an excellent event!

Frank Yuen | 08/11/11 04:11 AM | link | filter

Can anyone make out what was on the bookmark that Demarest shows in the Genii Speaks video?

Bob Coyne | 08/11/11 08:09 AM | link | filter

I don’t remember it exactly and there was one word I couldn’t quite make out, but the top half said something like "there are still a few [something] of magic left in the world". And I think the bottom half just had the name of the Sanders B&B, or something like that. Maybe someone else wrote it down or remembers exactly.

Bob Coyne | 08/11/11 08:36 AM | link | filter

Richard Hatch wrote: The Wikipedia entry on Erdnase has been edited to include the statement:

"Genii Magazine in September 2011 has proof that his real identity is W. E. Sanders."

Seems a bit too strong a statement to me.


Looks like it’s been changed. The current intro, however, is both too weak and misleading: "S. W. Erdnase was most likely a way for the author to conceal his real
later. Genii Magazine in September 2011 has proposed that his real identity is W. E. Sanders."

So he wouldn't be arrested??? And so people could figure out his identity later??? I don't interpret it that way.

Also, the new Genii article has done more than "propose" Sanders...instead, it has provided persuasive/convincing [pick your adjective] evidence. (Also it was the original David Alexander article in 2001 or whatever that proposed him...not this article)

**Bill Mullins | 08/11/11 09:14 AM | link | filter**

*Richard Hatch wrote:* For those who can't access the GENII article online yet, here's a link to the Dalrymple cartoon featuring (among many others) a caricature of W. F. Sanders (W. E. Sanders father):
http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/art..._00579.htm

And [HERE](http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/art..._00579.htm) is the cartoon as originally printed in *Puck*.

Note that in neither place is the "Montana" character specifically identified as Sanders. The senators on the left side of the image (Quay, Hoar, Sawyer, Hiscock) are named and can be clearly identified as republican members of the senate in 1891. The men manning the cannon in the middle are only named by states (Montana, Idaho, Dakota) as representing the mining states of the West. The Montana character resembles Sanders, but isn't as accurate a likeness as the named senators above.

I think it is possible that the Montana character is simply supposed to represent the interests of the Montana miners, and may not be intended to be a likeness of W. F. Sanders (perhaps Dalrymple didn't have a photograph or other source material to use to make the picture resemble Sanders, who had only been in the Senate for a year at that point).

**Bill Mullins | 08/11/11 09:54 AM | link | filter**

*Frank Yuen wrote:* Can anyone make out what was on the bookmark that Demarest shows in the Genii Speaks video?

"There are still a few remnants of magic left in the world"

**Roger M. | 08/11/11 10:02 AM | link | filter**
Sanders...instead, it has provided persuasive/convincing [pick your adjective] evidence. (Also it was the original David Alexander article in 2001 or whatever that proposed him...not this article)

As it remains circumstantial evidence Bob, it’s hard to consider it anything but a "proposal". Perhaps "strongly proposed" might be more appropriate.

It may be my reading skills askew, but nowhere in the article did I read any hard statement made by Marty (made outside of his first-person Erndnase voice) which declared "I've found S.W. Erndnase, and he was Wilbur Sanders. Everybody should stop looking now, and don't question my article".

In fact, it appeared to me that Marty made sure not to say that. In his concluding paragraph, as I pointed out above, Marty writes "IF he wrote the book"............which is very different from "he wrote the book".

Richard Kaufman is really the only person who all but stated that Erndnase had been found. He did that both online and in his Editors page in the magazine. I didn't read anything similar from Marty. Richard, like us all, is entitled to his own opinion as to whether the articles circumstantial evidence is strong enough to "convict".

Marty presented his new circumstantial evidence in a brilliantly written piece, but didn't appear to presume to make a final statement which would stop all further questioning for the duration.

Personally, I would find it important to avoid the Busby, Gardner, Whaley trap. That trap tied the hands of one of those authors for the remainder of his life. They were absolutely resolute in their MFA candidate, and would look at no other candidate. Not a great position to be taking IMO, considering the fall from grace of MFA as a candidate over the years. (I'm not sure if we know the status of Busby these days, is he still living?.....and I believe that Bart still stands strongly by his MFA conclusion.)

I certainly wouldn't be comfortable stating as fact that Sanders was Erndnase. There's just nothing that could be considered hard enough evidence to support that statement.

Although it remains a strong and convincing "proposal".

Steve Bryant | 08/11/11 10:19 AM | link | filter
Is the iPad edition complete and ready yet?

**Rick Ruhl | 08/11/11 10:22 AM | link | filter**

*Roger M. wrote:* Although it remains a strong and convincing "proposal".

Richard did say there are more articles coming.. perhaps he is privy to some other information that we don’t know yet.

He’s known about this article since May.. and he’s damn good at keeping his mouth shut... dammit...

**Richard Kaufman | 08/11/11 10:25 AM | link | filter**

Roger is correct: Marty is a good journalist and never makes a broad statement about Sanders.

As an editor, I know a good story when I see it. I think his case for Sanders is very compelling, and will become even moreso as he furthers his research.

I agree entirely with both David Alexander and Marty that the name "E.S. Andrews" is NOT and can’t possibly be the name of the true author because the writing in the book is far too intelligent for the author to have barely concealed his name by a simple reversal of letters if he wanted to be anonymous. That is one of the MOST compelling reasons that Sanders is a viable candidate and all the others are not.

**Bob Coyne | 08/11/11 10:53 AM | link | filter**

*Roger M. wrote:*

*Bob Coyne wrote:* ..........the new Genii article has done more than "propose" Sanders...instead, it has provided persuasive/convincing [pick your adjective] evidence. (Also it was the original David Alexander article in 2001 or whatever that proposed him...not this article)

As it remains circumstantial evidence Bob, it’s hard to consider it anything but a "proposal".

Perhaps "strongly proposed" might be more appropriate.

[...]
I certainly wouldn’t be comfortable stating as fact that Sanders was
evidence to support that statement.

Although it remains a strong and convincing "proposal".

I was trying to make two points:
1) <b>Use of language:</b> Saying "to propose" usually implies something new (at least in context). You don't have people "proposing" the same thing over and over as they argue for it. It's proposed once. The proposal that Sanders was Erdnase came from David Alexander several years ago. So it sounds strange (to me anyway) to say that this new article proposed it since the proposal had already been made. Instead, what this article did is add evidence to the claim, flesh out the details, etc.
2) <b>Level of certainty:</b> Even ignoring this "newness" connotation of "propose", it's still too weak to merely say "propose" without any qualifier about the strength of the evidence. i.e. at this point there's a difference between the proposition that "Erdnase was Sanders" vs "Erdnase was Milton Andrews". If the intro paragraph is going to single out Sanders explicitly (which I think it should), then it should say more than that he is a proposed candidate.

I am 95% convinced that Sanders is Erdnase (up from 50% before). So I agree it's not an ironclad case, but seems safe to say that the substantial weight of the evidence points to Sanders.

---

**Roger M.** | 08/11/11 11:04 AM | link | filter

Being personally convinced (95% convinced) that Sander is Erdnase is great, but it may not be thinking that is universally shared.

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/11/11 11:10 AM | link | filter

Well, it's pretty obvious that it's not going to be universally shared.

---

**Chris Aguilar** | 08/11/11 11:17 AM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote: Being personally convinced (95% convinced) that Sander is Erdnase is great, but it may not be thinking that is universally shared.

I'm reasonably certain that Bob wasn't demanding that sort of consensus as necessary or even expected.

---

**Bob Coyne** | 08/11/11 11:19 AM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote: Being personally convinced (95% convinced) that Sander is Erdnase is great, but it may not be thinking that is universally shared.
I didn't say it was universally shared (or not) -- just giving my opinion.

Maybe someone should conduct a poll. (Does this forum provide that functionality?) I wouldn't be surprised if a large majority would now pick Sanders. It would be interesting to know, though it wouldn't affect my evaluation of the evidence, which I find very compelling.

What odds would you place on it?

---

**Jon Racherbaumer** | 08/11/11 11:28 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

How about this?
It is unlikely we will ever KNOW for sure.
I say this as I wistfully gaze at the 121 books and papers on my shelf relevant to the Kennedy Assassination.
Also, is it time we revisit and watch the film, "Who Shot Liberty Valance?"
Meanwhile, I'm enjoyed all of the "stories" and "versions"...
Onward...

---

**Rick Ruhl** | 08/11/11 12:01 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Jon Racherbaumer wrote*: How about this?
It is unlikely we will ever KNOW for sure.
I say this as I wistfully gaze at the 121 books and papers on my shelf relevant to the Kennedy Assassination.
Also, is it time we revisit and watch the film, "Who Shot Liberty Valance?"
Meanwhile, I'm enjoyed all of the "stories" and "versions"...
Onward...

And you live in the center of the movie JFK!

---

**Ted M** | 08/11/11 12:16 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Language issues:

David Alexander proposed Wilbur E. Sanders as a candidate, presented preliminary evidence and argued his case.

Marty Demarest presents additional evidence and more fully develops the argument that Sanders was Erdnase.

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**Geno Munari** | 08/11/11 12:20 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)
The article was very well written and certainly interesting. Many of you have beat me to the punch on several points with valid arguments. One thing we have as evidence for the first time (possibly) is the sampling of the handwriting of the candidate and the Copyright Office document that probably has Erdnase actual signature. One could argue that someone else filed the document for Erdnase. I say no. It would be inconsistent in keeping the author private. Why have another person on the need to know basis? But if it were another person might it had been a collaborator? I am not a handwriting expert but possibly Richard Hatch may want to do a cursory look since he as an official copy of that document. The science of handwriting is proven and valid. He also talks about this document on the DVD set I produced.

Incidentally, my entire family migrated from Italy to Butte, Billings, Roundup and Klein Montana in 1912? There is no question that gambling and saloons were everywhere. My grandfather was a miner. There were as many or more card cheats there than anywhere. In my early days at the California Club the "eye", Mike Sarkis, was from Butte. Then at the Dunes in early '68 I met Lloyd McQory (sic) who was the best handmucker I have ever seen. I am glad that the topic will stay open as the investigation continues.

Please excuse typographical errors as this from my Blackberry.

Roger M. | 08/11/11 12:24 PM | link | filter

The hunt for Erdnase has always been somewhat ephemeral.

If one finds solace in declaring Sanders as Erdnase based on the circumstantial evidence presented to date, that’s great and I fully support (and enjoy reading) those divergent personal opinions.

Much as many found solace (and still, apparently find that same solace) in declaring that MFA was Erdnase, it’s something that’s rendered as a personal opinion.

Circumstantial evidence, no smoking gun, and at least one other candidate that can be shown to have been physically much closer to the First Edition of the book than Sanders has been to date.

I’d find a "poll" somewhat unsatisfying. I welcome the fact that this is a bunch of personal opinions and that they’re all different. I like the fact that there are those who have been swayed, and those that haven’t yet "drunk the kool-aid".
I also feel that if it wasn't a series of personal opinions, we wouldn't be as far along the search as we are, and we wouldn't eventually be in possession of the smoking gun that would satisfy everybody that it was safe to say "search over".

As an aside........I was a supporter of Sanders as a possible author of EATCT long before this article was published, in fact I've been "on-board" since Richard published David's article a decade ago. It's for precisely this reason that I'll not take a round of new, but only circumstantial evidence as carrying enough weight to declare victory in the search.

There are undeniable aspects to the candidate proposed by Richard Hatch that have not yet been fully addressed, and that speak strongly to a possible attachment of that candidate to EATCT.

I look forward to hearing and reading much more from Richard Hatch, and hearing and reading much more from Marty.

Davids article of a decade ago and Marty's article this month. The contributions of Richard Hatch in this thread and other media. The subjective and research based portions of Geno's DVD set. The contributions of guys like Bill Mullins in this thread. ........it's all important, and it's all relevant.

I'm glad the thread isn't going to be locked, and I think in not locking it, the possibility still exists that we'll one day be reading (or seeing) the smoking gun that would end this search for good. I also think that it may be important to maintain this thread as a bastion of free thinking on the subject, and to not let it become a battleground for different camps declaring who may, or who may not be a more profoundly acceptable candidate.

As I said earlier, Marty's article was excellent...brilliant even. Undoubtedly the best I've ever read on Erdanse. He deserves much credit for his work, and I truly do believe that David Alexander would have been thrilled to see the development work that Marty did with Sanders.

---

Roger M. wrote: It's for precisely this reason that I'll not take a round of new, but only circumstantial evidence as carrying enough weight to declare victory in the search.

....
I like the fact that there are those who have been swayed, and those that haven't yet "drunk the kool-aid".

Who is asking (or expecting) you to "declare victory" or "drink the kool-aid" here?

---

**Mike Vance** | 08/11/11 12:57 PM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote: Being personally convinced (95% convinced) that Sander is Erdnase is great, but it may not be thinking that is universally shared.

Given the lengthy opinions of yours we’ve been reading, I’d think you could tolerate someone else’s opinion a little better. It's an opinion. You don't have to agree with it, or even with this one for that matter.

---

**Roger M.** | 08/11/11 12:58 PM | link | filter

Hi Chris,
You’re looking for something that isn’t there.

Nobody is asking (or expecting) anything of me, nor am I asking for anything from anybody.
They were simple sentences in a forum post, no "intent" behind either of them.

---

**Bob Coyne** | 08/11/11 12:59 PM | link | filter

Other than the obvious/big pieces of new evidence like the decks of cards, magic trick ref, gambling debt letters, I particularly enjoyed these:

1) The use of "(?)" mid-sentence next to words being used to denote doubt or irony. That’s something that strikes me as characteristic of Erdnase’s writing and it’s revealing that Sanders does the same. This is a similar device to something I noticed (and mentioned here a few days ago) that both Sanders and Erdnase seem to use lots of scare quotes (eg. "he coolly proposes to 'make good'...")

2) I’m not sure how to weigh it, but I think perhaps the most clever/interesting (and unexpected) new piece of evidence is the explanation for the "Charlies" misspelling or "Charlier" being due to Sanders’ handwriting style with raised r's looking like s's. Sanders’ classical/Latin education as an explanation for the Stratagem/Strategem misspelling is equally interesting and clever.

---

**Richard Kaufman** | 08/11/11 01:02 PM | link | filter
total, to present a very compelling case. Marty's realization that the misreading of handwriting could produce "Charlies Pass" instead of "Charlier" is a great bit of clear thinking.

It is the accumulation of these types of details that will make the case.

---

Roger M. | 08/11/11 01:02 PM | link | filter

Hi Mike,
Would you rather I not post?
I'm not sure what the "length" of my posts has to do with anything?

If you could please highlight where I've been remiss in tolerating somebodies post, that would help me understand what you're referencing.

My "opinion" is simply my opinion. If it's different than yours, that means absolutely nothing beyond the fact that we have different opinions.

If you've difficulty with my post lengths, I'm sorry.........I'm not willing to change them, but don't mean to offend you by putting in more content than you feel is required.

---

Bob Coyne | 08/11/11 01:04 PM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote: If one finds solace in declaring Sanders as Erdnase based on the circumstantial evidence presented to date, that's great and I fully support (and enjoy reading) those divergent personal opinions.

Solace?? Definition: comfort in sorrow, misfortune, or trouble; alleviation of distress or discomfort.

I think people who find the case for Sanders compelling are just impressed by the evidence (and excited to learn more about who wrote the book). There's nothing negative about that. I would have been disappointed if the article proved to be a dud -- only in that case would I have needed some solace! :-)

---

Richard Kaufman | 08/11/11 01:05 PM | link | filter

I'm sure there are people who are much more critical of the article who haven't posted their opinions here.

Actually, I know that for a fact--one of my friends, and someone who I deeply respect as both a magician and scholar, summed up his response to Marty's article as a lot of "nonsense." Skepticism is a healthy thing for journalists. It prods them to dig deeper.
I have a feeling that the next issue of Magicol that David Ben refers to is going to carry something about Richard Hatch’s candidate, though I don't know that for a fact. Just a guess.

Richard Kaufman | 08/11/11 01:06 PM | link | filter

I respect Roger M.’s posts--it’s exactly the kind of discourse we want here on the Forum. So, let’s please not start picking at each other.

Mike Vance | 08/11/11 01:08 PM | link | filter

Bob,

I liked the Dalrymple connection, the idea that the "family connection" may not have anything to do with genealogy.

Richard Kaufman | 08/11/11 01:12 PM | link | filter

The only thing M.D. Smith remembered about the name of the man he met was that it was something with a "W."

Wilber Sanders' first name obviously begins with a "W."

No candidate named E.S. Andrews has a name that would be remembered as having been something with a "W."

Just one more detail that makes Sanders fit.

Chris Aguilar | 08/11/11 01:13 PM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote: Hi Chris,
You’re looking for something that isn't there.

Nobody is asking (or expecting) anything of me, nor am I asking for anything from anybody.
They were simple sentences in a forum post, no "intent" behind either of them.

You were obviously referring to other people (or why bother posting that at all?) Especially with the "Kool-Aid" comment.
Since I’m really not seeing that here, my hope was that you could clarify exactly who you were referring to for the sake of clarity.
Bob Coyne wrote: I am 95% convinced that Sanders is Erdnase

Bob, I’d say I’m a little north of 95%. Marty’s work sets a new bar for the other candidates to attempt to reach, in my opinion.

Roger M. wrote: Hi Mike,
Would you rather I not post?
I’m not sure what the "length" of my posts has to do with anything?

If you could please highlight where I’ve been remiss in tolerating somebodies post, that would help me understand what you’re referencing.

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If you’ve difficulty with my post lengths, I’m sorry..........I’m not willing to change them, but don’t mean to offend you by putting in more content than you feel is required.

Way to take things out of context. "Length" was obviously the point I was trying to make. Post away. No one is stopping you.

Richard Kaufman wrote: The only thing M.D. Smith remembered about the name of the man he met was that it was something with a "W."

Wilber Sanders' first name obviously begins with a "W."

No candidate named E.S. Andrews has a name that would be remembered as having been something with a "W."

I was impressed with that because it’s a piece of fairly hard evidence from a first hand source (Smith). As you say, if another candidate can't reconcile that, it would (to me at least) go strongly against them.

I created a stub page for W. E. on Wikipedia:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilbur_Edgerton_Sanders

Anyone so inclined can add to it.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/11 01:21 PM | link | filter

I’m enjoying the consideration of a writer as the author, with the magician/gambler matters set in background. Gets me wondering if he’d read Neve’s Merrie Companion book and saw his book as a contrast to the apparatus heavy books of the time (Roteberg/Hoffmann).

Roger M. | 08/11 01:21 PM | link | filter

Once again Chris, you seem to want some sort of hostile discourse on the subject.

Not interested.

My position hasn’t changed one iota from ten years ago, and I’m certainly not trying to change yours (or anybody else’s).

I’m not selling any theories, and I’m not looking for an argument.

Hope I’m clear on that?

Roger M. | 08/11 01:23 PM | link | filter

Mike Vance wrote:
Way to take things out of context. "Length" was obviously the point I was trying to make. Post away. No one is stopping you.

The length of my posts Mike, is frankly none of your concern. I’m a bit surprised that you’d even comment on it.......it’s called "substance", and the complete opposite of snide little retorts.

You’re always free to pass my posts by, although I feel there may be some valid (and even interesting) points contained within........you may disagree, which I have no problem with.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/11 01:31 PM | link | filter

Wow, the personal commentary/distractions are getting close to Vernon’s legendary rebukes to those he felt were not offering a poetic/artistic recital in what they were -b- -....--
The erdnase text will be what it is. How you participate in the dialog and the record you leave is yours.

---

**Chris Aguilar** | 08/11/11 01:38 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Roger M. wrote: Once again Chris, you seem to want some sort of hostile discourse on the subject.

Hostile? Certainly not.

"Roger M." wrote: I like the fact that there are those who have been swayed, and those that haven't yet "drunk the kool-aid".

I just asked for clarification (i.e. "Who are these Kool-aid drinkers you mention") of the above. I'm genuinely curious because I'm not seeing that here at all. To me "kool-aid drinker" would imply someone claiming 100% certainty. Even the author, Marty doesn't do that.

If someone espouses even a small amount of uncertainty, I would question referring to them in that manner.

---

**Bob Coyne** | 08/11/11 01:52 PM | [link](#) | [filter]

Mike Vance wrote: Bob,  

I liked the Dalrymple connection, the idea that the "family connection" may not have anything to do with genealogy.

Yes, another ingenious one that builds the case by reframing the question slightly. It's not as convincing as if it had been a family connection as Smith remembered, but the fact that there's a direct connection of a different sort does seem to me to add weight to the case. The exact connection seems like an easy thing for Smith to misremember 30 years later. It is still an open question whether Sanders was related to Dalrymple, so this other/new connection could be a coincidence.

---

**Roger M.** | 08/11/11 02:06 PM | [link](#) | [filter]

I'm not seeing any sort of Dalrymple "family connection" as per Smith's memory of conversation he had with Erdnase in Chicago.

The cartoon is one in which the proposed Sanders Sr. character is actually one of about 20 detailed caricatures represented in the scene, along with another 20 caricatures.
"undetailed" background folks.

Even if you do accept that the proposed Sanders Sr. is represented in the cartoon (and he's not identified by Dalrymple as such), having a popular political cartoonist draw a cartoon featuring a popular Montana politician doesn't seem to me to be any sort of family connection?

If anything, it seems a political cartoonist drawing a politician.......business as usual for political cartoonists, and something that appears to contribute little to establishing a connection between what M.D. Smith recalled ("a family connection"), and the cartoon itself.

Chris Aguilar | 08/11/11 02:15 PM | link | filter

I would not call the "Montana" illustration undetailed. While it's a bit smaller in frame, it seems to hold as much detail as the named senator caricatures.

http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/art ... 00579.htm

The drawing purported to be W.F. Sanders doesn't seem particularly generic to me. Perhaps looking at other (more clearly) generic type characters in Dalryples other works might shed some light on his style.

Roger M. | 08/11/11 02:18 PM | link | filter

Chris, with "undetailed", I was referring to the large contingent of apparent "horsemen" that are faded into the background, and not colored in---------- not the hatted "Montana" representative.

He's obviously included in the group of detailed chaps in the foreground.

Regardless, it's got nothing to do with apparently demonstrating any sort of family connection.

Richard Kaufman | 08/11/11 02:27 PM | link | filter

No, at this point there has not been a family relation established to Darlrymple. However, having had your father caricatured by one of the most famous illustrators of the day is certainly the type of thing Sanders might mention to another illustrator--in this case the man who is going to illustrate your book, M.D. Smith.

Now I want you fellows to STOP sniping at one another. NOW, please.
Richard Kaufman wrote: Now I want you fellows to STOP sniping at one another. NOW, please.

My apologies, Richard.

Roger M. | 08/11/11 02:42 PM | link | filter

If you’d prefer Richard, I be willing to stop posting.

I should state right up front that I’m not inclined to change the direction my posts are taking, so if folks don’t agree with me, perhaps there’s nothing constructive to be gained by offering a counterpoint to specific elements of Marty’s article.

Insults disguised as questions can be difficult to respond to, although I believe I was polite in my efforts to clarify statements, or answer questions that were, frankly, hardly constructive and not really honest in their intent.

Chris Aguilar | 08/11/11 02:47 PM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: However, having had your father caricatured by one of the most famous illustrators of the day is certainly the type of thing Sanders might mention to another illustrator--in this case the man who is going to illustrate your book, M.D. Smith.

I find that line of reasoning to be, well, reasonable. A "family connection" can mean all sorts of things that have nothing to do with genealogy.

Mike Vance | 08/11/11 02:57 PM | link | filter

Bob Coyne wrote:

Mike Vance wrote: Bob,

I liked the Dalrymple connection, the idea that the "family connection" may not have anything to do with genealogy.

Yes, another ingenious one that builds the case by reframing the question slightly. It’s not as convincing as if it had been a family connection as Smith remembered, but the fact that there’s a direct connection of a different sort does seem to me to add weight to the case. The exact connection seems like an easy thing for Smith to misremember 30 years later. It is still an open question whether Sanders was related to...
I’m not sure he had misremembered anything exactly. Everyone assumes that "family connection" means that you are a relative in some way, but a connection to a family doesn’t have to be by blood. It could just be an association to the family. It was some good out-of-the-box thinking by Marty.

I agree that a genealogical connection is still the most likely interpretation. It needs to be checked out, especially given Alexander’s claim that there may be a direct connection.

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**Chris Aguilar | 08/11/11 02:59 PM | link | filter**

_Roger M. wrote_: Insults disguised as questions can be difficult to respond to, although I believe I was polite in my efforts to clarify statements, or answer **questions that were, frankly, hardly constructive and not really honest in their intent.**

And impugning the honesty of others as you’re doing here is constructive?

If you think my asking you a question about one of your posts (i.e. "kool-aid drinkers", "those claiming victory", etc. ) was an insult, **then you have my apologies.** That was certainly not my intent.

Per Richards request, I will refrain asking you about this again.

---

**Mike Vance | 08/11/11 03:12 PM | link | filter**

Chris,

As reasonable discussion is not always possible, we should probably stop letting ourselves get baited. Let’s keep things positive and ignore the noise.

BTW, that was a nice catch on the Sanders picture the other day. Bravo.

---

**Mike Vance | 08/11/11 03:17 PM | link | filter**

_Richard Kaufman wrote_: I have a feeling that the next issue of Magicol that David Ben refers to is going to carry something about Richard Hatch’s candidate, though I don’t know that for a fact. Just a guess.

How about it, Richard? Is something forthcoming?

---

**Chris Aguilar | 08/11/11 03:18 PM | link | filter**
Mike Vance wrote: BTW, that was a nice catch on the Sanders picture the other day. Bravo.

That was all Bob Coyne. He told us in this thread where to find it and I just did that and created a quick overlay. You know, even after watching the video clip, I’m still not clear what you were looking for when you disassembled the Sanders desk. Just the "W" initial or hoping to find something else?

Ian Kendall | 08/11/11 03:27 PM | link | filter

I've got family connections to Garibaldi and A A Milne, but I'm not related to them.

I've not read the article yet, but it seems to be interesting. Think I'll dig out the older version for a bit of preparatory homework.

Mike Vance | 08/11/11 03:32 PM | link | filter

Chris,

I was on my way to visit Marty, so I had to drive through Helena. He was kind enough to let me help with the research. One assignment was to take apart the desk and to examine every inch to see if anything was there. I was hoping to find: "It was me. I did it. I was Erdnase." written somewhere, but I didn't find that. I did find an old pen nib, a receipt for nylons (not for Sanders, although that would have been an interesting revelation), and a letter a female relative wrote behind one of the drawers. There was also the mark in the side that looks somewhat like a "W."

It was actually kind of funny at one point. I was alone in the house taking apart the desk. I forgot to bring the flashlight Marty suggested I bring, so I took the shade off of a lamp. In walks a guest to see me in the middle of the floor on my back holding a lamp up under the desk. I said, "Hi." He said, "Hi," and then he walked into his room unperturbed by my presence or the desk in pieces.

Mike Vance | 08/11/11 03:34 PM | link | filter

Chris Aguilar wrote:

Mike Vance wrote: BTW, that was a nice catch on the Sanders picture the other day. Bravo.

That was all Bob Coyne. He told us in this thread where to find it and I just did that and created a quick overlay.
Then that was a nice catch, Bob. Bravo.

---

**Mike Vance | 08/11 03:36 PM | link | filter**

*Ian Kendall wrote:* I've got family connections to Garibaldi and A A Milne, but I'm not related to them.

I've not read the article yet, but it seems to be interesting. Think I'll dig out the older version for a bit of preparatory homework.

Ian, the Alexander article has been reprinted in this issue of Genii if you can't find it.

---

**Carlo Morpurgo | 08/11 03:47 PM | link | filter**

Maybe it has been written before, but who owns the Helena house now? Are they related somehow to the Sanders' family? I saw a couple of names on the B&B website. Did they just let you go in and take apart furniture? Are they acknowledged anywhere?

I am also curious about the "secret compartment" inside the wall, mentioned in the video...was that something that was not allowed to be explored?

---

**Ian Kendall | 08/11 03:52 PM | link | filter**

Thanks Mike; earlier in the year I sorted all my magazines into date order, so finding back issues is a lot easier. I'll probably not see the current issue for a few months, so it will have to do :)

---

**Mike Vance | 08/11 04:27 PM | link | filter**

*Carlo Morpurgo wrote:* Maybe it has been written before, but who owns the Helena house now? Are they related somehow to the Sanders' family? I saw a couple of names on the B&B website. Did they just let you go in and take apart furniture? Are they acknowledged anywhere?

I am also curious about the "secret compartment" inside the wall, mentioned in the video...was that something that was not allowed to be explored?

Carlo, the B&B is owned by Rock Ringling (of the circus folk) and Bobbi Uecker. I don't believe they are related to the Sanders family. At the time, they knew Marty quite well, and he asked that they let me in to thoroughly examine the desk.
unexamined spaces, but I doubt anything was put back there when it was built into the wall. You'd have to tear the whole thing out of the wall to find out. If there were extra copies of the Expert anywhere, they would have been in Wilbur's office, which burned down.

Carlo Morpurgo  | 08/11/11 04:43 PM  | link  | filter

Mike Vance wrote: If there were extra copies of the Expert anywhere, they would have been in Wilbur's office, which burned down.

I suspect that the house will be subject to much further scrutiny....loose floor tiles, hidden knobs, pulls...

Richard Kaufman  | 08/11/11 04:47 PM  | link  | filter

There was a ton of Houdini's stuff that sat in the basement of his brownstone in Manhattan, untouched, from the time of his death in 1926 until 1961 (or so).

Ryan Matney  | 08/11/11 05:02 PM  | link  | filter

Is that where Jay Marshall helped Bess move from and was given Houdini's tooth?

Was never sure if this was a joke or not.

Mike Vance  | 08/11/11 05:10 PM  | link  | filter

Carlo Morpurgo wrote: I suspect that the house will be subject to much further scrutiny....loose floor tiles, hidden knobs, pulls...

The house has been fully restored, so any secret passage would likely have been found by now.

Steve Bryant  | 08/11/11 05:12 PM  | link  | filter

I recently found a source which told of Bess Houdini offering James Thurber the pick of Houdini's library, about a year after Houdini's death. Thurber took her up on it.

Bob Coyne  | 08/11/11 05:23 PM  | link  | filter

Roger M. wrote: If you'd prefer Richard, I be willing to stop posting.

I should state right up front that I'm not inclined to change the direction
nothing constructive to be gained by offering a counterpoint to specific elements of Marty's article.

Insults disguised as questions can be difficult to respond to, although I believe I was polite in my efforts to clarify statements, or answer questions that were, frankly, hardly constructive and not really honest in their intent.

Roger, I hope you continue to post. It's valuable to have many points of view and challenges of the evidence. Weak arguments *should* be weeded out, and strong ones should be forced to stand up to the scrutiny. This should be an ongoing process as other new arguments and evidence (both pro and con) are introduced over time. This forum is a great place for that to happen.

However, it's overly provocative and insulting when you call people "kool-aid drinkers" and claim they're looking for "solace" etc if they look at the evidence differently than you. Plus it really mischaracterizes the excitement people feel at all the new evidence.

btw, I'm still interested in the odds you would place on Sanders being Erdnase (and why) -- you haven't said.

Roger M. | 08/11/11 05:48 PM | link | filter

The Bonanno family bought the house directly from Bessie. They were neighbors on the block when the Houdini's lived in the house. Most here will recall that Houdini refused to live in the house between when his mother died, and the time he himself passed away. He did use it for all his storage, and as pictures of the house show, Houdini had literally a ton of "stuff" in the house.

Rose Bonanno (daughter, granddaughter....I'm not sure?) maintained ownership, and lived in the house until the 70's.

Anything that Houdini and Bess left in the basement or elsewhere in the house, and that Rose didn't get around to removing, was still in place until 1970 and beyond.

There are references online to the current owner (who lives on the first two floors) finding Houdini memorabilia in the nooks and crannies of the basement right up into the 1990's.

EDIT: Just saw your post Bob, and must offer up apologies if I came on too strong for some. Not my intent to do so. I'll continue to post.....I was just pouting :)
Roger M. wrote: Just saw your post Bob, and must offer up apologies if I came on too strong for some. Not my intent to do so. I’ll continue to post.....I was just pouting :)

Great, good to hear!

To answer Bobs question.

Sanders has always been in and out as my top contender for the part of Erdnase in my time following the story. Always #1 or #2.

Truthfully, as Richard Hatch and David Alexander each presented additional evidence over the years, I went back and forth between their two candidates.

I'll reserve putting an actual percentage on it until I read the next issue of Magicol. I joined Magicol a few months ago when David Ben hinted that the September issue would include something compelling on Erdnase.

I couldn’t really consider Sanders any higher than I already do without stating with absolute assurance that I believe he’s Erdnase.

I’m just not there at this point in time. As I’ve stated many times in the last couple of days, Marty’s article (as excellent as it was) didn’t get me there. I know there are other regulars in this forum who ”didn't get there” either, those folks can post their thoughts when they see fit to ......or maybe not, it seems to be a personal choice as to how folks are inclined to respond to Marty's article.

SO......I’ll see what the September issue of Magicol brings to the table, will re-read The Man Who Was Erdnase(which I totally disagree with, but which still remains one of the best overall Erdnase resources available), will re-read Marty and David’s Genii articles, and then likely re-read this thread (which I’ve got printed out and bound, and as a .pdf on an iPad).

Then I’ll see where it all leaves me. It’s been such a compelling "hobby", I begin to wonder if I’m not intentionally trying to put the brakes on accepting a final answer........any final answer :)

Bill Mullins | 08/11/11 06:26 PM | link | filter
Is there anyone who has got an archive of the thread (printed or electronic) with the names still attached to posts? I go back and see posts that I’m pretty sure I wrote, but are labeled "anonymous".

---

**Rick Ruhl** | 08/11/11 06:33 PM | [link] [filter]

this thread is a book in itself.. 5 years from now I can see Richard printing it as 'the erdnase talks'

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/11/11 06:37 PM | [link] [filter]

I don’t own the right to reprint it. All posts are owned by the person who made them.

---

**Roger M.** | 08/11/11 06:42 PM | [link] [filter]

Rick, if you go to the top of the forum page, under **Topic Options**, you can select **print topic** from the menu, which quite beautifully (and almost instantly) formats this entire thread for either a complete hard copy print out, or (for those using a Mac) "saving" as a .pdf, to read on your iPad (or similar).

I keep a bound version (which includes up to March 2011), and an iPad .pdf version that I keep relatively up to date for those times when I’m away from any online connectivity.

........I recently went camping, and the iPad version made for some damn fine late night reading, no nightlight required :)

---

**Rick Ruhl** | 08/11/11 06:42 PM | [link] [filter]

Compolation Copyright.. the posts remain the copyright of the people and your are compiling it in a compolation. This happend years ago with the messages from Compuserve.

I just noticed this too, to change the subject

ERDNASE
ERDNAS (drop traling e)
SANDER (backwards and the R and E inverted)

Has anyone seen that before?
Rick,
Your last post jogged my memory of some notes on anagrams:

This interesting. Back to anagrams.

Rotenberg’s New Era Card Tricks has a few names scrambled in the title:

New era card tricks
Erdnase car trick

New era card tricks
Andrews. Trick car

Some say the Erdnase must have read this 1897 book.

Probably just a coincidence.

Richard Kaufman | 08/11/11 09:12 PM | link | filter

There’s no question he read it, because that’s where Adrian Plate’s Excelsior Change is published, and Erdnase took it and changed the name to Palm Change and put it in Expert at the Card Table.

Ryan Matney | 08/12/11 01:24 AM | link | filter

Richard,

Not trying to be wise here but is there any chance of Erdnase's reinvention of the Adrian Plate change and/or the Houdini change?

I've always thought the idea of published moves being in the book and the slight tonal shift of the magic section made it seem plausible there were two authors.

Then, you published the writing analysis a little while back that said it was very possible that there were two authors!

I'm still waiting for the new issue to get here so I don't know if this is addressed in the new article or not.

Richard Kaufman | 08/12/11 01:38 AM | link | filter

I don't think Erdnase reinvented anything: he read the items in earlier books, such as Rotenberg and Selbit.
I'm bothered by that writing analysis article.

This all has me thinking. In programming, some coders will try to hide their code by using obfuscation. Perhaps it's even more than anagrams that Sanders used in the text to disguise his identity and for someone to figure it out.

Also, it could even be that someone else wrote it in Sanders style and made it look like Sanders would be the author if someone ever tried to find out who wrote it. It could have been another gambler, who wanted to get even with Sanders or his dad. His dad was a Senator so I'm sure he made a few enemy's along the way.

Wow, this opens up even more of a can of worms.

Let me introduce you to Mr. Ockham... ;) 

I look forward to reading the article at some point. Maybe it'll sway my opinion that the book was written by a gambler called Andrews.

Am I the only one who does not see where it says "Playing Cards" on the 1896 list? I can't make out the word cards.

Is the ancient card trick he performed "MUTUS NOMEN DEDIT COCIS" so old it could be considered the 21 card trick of it's day? The trick every kid knows how to do.

Jeff Pierce

Jeff, it definitely reads "1/2 doz playing cards."
Jeff, I thought the word being presented as "cards" actually looks like it begins with an "l" or a "t". 
If you look at his writing in the same list above that entry, you can see he makes both of those letters (L and T) in a similar fashion.

He doesn't cross his "t".

What Marty is proposing as the word "cards" doesn't look at all like it begins with the letter "c".

Also, as demonstrated by the author in the actual article, there is also the possibility that the letter being presented as an "r" could also be an "s"......(but still can't think of any words that would make sense following "Playing" other than "cards")

Whatever "they" are, they seems to cost 75 for half a dozen of them. I've not had any luck in accurately finding out what the cost of a deck of cards was.

It looks like, if they really were playing cards, they'd need to be around 13 a pack. Were playing cards going for 13 a pack when he made his trip North?

EDIT: Sorry Richard, you posted while I was writing...........what do you see as that first letter of "cards"?
Does it not look like an "l" or a "t" to you?

---

Richard Kaufman | 08/12/11 10:46 AM | link | filter

The written phrase clearly appears to be "1/2 Doz Playing Cards" to me.

But let's assume that it's not a "C."

Then you get "1/2 Doz Playing Tards" or "1/2 Doz Playing Lards," neither of which makes any sense at all.

---

Bill Mullins | 08/12/11 10:52 AM | link | filter

The "C" in "Cards" is the same as the "C" in "Lamp Chimnys" one line below it.

---

Roger M. | 08/12/11 10:53 AM | link | filter

There are other options if the "r" is an "s" as per Marty's suggestion that Sanders made the two letters pretty much identically.

I don't know about you, but other than what would be the common sense deduction...
word sure looks like it starts with an "l" or a "t" to me.

Roger I agree with you. it seems a stretch. I found an ad on Google books that reflected the price of .23 in 1896 for a pack of Bicycle US Playing Cards.

I thought the first letter looked more like an "l" than a "t" because the "t" has more of a sharp angle at the connector between letters.

What is the first item on the list? something 9#?

Jeff

Roger, if you can find one phrase that makes sense using a letter other than "c" then you may have a point. But I can't imagine anything other then "cards" following "1/2 Doz Playing ..."

Despite trying, neither can I Richard.

But he seems to have decent penmanship.......and not inclined to make a somewhat well defined "l" as the first letter of "cards".

But as you say, there's really nothing else that makes sense.

Does anybody know if a deck of cards was priced around 13 at the turn of the century?

Roger M. wrote: Whatever "they" are, they seems to cost 75 for half a dozen of them. I've not had any luck in accurately finding out what the cost of a deck of cards was.

It looks like, if they really were playing cards, they'd need to be around 13 a pack. Were playing cards going for 13 a pack when he made his trip North?

Here is an 1898 price -- a gross of Steamboats for $12.00, or a little over 8 cents a deck.

This interesting 1895 article gives stats on playing card production (20 million decks a year) and quotes retail prices as low as 5 cents a deck.
.23 a pack in 1896

The price of playing cards varied by type. Steamboats were the least expensive, Bicycle Rider Backs more expensive.

It's a capital letter, because he capitalizes each significant word in his list.

As Bill points out, its form matches the capital C in "Chimnys" on the next line down. Its form matches neither the capital T in "Tobacco" (2 lines up), nor the capital L in "Lamp" (1 line down).

It's very clearly "1/2 Doz Playing Cards".

Bill Mullins wrote: Google Books has Vol 8 of "The Caledonian". In the Jun 1908 issue, on p 115, is an account of the banquet of the Canadian Club of New York, held at the Hotel Astor on May 14. Among the attendees (p. 117) is S. W. Erdnose.

I and others have searched high and low for evidence of anyone, anywhere, whose real name was/is Erdnase. It doesn’t exist. To find, only six years later, a name which sounds equally contrived but only one letter off seems somehow significant.

(And this is the only place I’ve found the name -- it isn't elsewhere in census records, newspaper archives, Google books, etc. It may be a dead end, research wise.)

This finding of Bill Mullins always intrigued me. And now that Sanders diaries and life are being actively explored, it occurred to me that maybe more is known about where Sanders was and when, particularly if he was in New York during this event.

The write-up in this article says this banquet took place on May 14th, but doesn’t say the year. The publication itself is dated April 1908, so depending when the publication actually came out, it seems this banquet could have been either May 14 1907 or May 14
Richard Kaufman | 08/12/11 11:10 AM | link | filter

I've wondered about this as well, however it could have been almost anyone who knew about the book playing a joke.

Jeff Pierce Magic | 08/12/11 11:11 AM | link | filter

OK I can see it now that I look at the word "Chimnys" thanks Bill.

Can anyone shed some light on the magic trick and my question above regarding it?

Jeff

El Harvey Oswald | 08/12/11 11:13 AM | link | filter

It's obviously "playing cards" - not least because, as RK points out, absolutely nothing else makes sense. The price is indirect confirmation. Not even close to being something in dispute.

Ted M | 08/12/11 11:14 AM | link | filter

Also he seems to be paying around half retail price for the other items on the list.

5 pr Mitts 1.25 Retail 3.25
... 5 Undershirts 1.75 " 5.00
3 Drawers " 3.00
2 Undershirts 1.50 " 1.50

So paying 13 cents for a 23 cent pack of cards is in line with the other entries.

Bob Coyne | 08/12/11 11:20 AM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: I've wondered about this as well, however it could have been almost anyone who knew about the book playing a joke.

I agree. Though it would be a strange coincidence if such a joke just happened to occur when Sanders was in NY.

Bill Mullins | 08/12/11 11:31 AM | link | filter

More contemporary playing card advertisements:
Marty Demarest | 08/12/11 11:40 AM | link | filter

I thought I should drop by and introduce myself. I wrote "Unshuffling Erdnase."

Thank you to everyone on this forum for engaging in such a lively and interesting
discussion over the years.

And thank you particularly to Richard Kaufman for hosting this space, and for doing a
wonderful job as editor. Better even than publishing what I wrote, you published what
I meant to write. I hope that everyone enjoys the article. I’m eager to get my copy of
Genii in the mail.

As time permits, I’ll try to address some of the questions that have been asked on this
forum. Many of them are ones I have already asked myself, so I’m happy to share my
answers.

For starters, however, I’d like to say that I have nothing but respect for David
Alexander and his work. I would never have written "Unshuffling Erdnase" without
him. I can think of no greater compliment to someone’s work than to extend it.

Roger M. | 08/12/11 11:45 AM | link | filter

   El Harvey Oswald wrote: not even close to being something in dispute.

Nobody is disputing anything, but rather undertaking a critical questioning of the
evidence provided by Marty in support of his article.

In this case, and as a result of the question actually being asked......that Sanders created
a "packing list" and included six decks of playing cards on it does stand up to critical
examination.

Richard Kaufman | 08/12/11 11:51 AM | link | filter

Hey Marty, good to see you here.
For those of you who’d like to meet Marty in person and take a tour of Wilbur Sanders’ home, the Erdnaseum is taking place in Montana at the end of this month.

Go West, young man!

---

**Mike Vance** | 08/12/11 11:52 AM | link | filter

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* Hey Marty, good to see you hear.

For those of you who’d like to meet Marty in person and take a tour of Wilbur Sanders’ home, the Erdnaseum is taking place in Montana at the end of this month.

Go West, young man!

Hey, that’s North for some of us.

---

**Roger M.** | 08/12/11 11:54 AM | link | filter

Hi Marty,

Congratulations on a fantastic article, and all the renewed interest it’s generated in Erdnase.

I applaud your research, and look forward to any further articles or books you might undertake on the subject.

Thanks for your hard work.

---

**Mike Vance** | 08/12/11 11:54 AM | link | filter

I’d address the handwriting comments to Marty. Sanders handwriting was, I believe, a pain to translate. In one diary, he even turned the page upside-down and wrote in the spaces between lines.

---

**El Harvey Oswald** | 08/12/11 12:13 PM | link | filter

"Nobody is disputing anything, but rather undertaking a critical questioning of the evidence provided by Marty in support of his article.

In this case, and as a result of the question actually being asked......that Sanders created a “packing list” and included six decks of playing cards on it does stand up to critical examination."
Fair enough. It just struck me as self evident that this would stand up to critical examination. However, it’s probably a measure of how influential this article and its future manifestations will be that every detail is scrutinized. And by reinforcing how well researched and reasoned the article is, even the lock-down confirmation of facts beyond reasonable disput illuminates that this is first-rate scholarship, and quite possibly compelling enough to attract a broad audience.

**Bill Mullins** | 08/12/11 12:19 PM | [link] | [filter]

*Bob Coyne wrote:*

> Richard Kaufman wrote: I’ve wondered about [Erdnose] as well, however it could have been almost anyone who knew about the book playing a joke.

I agree. Though it would be a strange coincidence if such a joke just happened to occur when Sanders was in NY.

I think Richard Evans pointed out that Saram Ellison, founder of the Society of American Magicians, was also a founding member of the Caledonian club. While he doesn’t show up as an attending member at this banquet, the line below “Erdnose” shows William B. Ellison, which was the name of Saram’s brother.

**Marty Demarest** | 08/12/11 12:21 PM | [link] | [filter]

Everyone is invited to the Erdnaseum in Helena, MT, August 26 and 27. Mingle and meet with some of the best minds in Erdnaseana. The event is casual and open, with everyone welcome and encouraged to bring their insights, questions and opinions.

Among the planned events:

--A live presentation by Richard Hatch on the history and mystery of The Expert at the Card Table, followed by a live presentation by Marty Demarest on W.E. Sanders, including current developments and work in progress. (Wilbur played cards--but how did his friends want him to play? Why two titles? The mind behind the mechanics...)


--A symposium about Erdnase's cheating led by R. Paul Wilson.

--A symposium about Erdnase's identity led by Richard Hatch. Plus more! And surprises...
Visit www.erdnaseum.com for more information, or contact Mike Vance through this forum.

I hope to meet you in Helena!

---

**aofl** | 08/12/11 01:40 PM | [link] | [filter]

*Ted M wrote:* Also he seems to be paying around half retail price for the other items on the list.

5 pr Mitts 1.25 Retail 3.25  
...
5 Undershirts 1.75 " 5.00  
3 Drawers " 3.00  
2 Undershirts 1.50 " 1.50

So paying 13 cents for a 23 cent pack of cards is in line with the other entries.

Maybe he bought them at Costco. I know that's where I get mine.

A

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**Bob Coyne** | 08/12/11 01:59 PM | [link] | [filter]

*Bill Mullins wrote:*

*Bob Coyne wrote:*

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* I've wondered about [Erdnose] as well, however it could have been almost anyone who knew about the book playing a joke.

I agree. Though it would be a strange coincidence if such a joke just happened to occur when Sanders was in NY.

I think Richard Evans pointed out that Saram Ellison, founder of the Society of American Magicians, was also a founding member of the Caledonian club. While he doesn’t show up as an attending member at this banquet, the line below "Erdnose“ shows William B. Ellison, which was the name of Saram's brother.

Yeah, I remember that. It seems there are a couple different scenarios and variations.
(maybe related to Ellison) was there as Erdnose/Erdnase. However, I still think that *if* (big if) Sanders was in New York at that time, then this would be a significant finding.

In general, it would be great if a timeline could be established for where Sanders was throughout his life. It would help rule in or out other location-related events like this. Maybe Marty can shed some light on that! :-)

**Bob Coyne** | 08/12/11 02:42 PM | link | filter

"Unshuffling Erdnase" -- that's a clever title. Maybe it was obvious to everyone already and I was just being dense, but I just realized that it refers not just to cards (shuffling) and unravelling the mystery (metaphorically putting back together the pieces of evidence), but also to unshuffling the anagram (i.e. permuting the letters from SW Erdnase to ES Andrews to WE Sanders).

**IrishMagicNews** | 08/12/11 04:44 PM | link | filter

Richard & Marty,

What a great read. Never really considered myself a history kinda guy but having read David Alexanders original piece about 10 years ago, watched presentation by Mike Caveny at EMC and now this I am getting more and more interested in the giants on whose shoulders we stand.

Thank you,

Brendan

PS An anagram of Demarest is Mastered. A masterful job on this Marty.

**Leonard Hevia** | 08/12/11 07:14 PM | link | filter

While David Alexander is receiving justly deserved credit for his preliminary investigation of Erdnase, we shouldn't forget that he had quite a bit of assistance from his research partner Richard Kyle. In his article, David writes:

After my preliminary investigation I sought the assistance of an old friend, Richard Kyle. Richard had been a successful writer for many years, was an expert on the pulps, comic history, and was the writer/publisher who had coined the term "graphic novel." For many years he owned Richard Kyle Books in my home town and I admired his insightful and analytical mind. It took both of us working on the case to come to the conclusions we have and Richard deserves as much credit as I do.
SwanJr | 08/12/11 11:40 PM | link | filter

Does anyone know when Drake published their first book? Did they publish anything before 1903?

Richard Hatch | 08/13/11 01:02 AM | link | filter

SwanJr wrote: Does anyone know when Drake published their first book? Did they publish anything before 1903?

Drake was publishing books before 1900, though they re-organized in 1903. Many of their classic magic books were published in 1902 and are advertised on the back cover of the very first issue of THE SPHINX (March 1902). They sold first edition copies of Erdnase for $1 starting in 1903 and published their first hardback and paperback editions of it in 1905, keeping it in print as late as 1937 in various editions (hardback and paperback, 205, 190 and 178 page versions).

SwanJr | 08/13/11 02:08 AM | link | filter

Thank you, Richard, for your prompt reply.

-Hurt

Richard Hatch | 08/13/11 02:58 AM | link | filter

Hurt, am I correct in summarizing one aspect of your MCA talk by saying that anyone writing and publishing a book such as Expert at the Card Table in 1902 (which could not be classed as an anti-gambling treatise and therefore might be viewed as immoral literature) would have wanted/needed the protection that some level of anonymity provides due to the Comstock Laws?

If so, then I think the anonymity debate becomes one of whether the author wanted/needed strong (absolute) anonymity or whether his ego favored weak anonymity. The former case favors a candidate whose real name bears no relation to the pseudonym, S. W. Erdnase, the later favors the simplest relationship, E. S. Andrews. In between are the more complex decipherings of the name (M. F. Andrews, W. E. Sanders, etc.).

I would argue that the inclusion of the illustrator’s real name on the title page, M. D. Smith, plus the proclamation that the book was published "by the author" and not some dummy corporation set up to protect his identity are either grossly negligent if the author wanted absolute anonymity or (more likely) indicate the author felt only a weak need for anonymity. The fact that no one bothered to track down Smith for 40
simply accidents of history which the author could not have anticipated.

Richard Hatch | 08/13/11 10:29 AM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: The only thing M.D. Smith remembered about the name of the man he met was that it was something with a "W."

Wilber Sanders' first name obviously begins with a "W."

No candidate named E.S. Andrews has a name that would be remembered as having been something with a "W."

Just one more detail that makes Sanders fit.

When Smith told Martin Gardner that he did not recognize the name "Erdnase" and thought the name had a "W" in it, Gardner asked Smith if the author's name might have been "Andrews" (a name with a "W" in it). Smith immediately affirmed that the man he met was named "Andrews" and that is how they refer to him in the discussions from that point on. This is clearly a "prompted" recollection, not an independent one from Smith's memory, but Smith is very definite in confirming the last name Andrews. David Alexander's reconstruction of this has Sanders using the name "Andrews" in his dealings with the printer and illustrator (and possibly the bank) in order to preserve his anonymity. "Andrews" is another "ruse" of the author. I don't think Smith's recollection that the author's name had a "W" in it should weigh too much in favor of Wilbur, since Smith is referring to the author's last name, and is unlikely to have known the author's first name or recalled his initials 40 years later. Indeed, Gardner tells us that Smith did NOT recall the author's first name or initials, so Smith was clearly NOT thinking the "W" was one of the author's initials (later Gardner would claim in correspondence with the copyright office that Smith subsequently recalled the author's first name as "James"). How much weight should be given to Smith's recollection is a major debating point in the identity question, obviously. Personally, I favor sticking with those recollections Smith is clear on until compelling evidence to the contrary presents itself. He is our only credible eyewitness at this point, alas.

SwanJr | 08/13/11 02:24 PM | link | filter

Thanks, Richard, for your query. My research is going to be published in the Magicana Erdnase issue, but in quick summary: by publishing in Chicago where the Comstock Laws were almost universally ignored, Erdnase would have much less need of anonymity than in most cities in the United States, including New York where the law was enforced vigorously. However for reason's of safety while travelling, it was prudent to use a false name, since you could be arrested anywhere in the States if you
gambling supplies from Chicago used a pseudonym to sell their wares. Most did not go to too much trouble beyond that to remain anonymous.

- Hurt McDermott

**David Ben | 08/13/11 02:29 PM | link | filter**

Hurt's article related to this subject is terrific, and will be part of the Erdnase issue of Magciol.

**Marty Demarest | 08/14/11 12:28 AM | link | filter**

Brendan, I had no idea about my own name. Thank you for pointing that out, and for the compliment.

It's amazing what we often fail to notice, even when it's been in plain sight for so long. One of my favorite things about David Alexander and Richard Kyle's research was their willingness to reexamine details from a new perspective--re-annagramizing Erdnase and reading "Andrews artifice" on the title page for example.

I agree with Richard Hatch. I find no reason to abandon Marshall D. Smith's recollections, especially because they come from our only first-hand Erdnase witness. However, I do differentiate between the memories that Smith stated himself (in his letters to Martin Gardner), and those memories that come to us second-hand through Martin Gardner's notes.

From Smith's own letters (published in the Gardner-Smith Correspondence--thank you Richard Hatch and Charlie Randall!), we learn that Erdnase was relatively short, well-mannered and had soft, well-attended hands. He was a good dresser and Smith thought he was from the "East." He also politely discounts the picture of Milton Franklin Andrews, and, to my mind, fails to confirm the name Andrews at all. He discounts the names "Milton" and "Franklin," and often skirts "Andrews," using the phrases "The man I met..." "this fellow" and "that guy" when he clearly means Erdnase. When Smith does refer specifically to Andrews, he usually seems to be referring to M.F. Andrews, not Erdnase. In my opinion, Smith is politely declining to confirm "Andrews" as a name he remembered.

However... According to Gardner's notes, during his initial interview with Gardner, Smith remembered Erdnase's (possibly) real name as "something with a W." Gardner suggested "Andrews" and "his face lighted up and he was sure that was it. Does not recall first name or initials."

I put a substantial question mark next to Gardner's notes. As Richard Hatch has
Erdnase’s first name as "James." He also states that Smith remembered drawing only "twenty or thirty" figures, but he mentions that nowhere in the notes of his initial interview with Smith. As far as I can tell, the first time he states it is in his essay "The Mystery of Erdnase," published the following year. Why didn't he make note of it? What else did he omit? And what might have been mis-remembered during that time?

In my opinion, we must be careful to note when we are dealing with Smith's (45-year-old) recollections and Gardner’s second-hand, Andrews-oriented synopses of Smith’s recollections. The two are very different types of evidence.

El Harvey Oswald | 08/14/11 12:39 AM | link | filter

"Google Books has Vol 8 of "The Caledonian". In the Jun 1908 issue, on p 115, is an account of the banquet of the Canadian Club of New York, held at the Hotel Astor on May 14. Among the attendees (p. 117) is S. W. Erdnose."

more likely that it was (1) the actual author of Expert at the Card Table (using his pseudonym) or (2) a fan of the book (also using a pseudonym) or simply (3) someone with that name? (2) and (3) are both more probable than (1).

an awful lot rides on the author's name being an anagram. but the first-level anagram-based inferences at least aren't absurdly attenuated the way aligning the German meaning of "erdnase" - "earth nose" - with "miner" is, by the unsatisfying construction that miners have their noses close to the earth. he could have chosen to re-formulate his name into an anagram, and even perhaps one with a deliberate palindromic message about "andrews" being a ruse in it. but it begins to sound like batman making rapid crime-solving associations and dubious logical leaps when the "earth nose" speculation is invoked. that's really where the alexander analysis went off the rails. demarest didn't have a great deal to work with, but he does seem to have brought to bear what available facts there are to make a reasonably compelling case. a deck of cards has at least been put if not in this candidates hands in his travel bag, and more than a casual supply of cards.

Marty Demarest | 08/14/11 12:53 AM | link | filter

Bob, you bring up an interesting clue with the Caledonian Club. I was first informed about "S.W. Erdnose" by Bill Kalush. My research into that document has led me to make both a detailed timeline of Sanders’ life (sometimes down to the hour, where train schedules can be obtained), and a database of his friends and acquaintances.

I did not include the Caledonian Club in "Unshuffling Erdnase" because I’m still not satisfied with the answers. However, I’m happy to share the news that W.E. Sanders
area April-May 1908. (He was in Yubaland, California.)

I think the Caledonian banquet took place in 1908, but others might read the evidence differently. If so, it is unlikely that W.E. went from California to New York for the dinner, while skipping one of his class reunions six days earlier. But he was an eccentric, so...

There are some interesting names on that list. "But that is another story," as Erdnase wrote.

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**Marty Demarest** | 08/14/11 01:03 AM | link | filter

Bob Coyne very correctly observes that W.E. Sanders uses "scare quotes" as habitually as Erdnase. These are common not only in his published writings, but they're very abundant in the journals as well.

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**Marty Demarest** | 08/14/11 01:13 AM | link | filter

I may have to find some kind of prize for Bob Coyne (who figured out where the rock collection was), Chris Aguilar (who matched Wilbur's images) and Brent Cromley (who, as a good Montanan, recognized The Parrot as the setting for the office video). Good sleuthing, gentlemen. I hope it was fun.

---

**El Harvey Oswald** | 08/14/11 02:02 AM | link | filter

the mid-sentence insertion of parenthetical questions marks was a pretty compelling parallel

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**Carlo Morpurgo** | 08/14/11 07:16 AM | link | filter

*Marty Demarest wrote:* I think the Caledonian banquet took place in 1908, but others might read the evidence differently.

The evidence says "Thursday, May 14". Hence, it cannot be 1907...(since it was a Tuesday).

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**Bob Coyne** | 08/14/11 09:30 AM | link | filter

*Carlo Morpurgo wrote:*

*Marty Demarest wrote:* I think the Caledonian banquet took place in 1908, but others might read the evidence differently.
The evidence says "Thursday, May 14". Hence, it cannot be 1907...(since it was a Tuesday).

Good thinking to figure out the year that way. Well that seems to pretty much rule out Sanders being there (given Marty’s timeline).

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**Bob Coyne** | 08/14/11 10:07 AM | link | filter

*Marty Demarest wrote:* I may have to find some kind of prize for Bob Coyne (who figured out where the rock collection was), Chris Aguilar (who matched Wilbur's images) and Brent Cromley (who, as a good Montanan, recognized The Parrot as the setting for the office video). Good sleuthing, gentlemen. I hope it was fun.

The whole lead-up to the article was super fun. Fortunately the clues you and RK provided were easier to crack and more definitive than the ones Sanders left behind :-)

btw, The key to finding the rock collection and the Sanders photo (which Chris Aguilar then nicely composited/aligned with the Genii cover) was working backwards from having confidence that the article was about Sanders=Erdnase (thanks to the "wiiilllbur" clue). A little online searching and reviewing of Sanders' writings turned up the answers.

One clue (?) that didn't seem to lead anywhere was the anagramatic misspelling of "erdnase" as "erdanse" and "erndase" in the "office" video. I guess that was just a generic clue as to the name being an anagram rather than anything specific...

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/14/11 10:49 AM | link | filter

... or it could have been sloppy typing.

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**Marty Demarest** | 08/14/11 10:56 AM | link | filter

VERY sloppy typing. But they remined intentionally. Sometimes a mistake is just a misteak.

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**Marty Demarest** | 08/14/11 11:59 AM | link | filter

Jeff, I too am interested in the history of Mutus Nomen. I've done some research, and while it seems to be a very old trick, it proliferated greatly during the early 20th Century.

Jack Potter compiled a good bibliography of it in the November 1955 Linking Ring (vol...
My main interest is in sources from which W.E. could have learned it. Based on the dates (pre-1881), he might have gotten it from one of the books listed below. I haven't been able to check/date them all. It's also important to note that the trick is not always "Mutus Nomen Dedit Cocis." Sometimes the words are in a different order. That helps narrow my search.

--The Secret Out, W.H. Cremer
--The Boy's Own Conjuring Book, Anon.
--Card Tricks and Puzzles, "Berkeley" Rowlands
--Hanky Panky, W.H. Cremer
--The Magician's Own Book, Anon. (Jonathan Green?)
--An Exposition on Games and Tricks with Cards, Jonathan Green

Of course, other magicians knew the trick, so books were not the only source.

The trick was common enough for Hilliard to write, in "Greater Magic": "But unfortunately it has been so widely publicized down the years--in books, magazines, newspapers, and the throw-out pamphlets magicians have been peddling among their audiences since the time of Bosco and Pinetti--that he would be a bold performer who would attempt the feat today before even an unspohisticated parlor audience."

By 1938, that might have been true, though the publication of the effect seems to have been markedly rarer in the mid-to-late 19th Century.

I do think it is much more sophisticated than the 21 Card Trick. Hilliard's own presentation is remarkable, and I think there are none better than Jim Steinmeyer's variation, "The Tuzot Sensu Mystery" published in Genii, August 2011. Even in its plain form, however, "Mutus Nomen" takes a lot of work and attention, not to mention showmanship. As Steinmeyer wrote, "It looks complicated."

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**Magic Fred** | 08/14/11 05:29 PM | link | filter

*Marty Demarest wrote:* Everyone is invited to the Erdnaseum in Helena, MT, August 26 and 27. Mingle and meet with some of the best minds in Erdnaseana. The event is casual and open, with everyone welcome and encouraged to bring their insights, questions and opinions.

Among the planned events:

--A live presentation by Richard Hatch on the history and mystery of The Expert at the Card Table, followed by a live presentation by Marty Demarest on W.E. Sanders, including current developments and work in
Why two titles? The mind behind the mechanics...


--A symposium about Erdnase's cheating led by R. Paul Wilson.

--A symposium about Erdnase's identity led by Richard Hatch.
Plus more! And surprises...

Visit [www.erdnaseum.com](http://www.erdnaseum.com) for more information, or contact Mike Vance through this forum.

I hope to meet you in Helena!

No Wesley James then?

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/14/11 09:38 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

[size:11pt]Erdnose and Sanders[/size]

May 14 was a Thursday in 1908; this was the year that "Erdnose" attended.

There is no reason to think that Sanders would attend the Canadian Club banquet that year (or any other year). The society was for people of Canadian Heritage, and Sanders was born in Ohio, and his parents were born in New York and Ohio. His paternal grandparents were both born in New York, and his maternal grandparents were born in Connecticut and Pennsylvania. Any links he had to Canadian society were weak, at best.

I've searched the other issues of the Caledonian, and found no reference to Sanders (although an anonymous writer in vol. 19 mentions having done some mining business with Wilbur Fisk, W. E.'s father).

As for who "Erdnose" really was, I think the fact that Saram Ellison was a founding member is telling, and that his brother attended the same year is also worth considering.

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/14/11 10:22 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*El Harvey Oswald wrote:* an awful lot rides on the author's name being an anagram, but the first-level anagram-based inferences at least aren't
"earth nose" - with "miner" is, by the unsatisfying construction that miners have their noses close to the earth.

Sanders was not a miner, he was a mining engineer. One of his chief jobs was to figure out whether a particular deposit of ore was of sufficient quality that it could be profitably mined. He did have to "sniff out" the quality veins and seams of gold, silver, etc.

The construction is a figurative one, not a literal one, but it holds true because of Sanders' occupation.

The analysis of the name "Erdnase" often starts with the pseudonym, and works back to a particular candidate's name. This is backwards, to my way of thinking. We should start with a candidate, and find a train of thought that would lead to "S. W. Erdnase". If the train of thought is logical, don't eliminate the candidate from contention.

For anyone who is "E. S. Andrews", that train is logical a simple reversal.

For "W. E. Sanders", the reversal is "S. R. Ednasew", which is even more cumbersome than "S. W. Erdnase". But if you are a mining engineer, and used to scrambling the letters of your name, then "S. W. Erdnase" is a logical choice compared to other scramblings such as "Dr. Weenass" or "S. N. Sarweed" or "Ned Sarwess".

Richard Kaufman | 08/14/11 10:25 PM | link | filter

I met a Dr. Weenas once ...

Magic Fred | 08/15/11 09:03 AM | link | filter

One piece of evidence that seems to be universally swept aside is the comment made by Vernon on the Revelations videotapes.

Perhaps the Professor had been known to mix up his stories, especially in old age, but have we any reason to doubt his claim regarding Sprong's visit with Drake?

Drake, who knew the identity of the author, apparently told Sprong simply and directly that if you spell the name backwards, you have your author.

This is one of the reasons I still lean strongly towards a James Andrews or E.S. Andrews.

mrgoat | 08/15/11 09:45 AM | link | filter
That’s nothing, the tech on one of my servers is called Rommel Suganob.

True story. Really.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/15/11 09:51 AM | link | filter

Magic Fred wrote: ...
Drake, who knew the identity of the author, apparently told Sprong simply and directly that if you spell the name backwards, you have your author...

How do we know that Drake knew the identity of the author? And what verification do we have of Sprong’s report?

Magic Fred | 08/15/11 09:57 AM | link | filter

That’s basically what I’m asking. If Vernon is to be believed, Drake promised the author directly that he would not reveal his identity.

It seems to me that there is not much motive anywhere along the trail of this particular anecdote for anybody to make things up.

The only question, for me, is the accuracy of Vernon’s recollection.

Ryan Matney | 08/15/11 11:29 AM | link | filter

It’s third of fourth hand heresay evidence. You have to believe Vernon’s accurate and Sprong was accurate and Drake was accurate.

Something may likely have been lost in the retelling and the passage of time.

It’s likely that Drake knew the name S.W. Erdnase was an annagram but may have been confused later as to exactly how to descrmable the letters.

OR, the simplest explanation of all: if David Alexander’s thinking was correct and the name Andrews was intentionally left as a red herring. (Andrews Artifice) then it’s likely that Sanders TOLD Drake something like "Don't tell anyone but my real name is Erdnase reversed."

I personally think that is believable, espicially if you believe that Sanders left the clues about Andrews being a false lead intentionally.

I previously thought this was David Alexander reaching for evidence but now...I’m inclinded to believe it.
"Sanders was not a miner, he was a mining engineer. One of his chief jobs was to figure out whether a particular deposit of ore was of sufficient quality that it could be profitably mined. He did have to "sniff out" the quality veins and seams of gold, silver, etc.

The construction is a figurative one, not a literal one, but it holds true because of Sanders' occupation"

yes, i understand there's not the actual contention that miners or engineers or anyone in the industry actually worked with their noses to the ground. but this particular word play is so "figurative" -- first requiring translation to German and then back to the English "sniff out" idiom -- as to not be meaningful evidence of Erndase's identity. it's just not compelling and its inclusion risks making the other far more plausible proposed word coding appear just as silly and attenuated.

Considering the important family/political reasons for hiding his identity as described by Marty D, might Sanders not also have protected himself by using a pseudonym during production of the book, rather than trusting the illustrator and/or publisher not to accidentally divulge his identity? (After all, it appears from the Sprong story that the publisher was willing to do just that.)

Might Sanders have first anagrammed himself to become E.S. Andrews -- a very natural-sounding name, neither suggesting fakery nor inviting scrutiny -- to deal with Drake and Smith?

If Drake then advised publishing Andrews' book under a pseudonym due to the Comstock laws... presto, enter Erdnase via simple reversal.

That could square with Drake believing that reversing Erdnase's name would reveal the author's real name, and could also allow for Smith responding to the name Andrews when suggested by Gardner.

That's very plausible Ted and it may have been just like that.

However, I tend to think that if someone delighted in word play and clues, then they probably intentionally started people looking for Andrews.
But yes, Drake may have ONLY ever known him as ES Andrews. That's likely and explains Drake's story.

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**Magic Fred** | 08/15/11 12:24 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Ryan Matney wrote:* It's third of fourth hand heresay evidence...

And yet still more direct and convincing than anything else that's been offered. Once you've decided that it was Sanders, there's an infinite number of seemingly logical ways to make the name fit.

Me? I'm still waiting for an Andrews with gambling experience...

---

**Roger M.** | 08/15/11 01:51 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Magic Fred wrote:*

Me? I'm still waiting for an Andrews with gambling experience...

How about an E.S. Andrews living a few blocks from the shop in Chicago that remaindered all the first editions of EATCT?

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**El Harvey Oswald** | 08/15/11 02:05 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

"Once you've decided that it was Sanders, there's an infinite number of seemingly logical ways to make the name fit"

once you've decided it's lots of people there are lots of way to make the available evidence fit. Sanders is plausible, and more probable than other candidates; but that doesn't necessarily make Sanders more probable than not. It still feels a bit thin, and in need of more direct evidence. while it is perhaps entirely likely that there is noting putting Sanders directly in a gambling setting - the best we seem to have is some seemingly illogical movement in his finances on the train trip to New York -- that feels like the still missing piece. similarly, had the the legerdemain section included the card trick that he's documented as performing and jotting the three-part Latin name of in his journal, that would have been compelling. as it is, the exclusion is frustrating.

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**Ryan Matney** | 08/15/11 04:26 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

El Harvey,
money situation on the train trip to New York. If anything that is a stretch to say as Marty did in the article that perhaps it was the beginning of Sanders leading a double life.

Perhaps it was, but I think that is making something fit your point of view. There’s better evidence in the article but the best evidence is... all of the evidence, no single piece.

Roger M. | 08/15/11 07:52 PM | link | filter

Actually, the best evidence is in the article that follows Marty’s article in this issue of Genii (the 10 year old one).

It’s the anagram work that David Alexander et al proposed which forms the core evidence, and provides any foundation to be had.

It would be overstating the obvious to say that the recent circumstantial evidence, when taken by itself, would apply to millions of American men at the turn of the century.
All the “little circumstantial details” really don’t add up to anything one could call evidence, outside of the full acceptance of Alexanders anagram positing.

First you do have to believe that David Alexander was 100% correct in his article, and if you don’t fully and completely buy into Alexanders anagram proposals, then Sanders can’t assume the title of Erdnase.

Further, you have to believe that the other strong candidate as proposed by Richard Hatch is supported by NO evidence worth considering further, and that he offers NO questions which require answers before one can erase him permanently from the candidacy list.

Until you can erase the Hatch candidate with 100% certainty backed up by hard facts and strong evidence (or any other candidate for that matter), then Sanders can’t assume the title of Erdnase.

Marty has brought us a long way with his article, but as was pointed out earlier, Marty was careful not to make any declaration that this was all over.......Ernase found.......quit looking.

There's work to be done with all the candidates, and even if one chooses not to support any of the candidates named "Andrews", there's still work to be done documenting how they couldn't be Erdnase, at least before Sanders can assume the title.
been difficult to find, and suggests that continued consideration of all the evidence provided, and full examination of all the candidates remains the best course of action.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/15/11 08:04 PM | link | filter

To assume the title of Erdnase. Interesting term. Thanks.

Those with a smidgen of historical insight have something to mull over.

El Harvey Oswald | 08/15/11 08:12 PM | link | filter

"Until you can erase the Hatch candidate with 100% certainty backed up by hard facts and strong evidence (or any other candidate for that matter), then Sanders can't assume the title of Erdnase."

it's not at all clear why Sanders can't be considered (or "assume the title," whatever that means) until others, seemingly all others, have been eliminated, and to an impossible degree of certainty. perhaps you could elaborate on your prescribed methodology.

in any event, that doesn't sound like how history works. even widely accepted historical events -- e.g., "Caesar crossed the Rubicon," "Washington crossed the Delaware" -- are only probabilistic statements, often challenged by other, nearly as probable statements. at most, a "definitive" conclusion will be something like "55% probability Erdnase was Sanders, 20% Andrews, 25% someone else." under the circumstances, 55% would be enormously compelling.

Roger M. | 08/15/11 08:21 PM | link | filter

Simply put, the Hatch candidate presents extremely compelling questions, questions that quite obviously require answering before discarding him as a primary candidate. That's simply a fact.

My point was, Sanders can't legitimately assume sole position as the Erdnase candidate until all other candidates are resolved to some semblance of satisfaction to those doing the searching.

Considering my long term support of Sanders as the #1 candidate, it's tempting to just discard all other candidates and state "case closed".

But not only would that be "wrong", it's also an incredibly bad way to undertake historical research.

There's still questions needed on both the Andrews and Sanders fronts.
Take it or leave it, until those answers are found, there can be no final conclusion drawn.
........and that's all just personal opinion of course........YMMV.

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**El Harvey Oswald** | 08/16/11 12:57 AM | [link] | [filter]

"it's tempting to just discard all other candidates and state "case closed"."

Who is advocating this straw man approach?

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**Bob Coyne** | 08/16/11 01:07 AM | [link] | [filter]

Roger M. wrote: It's the anagram work that David Alexander et al proposed which forms the core evidence, and provides any foundation to be had.

I agree. And it's not just the insight that SW Erdnase is a full anagram (as opposed to a simple reversal) but the crucial evidence that WE Sanders (whose name was one of those anagrams) had experimented with anagrams based on his name in his diaries. That was a truly amazing finding, which Marty seems to have added new instances of.

Roger M. wrote: First you do have to believe that David Alexander was 100% correct in his article, and if you don't fully and completely buy into Alexanders anagram proposals, then Sanders can't assume the title of Erdnase.

I don't agree with this. For example, I'm not convinced about the "and ruse artifice" = "andrews artifice" thing. The theory that a full anagram was used makes sense on its own (with the simple reversal being misdirection). And the evidence in Sanders' diaries about playing with anagrams also remains relevant without having to accept the "andrews artifice" part of his argument.

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**Magic Fred** | 08/16/11 03:49 AM | [link] | [filter]

Roger M. wrote:

Magic Fred wrote:
Me? I'm still waiting for an Andrews with gambling experience...

How about an E.S. Andrews living a few blocks from the shop in Chicago that remaindered all the first editions of EATCT?
Richard Hatch | 08/16/11 04:46 AM | link | filter

Magic Fred wrote:

Roger M. wrote:

Magic Fred wrote:
Me? I’m still waiting for an Andrews with gambling experience...

How about an E.S. Andrews living a few blocks from the shop in Chicago that remaindered all the first editions of EATCT?

Convince me that he was a card player and I’d probably be ready to hammer the Gavel.

Bill Mullins posted evidence that this particular candidate (Edwin Sumner Andrews) was indeed a card player on this very thread earlier this year. Does it prove he was Erdnase? Hardly, but it adds additional circumstantial evidence to his case.

Magic Fred | 08/16/11 05:13 AM | link | filter

Richard Hatch wrote:

Magic Fred wrote:

Roger M. wrote:

Magic Fred wrote:
Me? I’m still waiting for an Andrews with gambling experience...

How about an E.S. Andrews living a few blocks from the shop in Chicago that remaindered all the first editions of EATCT?

Convince me that he was a card player and I’d probably be ready to hammer the Gavel.

Bill Mullins posted evidence that this particular candidate (Edwin Sumner Andrews) was indeed a card player on this very thread earlier this year. Does it prove he was Erdnase? Hardly, but it adds additional circumstantial evidence to his case.

In that case, I should obviously go back and re-read the thread properly before...
Just a quick half playful/half serious observation:

Mr Mullins said "There is no evidence that Andrews cheated, or knew any sleight of hand moves."

In my opinion, that strengthens, not weakens his case... ;)

---

Rick Ruhl | 08/16/11 06:42 AM | link | filter

[quote=El Harvey Oswald

at most, a "definitive" conclusion will be something like "55% probability Erdnase was Sanders, 20% Andrews, 25% someone else." under the circumstances, 55% would be enormously compelling. [/quote]

Would 55% be enough in a court of law for a civil suit for one of his family to be able to take control of the book?

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Jonathan Townsend | 08/16/11 08:20 AM | link | filter

I'm at least fifty five percent sure a guy named Watson wrote the Sherlock Holmes stories. So maybe we should go looking for someone of that name and when found (must be dozens in the London area at the time) give his family the rights to the works unless the Doyle family can produce something more than a work for hire agreement. Hmmm?

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Bob Cunningham | 08/16/11 09:16 AM | link | filter

Think of the implications for the heirs of Francis Bacon!

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Chris Aguilar | 08/16/11 10:09 AM | link | filter

Rick Ruhl wrote: Would 55% be enough in a court of law for a civil suit for one of his family to be able to take control of the book?

No one can take control of the book. Like all books in the U.S. written before 1923, it's in the public domain.

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Rick Ruhl | 08/16/11 10:24 AM | link | filter
Chris Aguilar wrote:

Rick Ruhl wrote: Would 55% be enough in a court of law for a civil suit for one of his family to be able to take control of the book?

No one can take control of the book. Like all books in the U.S. written before 1923, it's in the public domain.

I didn't mean in literally, I meant it a court of law, could the 55% prove ownership by the decendants of the Sanders family.

I know the book is PD... but just wondering if 55% would be enough if it wasn't?

Bob Coyne | 08/16/11 10:37 AM | link | filter

Bob Cunningham wrote: Think of the implications for the heirs of Francis Bacon!

Except that Bacon didn't write Shakespeare's works...the actual author was Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford. :-)

El Harvey Oswald | 08/16/11 10:57 AM | link | filter

"Would 55% be enough in a court of law for a civil suit for one of his family to be able to take control of the book?"

It's enough to win a civil suit; the "preponderance of evidence" standard is 51% -- though of course how a particular judge or jury construes that can vary a lot.

As for "taking control of the book," that's not an option with this book, which long ago went into the public domain. The copyright laws are as they are in part to avoid the circumstance where, as here, the author didn't bother to renew the copyright or was dead, and then long after his "family" tries to claim a stake in something they had no part in creating.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/16/11 11:12 AM | link | filter

Folks, what you're doing is upping the standard for what one may consider a likely "candidate" based on available data. That's a good thing IMHO. Claiming any of the people proffered so far as the author of the work or talk of "the title of Erdnase" still looks like humor or foolishness.
EACT text. Also recent/greater notice of a literary perspective for the palavar at the start of the text and the conjuring presentation given as example.

Are there clues in the text that the author has experience using the advantage play techniques - or those of the conjuring section? It’s one thing to write about a topic, as Chris Priest did, and quite another to spend some time in its real world application.

**Magic Fred** | 08/16/11 11:33 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Jonathan Townsend wrote:* ...Are there clues in the text that the author has experience using the advantage play techniques..

No clues. Solid evidence. Almost irrefutable. We’ve been over it before and the details are too intricate and plentiful to discuss fully here. For all intents and purposes it is fair to say that the author definitely had working knowledge and experience with the cheating techniques.

I defy anybody who has actually mastered the material to claim otherwise.

**Jonathan Townsend** | 08/16/11 11:49 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Even today we don’t have the modeling of "what do to", "when to do it" and "how to know when/what" for magic or card table stuff. Of course folks did not have the "how to know if, how to know if anything but" language back then but modeling is still critical in transmitting expertise. The rest is, to be kind, literature. And the Chris Priest reference is not given lightly.

The only solid thing we have is a text. Let’s not be muggles about it confusing statistical findings with solid narrative. Good palaver it may be, but not evidence of more than good writing IMHO.

I hold that 1: if you can cheat - you don’t teach that way or in public. And 1a you don’t expect to make as much from a book as from doing what you spent all that time learning to do. And 2: if you understand magic as a performer you don’t teach "what to" but instead "how to".

If anyone who cheats at cards for a living and has taught proteges to cheat, or does magic for a living and has taught proteges wishes to go after the "what to"/"how to" matter I’m interested.

@Fred: Asking others to call you on that line seems less than useful. The claims in the palaver at the start of the text are about paying for the card table experience are not the same as claims to functional expertise under fire. Same for conjuring.
Jonathan Townsend wrote:  I particularly like the sidebars about data from other magic texts filtered into the EACT text.

I like this too. Maybe someone has already done it, but it would be interesting to see a list for each item (trick/sleight/subtlety) in Erdnase what possible sources it came from.

The same sort of research into sources is done with Shakespeare and is used to argue for/against candidates in that authoring controversy (as well as shedding light on the meaning of the texts themselves).

Magic Fred | 08/16/11 12:02 PM | link | filter

I refer not to any claims made by the author.

Mastering the material requires the student to go through a process. It is that process which will convince those knowledgable in the subject that the author is indeed talking from experience.

The evidence ranges in category and is entirely convincing. From the abstract to concrete, the indications of practical experience are so compelling that it is just not reasonable to entertain the idea that the author was writing from the sidelines.

As for the magic section, I would agree that the author seems to be but a hobbyist. A gambler with an interest in card tricks, if you will.

Magic Fred | 08/16/11 12:09 PM | link | filter

By the way, I hope you don’t take it too personally if I suggest that you might learn a little from his prose. He had mastered the knack of employing elegant, correct language whilst still conveying his meaning with crystal like clarity...

;

Jonathan Townsend | 08/16/11 12:30 PM | link | filter

I understand, respect and yet disagree with the claim of recognizing expertise in this case. Here's where I get a "no go" gage on the card cheat veracity: the want of "when to" and full discussion of the spread and other effective resources in use at the time. The focus on unprepared and unassisted methods also seems restrictive for a book that purports to explore the calendar of available resources. This is just my feeling - that of
what I found looking through Aristotle, Newton, Eco (on semiotics) or even when trying to read Dirac's book on Relativity. Again, my perspective and gut feeling when looking at this area as an outsider. I am interested in the perceptions of an expert card cheat on this matter and the text.

**Magic Fred** | 08/16/11 12:35 PM | link | filter

There are logical and justified reasons for the omissions you cite. Both explicitly given by the author and easily inferred.

There is absolutely no reason, for example, to assume that the author would be conversant with "the spread" or any other stratagem that we now know to have been in use at the time.

The author, remember, was astute in not claiming to know it all...

**Jonathan Townsend** | 08/16/11 12:37 PM | link | filter

Back to the center of this topic - the Sanders discussion interests me as he was also a writer. That background looks promising for peripheral details that could give further clues/match elements in the text.

**Marty Demarest** | 08/16/11 02:12 PM | link | filter

W.E.'s status as a writer is a crucial detail.

We can plausibly debate and question M.D. Smith's testimony, the provenance of first edition copies, Erdnase's actual gambling skills, etc. But anyone who holds a copy of The Expert has two irrefutable pieces of evidence in hand: The author was a writer, and a self-publisher.

Before any candidate can be considered, the questions must be asked: Is this person a writer? Does this person have self-publishing skills?

As I explain in "Unshuffling Erdnase," the answer for W.E. Sanders is "yes" on both counts.

**Joe Mckay** | 08/16/11 03:17 PM | link | filter

Can someone fill me in a bit more on E.S. Andrews? I am guessing this is Richard Hatch’s suggestion?
shop selling a bunch of remaindered first-editions. That is pretty neat. Just curious if anything else is known about this character?

Also - if Richard is reading this - do you still stick by E.S. Andrews - or are you swinging towards Wilbur?

Sorry for all the questions!

Joe

Rick Ruhl | 08/16/11 03:33 PM | link | filter

Joe Mckay wrote: Can someone fill me in a bit more on E.S. Andrews? I am guessing this is Richard Hatch’s suggestion?

Somebody mentioned there was an E.S. Andrews who lived round the corner from a shop selling a bunch of remaindered first-editions. That is pretty neat. Just curious if anything else is known about this character?

Also - if Richard is reading this - do you still stick by E.S. Andrews - or are you swinging towards Wilbur?

Sorry for all the questions!

Joe

it was Todd Karr

http://www.miraclefactory.net/mpt/view ... e=articles

Bill Mullins | 08/16/11 04:25 PM | link | filter

Rick Ruhl wrote:

Joe Mckay wrote: Can someone fill me in a bit more on E.S. Andrews? I am guessing this is Richard Hatch’s suggestion?

Somebody mentioned there was an E.S. Andrews who lived round the corner from a shop selling a bunch of remaindered first-editions. That is pretty neat. Just curious if anything else is known about this character?

it was Todd Karr
No, it was not Todd Karr. It was Edwin Sumner Andrews. See Richard Hatch's post of 3/11/2011:

[Edwin S. Andrews] is transferred to yet another gambling center, San Francisco, in February 1903, the very month that an obscure magic company, the Atlas Novelty Company, which was on the same street he lived on, just a few blocks north of him, begins to sell the book for half price.

Roger M. | 08/16/11 04:53 PM | link | filter

E.S. Andrews with a deck of cards in his hands such that he has to "escape from the card table".......a set of matching dates to those required to place him in geographically correct locales,........and a stack of remaindered First Editions just around the corner from his domicile.

Pretty compelling stuff.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/16/11 04:56 PM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote: E.S. Andrews with a deck of cards in his hands such that he has to "escape from the card table".......a set of matching dates to those required to place him in geographically correct locales,........and a stack of remaindered First Editions just around the corner from his domicile.

Pretty compelling stuff.

For a set up patsy? Maybe. Did the guy write?

El Harvey Oswald | 08/16/11 05:00 PM | link | filter

theatricality compelling, perhaps; but being able to encapsulate this experience in a phrase that's similar to the book's title has no persuasive force. lots of people - but not me - live around the corner from stores with remaindered copies of my book. that's a coincidence without implications about authorship. by contrast, the matching dates are persuasive; likewise for sanders, though.

Chris Aguilar | 08/16/11 06:22 PM | link | filter

I don't find the "living around the corner from a bookstore with remaindered copies of
to other, more compelling evidence (dates, physical descriptions, etc.)

Roger M. | 08/16/11 07:17 PM | link | filter

Chris, I'm not trying to convince you of anything........but just point out that these were First Editions.

In that it was self-published by the author, it would (or could) imply that the author (there was no publisher) had to walk in the front door and make the deal, and then hand off the books.

An E.S. Andrews who played a lot of cards, and lived a few blocks away from said novelty company thus is of interest to those who search.

The USA is a big enough place that, with the above taken as a whole, I have chosen (as have many others) to find it compelling enough to want to know more.

Chris Aguilar | 08/16/11 07:29 PM | link | filter

The book remainder thing seems to have no logical connection at all. It presumes far too much for me. I see no special significance that a bookstore in San Francisco might have had first editions to remainder. I assume that the same could have been said for any city that got a shipment of the book (which need not have necessarily come directly from Erdnase) and didn't sell out of them. And since a few of the candidates traveled extensively, we have no evidence that any particular candidate provided books to any particular bookstore.

The card game thing is slightly better, but I’d question "played a lot of cards". I suspect that you’re getting that from the following, but I just don't see it. We get a reference of a guy (called "Edward" no "Edwin") ducking a single game of cards one time. Seeing how popular such games were, I don't see it as particularly significant. Mullin's presumes from the article the "Edwards" was a regular player, but it provide no evidences for his actual reason for ducking out. It's certainly interesting, but not terribly (at least to me)compelling without further evidence.

San Francisco Call 1/13/1911 p 4
MYSTERY OF THE "PIPPINS" SOLVED

Ed Andrews Can No Longer Dodge Session by Trip to Watsonville

EDWARD ANDREWS of the Pere Marquette has always boasted of a method, all his own, of being able to escape a game of cards when he does
Watsonville and see about a shipment of "Pippins." A few days ago friends from the other side of the bay saw him in Market street conversing with several young women. It happened that there was to be an evening at cards in an Alameda home that very evening and when Ed reached home he was requested over the telephone to join in the games. "Very sorry," he said, "but I am going to Watsonville in about an hour to see about a shipment of 'Pippins.'" "How about the three 'Pippins' you were seen talking to this afternoon?" was returned to him over the phone. When the story came out at the club yesterday afternoon William F. Schmidt of the Missouri Pacific, who makes frequent trips to Watsonville, remarked that it was funny that he had never thought of Andrews' idea.

Richard Kaufman | 08/16/11 09:04 PM | link | filter

Until there's some evidence that Edwin Sumner Andrews was a writer, and interested in magic (both things we have with W.E. Sanders), he is not in the top tier of candidates from my point of view.

However, Marty's point that Sanders knew a lot about card cheating, but was not a professional cheat himself, is important: Sanders was neither a cheat nor a magician, yet knew a lot about both. Erdnase was almost certainly not a cheat for reasons cited many times by both Tony Giorgio and Marty.

Bill Mullins | 08/16/11 11:32 PM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: However, Marty's point that Sanders knew a lot about card cheating . . .

From p. 58 of the article:

But there are no records that W.E. was ever caught cheating at cards.

Chris Aguilar | 08/17/11 12:32 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote:

Richard Kaufman wrote: However, Marty's point that Sanders knew a lot about card cheating . . .

From p. 58 of the article:

But there are no records that W.E. was ever caught cheating at cards.
Where did Marty make the point that "Sanders knew a lot about cheating"?

Richard Kaufman wrote: Erdnase was almost certainly not a cheat for reasons cited many times by both Tony Giorgio and Marty.

If you are referring to Giorgio's articles in Genii, he does not provide a single convincing argument against Erdnase being a cheat.

I maintain that the evidence within the book itself proves beyond any reasonable doubt that the author was a highly experienced and accomplished card cheat.

"W.E.'s status as a writer is a crucial detail."

It is perhaps the single most compelling angle. Sanders' experience, education, and social position all comport with the book's tone, intellectual rigor, and ironic edge.

All other things being equal, lack of evidence indicating Sanders was a gambler speaks as much in his favor as against.

Having used a fake name in writing a book on his nefarious activities, it might be reasonable to assume that he would have taken similar, if not more stringent, precautions whilst actually indulging in them...

"All other things being equal, lack of evidence indicating Sanders was a gambler speaks as much in his favor as against."

how does his not having been a gambler make his having written a book about gambling methods more likely? (and in equal measure to also making it less likely, thereby conveniently canceling out the gambler variable) that Sanders was a writer of some ability, a distinctive voice, and with certain repeating flourishes is quite possibly the most important variable of all. but gambling experience, or lack of it, is similarly important, and it points in only one causal direction. if Sanders gambled, it's more
somehow more consistent with Sanders' background and family, that's circular, amounting to little more than saying Sanders was Sanders. If he wasn't a gambler (honest or not), it doesn't negate, or even affect the potent writer variable. But it reduces the overall likelihood that he wrote the book - assuming the premise that, more likely than not, the author of what was by far the most comprehensive treatise on gambling methods was himself a gambler. (And in anticipation of magic cafe-types offering an ALL-CAPS intellectual revelation fully a century past its "sell by" date -- in this instance that he didn't HAVE TO have been a gambler: yes, that's right; that's how probability works.)

"Having used a fake name in writing a book on his nefarious activities, it might be reasonable to assume that he would have taken similar, if not more stringent, precautions whilst actually indulging in them..."

Yes, it's likely he'd have used a fake name while gambling. But I don't quite feel the ominousness suggested by the pregnant ellipsis.

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**Bob Coyne** | 08/17/11 06:27 AM | link | filter

*Magic Fred wrote:* All other things being equal, lack of evidence indicating Sanders was a gambler speaks as much in his favor as against.

Having used a fake name in writing a book on his nefarious activities, it might be reasonable to assume that he would have taken similar, if not more stringent, precautions whilst actually indulging in them...

I thought it was pretty clear from Marty's article that Sanders did play cards and gamble, with various references to his knowledge of card games, frequenting card club, etc. Also, the letters to him about repayment of gambling debts are hard evidence supporting this point. Of course, whether he cheated at gambling is separate issue.

---

**Magic Fred** | 08/17/11 06:33 AM | link | filter

*El Harvey Oswald wrote:* How does his not having been a gambler make his having written a book about gambling methods more likely?

Not quite what I said. I was saying that, all other things being equal, an absence of evidence for card playing would not sway me in the least.

My point being that the author was obviously extremely intelligent and accomplished in artifice, so it would not surprise me had he left not a trace of evidence from his card playing.
So, if a compelling candidate was presented with the one stumbling block that you can't attach him to any card playing activities, I wouldn't see that as a stumbling block at all...

---

**Magic Fred** | 08/17/11 06:46 AM | link | filter

*my use of Sanders as an example of a candidate who can't be attached to card playing activity was a result of reading another post to quickly... apologies.

Just wanted to make the point that the absence of such evidence is almost to be expected. In fact, were there plentiful evidence indicating that a candidate was an avid card player under his real name, I'd be somewhat suspicious.

Not to say that it's impossible that the author played openly under his real name. That's the point. :)

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**Bob Coyne** | 08/17/11 06:47 AM | link | filter

_El Harvey Oswald wrote:_ "W.E.'s status as a writer is a crucial detail."

It is perhaps the single most compelling angle. Sanders' experience, education, and social position all comport with the book's tone, intellectual rigor, and ironic edge.

Yes, this is what really seals the deal for me too. In fact, I think EATCT is such good writing that it should be viewed as literature as much as an inventory of card technique. It's a great piece of writing, pure and simple. And it's the writing style and voice of the writer as much as anything that has inspired the many readers of the book.

btw, I noticed another instance in Sanders/Erdnase writing similar to his ironic use of scare quotes and those parenthetical mid-sentence "(?)". In this case Sanders inserts parenthetical letters mid-word (in "in(co)herent") to make the word do double duty, again in an ironic tone.

"It sufficeth to say that only the innate and in(co)herent modesty of the objective subject of this 'story of a life' prevents the Class Historian (officially -- when writing of Billy Sanders) from dealing in higher superlatives than these hereinafter detailed, specified and contained, to wit: ..."

(Sanders writing about himself in the Columbia 1885-1910 25 year reunion book)
Has anyone [Marty?] looked at the correspondence and diaries of James Sanders (the elder brother of Wilbur)? They seem to be available in the Montana Historical Society. Perhaps they’d contain information pertaining to Wilbur.

http://nwda-db.wsulibs.wsu.edu/findaid/...44/xy80716

[James Sanders (1859-1923) was a Helena, Montana, attorney and librarian of the Montana Historical Society. Papers include general correspondence (1878-1922), writings, and diaries (1875-1888) covering his boyhood, education, travels, and early legal career. [Diary includes a copy of Harriet P. Sanders’ diary (1867). Separated from Wilbur Fisk Sanders Papers (MC 53).]]

Marty Demarest | 08/17/11 08:52 PM | link | filter

As I mention in Genii, one thing that is notable in James' papers is his correspondence to his brother regarding the posthumous publication of their father’s speeches and essays. I find it very telling that James sought Wilbur's advice on self-publishing, even down the quality of the paper used. I suspect that if anyone knew about Wilbur's work on The Expert, it was James. The two of them shared an office during 1902--the year of The Expert's publication.

A knowledge of self-publishing is one of Erdnase's demonstrable traits. I think any credible candidate for Erdnase must be both a writer and a self-publisher.

Magic Fred | 08/18/11 04:14 AM | link | filter

"It sufficeth to say that only the innate and in(co)herent modesty of the objective subject of this 'story of a life' prevents the Class Historian (officially -- when writing of Billy Sanders) from dealing in higher superlatives than these hereinafter detailed, specified and contained, to wit: ..."

I have to say, in all honesty, this sounds nothing like Erdnase to me.

Granted, I’m not academically qualified to make a literary analysis, but I think I have a decent grasp of the language (and certainly a familiarity with Erdnase).

I look forward to reading more examples when I get my hands on the article.

Bob Coyne | 08/18/11 07:51 AM | link | filter

Magic Fred wrote: "It sufficeth to say that only the innate and
prevents the Class Historian (officially -- when writing of Billy Sanders) from dealing in higher superlatives than these hereinafter detailed, specified and contained, to wit: ...

I have to say, in all honesty, this sounds nothing like Erdnase to me.

Granted, I’m not academically qualified to make a literary analysis, but I think I have a decent grasp of the language (and certainly a familiarity with Erdnase).

I look forward to reading more examples when I get my hands on the article.

As Marty pointed out in the article, Sanders is adept at changing his writing style for the situation. In this case he’s writing it in a facetious tone, intentionally mimicking overly formal language as an effect ("towit", "hereinafter detailed..."). If you read it in full context, that’s apparent. He puts on different voices, not just at the word-level but in the pronunciation too (by varying the spelling) throughout this same document.

So in some sense you could flip your observation around and say that Sanders doesn’t sound like Sanders! For example, in the very same paragraph as the "towit" stuff, he abruptly switches voices and describes himself with: 'lie air young an' beautifullest an' fair; he hez carroty face an' a freckled hair; he seems pure an' nobil ez he kin bebut, nixkumarouse, Bill, yer kaint fule me! He hez wondrous grace in hiz nether pegs, when he pir-hoo-etts on hiz rear hind legs: an' he thinks he's sum with hiz hullaballoo; but he kaint fule meknow him throo an' throo! "

We actually see a bit of that same ability to mimic different speaking styles in Erdnase, albeit in a completely different voice, with "Dont trouble bout no two hans, Boss. Get yo own han. De suckah, hell get a han all right, suah!.

But that wasn’t my point anyway -- instead I thought this example of using mid-word parenthetical letters in "in(co)herent" was in the same vein as the mid-sentence use of parenthetical question marks "(?)" and the heavy use of scare quotes in both Erdnase and Sanders. All used in a humorous or ironic manner.
So his ability to sound unlike Erdnase furthers his candidacy... hmm. Maybe Tamariz was right after all!

Bill Mullins | 08/18/11 05:08 PM | link | filter

So,

If we don’t know he gambled, that supports the idea that he was Erdnase.

If his writing doesn’t match the style of "Expert", that supports the idea he was Erdnase.

Hmm.

I think that if we can conclusively show that Sanders was not related to Dalrymple, then case closed!

Marty Demarest | 08/18/11 05:15 PM | link | filter

The Dalrymple family was related to the Edgerton family.

Alas, Bill, it won’t be so easy.

Bob Coyne | 08/18/11 07:29 PM | link | filter

Marty Demarest wrote: The Dalrymple family was related to the Edgerton family.

Wow, that’s quite a big bit of news!! Solid evidence for it? Close enough relation to have been known and mentioned to Smith by Erdnase/Sanders?

David Ben | 08/18/11 09:55 PM | link | filter

Marty

If you could please, please be more specific. What evidence do you have of the relationship between Dalrymple and Sanders, other than the political cartoon? Would you be kind enough to name the actual source of this information and, or produce the document?

Thanking you in advance.
Bill Mullins wrote:
If we don’t know he gambled, that supports the idea that he was Erdnase....

I agree entirely with the sentiment of your post :)

I’d just like to clarify my thoughts regarding a candidate having been a gambler: it is quite a different thing to say there is no evidence that he was a gambler, as opposed to “we can demonstrate he was (or was not) a card player.”

So my position on the matter would be:

- demonstrate that he never played cards and it’s obviously not Erdnase.

- demonstrate he was a known card player under his own name: still possible that he was Erdnase, but I’d be very suspicious.

- no evidence either way of having been a card player under his own name: this would be the most likely candidate, for me.

Edit: of course there is a fourth option, if you can demonstrate he was a card player under a fake name then that’d probably further his case.

Leonard Hevia | 08/19/11 04:59 PM | link | filter

Just finished reading the article, and I’m surprised no one has mentioned the fact that Sanders’ parents were staying at the Windsor Clifton Hotel in Chicago during the winter of 1901-02. Sanders was in Duluth, Minnesota in early November 1901. It’s not a stretch to believe that he traveled to Chicago to visit them, among other things. Smith remembered meeting Erdnase at a hotel that was nearby the Windsor Clifton, possibly the Globe Hotel.

Other items in Marty’s article that stood out for me were:

1. Marty’s explanation for the misspelling of the word “Charlier” to “Charlies” in Expert. It was easy for the printer to mistake the lower case letter “R” in Sanders’ cursive writing for an “S”--if Sanders was the author.

2. Sanders’ preoccupation with the condition of his hands. This is in keeping with someone such as a card gambler or magician who handles a deck of cards on a
his ten-week trip into the Rocky Mountains is evidence of this.

3. The fact that Sanders purchased six decks for his Rocky Mountain trip suggests a real love for the pasteboards. Laymen don’t usually purchase six decks at once.

4. The fact that Sanders was a highly skilled writer who could slip in and out of different writing styles as easily as he could his mining boots. Marty also included examples of Sanders' prose in the vernacular speech. The fact that both Erdnase and Sanders could write in vernacular speech is striking.

We know that Erdnase may have had a copy of P. T. Selbit's *The Magician's Handbook* as a source for the color changes in *Expert*. Since Sanders must have owned books and journals, could there have been gambling and magic books in Sanders' library? Since Sanders had no children, what happened to his library at the Berkeley home?

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**Frank Yuen** | 08/19/11 05:27 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Richard, in your Genii Speaks column you wrote that you saw some inconsistencies with the illustrations. Care to elaborate?

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**Bob Coyne** | 08/19/11 10:46 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I've been looking more at the similarity of language used by Sanders and Erdnase. Sanders' chapter (50 pages) in Mine Timbering (MT) is actually quite similar to the technical descriptions in Erdnase (EATCT) in tone, terminology, and clarity. The prefaces and introductory sections in both works also share similarities, including their way of delineating the scope and approach of the respective works.

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Both offer the reader a treatise (of sorts) and stress the importance of details.

EATCT: A TREATISE on the Science and Art of Manipulating Cards
EATCT: the sum of our present knowledge is PROFFERED THIS IN VOLUME
EATCT: IMPORTANCE of DETAILS (full section heading)

MT: it has appeared worth while to make the present COLLECTION WHICH IS OFFERED not as a complete TREATISE on the subject, but rather as a series of essays which go fully into many IMPORTANT DETAILS

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Both give disclaimers. describing the limitations of what is covered:
EATCT: IT IS NOT OUR PURPOSE TO DESCRIBE the various kinds of apparatus, or prepared or mechanical cards, that play so great a part in the professional conjurer’s startling exhibitions.

MT: IT IS NOT THE PROVINCE OF THIS ARTICLE TO TOUCH UPON methods of mining in use above ground, whether by hydraulic mining, or other processes, but rather to deal with the support of underground excavations by the use of timbers, and the details of mining therewith connected. NOR IS IT INTENDED TO ...

---

Both take time to describe the relevance of the illustrations:

EATCT: Therefore the writer has expended much time and care in illustrating many manoeuvres that at first may seem unimportant, but all of which are essential to the curriculum of artistic card handling.

MT: in the figures drawn to illustrate the article, sizes of timber most frequently used have been arbitrarily taken for convenience. The figures giving dimensions are working drawings showing the methods of framing, as explained, and can easily be applied to frames and timbers of any desired dimensions.

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Various other parallel wordings/concepts:

EATCT: DESCRIBING with detail and illustration EVERY KNOWN expedient, manoeuvre and stratagem of the expert card handler

MT: the mines operated under these methods PRESENT EVERY KNOWN characteristic of lode formation.

EATCT: LITTLE OR NO skill is required, BUT a practiced hand can locate and bring the cards to the top

MT: large excavations may be supported with LITTLE OR NO timbering, BUT usually...

EATCT: various METHODS OF LOCATING AND PRODUCING selected cards

MT: the METHODS OF LOCATING AND ALIGNING the sets are those used for...

EATCT: and the tip SHOULD BE HELD SUFFICIENTLY ABOVE IT TO RECEIVE the lower packet

MT: with sides that SHALL PROJECT BEYOND THE SIDE of the chute into the tramway SUFFICIENTLY FAR TO ALLOW the rock to fall...

EATCT: An expert can run the whole deck WITH THE UTMOST rapidity

MT: huge timbers that have been framed WITH THE UTMOST precision
play for money
MT: this station, while requiring more exciting to construct, IS BY FAR THE MOST economical in the end

EATCT: we shall describe several of the BEST METHODS known for secretly exchanging
EATCT: the BEST AND SIMPLEST METHODS of accomplishing the sleights
MT: probably the SIMPLEST METHOD OF aligning the side plates of inclined-shaft sets
MT: being the SIMPLEST AND CHEAPEST METHOD OF framing

EATCT: the other fingers and thumb HOLDING the packet FIRMLY TOGETHER.
MT: in order to BIND the frames FIRMLY TOGETHER at this point

---

**Bill Mullins** | 08/19/11 11:50 PM | link | filter

Wilbur Sanders, literary critic:

Sir Some time ago, a report that was stated to have been the result of an examination made upon a mining property . . . came into my hands and has been carefully preserved by me as a classic. . . . Certainly in part it is too good to keep, and in a spirit of benevolence and as an offering upon the shrine of professional goodwill toward professional brethren, the following extracts have been exhumed from their obscure place of burial among files containing many another mining report that is less picturesque, less unique. The following contains the rich kernel removed from the enclosing shell.

[Extended quote follows.]

How plain and simple it all is to write a mining report. Not necessarily one that will 'stick,' but a picturesque and unique document that is readable and fairly well filled with data culled in a measure from geologic reports and folios of the region or from other vicarious sources and containing more or less uncertain assumptions and statements as to ore values and to positive, probable, and possible ore reserves that from their very artlessness and ingenuousness should convince, but which somehow fail to carry a satisfactory weight when their authors are brought 'upon the carpet.' And how many reports presuming to describe mining properties are written that should never have been penned because of the wicked waste of ink resulting therefrom.

Wilbur E. Sanders
Sonora, California, July 6.
Just fooling around with the title page (and nothing more...)

Can you read W.E. Sanders?

Great find Carlo.

That right there is pushing the boundaries of "pure chance".

I find it especially interesting that you didn’t have to move any of the text (hand-set type in its day) off the page in order to find the hidden name.

I’m interested in what others have to say about Carlo’s find?

That’s pretty remarkable! What other names can be generated by sliding the text back and forth?

Andrew Pinard wrote: That's pretty remarkable! What other names can be generated by sliding the text back and forth?

who knows, probably thousands...certainly Andrews, but not ES (or MF) Andrews. I just wanted to see if I could come up with WE Sanders, assuming that 1. he wrote the book 2. he liked to play with words 3. he played with the first part of the title, and given that 4. he decided to split the words and sentences in that weird way (especially "conjurer" and "illustration". again, just playing around....

Well... Just thought I would try a couple of the obvious examples...

Ummm... E.S. Andrews doesn't work.
M.F. Andrews doesn’t work.
S.W. Erdnase doesn't work.
the recent scholarship. Talk about staring you in the face.

ajp

**Bob Coyne** | 08/20/11 12:56 PM | link | filter

This is interesting!

Here’s one simple way to think about the chances. If we assume the constraint of the typography making the pyramid of the same shape and size, then the number of letters on each line is fixed. Ignoring spaces, the first line has 38 letters, the second has 29, etc. We can then calculate the chance that every line would have the corresponding required letter in "WESanders" somewhere on it. The probability that the first line *wouldn’t* have a W is (25/26)^38 (i.e. that all 38 letters on that line are something other than a W). The chance that the first line *would* have at least one W would be 1 minus that, or .77. The chance that every line would have at least one instance of its required letter is the product of these per-line probabilities. This turns out to be .0055, or less than 1 in a hundred.

So it’s not very likely that WESanders would appear there by chance given those assumptions -- which implies it’s intentional. Some of the above assumptions, however, are bogus. For example, the letters in WESanders are fairly common and hence more likely than other letters to appear in any given text. If you take relative letter frequencies into account, the probability comes to about .05 (or 1/20). So, it’s still on the unlikely side that his name would be there just by chance. Of course, other assumptions made above would change the odds in different ways.

**Leonard Hevia** | 08/20/11 02:02 PM | link | filter

That was an amazing discovery Carlo. It might even be the explanation for the pyramid design on the title page. Without that pyramid layout of the sentences, you wouldn’t be able to slide the sentences left and right and stay within the margins of the page.

**Carlo Morpurgo** | 08/20/11 02:35 PM | link | filter

*Bob Coyne wrote:* This is interesting!

Here’s one simple way to think about the chances. If we assume the constraint of the typography making the pyramid of the same shape and size, then the number of letters on each line is fixed. Ignoring spaces, the first line has 38 letters, the second has 29, etc. We can then calculate the chance that every line would have the corresponding required letter in...
"WESanders" somewhere on it. The probability that the first line wouldn't have a W is \((25/26)^38\) (i.e. that all 38 letters on that line are something other than a W). The chance that the first line would have at least one W would be 1 minus that, or .77. The chance that every line would have at least one instance of its required letter is the product of these per-line probabilities. This turns out to be .0055, or less than 1 in a hundred.

So it's not very likely that WESanders would appear there by chance given those assumptions -- which implies it's intentional. Some of the above assumptions, however, are bogus. For example, the letters in WESanders are fairly common and hence more likely than other letters to appear in any given text. If you take relative letter frequencies into account, the probability comes to about .05 (or 1/20). So, it's still on the unlikely side that his name would be there just by chance. Of course, other assumptions made above would change the odds in different ways.

Glad you (and others) found it interesting...but I am not entirely convinced about the "a posteriori" probability argument, just based on occurrences of letters. You'd have to think about the fact that letters cannot be randomly chosen, they need to form words, and words need to form sentences etc. But even then I'd argue that a calculation "after the fact" should not be interpreted as likelihood of "intentions". For example, I could argue the the probability that you start a post in this forum with a "T" and end it with an "S" is about 0.0015, which does not indicate to me that in your post above you intentionally wanted to start with T and end with S...this is a silly example I know, maybe you can come up with a better one....

---

**Bob Coyne** | 08/20/11 03:00 PM | [link] [filter]

*Carlo Morpurgo wrote:*  
Glad you (and others) found it interesting...but I am not entirely convinced about the "a posteriori" probability argument, just based on occurrences of letters. You'd have to think about the fact that letters cannot be randomly chosen, they need to form words, and words need to form sentences etc. But even then I'd argue that a calculation "after the fact" should not be interpreted as likelihood of "intentions". For example, I could argue the the probability that you start a post in this forum with a "T" and end it with an "S" is about 0.0015, which does not indicate to me that in your post above you intentionally wanted to start with T and end with S...this is a silly example I know, maybe you can come up with a better one....

On the first point...I don't think the constraints on which letters can appear in which words would make too much difference in the probabilities since the overall frequencies of letters is derived from words they occur in (e.g. that E is 12% and W is
other issues like what words can most likely follow each other and how that might affect the letter frequencies for a given number of words on a line. But for a rough estimate I think it’s OK to ignore those sorts of things.

On the second point, I agree. You’d have to take into account all the plausible different ways Sanders’ name could have been inserted into the text (upside down, first letter of each word, spelling out w-i-l-b-u-r, etc) and then penalize those for *not* occurring. So it sort of becomes like a magic trick with multiple outs where you can always spell in some way to the card or whatever. That’s why I put in the caveats about how the calculation (and its interpretation) was based on the assumptions being made. btw, the constraint that the letters can only slide within the page and not off (an assumption I didn’t make) would make WESanders appearing there by chance alone less likely.

---

**Carlo Morpurgo** | 08/20/11 03:36 PM | link | filter

_Bob Coyne wrote:_ btw, the constraint that the letters can only slide within the page and not off (an assumption I didn’t make) would make WESanders appearing there by chance alone less likely.

Yes...that is a stronger case...In the sense that it’s reasonable that if Sanders wanted to have his name appear in that sort of way, then the easiest way (and safest perhaps) was by shortening the sentences (as Leonard also pointed out above). The alternative of course was to use a fixed width, with the letters in his name already aligned vertically or in some other "intentional" shape....within a longer paragraph.

---

**Richard Kaufman** | 08/20/11 05:43 PM | link | filter

There are some influential people in our field who think that the entire argument for Wilbur Sanders is "nonsense" and they don't accept the conclusion AT ALL. I expect we’ll see and hear more about this in coming months.

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**Chris Aguilar** | 08/20/11 05:54 PM | link | filter

Are these "influential people" folks who have publicly weighed in on the topic before?

---

**Bob Coyne** | 08/20/11 06:19 PM | link | filter

_Wilbur Sanders, literary critic, via Bill Mullins: wrote:_ ...the following extracts have been _exhumed_ from their obscure place of burial

Ah, perhaps this is the same place where one can also exhume some "antiquated moss-covered ruses" :-(
from geologic reports and folios of the region

Undoubtedly via the Erdnase System of Culling....

Wilbur Sanders, literary critic, via Bill Mullins: wrote: ...And how many reports presuming to describe mining properties are written that should never have been penned because of the \textit{wicked waste} of ink resulting therefrom.

Presumably by the same "Self-styled 'ex-professionals'" (responsible for the aforementioned exhumations, btw) who have "regaled the public with astounding disclosures of their former \textit{wiles and wickedness}"

\begin{quote}
\textbf{Rick Ruhl} | 08/20/11 06:28 PM | link | filter

\textit{Carlo Morpurgo wrote:} Just fooling around with the title page (and nothing more...)

\url{http://tinyurl.com/3gc7bzq}

Can you read W.E. Sanders?

David Alexander said in his article that that page is the only one needed to find the true name of the author.

And this is from TOP to BOTTOM. Its has to be intentional.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textbf{Rick Ruhl} | 08/20/11 07:14 PM | link | filter

Also I was playing around with the name..

S W Erdnase

E S Andrews

Pop the W to the top and invert the RE

W E Sanders

Im thinking this relates to three magic tricks.

The first, of couse, is reversing the order of the deck.

The others are a double lift and a shift....
Carlo's work is very interesting, and quite in keeping with David Alexander's original research. Fascinating!

It points up one of S.W. Erdnase's unquestionable qualities: He disguised his name.

Along with being a writer and a self-publisher, we can be fairly certain that S.W. Erdnase disguised his real name. Any credible candidate for Erdnase must be a writer, a self-publisher and have reason to use a pseudonym.

Of course authors have many reasons for disguising their real names, ranging from personal to legal. But since S.W. Erdnase did not attempt to hide his illustrator's name, and since he never emerged to claim his work after laws and legal rulings began to change in the early part of the 20th Century, it seems likely that S.W. Erdnase had a personal reason to disguise his name.

I discuss W.E. Sanders' personal reasons for maintaining his anonymity in the September issue of Genii. I also provide examples of Wilbur's fondness for rearranging the letters of his name in different ways, including stacking them in columns.

It's disappointing to read that some think Sanders candidacy is "nonsense".

Making broad or definitive statements in either direction doesn't help the search at all.

It helps THEIR search if they have a different candidate that they are supporting, for whatever reason.

I agree with Roger. There is a great deal of circumstantial evidence that is getting stronger. Carl's discovery is really amazing.

I'll be most interested in seeing any forthcoming evidence (for or against any viable candidate) that these "influential people" choose to share with us.
shut up" time.

----- Grabbing my popcorn and settling in for some interesting times -------

**Brad Henderson** | 08/20/11 10:05 PM | link | filter

Can someone point out what I am meant to see in carlos's picture? Reading on iPhone. Perhaps it isn't visible so readily there?

**Bob Coyne** | 08/20/11 10:20 PM | link | filter

A few days ago in this thread, David Ben said "Hopefully the next issue of Magicol will provide some clarity to this debate. I am in the process of assembling the issue for layout now."

David more recently in this thread asked Marty for documentation to support the new claim that the Edgertons (Sanders Mother’s family) were related to Dalrymple.

So it sounds to me that at least some counterarguments will be presented there.

**Bob Coyne** | 08/20/11 10:27 PM | link | filter

*Brad Henderson wrote:* Can someone point out what I am meant to see in carlos's picture? Reading on iPhone. Perhaps it isn't visible so readily there?

The nine lines of text that says "Embracing the whole calendar..." were all shifted left or right so that a vertical column of letters spells out "WESANDERS".

It starts with the W in "whole", the second E in "employed", the S in "Describing", the A in "tration", the N in "manoeuvre" etc.

**Roger M.** | 08/20/11 10:28 PM | link | filter

Brad, starting with the "W" in "Whole", read in a vertical line going straight down.

WESANDERS

Might be tough to see on an iPhone.

Edit: Bob beat me to it!
It took me a few minutes to see it.

**Eoin O'hare** | 08/20/11 11:44 PM | link | filter

Here’s Carlo’s photo (I hope you don't mind) with the name circled.

![Image of a book cover](https://example.com/book_cover.jpg)

**El Harvey Oswald** | 08/21/11 01:37 AM | link | filter

wow; that would be an extraordinary coincidence, and the weird margin justification suggests it was deliberate

**El Harvey Oswald** | 08/21/11 01:41 AM | link | filter

i see now that’s not in fact how it was arranged on the original title page; not so remarkable
I do not recall if this has been mentioned previously;

But can any significance, in light of latest findings, be attached to the credit for illustration going to M.D. Smith and not his full name.

Just as we have only S.W. we only get M.D. Why no full name for the artist? Why no Full false name for the author?

---

**El Harvey Oswald** | 08/21/11 05:32 AM | [link] | [filter]

"Just as we have only S.W. we only get M.D. Why no full name for the artist? Why no Full false name for the author?"

initials for both: just parallelism.

initials for the author: arguably more concealment, as a full name might give clues, even unintentionally. also, it is gender neutral, though the probability of a female author is likely close to zero.

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**Marty Demarest** | 08/21/11 09:13 AM | [link] | [filter]

Happy 150th Birthday, W.E. Sanders!

---

**Leonard Hevia** | 08/21/11 12:23 PM | [link] | [filter]

*El Harvey Oswald wrote*: i see now that's not in fact how it was arranged on the original title page; not so remarkable

If Erdnase had arranged it as Carlo did, wouldn't it have been too obvious to ascertain his real name? There was a deliberate reason for the pyramid shape of the title page. If Erdnase designed it that way for purely aesthetic reasons, then we have a hell of a coincidence. If not, we have W.E. Sanders.

---

**Brad Henderson** | 08/21/11 12:38 PM | [link] | [filter]

Thanks!

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/21/11 02:08 PM | [link] | [filter]

It's yet another SWE "shift" that produces the name of the author.
I was working on this even more and needed to add what I think are moves in the book that relate to the name.

S W Erdnase

E S Andrews

Reversing the order of the cards as described in the Stock Shuffle.

E S Andrews

W E S Andres

Use the Slide to bring the W to the top. In his description of the slide, he says "It is a form of exchange that may be occasionally employed".

I still haven't figured out which move would reverse the r and e.

Rick

Jonathan Townsend | 08/21/11 06:39 PM | link | filter

Who's gonna be first with "bible code" revelations from this text?

Geno Munari | 08/21/11 09:55 PM | link | filter

I found this interesting post. It mentions a different name for Wilbur's son. Perhaps he had another son, other than James, as mentioned in the article. If I missed this, my apology.

http://genforum.genealogy.com/sanders/m ... 10554.html

Richard Kaufman | 08/21/11 10:22 PM | link | filter

Wilbur Fisk had three sons if memory serves: Wilber Sanders had two brothers.

Rick Ruhl | 08/22/11 08:20 AM | link | filter

Wilbur's younger brother was named Louis, according to the sidebar in Marty's article.

El Harvey Oswald | 08/22/11 09:37 AM | link | filter
his real name? There was a deliberate reason for the pyramid shape of the title page. If Erdnase designed it that way for purely aesthetic reasons, then we have a hell of a coincidence. If not, we have W.E. Sanders.

i suppose so; i'm kind of drifting back toward finding it pretty compelling

---

**Jonathan Townsend** | 08/22/11 10:30 AM | link | filter

Can you slide the lines around to find other names of candidate magicians, writers or card sharps?

---

**Bob Coyne** | 08/22/11 11:34 AM | link | filter

_El Harvey Oswald wrote:_ "If Erdnase had arranged it as Carlo did, wouldn't it have been too obvious to ascertain his real name? There was a deliberate reason for the pyramid shape of the title page. If Erdnase designed it that way for purely aesthetic reasons, then we have a hell of a coincidence. If not, we have W.E. Sanders."

i suppose so; i'm kind of drifting back toward finding it pretty compelling

I'm drifting around on this too. The letters in his name (E, S, A, ...) are almost all very common. So there's roughly a 1 in 10 chance that WESANDERS would appear either forward or backwards within a block of text of that size/shape (with each line of text containing the corresponding letter of his name). Plus there are other variants of picking letters or choices he could make for how he wrote his name. So it doesn't seem like that huge of a coincidence to find something.

Also, if Sanders wanted to conceal his name, wouldn't he have chosen a way that couldn't be chalked up as easily to chance? Eg, with the SW Erdnase anagram there are only a small handful of ways to unscramble that to an actual name. So that makes a much stronger (though well hidden) connection to his name.

---

**Carlo Morpurgo** | 08/22/11 01:29 PM | link | filter

Glad to see that some more people found this "discovery" interesting...! I am personally entertained by it, but I would be cautious about claiming that it really means something... To entertain myself even more I came up quickly with a similar "pyramidal scheme" with my own name (not very creative, I admit), and when I was almost done I read Bob's message above and found out that I had already the first 6 letters in WESanders...I just tweaked it a little to have them all:

http://tinyurl.com/zhqoefw
Jonathan Townsend | 08/22/11 01:50 PM | link | filter

Puzzle boxes in text form?
Is this a common practice?

Richard Kaufman | 08/22/11 02:11 PM | link | filter

I don’t know much about this sort of thing, but what are the odds that the letters WESANDERS would appear in perfect order from top to bottom merely by shifting some of the lines from side to side? It would seem that the odds are very great AGAINST it happening, which makes it much more likely to have been done purposefully.

Carlo Morpurgo | 08/22/11 02:11 PM | link | filter

this is the correct link: http://tinyurl.com/42b8mjr

Geno Munari | 08/22/11 02:12 PM | link | filter

Carlo, I find this so compelling.

I just am amazed, however it is similar to the problem with imperfect anagrams. For instance, In New Era Card Tricks, you can find Erdnase car trick. However I am afraid that anagrams are much like a Google search. You can put two different names together and find items in the search that are not relevant.

I still am pondering the theories pro/con, allowing the use of Marshall Smith’s name to remain on the cover. Any thoughts on this?

Bill Mullins | 08/22/11 02:13 PM | link | filter

Geno Munari wrote: I found this interesting post. It mentions a different name for Wilbur's son. Perhaps he had another son, other than James, as mentioned in the article. If I missed this, my apology.

Wilbur Fisk had five sons. WE, James Upson and Louis Peck lived to adulthood. Henry and Walter, both born in 1872, died in infancy.

Marty Demarest | 08/22/11 04:20 PM | link | filter

Carlo’s recent exploration of the “Erdnase Triangle,” along with some interesting blog posts by Tom Sawyer (http://rulebooklets.wordpress.com) have started me thinking
David Alexander pointed out that at some point, endless coincidences become irrational. And I agree with him.

I also agree with many posters on this forum that many congruities between W.E. Sanders and S.W. Erdnase could be coincidences.

But no person is a series of discrete qualities. Each person is a aggregate of those qualities.

Take a sample group of every man alive in America ca. 1901. Then have those who were writers stand up. (Then everyone sit down.) Then have those who had self-publishing skills stand up. (Sit down again.) Then have those whose names have a realationship to S.W. Erdnase stand up... Etc.

Each time a different group of men would stand. Coincidences.

But if you have all the writers stand. Then ask those who don't have self-publishing skills to sit. Those whose names don't have a relationship to S.W. Erdnase sit... Etc.

You'd be left with a single group. Very, very small. Coincidence?

A coincidence is rare enough. But as coincidences aggregate, the rarity exponentiates. More than becoming irrational, it becomes unique.

---

Bob Coyne wrote:
I'm drifting around on this too. The letters in his name (E, S, A, ...) are almost all very common. So there's roughly a 1 in 10 chance that WESANDERS would appear either forward or backwards within a block of text of that size/shape (with each line of text containing the corresponding letter of his name). Plus there are other variants of picking letters or choices he could make for how he wrote his name. So it doesn't seem like that huge of a coincidence to find something.

Isn't the relative letter frequency already taking into account the fact that those letters are very common? I tried the calculation myself, without the additional constraint that the lines can't slide outside the margins, and I came up with 0.012 (assuming that lines have 38, 29, 33...9, words in them)

Note in passing that the last 4 letters of the name are already pretty much aligned in the original pyramid. But it could be chance as well.
Bob Coyne wrote:

Also, if Sanders wanted to conceal his name, wouldn’t he have chosen a way that couldn’t be chalked up as easily to chance? Eg, with the SW Erdnase anagram there are only a small handful of ways to unscramble that to an actual name. So that makes a much stronger (though well hidden) connection to his name.

I doubt that Erdnase went through all the anagrams (by hand) to find out that only a few are reasonable names. In all this, it seems reasonable to assume that if he concealed his real name then he must have also left some clues on how to find it, without the use of modern technology. Otherwise almost anything is possible, if it was "for his eyes only".

If the "S.W.E. shift" is such a clue then the anagram search is reduced considerably (either WES or ESW as first block). If one absolutely wants to push the pyramid scheme (and I am not), then ESW is out, DERS is in (assuming that the originally aligned "DERS" is a clue related to the last 4 letters). One is then left with only 2 possibilities, one of which is not reasonable, (WESNADERS - note however that "Snaders" today appears as a proper name in the white pages).

I find this argument a bit weak, but it’s all I could come up with in order to justify the "lines in the pyramid" thing (no pun intended!), and putting it together with what’s known...

Rick Ruhl | 08/22/11 06:05 PM | link | filter

Marty Demarest wrote: Carlo's recent exploration of the "Erdnase Triangle," along with some interesting blog posts by Tom Sawyer (http://rulebooklets.wordpress.com) have started me thinking about coincidences.

David Alexander pointed out that at some point, endless coincidences become irrational. And I agree with him.

I also agree with many posters on this forum that many congruities between W.E. Sanders and S.W. Erdnase could be coincidences.

But no person is a series of discrete qualities. Each person is a aggregate of those qualities.

Take a sample group of every man alive in America ca. 1901. Then have those who were writers stand up. (Then everyone sit down.) Then have
those whose names have a relationship to S.W. Erdnase stand up... Etc.

Each time a different group of men would stand. Coincidences.

But if you have all the writers stand. Then ask those who don't have self-publishing skills to sit. Those whose names don't have a relationship to S.W. Erdnase sit... Etc.

You'd be left with a single group. Very, very small. Coincidence?

A coincidence is rare enough. But as coincidences aggregate, the rarity exponentiates. More than becoming irrational, it becomes unique.

Could it be that since we may have found the author, it's much easier to 'reverse engineer' the hidden anagrams and clues in the book, since we have a name to go by.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/22/11 07:08 PM | link | filter

+1 "The Erdnase Triangle"

Roger M. | 08/22/11 07:19 PM | link | filter

We've had the name of Sanders to go by for the past decade though. These were waiting to be discovered since David Alexander first gave us the name.

This is just excellent research, and keen observation IMO.

.............and apparently more to come shortly!

El Harvey Oswald | 08/22/11 07:39 PM | link | filter

"You'd be left with a single group. Very, very small."

what's "small"? 10? 100? 1000? "small" when finding subgroups from among millions of people -- subgroups defined by criteria not altogether common, but not rare, either -- is a pretty big number next to what "small" is relative to the resources of the magic community to determine the identity of a long-dead person who left few clues.

Carlo Morpurgo | 08/22/11 07:53 PM | link | filter

Carlo Morpurgo wrote:
lines can’t slide outside the margins, and I came up with 0.012 (assuming that lines have 38, 29, 33...9, words in them)

there was a small typo in my numbers...the correct answer should be 0.055. More interesting (and difficult) is the calculation WITH the line constraint...if I have time I'll try some toy version later, just to see how much smaller the numbers get.

Rick Ruhl | 08/22/11 10:58 PM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote: We’ve had the name of Sanders to go by for the past decade though. These were waiting to be discovered since David Alexander first gave us the name.

This is just excellent research, and keen observation IMO.

.............and apparently more to come shortly!

Just seems to me things are falling into place...

Carlo Morpurgo | 08/23/11 12:38 AM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote: +1 "The Erdnase Triangle"

Yeah, I guess "triangle" or "trapezoid" would be a bit more appropriate, although I see it more in terms of blocks stacked on top of each other....

El Harvey Oswald | 08/23/11 01:31 AM | link | filter

"the odds are very great AGAINST it happening, which makes it much more likely to have been done purposefully."

Intuitively, perhaps; but probability doesn’t assign causation that way.

Rick Ruhl | 08/23/11 01:35 PM | link | filter

I was looking at a map of 1902 Chicago.

It seems the corner of Congress and State Street where Smith and Erdnase met, was only a block or two from the Chicago Board of Trade.
Roger M. wrote: It's disappointing to read that some think Sanders candidacy is "nonsense".

Making broad or definitive statements in either direction doesn't help the search at all.

I tend to agree with you Roger. (Just catching up... This discussion is really moving along.)

However, strong opinions re. Erdnase are nothing new. I’ve read that Martin Gardner declared David Alexander's work to be "pure baloney!"

One of the pleasures I’ve had in doing this work is meeting many people who take Erdnase and his identity very, very seriously. It has genuinely been a delight. And one of the joys I’m finding in my further work on the subject is that it is allowing me to also write about these people. There are some big personalities in this little world!

But rancor doesn't help further the content of the discussion. Nor do closed minds. I was dismayed to read, on Thomas Sawyer's new Erdnase-blog (http://swerdnase2011.wordpress.com/), that he withdrew from publishing some of his work because of the spirit of the general discussion. I'm glad he decided to publish his work on Erdnase's identity, which in my opinion represents some of the most innovative thinking on the subject.

I can't say that I see the situation the same as Thomas did. (But when asked to publicly share my work for free, I do admit to having a response akin to "Nonsense!")

That said, I’m hoping the upcoming Erdnaseum proves to be full of enjoyable discussion and freely shared ideas. It should be fun.

Martin Gardner was a brilliant man, it's so hard for me to accept that he championed Andrews till the very end.

Whether you believe Marty's work that Sanders wrote Expert at the card Table or not, MD Smith's description of the man he met and the fact that Andrews wrote like a street thug convince me that Andrews could not ever have been Erdnase. 
proves to be full of enjoyable discussion and freely shared ideas. It should be fun.

Marty, are there any plans regarding "Proceedings" of some sort?

**Roger M.** | 08/23/11 05:23 PM | link | filter

_Marty Demarest wrote:_ I’ve read that Martin Gardner declared David Alexander’s work to be "pure baloney!"

Marty, I’ve long felt that Gardner based a lot of the veracity of what he said about MFA being Erdnase on the boots on the ground research of Bart Whaley. I’ll go on record as saying that I think Bart Whaley is one of the finest researchers in magic history. His recent work on the true identity of "An Adept", the author of "A Grand Expose" is an example of his very fine style of research.

BUT......the above doesn’t mean Gardner/Whaley can’t be wrong about the identity of Erdnase......and in fact, I think most here would say that they were indeed quite wrong. It doesn’t mean Whaley isn’t a fine researcher (and Gardner isn’t a good friend, each of them supporting the others research).

Gardner would _have to say_ DA’s work was "pure baloney", simply because he and Whaley had made concrete decisions as to the identity of Erdnase, and then shared them with the public with absolutely no wiggle room to be corrected if they were eventually proven wrong, or had some serious push-back from those who may not believe MFA could have been Erdnase.

It’s for the above reason that I keep _"The Man Who Was Erdnase"_ as one of the cornerstone pieces of research on Erdnase.......it’s _great_ research, but Gardner et al reached the wrong conclusion.

**El Harvey Oswald** | 08/23/11 05:48 PM | link | filter

alexander’s work wasn’t very compelling, in itself, and it often veered into weirdness. Marty Demarest, by contrast, is far more rigorous.

**Bill Mullins** | 08/23/11 06:10 PM | link | filter

_Roger M. wrote:_ I’ll go on record as saying that I think Bart Whaley is one of the finest researchers in magic history. His recent work on the true identity of "An Adept", the author of "A Grand Expose" is an example of his very fine style of research.
I knew that Whaley had done research on Gerrit Evans ("How Gamblers Win"), but was not aware of any work he'd done on "A Grand Expose". Is it published?

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**Roger M.** | 08/23/11 06:15 PM | link | filter

WOW......you're absolutely correct Bill, total brain drain on my part.

*Not "A Grand Expose", but indeed, **How Gamblers Win**.*

I'm getting my Magicana re-release editions mixed up.

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**Roger M.** | 08/23/11 06:23 PM | link | filter

*El Harvey Oswald wrote:* alexander's work wasn't very compelling, in itself, and it often veered into weirdness. Marty Demarest, by contrast, is far more rigorous.

I find this post somewhat disrespectful. Not in its observation of the excellence of Marty's research (which indeed is excellent), but in the need to insult the memory of David Alexander.

Your post doesn't advance the topic in the slightest.

---

**Richard Kaufman** | 08/23/11 07:28 PM | link | filter

I can assure you that David Alexander would not have been offended by the remark, and would have relished a fine argument about El Harvey's position.

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**El Harvey Oswald** | 08/23/11 07:49 PM | link | filter

"Your post doesn't advance the topic in the slightest."

Commenting on the prior research having made silly leaps of logic doesn't "advance the topic"? but praising better, subsequent research by a living person on precisely the same topic does? I doubt very much that "the memory" of anyone feels much affront. and as RK suggests, people who publicly advance ideas with competing versions typically welcome chances to defend their positions. should we also dull our critiques of capitalism, in deference to "the memory" of Adam Smith? or does analytical pollysanism apply only to the relatively recently deceased?

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**Roger M.** | 08/23/11 08:14 PM | link | filter
Your recent inability to identify the layout of the title page aside, you seem short on facts and long on well written but uninformed opinion........I’d like to know exactly what you feel was offered by Alexander that rates as "silly".

---

**Chris Aguilar** | 08/23/11 08:21 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I felt the same way about D. Alexander’s initial article from a decade+ ago. It was very interesting, but not completely compelling to me. Marty’s research builds on and goes further in depth, making (in my view) a better overall case.

Expressing that notion isn’t disrespecting D.Alexander or his work.

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**Roger M.** | 08/23/11 08:39 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Sure Chris, whatever you say.

I found David’s article compelling ten years ago, and found Marty's article equally compelling a week ago.

This passive/aggressive "playing of sides" however, is counterproductive........so I'll leave you and the rest of Marty's (probably unwanted) sycophants to chat amongst yourselves.

---

**El Harvey Oswald** | 08/23/11 08:51 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

"I'd like to know exactly what you feel was offered by Alexander that rates as "silly""

- that "eardnase" means "earth nose," in german, and is thus a coded reference to sanders' experience in mining;
- that by an absurd sequence of reconfiguration the phrase "artifice, ruse and subterfuge" yields "andrews artifice" (and, relatedly, his unfamiliarity with the fact that seemingly arbitrary differences in font sizes was fairly common in contemporaneous title pages).

finally, it is accurate that i initially thought that the point about the title page was offered with reference to the actual alignment of the title page, not after it was reconfigured. it was only conceivably an interesting point, meaningfully bearing on the identity, if it took the title page as it actually was; thus the assumption.

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/23/11 09:11 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)
Not me.

finally, it is accurate that I initially thought that the point about the title page was offered with reference to the actual alignment of the title page, not after it was reconfigured. It was only conceivably an interesting point, meaningfully bearing on the identity, if it took the title page as it actually was; thus the assumption

Mr. Oswald--based on your quote, you would have found it more interesting if Sanders' name was clearly vertically visible on the title page before Carlo changed the pyramid alignment? Wouldn't that have been too obvious a clue? As David wrote in his article (You did read it?), Erdnase had a "healthy ego" and was "shrewed beyond words." He wasn't going to make it easy to figure out his real identity. David also pointed out that Erdnase could have chosen an "impenetrable literary device" such as "Anonymous" or "A Reformed Gambler" to obliterate the trail, but he didn't. He left the trail open (barely) for those intelligent enough to figure it out.

Reading the title page backward to get "Cardtable Subterfuge And-ruse Artifice" as David suggested might initially seem a bit far fetched--but not impossible. Erdnase knew that investigators would read his name backwards to get E.S. Andrews. When you read the title page backwards, as David suggested, Erdnase seems to say "Gotcha, didn't I?" This is not at odds with Sanders' mischievous nature. Remember, he got caught stealing ore from a mine, and kept falling into debt each time he visited New York. Hmmm...

I don't see anything improbable about the Erdnase/earthnose connection. If you were a mining engineer named W.E. Sanders who had studied the German language, and was fond of rearranging your name, wouldn't the name "S.W. Erdnase" make sense?

I keep going back to the photo of Sanders' writing desk in Marty's article. Why would anyone have a writing desk with a top that unfolds to two green baize-covered panels? Unless you needed the baize top for table riffle shuffling and other card work while you wrote your manuscript.

kind of perilous proclaiming a perfect consensus.

I find Sanders a more compelling candidate than Andrews, or anyone else -- but
on the strength of demerest's analysis, not alexander's.

consistency: hobgoblin of small minds, and all

Richard Kaufman | 08/23/11 11:04 PM | link | filter

I think that green baize covered writing desks were common at that time. I've seen plenty of them in antique shows.

El Harvey Oswald | 08/23/11 11:16 PM | link | filter

"Mr. Oswald--based on your quote, you would have found it more interesting if Sanders' name was clearly vertically visible on the title page before Carlo changed the pyramid alignment? Wouldn't that have been too obvious a clue?"

maybe; but it would have been more interesting. as actually constructed, it's too obscure, and too likely to have resulted from pure chance. likewise, assessments of a "healthy ego" are just too thin to be confirmation of something that, all things considered, is more unlikely than likely.

as for your infantile "(you did read it?)" aside, i obviously did. none of it is impossible -- so much so that i'd say sanders was erdnase. some of it, though, i don't find compelling, particularly where very attenuated word-play is attributed to sanders. congratulations on finding every last word of it accurate. chances are, though, some of it is in fact off them mark -- and it can be, without destroying the ultimate conclusion, which, now for the fifth time, i'm fully inclined to agree with.

but if it matters to you, i'd suggest that if someone is already convinced that it's sanders, you start pushing them the other way by insisting that the "earth nose" theory is plainly accurate. yes, it "makes sense," in that it logically coheres. i just don't think sanders engaged that particular association, which carried too much weight in the alexander article. and the alexander article didn't exactly catch on as the demarest article has; so among the least controversial things that can be said is that demarest's presentation is far more persuasive. in that this exchange began with a visceral response that it was somehow "inappropriate" to be critical of alexander, it seems that's what would continue to fuel it. alexander made a huge, important contribution, which also included some sub-scholarly speculation. demarest followed it up and sold me that sanders was erdnase. what more would you like?

Leonard Hevia | 08/23/11 11:34 PM | link | filter

what more would you like?
punctuation...well...infantile.

---

**El Harvey Oswald** | 08/23/11 11:54 PM | link | filter

but it's so heavy with hidden clues that way.

strong, substantive response, leonard. but capital letters aren't really "punctuation." i recognize that you guys with all your self-published houdini diatribes have to make things look "professional" by your own proofreading before going down to kinko's for binding; but i've perhaps gotten accustomed to having people take care of non-substantive details like big letters and little letters. or are you appalled by the way the younger set don't read books and go all e.e. cummings on their message boards? either way, just keep working the "earth nose" angle and sounding as creative and intelligent as a politician.

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/24/11 12:07 AM | link | filter

Gentlemen, please stop sniping.

El Harvey, you used to know where the caps key was. Please find it again.

---

**Leonard Hevia** | 08/24/11 12:08 AM | link | filter

Punctuation, grammar--you know what I mean. It isn't really about imitating a politician or being a professional. It's about correct writing skills and the fact that you are too lazy to utilize the shift key on your computer.

You probably aren't aware that when you write like this, it has the effect of...what is that word you are so fond of using...I keep seeing it in your posts...**attenuating** your messages.

Attenuate-to weaken or dilute.

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**Chris Aguilar** | 08/24/11 12:14 AM | link | filter

*Roger M. wrote:* This **passive/aggressive** "playing of sides" however, is counterproductive........so I'll leave you and the rest of Marty's (probably unwanted) sycophants to chat amongst yourselves.

**Passive/ aggressive?**

**Sycophants?**
Not sure why you feel the need to be so negative Roger.

I just happened to agree with someone who doesn't share your opinion. I'd like to think we can all discuss this topic without resorting to such unwarranted nastiness / name calling.

El Harvey Oswald  | 08/24/11 12:16 AM  | link | filter

yeartning to get back to grading papers, mr. h?

you don't like it when people don't capitalize. we get it. that's two posts. yet you seem fond of ellipses, and that fatuous "well" construction you carted out up above. here's another little hint for you: With just one syllable you can say "use" and get the same meaning as "utilize" -- albeit without advancing your pedantic jack-off persona.

again, i'm inclined to think sanders was eardnase. you?

Chris Aguilar  | 08/24/11 12:17 AM  | link | filter

I'm still not sold on the whole "Earth Nose" thing.

Seemed like a stretch with D.Alexander wrote about it and it still seems like a stretch.

Most of the other evidence strikes me as far more compelling.

El Harvey Oswald  | 08/24/11 12:20 AM  | link | filter

"El Harvey, you used to know where the caps key was. Please find it again."

ironic; i forgot to keep concealing my identity. For you, OK.

Carlo Morpurgo  | 08/24/11 12:24 AM  | link | filter

*El Harvey Oswald wrote:* "I'd like to know exactly what you feel was offered by Alexander that rates as "silly""

- that "eardnase" means "earth nose," in german, and is thus a coded reference to sanders' experience in mining;
- that by an absurd sequence of reconfiguration the phrase "artifice, ruse and subterfuge" yields "andrews artifice" (and, relatedly, his unfamiliarity with the fact that seemingly arbitrary differences in font sizes was fairly common in contemporaneous title pages).
I've only been sporadically following the Erdnase discussion during the past several years, but I finally did read David's article for the first time, exactly two weeks ago. I then realized how much I was missing...there was a lot more going on than just the mere anagram.

In my opinion, David had a VISION that was pretty consistent and solid, and also the humility to admit that he did not yet nail Erdnase's identity in full ("we cannot say with certainty", "much is left to be done", "Many questions remain unanswered", etc etc).

The "and ruse artifice" sounds perfectly reasonable to me, but only if Erdnase actually used the name "Andrews", as conjectured by David. If you accept that device, then the "earth nose" thing seems to me more of a coincidence than a plan, so I would not have used this argument to strengthen the theory (maybe as a side "fun fact"). Honestly I don't think that David made such a big deal out of this as you are claiming.

Likewise, I think it's not correct to use David's questionable "erd nose" idea in order to support the claim that the theory is not compelling, or silly. You have to look at the theory as a whole, the profiles of Erdnase/Sanders being the strongest points in my opinion. It makes a lot of sense, even before Marty's article, and now even more.

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**Carlo Morpurgo** | 08/24/11 01:01 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Just to be precise, I meant to write:

Likewise, I think it's not correct to use David's questionable "erd nose" idea in order to support the claim that his work was not compelling.

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**Roger M.** | 08/24/11 01:10 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*El Harvey Oswald wrote:* .......... and the alexander article didn't exactly catch on as the demerest article has

You're simply wrong Mr. "Oswald".  
In fact, David Alexanders article in Genii coincided with his presentation at the Los Angeles Conference on Magic History.  
To say that it left the audience (an audience of the most senior representatives) somewhat breathless would be a serious understatement.

Along with Richard Hatch's presentation on the same topic, it was in effect all everybody was talking about post event, and in effect his original article and continued discussion helped drive *this very thread* for the past 9 years or so.
betrays you as somewhat of an uninformed amateur... not somebody who should be positing inflexibly on subject matter they're mostly unfamiliar with. While David Alexander and others in this thread have been keeping the polite (but vigorous) discussion going for the past decade, I can't help but note that your contributions began only a month ago. Perhaps you should spend some more time investigating precisely what's gone on to date before you inadvertently make statements that are just patently wrong.

Chris Aguilar | 08/24/11 01:26 AM | link | filter

Is there any chance that we can lay off the vitriol and get back to actually discussing Erdnase and the actual content of Marty’s excellent article?

El Harvey Oswald | 08/24/11 01:39 AM | link | filter

I am aware of the LA Conference on Magic History more than you know, but I simply don’t find that or the whole of Alexander’s work, without more (i.e., Demarest’s expansion of it) compelling. And as for how much something "caught on," that’s a matter of opinion, not quite capable of being "patently wrong." His article speaks for itself. And it is apparent that nine years of tendentious discussion about a five-page article doesn’t deepen the quality of analysis. That said, I will concede to being influenced on the margin by people who are typically regarded as opinion leaders in this magazine and in the field generally, to the effect that Alexander wasn’t a particularly rigorous thinker, to put it politely. No doubt you have a different view, perhaps influenced by friendship. If so, then the resort to invective and thread-posting seniority are understandable, probably admirable. But while you've been invested in this thread and whatever your personal crusade is, over those past nine years the surrounding world reverted to the standing assumption that Erdnase was Andrews, however much "everyone was talking about" these little gatherings that you so fondly recall. I might be wrong, but it appears very likely that Demarest has now actually shifted the paradigm, and, only now, the predominant assumption will shift, and Sanders will be regarded as the most likely Erdnase. Alexander obviously is essential in that transformation, and Demarest appears rational and large-minded enough to give him his full due, notwithstanding the tendency of Alexander’s acolytes, like you, to reinforce the impression of him not being quite up to producing first-rate, dispositive scholarship.

El Harvey Oswald | 08/24/11 02:01 AM | link | filter

I can't dispute any of that, factually or logically. It's a reasonable take. You find some things likely that I find unlikely. Ultimately, though, I gather that we find the Sanders theory more persuasive than anything that's previously been advanced. As for how the credit is apportioned between Demarest and Alexander, I really don't care.
even inconsequential, criticism with weird vitriol only reinforces the perceptions of Alexander. Unfortunately, as you point out Alexander himself qualified his work as preliminary, fractional, and speculative. I gather that the same self-awareness would allow him to distinguish between someone finding some ultimately inconsequential part of his presentation "silly" and that same person also finding his work provocative, important and factually right. It's difficult to begrudge him including those points that might seem silly as they are, if nothing else, "fun facts" that deepen the intrigue around a genuine mystery. And, as you also note, there's the quite real possibility that they aren't at all silly. I just don't think so.

In any event, thanks for an interested and well-stated response. You've lessened my own certainty, which can be a very satisfying sensation when you just let it happen.

John M. Dale | 08/24/11 02:09 AM | link | filter

How cool! You did manage to find the caps key. And, to think, I thought you were being facetious. Silly me.

JMD

El Harvey Oswald | 08/24/11 02:14 AM | link | filter

*courtesy laugh*

Tony Tuccillo | 08/24/11 08:31 AM | link | filter

Not to get the thread off of this contentious sidebar but this month's special honored guest at the Magic Cafe is SW Erdnase. Questions & comments open tomorrow and he's posted a short intro (http://www.themagiccafe.com/forums/view ... orum=300&0).

Any ideas who is filling in as SWE on the Cafe?

Richard Kaufman | 08/24/11 10:33 AM | link | filter

I agree with El Harvey regarding his assessment of how many folks viewed David Alexander's original lecture and article. While I admired David Alexander greatly and he was a close friend, his candidate seemed to be a far stretch, and his conclusions not quite ready for public analysis. Many comments after his lecture and after the article on Sanders appeared in Genii were those of people who were completely unconvinced.

David gave his lecture at the History Conference and published at that time because
for Hatch, I don't think David would have gone public at that point with W.E. Sanders because he was clearly at an early stage in researching Sanders.

When we heard nothing from David over the ensuing decade about Sanders, it seemed even less likely that his candidate was Erdnase. I have no idea how much time he spent on researching Sanders over that time--he was busy with many other projects.

Marty had the great advantage of being a native of Montana and able to spend a lot of time on the ground where Sanders walked and lived and he took full advantage of that. Marty is also a superb journalist and writer, and as I noted in Genii, that when you read Marty’s piece and then go back to David Alexander's piece, the latter seems less contrived.

**Bob Coyne | 08/24/11 01:41 PM | link | filter**

As Carl Morpurgo noted, David Alexander provided a vision. That vision and a lot of work allowed him to uncover some tantalizing initial evidence which Marty has added to tremendously. What David did is amazing and a sign of real brilliance (at least to those of us who find the Sanders case compelling). Whether or not David was a "rigorous thinker" is secondary. And premature rigorous thinking can bind you into boxes. It's often better to follow hunches and vision in the process of inquiry.

**El Harvey Oswald | 08/24/11 01:51 PM | link | filter**

Well said. All aspects apart from that core vision are secondary. Or, alternatively, if the things I and some others find unpersuasive were integral to his process (or, moreover, if Sanders did in fact plant the more questionable clues), then he’s in the creative realm, which I’ll take over "rigor" any day.

**Jonathan Townsend | 08/24/11 03:02 PM | link | filter**

Any conjecture on whether this likely "erdnase" actually moved in card games?

**Mike Vance | 08/24/11 04:32 PM | link | filter**

Here is a tentative Ernscum schedule:

Friday, August 26th

7:00 PM - Richard Hatch discusses the publication and mystery surrounding The Expert at the Card Table
8:30 PM - Q&A

~9:30 PM - W.E. Sanders' 150th Birthday Party with cake

Saturday, August 27th

10:30 AM - Tour of Journals, Grave site and other Erdnase hotspots around town

12:30 PM - Lunch Break

2:30 PM - Erdnase's Identity: Who was S.W. Erdnase and why should we care?

3:30 PM - Erdnase's Cheating: How good are the ruses and subterfuges S.W. Erdnase describes? Could he have been a working cheat, or was he just a hobbyist? R. Paul Wilson, star of "The Real Hustle" and the upcoming History Channel special "Scammed," leads this symposium.

4:30 PM - Erdnase's Shifts: Jason England, finished expert, demonstrates and discusses S.W. Erdnase's original (and controversial) shifts.

6:30 PM - Dinner - Eat one of W.E. Sanders' favorite foods (aside from butter), Montana Beef, free range and grass fed. BYOB and other things.

8:30 PM - Erdnase in Magic History: What was magic like before S.W. Erdnase? How has he changed it? From the sleights that Erdnase used as his foundation, to modern creations based on Erdnase's work (like Dan and Dave Buck's "Revolution E"), an open discussion of the role Erdnase has played in the development of magic.

Plus some very exciting surprises for lovers of The Expert at the Card Table.

Richard Hatch | 08/24/11 04:49 PM | link | filter

"I'm moving to Montana now..." - A. P. Paz

Richard Hatch wrote: "I'm moving to Montana now..." - A. P. Paz

Like Erdnase, Paz was "only in it for the money".
Bill Mullins wrote:

Richard Hatch wrote: "I'm moving to Montana now..." - A. P. Paz

Like Erdnase, Paz was "only in it for the money".

Hmmm... Erdnase gives his need for money as the "primary motive", not necessarily the "only motive" for writing the book...

El Harvey Oswald | 08/24/11 05:47 PM | link | filter

what were his stated secondary motives?

Marty Demarest | 08/24/11 08:38 PM | link | filter

I think Mike Vance forgot to mention the Diagonal Palm-Shifting Contest and the Twelve-Card Stock Run Up Race...

I was just sent this link:

http://s845.photobucket.com/albums/ab11 ... ?start=all

Carlo Morpurgo | 08/24/11 09:30 PM | link | filter

Marty Demarest wrote: I was just sent this link:

http://s845.photobucket.com/albums/ab11 ... ?start=all

meh...to me it's just corroborating standard statistics for the English language. To give it meaning there should be a "control group", including writings of unrelated individuals from the same time period.

I am a little bit puzzled by the average sentence length though....there should be a peak around 12 words, not 1 or 2.

Joe Pecore | 08/24/11 10:21 PM | link | filter

Carlo Morpurgo wrote:

meh...to me it's just corroborating standard statistics for the English language. To give it meaning there should be a "control group", including writings of unrelated individuals from the same time period.

I am a little bit puzzled by the average sentence length though....there
Here is the post from when I originally ran that analysis just for fun and to see what kinds of reports it produced:

http://www.geniimagazine.com/forums/ubb ... Post216808

I did not have clean copies of the text.

---

**Carlo Morpurgo** | 08/24/11 10:34 PM | link | filter

Yes...I agree with Bill...I was not aware of that part of the thread...obviously there is a problem with periods or the like, since the average sentence length is not right. But the rest (especially letter and word length frequencies) seems to be in line. Can you run another similar book? For fun of course....that is the whole point....no matter what comes up!

---

**Bob Coyne** | 08/25/11 05:32 AM | link | filter

Was all of Mine Timbering used as input? Or just Sanders’ section?

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**Joe Pecore** | 08/25/11 06:46 AM | link | filter

*Bob Coyne wrote:* Was all of Mine Timbering used as input? Or just Sanders’ section?

The whole book. I could probably dig up the application again if someone could get me cleaned up text to run through it.

---

**Carlo Morpurgo** | 08/25/11 07:31 AM | link | filter

How common was it to title subsections in the form

Italics text.-

This probably means nothing, but I noticed 31 of them in Sanders’ article and that Erdnase also uses them quite a bit (starting from page 1). A couple other folks in the same book use them, but not as much. I wonder if that was a particular style of technical journals of that time period.

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 08/25/11 08:29 AM | link | filter

*Bob Coyne wrote:* Was all of Mine Timbering used as input? Or just Sanders’ section?
timbering book would help argue for its place as closer to one particular chapter than another or the chapters closer to each other in that book than to the erdnase text. Pretty much an ANOVA corrected for vocabulary.

The null hypothesis here being "the chapters in the mining text are approximately equally different from each other as they are from the erdnase text and that the chapters in the erdnase text are approximately equally different from each chapter in the mining text"

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**Joe Pecore** | 08/25/11 10:30 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Some more text from Sanders, "A Reference-Scheme for Mine-Workings": [http://books.google.com/books?id=12RVAA ... rs&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=12RVAA ... rs&f=false)

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**Joe Pecore** | 08/25/11 10:56 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

And here is Sanders bio and picture from the Twenty-fifth anniversary reunion, Columbia University, School of Mines. Class of 1885: [http://books.google.com/books?id=pURGAA ... rs&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=pURGAA ... rs&f=false)

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**Joe Pecore** | 08/25/11 11:12 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Another online biographical sketch and picture of Sanders from "Universities and their sons" (1900): [http://books.google.com/books?id=6TQcAQ ... rs&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=6TQcAQ ... rs&f=false)

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**Bill Evans** | 08/25/11 11:39 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Joe Pecore wrote:* And here is Sanders bio and picture from the Twenty-fifth anniversary reunion, Columbia University, School of Mines. Class of 1885: [http://books.google.com/books?id=pURGAA ... rs&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=pURGAA ... rs&f=false)

Has anyone noticed how similar the picture on the right is to the drawing of Erdnase on the joker in the Conjuring Arts Research Center Erdnase decks? What a weird coincidence.

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/25/11 11:43 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Good find, Joe--haven't seen that photo of Sanders before!

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**SwanJr** | 08/25/11 12:02 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Marty, could you give us more details on the manuscript Sanders had with him in
Interesting tidbit from THE KANSAS CITY JOURNAL, MONDAY, MARCH 15, 1897 (http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86063615/1897-03-15/ed-1/seq-3/?words=Sanders):
"Bessie Bon, an unfortunate woman, who shot herself in the Auburn rooming house at 1311 Grand avenue April 1 1896, because W. E. Sanders had spurned her, borrowed his revolver for the purpose of ending her career. She lived 21 hours. The revolver, which was a 38-callber, had a pearl handle with a dove carved on it. It was not returned to Sanders."

(Sanders was the manager of the Norton-Bothwell Mines in Jopin, MO at that time)

Joe Pecore wrote: Interesting tidbit from THE KANSAS CITY JOURNAL, MONDAY, MARCH 15, 1897 (http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86063615/1897-03-15/ed-1/seq-3/?words=Sanders):
"Bessie Bon, an unfortunate woman, who shot herself in the Auburn rooming house at 1311 Grand avenue April 1 1896, because W. E. Sanders had spurned her, borrowed his revolver for the purpose of ending her career. She lived 21 hours. The revolver, which was a 38-callber, had a pearl handle with a dove carved on it. It was not returned to Sanders."

(Sanders was the manager of the Norton-Bothwell Mines in Jopin, MO at that time)

Wow, this guy is getting more interesting by the minute! This makes him sound like Milton Franklin Andrews' twin!

Something else written by Sanders in 1909 to compare with Expert: MoNTANA Organization, Name and Naming

No, it just means he got a lady very upset. He didn’t shoot anyone, and I’m sure everyone carried a gun in those days in that part of the country.
I think it's mentioned in the article that Wilbur Sanders enjoyed writing poetry.

Thomas Sawyer's reactions to Marty's article have now been posted in his Erdnase blog:
http://swerdnase2011.wordpress.com/

Tom Sawyer has just posted a very interesting advertisement from 1896 for M. D. Smith's services as an illustrator:
http://swerdnase2011.wordpress.com/

Hi
I just wanted to add that when we did our textual analysis of Erdnase (see my Genii article on Erdnase with David Homes), we did look at Saunders’ book on mining. I have attached the graph (showing Erdnase, Saunders and Harto) - the styles are VERY different, but there again the genre of the mining book is different to Erdnase, so that might account for it. If anyone can find any other writings by Saunders, email them to me and I would be happy to get them analysed.
Cheers
Richard
Richard Hatch wrote: Tom Sawyer has just posted a very interesting advertisement from 1896 for M. D. Smith's services as an illustrator:  
http://swerdnase2011.wordpress.com/  

Nice catch!

W. E. Sanders Bibliography


The Drainage of Mines. 1885, Columbia Univ thesis.


"A Reference Scheme for Mine-Workings." Bul Am Inst of Min Engrs May, 1906. Explains the need and gives a reference scheme for numbering and naming points and parts of mine-workings. Plans. 3000 w. This paper was also presented at the 2/1906 conference of the American Institute of Mining Engineers held in Bethlehem PA (Transactions of the American Institute of Mining Engineers, vol 37 1907 p 128 139) and was summarized in Mining Magazine vol 13 no. 7 1906, p. 581 583.

"Reference Scheme for Mines" Ores and Metals vol 15 no 12 June 15 1906


"Scheme for Filing Mining and Industrial Notes." Paper "was read by title for future publication" at meeting of American Institute of Mining Engineers, New Haven CT, Feb 25 1909. Not clear if the paper was ever published anywhere, though.


Class of 1885, School of Mines, twenty-fifth anniversary reunion. Edited by R. V. Norris, W. E Sanders and Joseph Struthers.

"Mining Reports" [letter] Mining And Scientific Press, 8/9/1913 p 233


"Our Dear Old School of Mines" (song lyrics) Columbia Alumni News V5n36 7/10/1914 p. 757.

I need to add the 25th Class Reunion book.
can be found on Google Books and/or Hathi Trust.

Bill Mullins | 08/26/11 11:21 AM | link | filter

I'm trying to get to Montana, but Delta is screwing with me.

Richard Kaufman | 08/26/11 11:25 AM | link | filter

I think that Sanders' writings in his many diaries will need to be transcribed and used in the Stylometric comparison, and I look forward to that.

Good luck Bill!

BrianB2 | 08/26/11 11:33 AM | link | filter

FYI...Mr. Erdnase is the VIP this week in a certain green site. He is available for questions until the 31st.

Brian

Richard Kaufman | 08/26/11 12:02 PM | link | filter

Since Mr.E is long dead, why is anyone interested in someone pretending to be him?

David Byron | 08/26/11 12:38 PM | link | filter

Sawyer mentions "promontory" as a sense of "Erdnase" that might be intelligible to a native speaker of German. It appears from 19th-century philological materials available in Google Books that this definition (in the sense of a peninsula) derives from a literal translation from Ainu.

I believe this has been mentioned previously in this thread.

What Sawyer doesn’t emphasize is the much more natural sense of "Erdnase" that would jump perhaps much more quickly to the mind of a native speaker: Erdnase == swine.

A pig explores nose to the ground in search of truffles. That is the obvious and immediate connotation of the neologism "Erdnase".

In considering the question of whether "Erdnase" as "earth-nose" is the sort of nom-de-plume an anagrammatically inclined mining engineer might adopt. I reckon it
miner does (uncover treasure beneath the earth) to what a pig does (uncover truffles beneath the earth).

Roger M. | 08/26/11 12:39 PM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: Since Mr. E is long dead, why is anyone interested in someone pretending to be him?

Really, this is as lame as it gets. Trying to cash in on the very recent swelling of interest in Erdnase by having "who" pretend to be Erdnase?

What on earth could ever be posted either as a question, or as an answer that would even be of *any interest whatsoever* to anybody?

Jonathan Townsend | 08/26/11 12:48 PM | link | filter

Does he prefer red or blue backed cards? Satin or Linnen finish? Can he XCM?

Marty Demarest | 08/26/11 06:54 PM | link | filter

I just read a new edition of one of my favorite books!

Richard Kaufman | 08/26/11 07:15 PM | link | filter

Damn tease.
And what book would that be?

Richard Kaufman | 08/26/11 08:16 PM | link | filter

Way cool! I'll let Marty make the announcement.

Richard Hatch | 08/26/11 08:33 PM | link | filter

Newly arrived at the Sanders B&B in Helena and the book is a great edition to my collection! Worth the trip and the conference doesn't even start for another 30 minutes!

Bill Mullins | 08/26/11 09:26 PM | link | filter

In Salt Lake City. Slowly getting there. Can you guys just do boring stuff until I arrive?
Richard Kaufman  | 08/26/11 09:40 PM | link | filter

Jeez, Bill you really had a crappy flight delay! I'm sure Marty will make it up to you.

Meir Yedid  | 08/26/11 11:49 PM | link | filter

An article about the Erdnaseum titled Magicians gather in Helena.

Go to:

http://www.beartoothnbc.com/news/helena ... elena.html

Richard Hatch  | 08/27/11 01:56 AM | link | filter


Pete McCabe  | 08/27/11 02:07 AM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: Way cool! I'll let Marty make the announcement.

Marty...?

Bill Mullins  | 08/27/11 03:36 AM | link | filter

So I get to the Helena Airport, and Mike Vance's wife is there to make sure I can get to the Erdnaseum with a minimum of delay. What a nice gesture! I follow her to the Sanders B&B, and we walk in literally as Marty is wrapping up his presentation.

But I got some W. E. Sanders birthday cake.

And got to stand around talking with people for 3 hours, which was really the whole point, anyway.

Shawn Evans  | 08/27/11 03:44 AM | link | filter

Is the Erdnaseum going to be filmed and released on DVD for the unfortunates who could not make it?

greg manwaring  | 08/27/11 05:01 AM | link | filter

I wonder if the Professor unwittingly ever crossed paths with Sanders?
Possible breakthrough: Discovered in the 2nd story bathroom (believed to be W. E. Sanders' boyhood loo), a book with the admonition: "...artfully avoid ambiguous anagrams!"

Possible breakthrough: Discovered in the same boyhood Sanders bathroom (by Ricky Smith), hand lotion (the author told Marshall Smith he "greased" his hands). Clearly set off in a box above the ingredients on the bottle of hand lotion, in large capital letters, are the initials "ESA". Coincidence?

http://www.amazon.com/dp/B005JDRYTS/
That is a link to Marty's new edition of The Expert at the Card Table for your Kindle (also can be read on the iPad using the Kindle app, which is how I viewed it).

Beautifully done and only $2.99

Richard Hatch wrote: Possible breakthrough: Discovered in the same boyhood Sanders bathroom (by Ricky Smith), hand lotion (the author told Marshall Smith he "greased" his hands). Clearly set off in a box above the ingredients on the bottle of hand lotion, in large capital letters, are the initials "ESA". Coincidence?

can you guys take photos of these "breakthroughs" for the rest of us..?

So, how has this stuff been in that house for 100 years and nobody has moved it or tampered with it?

I'm assuming the items were found before the convention/meeting. I get a mental image of everyone breaking off into groups in the house and walking around like The Goonies looking for clues.

Intentional plants???
Ryan Matney wrote: So, how has this stuff been in that house for 100 years and nobody has moved it or tampered with it?

Convention fun and good humor? ........wish I was there.

BTW, how are you getting the Kindle edition Richard? When I click on the Amazon link in your post it says "not available"?

Jeff Pierce Magic | 08/27/11 02:52 PM | link | filter

Will there be a hard edition, I don't have a Kindle?

Jeff

Richard Kaufman | 08/27/11 04:30 PM | link | filter

When I click on the link, I see that it's available, and that I purchased it. Hmmm... go to amazon and try searching on "Erdnase Demarest" and tell me if you find it.

You don't need a Kindle. You can get a Kindle app for iPad, or a Kindle "viewer" for your PC.

Rick Ruhl | 08/27/11 04:53 PM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: http://www.amazon.com/dp/B005JDRYTS/
That is a link to Marty's new edition of The Expert at the Card Table for your Kindle (also can be read on the iPad using the Kindle app, which is how I viewed it).

Beautifully done and only $2.99

Worked for me and it's super :)

Roger M. | 08/27/11 04:55 PM | link | filter

Interesting........the page shows up, but it clearly says "Not Currently Available", and where the price would normally be, it says "pricing information not available".

The above occurs when I click on your link, when I search for "Erdnase Demarest", the
Perhaps it's because Amazon sees my IP address as being in Canada?

Don't know, it's a mystery, and a drag......I'd like Marty's edition on my iPad :(

Richard Kaufman | 08/27/11 04:56 PM | link | filter

Roger, are you outside the USA?

Roger M. | 08/27/11 04:57 PM | link | filter

We cross posted Richard, yes I'm in Canada.

Richard Kaufman | 08/27/11 05:16 PM | link | filter

It could be because you're outside the US.

Roger M. | 08/27/11 06:45 PM | link | filter

Yes, I think that's it.
Although I've purchased many books directly from amazon.com, I've not ever tried a Kindle download.

Marty, could you put it on amazon.ca?
.......or make it available on amazon.com to those outside of the USA?

John Bodine | 08/28/11 12:07 AM | link | filter

For the detail oriented, the edition of The Expert on the cover of this months Genii is the facsimile edition.

Great article, thank you Marty and Richard and all other contributors. I can't wait to see what comes next!

Rick Ruhl | 08/28/11 12:55 PM | link | filter

As a side note, Sandy Marshall and I have been conversing in email. Seems Jay had in his collection 2 EATCT from 1918 and one has M.D. Smith's autograph from 1947 in it. The other doesn't.

I was autographed to Ewd. J. McLaughline.
Hi Rick, those sound like great editions. M.D. Smith was at the '47 SAM convention and signed books. I have a nice 1905 with his signature but not signed to anyone specific. Not sure how many he signed there but am assuming it was a relatively small number.

Now to find a first edition with Sanders autograph.

Also, has anyone compared the writing on the copyright application to that of Sanders yet? Dick Hatch perhaps? :)

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It's not a first edition, it's the 1918 edition, but still, these are few and far between.

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More information from the publisher of the new ebook version of "The Expert at the Card Table":

Just wanted to let your readers know that the ErdEd (for short) is also available for the Nook (search for "Erdnaseum Edition"-- their links aren't very concrete), and an iBooks edition should be available soon as well.

Also--since there was some confusion about it earlier-- Amazon has notified me that Canadian customers can purchase the book from the Amazon.com site, in the Kindle store.

Links to all editions are going to be maintained on our company website: http://charlesandwonder.com

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Hi John
I have hired a certified handwriting examiner to look at this, and awaiting a copy of the Copyright Application from the Library of Congress.
Geno

---

Since no one knows who filled out the copyright application (it doesn't necessarily
Correct, but this step is necessary so we can verify if he did sign the document.

The Erdnasium Edition still shows up (in Canada) as "Not Currently Available".

And still says "pricing information not available".

Must be me, although I'm on the other side of town from whence I first tried, at work, on a PC rather than a Mac, and have tried signed into Amazon, and signed out of Amazon.

........or maybe Amazon.com knows not of what they speak.

Richard,

Although your statement is accurate; "Since no one knows who filled out the copyright application (it doesn't necessarily have to be the person who owns it), the handwriting doesn't necessarily have to match".

Another person filling out the application would imply the author DID NOT keep his secret. Thus putting into question the whole point of the mystery. Of course we come back to why not just sign the book anonymous.

But if the handwriting does match....

We have another clue... :)

What happened in Montana this weekend? Did Marty and all of the gatherers take a time machine back to 1901 Chicago?

Rick Ruhl wrote: What happened in Montana this weekend? Did Marty and
A very impressive turnout: R. Paul Wilson from Scotland, Jason England and Geno Munari from Las Vegas, Derek DelGaudio, Michael Weber, Dan and Dave Buck from Las Angeles, Eric Mead from Aspen, Ricky Smith and Bill Kalush from CARC, Bill Mullins from Alabama and others. Some great discussions that moved the conversation forward. A good time was had by all. Thanks to Marty Demarest and Mike Vance for organizing a most memorable event! I’d say more, but I don’t want to betray any confidences...

Richard Hatch | 08/30/11 11:38 AM | link | filter

... and Jim Steinmeyer from Los Angeles was there...

Rick Ruhl | 08/30/11 12:22 PM | link | filter

Richard Hatch wrote: ... and Jim Steinmeyer from Los Angeles was there...

This is right up Jim’s alley too.

El Harvey Oswald | 08/30/11 03:55 PM | link | filter

"Really, this is as lame as it gets. Trying to cash in on the very recent swelling of interest in Erdnase by having "who" pretend to be Erdnase?

What on earth could ever be posted either as a question, or as an answer that would even be of any interest whatsoever to anybody?"

agree completely; it’s a silly conceit

Richard Hatch | 08/30/11 08:05 PM | link | filter

Gotta say that I have found some of "Erdnase’s" comments on the green site both insightful and funny. Whoever is doing it has a good sense of humor and an ability to sound more like Erdnase than some of the current candidates.

Curtis Kam | 08/30/11 10:18 PM | link | filter

And come on, there’s a discussion going on between Erdnase and Wesley James. That alone is worth a peek.
Jonathan Townsend | 08/30/11 10:48 PM | link | filter

It’s like reading a magician's version of Umberto Eco's story *Foucault’s Pendulum*.

Carlo Morpurgo | 08/30/11 11:16 PM | link | filter

    Richard Hatch wrote: I’d say more, but I don't want to betray any confidences...

this comment, combined with this sudden "silence" after the big hype, reminds me of a similar situation that happened about 4 years ago.....

Bill Mullins | 08/31/11 12:33 AM | link | filter

Here’s what happened.

Friday, we talked about Erdnase, then ate cake.

Saturday morning, we talked about Erdnase. Then ate lunch.

Saturday afternoon, we talked about Erdnase some more, then ate supper (burgers). Then we talked about Erdnase.

Sunday morning, those who were still in the area met at the Sanders B&B for breakfast, during which we talked about Erdnase.

I’m not speaking for everyone here, but your average Erdnasian could afford to lose 10-20 lbs.

Magic Fred | 08/31/11 03:04 AM | link | filter

    Curtis Kam wrote: And come on, there’s a discussion going on between Erdnase and Wesley James. That alone is worth a peek.

Wesley James comes across as the type of fellow who is never actually seeking an answer when he asks a question...

In reality, that’s one "discussion" which wouldn't last long.

Rick Ruhl | 08/31/11 06:25 AM | link | filter

    Bill Mullins wrote: Here’s what happened.
Saturday morning, we talked about Erdnase. Then ate lunch.

Saturday afternoon, we talked about Erdnase some more, then ate supper (burgers). Then we talked about Erdnase.

Sunday morning, those who were still in the area met at the Sanders B&B for breakfast, during which we talked about Erdnase.

I'm not speaking for everyone here, but your average Erdnasian could afford to lose 10-20 lbs.

Thank you my friend... now I know I missed a good time ;)

---

**Marty Demarest | 08/31/11 09:17 AM | link | filter**

I had a wonderful time at Erdnaseum! Aside from all the Erdnase and food (both of which I have a healthy appetite for), I really devoured R. Paul Wilson’s discussion about the viability of Erdnase’s cheating techniques, and Jason England’s examination of Erdnase’s passes. Erdnase invented five passes—and we’re still talking about them more than a century later—a great perspective on the author’s genius.

Also of note: Viewing Jason’s collection of Expert at the Card Table editions, and getting an online research overview from Bill Mullins. It was fun.

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**Rick Ruhl | 08/31/11 09:17 AM | link | filter**

*Carlo Morpurgo wrote:*

_Richard Hatch wrote:_ I’d say more, but I don’t want to betray any confidences...

this comment, combined with this sudden "silence" after the big hype, reminds me of a similar situation that happened about 4 years ago.....

Which was?

---

**Carlo Morpurgo | 08/31/11 07:45 PM | link | filter**

*Rick Ruhl wrote:* Which was?

I was half joking... but was referring to the aftermath of the Hooker Card Rise performances, in 2007....
Not that it matters in the scheme of things, but the visit by S.W.ERDNASE at the green place has been in the works for at least three years and has nothing whatsoever to do with the so-called recent interest in the man or his work.

Thank you.

"So-called recent interest"?

It’s called a resurgence of interest based upon information that gives good cause to believe the identity of Erdnase has been uncovered.

I apologize Richard if my post appeared a bit sarcastic. I imagine my tone had something to do with people assuming my guest this week was done because of all the recent Erdnase discussions...that would be further from the truth.

Hey Steve, what's with shaking someone's hand, praising them for being willing to hold strong opinions - like yourself, and then banning them without explanation the next day? Sent you an email requesting the courtesy of an explanation. Your behavior strikes me as cowardly and hypocritical. I would have expected better from you. Perhaps I will finally get that reply. You have my email in your inbox.

Is this going to turn into a "why was I banned from the magic cage?"

Me too! Me too! Why was I banned?!
Both you and Richard have a tough enough job running the boards, much less the other stuff.

Erdnase is hot, strike while the kettle is hot.

Carlo Morpurgo | 09/01/11 08:28 AM | link | filter

It's speculated that WE Sanders held a "double life", part of which was concerned with the perfecting of card sharp techniques, and gambling. If it's true that he rightly wanted to hide this part of his life, then it seems reasonable to me that one should look at what *other people* had to say about WE Sanders, other than the man himself, starting from his own father (whose diaries seem to be available).

One would look for signs indicating suspicions of his putative double life, or even better, comments about his dexterity with cards, time spent with a deck of cards in his hands etc.

Chris Aguilar | 09/01/11 11:31 AM | link | filter

Carlo Morpurgo wrote: then it seems reasonable to me that one should look at what *other people* had to say about WE Sanders, other than the man himself, starting from his own father (whose diaries seem to be available).

In his article, Marty D. does some of that by using Sander's letters from his brothers.

Carlo Morpurgo | 09/01/11 01:46 PM | link | filter

Chris Aguilar wrote:

Carlo Morpurgo wrote: then it seems reasonable to me that one should look at what *other people* had to say about WE Sanders, other than the man himself, starting from his own father (whose diaries seem to be available).

In his article, Marty D. does some of that by using Sander's letters from his brothers.

Yes, but my point is to check documents that were NOT in W.E. Sanders possession...thereby eliminating the possibility of their destruction (in case they contained "revealing details" or something controversial)

Brad Henderson | 09/01/11 02:22 PM | link | filter
Some people won't do the right thing unless pressured in front of their peers, apparently. Having said that, I do not want this thread to derail. Hopefully Brooks will reply to my email as per my request. Or perhaps he is not nearly the strongly opinionated independent man he wants so badly to believe he is.

Back to erdnase - sorry for the digression.

Richard Kaufman | 09/01/11 02:44 PM | link | filter

Brooks let the threads on The Berglas Effects go right into the dumper because of Mark Lewis--he did nothing to stop it, nor did he go back and clean them up. The mods just closed them.

Anyway, yes, BACK TO ERDNASE.

Chris Aguilar | 09/01/11 02:54 PM | link | filter

Carlo Morpurgo wrote:

Chris Aguilar wrote:

Carlo Morpurgo wrote: then it seems reasonable to me that one should look at what *other people* had to say about WE Sanders, other than the man himself, starting from his own father (whose diaries seem to be available).

In his article, Marty D. does some of that by using Sander's letters from his brothers.

Yes, but my point is to check documents that were NOT in W.E. Sanders possession...thereby eliminating the possibility of their destruction (in case they contained "revealing details" or something controversial)

I would think that Sanders father would be the one he'd most want to hide any dodgy behavior from. As such, I doubt his fathers papers would shed much light. No harm in checking though.

Carlo Morpurgo | 09/01/11 04:09 PM | link | filter

Chris Aguilar wrote:

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Carlo Morpurgo wrote: then it seems reasonable to me that one should look at what *other people* had to say about WE Sanders, other than the man himself, starting from his own father (whose diaries seem to be available).

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Yes, but my point is to check documents that were NOT in W.E. Sanders possession...thereby eliminating the possibility of their destruction (in case they contained "revealing details" or something controversial)

I would think that Sanders father would be the one he'd most want to hide any dodgy behavior from. As such, I doubt his fathers papers would shed much light. No harm in checking though.

I do not consider having or showing dexterity with cards in itself to be a dodgy behavior, especially if related (apparently perhaps) to magic -- you out of all people should agree with this... ;). It is more of a revealing detail, to us, after knowing about EATC.

I guess that the "W.E.S theory" requires us to buy into the idea that Sanders was cultivating his passion for card techniques, at that very sophisticated level of details, without ever being seen around or in his room fooling around with cards.

---

Chris Aguilar | 09/01/11 04:50 PM | link | filter

Carlo Morpurgo wrote: I guess that the "W.E.S theory" requires us to buy into the idea that Sanders was cultivating his passion for card techniques, at that very sophisticated level of details, without ever being seen around or in his room fooling around with cards.

Who knows how much "alone time" he had in his various travels or work learning the mining business?

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Richard Kaufman | 09/01/11 04:53 PM | link | filter

"I guess that the 'W.E.S theory' requires us to buy into the idea that Sanders was cultivating his passion for card techniques, at that very sophisticated level of details, without ever being seen around or in his room fooling around with cards."
There is no reason to assume that Wilbur Fisk Sanders would have found it compulsive to write about his son's hobby of doing magic tricks with cards in his diaries--it's trivial, and perhaps even more so to a crusading do-gooder and senator with more important things on his mind. Just because the father doesn't write about it, doesn't mean his son didn't do it.

Richard Kaufman wrote: "I guess that the 'W.E.S theory' requires us to buy into the idea that Sanders was cultivating his passion for card techniques, at that very sophisticated level of details, without ever being seen around or in his room fooling around with cards."

This is incorrect.

True, if his hobby was magic with cards that does not mean that his father diaries must contain this information. I have no clue as to what WFS’s diaries are about. But usually diaries have stuff in them that reveal more intimate details about one's private life.

Anyway, we do not know yet that the father did not write about it (or do we?) If he wrote about it ....that would be great! If he didn’t, well, it depends on what else he's written, especially about his son, I guess.

It’s also possible that Sanders' father did know about his son's penchant for cheating techniques, and that a very loud conversation about the value of the family name may be the reason Expert was published anonymously.

It would be great to learn what, if anything, Sanders' father or anyone else, for that matter, wrote about him. It really doesn’t have to be about cards or magic to be useful. Any information about his interests, skills, habits, travels, acquaintances, personality, etc could help add detail and put together pieces of the overall puzzle. Of course, a
Pete McCabe wrote: It’s also possible that Sanders' father did know about his son’s penchant for cheating techniques, and that a very loud conversation about the value of the family name may be the reason Expert was published anonymously.

True!

By the way, I made a mistake in my search at the library’s web site. I now notice only a few diaries by WFS dated 1866-1867 - those can't be helpful. But I do see personal letters, and diaries written by WES 's mother and especially several diaries by his brother James....

Pete McCabe wrote: I would look at the brother's diaries pronto. You can hide your magic hobby from your dad, especially if he's a bigshot with a busy life. But not your brother. Someone had to pick all the cards. Who did Erdnase try all his tricks on?

Roger M wrote: As an aside, for anybody that remembers the origins of The Giorgio Letters, and the original intent of Tony Giorgio's Genii column, they might also see how Sanders as a candidate is almost pushed over the top when Tony's original thoughts about Erdnase are applied to Sanders.

Taking Giorgio's thinking on Erdnase and applying it to Sanders gives us a KISS example of why Sanders might not have left much of a trail as a gambler or cheater.

He was neither cheat nor hustler, maybe a weekend gambler, and maybe a amateur card magician............just like Tony said.

I'm playing devils advocate here, as I never really felt that Erdnase was the "poseur" that Tony did.

But if you accept Tony's account of Erdnase (and remember that in the world of hustling, there are few living that have Tony's credentials), and maintain the KISS or Occams Razor approach to Sanders and the apparent lack of hard evidence to support him being a cheat or gambler, then you'll also realize that there's really nothing more to find, and Tony was right all along.
Sanders consolidated information from the card table, but was merely a passive observer?

As per Tonys thinking, Erdnase/Sanders really didn't know much about hustling at all. Perhaps between existing books, and his own seemingly above average intellect, Sanders simply "figured out" much of EATCT through sheer force of will and a desire to commit his thinking to paper.

Tony's original series of letters is a massive piece of missing support if one wishes to accept that Sanders is the best candidate for Erdnase........to date anyway, things are always prone to changing :)

Even if you profoundly disagree with the above (which I'm inclined to do), for those who have access to the first half a dozen or so Giorgio Letters (with your Genii subscription you do through Ask Alexander) it's worth it to go back and read once again Tony's thinking on just what Erdnase might actually have known, and why Tony's thinking strongly supports Sanders as the author of EATCT.

(Note that Tony put his thoughts to paper long before there were any candidates in the offering other than MFA, so he wrote what he wrote knowing only that MFA was proposed as the author of EATCT).

Richard Hatch | 09/03/11 09:39 AM | link | filter

The latest Erdnase blog from Thomas Sawyer (http://swerdnase2011.wordpress.com/) shows that an "H. M. Andrews" was housed in the same location as printer James McKinney in early 1902, when the book was in active production. The title page triangle can be re-arranged so that the letters spelling out "H. M. Andrews" line up perfectly, as was done earlier with "W. E. Sanders". Coincidence? Certainly one of them is, and I suspect both are.

Richard Hatch | 09/03/11 10:35 AM | link | filter

Similar to the above, Richard Wiseman's candidate, H. L. Andrews, who worked near McKinney and had a wife named "E. S. Andrews" can also have his name spelled out by choosing one letter from each of the 9 lines of the inverted triangle on the title page. As can the brother for whom he worked, "A. H. Andrews" and the brother who wrote about the family history, "H. C. Andrews". Coincidences all, in my opinion. Here's a link to the information on Wiseman's candidate: http://www.richardwiseman.com/erdnase.html

Carlo Morpurgo | 09/03/11 11:46 AM | link | filter

You can choose one letter per line, but you can't slide the lines and align either of these
If you assume that the lines can move around freely and if you take into account letter AND space frequencies, then the ballpark chances of getting WESANDERS are about 3%.

If you impose additional restrictions on how much the lines can slide then this number goes down quite a bit. With some less restrictive constraints than "not go over the margins" I calculated about 2/1000 of getting WESANDERS.

But, remember that in all this we are assuming that we're dealing already with 9 lines, as many as the letters in the name... This should be taken into account also when evaluating "coincidences"....

Having said so, to me this is a "fun fact" to add to the theory, and it will remain so even after a conclusive proof of Erdnase being Sanders. Maybe he just wanted the subtitle to form a nice wine chalice....

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**Richard Hatch** | 09/03/11 11:52 AM | link | filter

_Carlo Morpurgo wrote_: You can choose one letter per line, but you can't slide the lines and align either of those names vertically....coincidence? ;)

Sorry, I don't understand the constraint on sliding the lines. Why can't they be lined up vertically?

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**Carlo Morpurgo** | 09/03/11 12:03 PM | link | filter

_Richard Hatch wrote:_

_Carlo Morpurgo wrote_: You can choose one letter per line, but you can't slide the lines and align either of those names vertically....coincidence? ;)

Sorry, I don't understand the constraint on sliding the lines. Why can't they be lined up vertically?

Because the whole point was that you can form WESANDERS by sliding the lines while staying within the margins of the page.

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**Richard Hatch** | 09/03/11 12:24 PM | link | filter

_Carlo Morpurgo wrote:_
Carlo Morpurgo wrote: You can choose one letter per line, but you can't slide the lines and align either of those names vertically....coincidence? ;)

Sorry, I don't understand the constraint on sliding the lines. Why can't they be lined up vertically?

Because the whole point was that you can form WESANDERS by sliding the lines while staying within the margins of the page.

Ah... I apparently missed the "whole point", my bad. Thanks!

Richard Hatch | 09/03/11 01:48 PM | link | filter

Ok, I guess I'm still confused on the sliding of letters issue: If from the first line one uses the H in SLIGHTS, the second line, the L in GAMBLER, 3rd the A in DETAIL, 4th the N at the end of KNOWN, 5th the D in AND, 6th the R in CARD, 7 the E in ONE, 8th the W in DRAWINGS and finally the S in SMITH, does the sliding of the lines exceed the margins of the page? Not to my untrained eye, spelling out vertically, "H. L. ANDREWS", Wiseman's candidate...

Similarly, by using the M in GAMBLER on the 2nd line in place of the L in the same word, you get the fellow Sawyer spotted in the same building as McKinney at the time the book was in production. What am I missing about the special character of the WESANDERS sliding?

Carlo Morpurgo | 09/03/11 02:30 PM | link | filter

Richard Hatch wrote: Ok, I guess I'm still confused on the sliding of letters issue: If from the first line one uses the H in SLIGHTS, the second line, the L in GAMBLER, 3rd the A in DETAIL, 4th the N at the end of KNOWN, 5th the D in AND, 6th the R in CARD, 7 the E in ONE, 8th the W in DRAWINGS and finally the S in SMITH, does the sliding of the lines exceed the margins of the page?

I can't make it work with the original text. Even if you manage somehow to align the H and the L then you have a problem with the D in the fifth line.... (the word "OF" is cut off on the right).

Richard Hatch wrote: Similarly, by using the M in GAMBLER on the 2nd line in place of the L in the same word, you get the fellow Sawyer spotted in the same building as McKinney at the time the book was in production.

this is obviously worse than the previous situation, due to the second line.
ps:

This makes me think that perhaps we are not using the same original title page....The one I am using is the one published in David Alexander's article. Maybe the original page in the book was wider?

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Richard Hatch | 09/03/11 03:04 PM | link | filter

*Carlo Morpurgo wrote:* This makes me think that perhaps we are not using the same original title page....The one I am using is the one published in David Alexander's article. Maybe the original page in the book was wider?

Ah, thanks Carlo. The title page reproduced in the David Alexander article is severely trimmed on all sides (likely unintentionally due to space in the article). The first edition margins are much wider.

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Carlo Morpurgo | 09/03/11 03:46 PM | link | filter

I am glad we sorted this out... Anyway I think that the WES alignment fits better with other aspects of the Sanders *theory* (without proving anything)

1. playing with his name, vertically or otherwise
2. wanting to use a full anagram as an author
3. wanting to leave traces on how to discover his identity
4. eliminating "andrews" via the "and ruse artifice"
5. using "SWE shift" to identify the first three letters
6. "artfully avoiding ambiguous anagrams" (?)

If we had solid proof that the above Andrews were the authors, then the vertical alignment of their names in my mind would be as much fun.

By the way, can you say more about 6. above?

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Carlo Morpurgo | 09/03/11 07:03 PM | link | filter

*Carlo Morpurgo wrote:* I am glad we sorted this out... Anyway I think that the WES alignment fits better with other aspects of the Sanders *theory* (without proving anything)

1. playing with his name, vertically or otherwise
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3. wanting to leave traces on how to discover his identity
5. using "SWE shift" to identify the first three letters
6. "artfully avoiding ambiguous anagrams" (?)

If we had solid proof that the above Andrews were the authors, then the vertical alignment of their names in my mind would be as much fun.

I meant "would NOT be as much fun".....

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**Carlo Morpurgo** | 09/03/11 11:25 PM | [link] | [filter]

Carlo Morpurgo wrote: Because the whole point was that you can form WESANDERS by sliding the lines while staying within the margins of the page.

Maybe a better and more reasonable way to state this would be "while staying within the margins of the text". I am not sure how they where printing books back then, but I assume that even then the text had to stay within a certain boundary, well inside the actual page by a predetermined amount.

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**magicam** | 09/04/11 05:25 AM | [link] | [filter]

Havent read the Genii article or sunk my teeth into the Erdnase literature for years, but FWIW offer two observations, which may have been previously made by others.

First, the inverted pyramid graphic design on the title page is nothing novel. This design has been used in many books printed over the past 500 years.

Second, what significance, if any, do we attach to the fact that the first three primary words of the proper title of Erdnases book (artifice, ruse, subterfuge) are all synonyms for each other, meaning trickery or deception? Why would the author indulge in such high-profile pleonasms? To demonstrate his deep vocabulary? (Doubtful.) To show that he used a copy of Rogets Thesaurus? (Also doubtful.)

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**Richard Hatch** | 09/04/11 09:48 AM | [link] | [filter]

Carlo Morpurgo wrote: 6. "artfully avoiding ambiguous anagrams" (?)

Sorry, this was a joke for those at the Erdnaseum. I did find a book with this quote in it in the Sanders' B&B 2nd story bathroom (Ricky Smith and I were staying in what was believed to have been Wilbur's room), but the book was a contemporary object, as was a bottle of hand lotion with the bold initials ESA printed on the label. "Finding" them
Carlo Morpurgo | 09/07/11 10:57 PM | link | filter

*magicam* wrote: First, the inverted pyramid graphic design on the title page is nothing novel. This design has been used in many books printed over the past 500 years.

Just yesterday I was browsing a brand new calculus book and I found this [link](http://tinyurl.com/3p6ypey)

(it's the very last page of the book)

could not help smiling...and no, I am not going to try to find hidden names in it...

Bill Mullins | 09/09/11 02:19 AM | link | filter

Thomas Sawyer's [Erdnase Blog](http://www.erdnaseblog.com) has recently been focussed on 73 Plymouth Place/Court in Chicago, the address of James McKinney when he printed the book.

A 1905 map shows the building there. 73-75 Plymouth are all 1 building, and it is 80 feet tall.

[Tom - if you are following this, and want a copy of the map, email me offline and I'll send it to you.]

It would appear that the street numbers have been changed (it is now the 500 block), and that the building has been torn down. The east-bound lane of W. Congress pkwy occupies the space now.

Marty Demarest | 09/09/11 09:35 PM | link | filter

*Rick Ruhl* wrote: As a side note, Sandy Marshall and I have been conversing in email. Seems Jay had in his collection 2 EATCT from 1918 and one has M.D. Smith’s autograph from 1947 in it. The other doesn’t.

This is interesting considering that Whaley, Gardner and Busby, in *The Man Who was Erdnase*, state: "This [first edition] copy of *The Expert*, bearing Gallaway’s bookplate [Edward Gallaway--typesetter for James McKinney and Company], still rests in Chicago in the collection of Jay Marshall..."

I wonder what happened to that particular first edition.
Marty Demarest wrote:

Rick Ruhl wrote: As a side note, Sandy Marshall and I have been conversing in email. Seems Jay had in his collection 2 EATCT from 1918 and one has M.D. Smith's autograph from 1947 in it. The other doesn't.

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I wonder what happened to that particular first edition.

See Lot #101.

Hoo monkey | 09/10/11 12:28 PM | link | filter

It occurs to me, while peering into this issue just a bit, that we are still within the golden period of research on WE Sanders. That is, given his death date, there are almost certainly still people alive who knew him.

Finding those people and interviewing them would be a great accomplishment.

Rick Ruhl | 09/12/11 08:31 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote:

Marty Demarest wrote:

Rick Ruhl wrote: As a side note, Sandy Marshall and I have been conversing in email. Seems Jay had in his collection 2 EATCT from 1918 and one has M.D. Smith's autograph from 1947 in it. The other doesn't.

This is interesting considering that Whaley, Gardner and Busby, in The Man Who was Erdnase, state: "This [first edition] copy of The Expert, bearing Gallaway's bookplate [Edward Gallaway--typesetter for James McKinney and Company], still rests in Chicago in the collection of Jay Marshall..."
See Lot #101.

Ok So Sandy has a first edition and a 1918 edition. The 1918 edition has the autograph, as it has the King of Diamonds with no diamonds on the cover.

He sold me the other 1918 edition without the autograph. He had thought the the autograph was the first edition.

Marty, Bill, Ill email you guys the photos Sandy took of the autographed edition.

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Rick Ruhl | 09/12/11 08:40 AM | link | filter

Looking at the list, he must have the 1902 edition too. Bill I emailed you the pics, Marty, I sent them to richard to forward to you, as I dont have your email address.

This is the 1918 edition that has the MD smith sig on it from 1947.

Still worth about $3000-$5000...

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John Bodine | 09/12/11 05:34 PM | link | filter

For what it’s worth, there are at least 6 different versions of the c1918 edition. I say circa because there is no date on that edition. Slight variations include different ads on the back, KH with and without the pips, number of blank pages, green/grey paper wraps, and 1 HB edition in light blue cloth.

My current count shows about 100 different editions/printing variations, many mentioned on the Genii page for the book.

John Bodine

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magicam | 09/14/11 06:01 AM | link | filter

^^^ 

John, Id love to see that list someday! Thats a helluva lot of variants!

As a general comment (i.e., not directed at John), perhaps not now, but hopefully at some point in time the bibliographical study of TEATCT will reach a level where the correct use of terms like edition, issue, and state is essential/helpful to good communication about all the variants of this book. For example, if two copies of a book are identical except that one copy is bound in publishers wraps, and the other in publishers cloth, then these copies represent different issues, not different editions. Bibliographically speaking, there is no such thing as a hardbound edition or a
off a book and examining the text block only.

**Bill Mullins** | 09/14/11 12:09 PM | link | filter

My own collection of editions/printings-states/issues is pretty modest*, but I was able to quickly add a couple of entries to the Magicpedia page.

*Jason England brought his collection to the Erdaseum. It was a privilege to examine and handle not only two separate 1st edition copies, but also multiple Drake hardbacks, foreign editions, and a huge stack of the various "classic" paperbacks from Drake, Wehman, Powner, KC Card, etc. Also predecessors and related works such as different editions of "How Gamblers Win" and "A Grand Expose" and Hardison's "Poker". Thanks Jason!

**El Harvey Oswald** | 09/15/11 12:52 AM | link | filter

"Second, what significance, if any, do we attach to the fact that the first three primary words of the proper title of Erdnases book (artifice, ruse, subterfuge) are all synonyms for each other, meaning trickery or deception? Why would the author indulge in such high-profile pleonasms? To demonstrate his deep vocabulary? (Doubtful.) To show that he used a copy of Rogets Thesaurus? (Also doubtful.)"

None; redundancy for emphasis, or just commonplace redundancy without either an overt or meaningfully subconscious motive. Probably not every gesture capable of being commented on was a deliberately coded message about his identity. And I suspect he didn’t need a thesaurus to come up with those synonyms.

**magicam** | 09/15/11 02:05 AM | link | filter

^^ Your guess is as good as mine (or maybe better). I dont know that such redundancy was intended as a clue to the authors identity, but do think it was intentional/conscious.

**Carlo Morpurgo** | 09/16/11 11:36 PM | link | filter

I am only now reading the new October Genii....I was shocked to see my name and all the "sliding stuff"!...Richard, I can’t believe you put me in there! I hope you won't regret it.... ;) Thanks!

**Mal333** | 09/21/11 10:22 PM | link | filter

Hi all.
I have spent the last few days reading through this fascinating thread here on the Genii forums. I am a member of other forums not just about magic, and (I know it’s been said before) this has to be the most interesting and engrossing thread I have seen online.

Many thanks to the tireless and insightful research that has gone into this subject by the many members of the forum, your work has been much appreciated.

Look forward to further development on this topic.

Ps I have always wondered why M. D. Smith was never asked to do a quick sketch of the man he met in the hotel room. Many questions were posed to him about the man’s appearance etc, I would have thought being an experience illustrator, he would have been able to produce something that could be compared to the candidates for Erdnase. I understand it was 40 years since he’d met him, but I would’ve thought that it could have provided an excellent piece of information. I apologize if this has been mentioned before.

Bill Mullins | 09/24/11 04:51 PM | link | filter

Jason England used to host a web page with picture of numerous editions of Expert (you can still find remnants of the page on The Internet Archive, and there is a Spanish language "borrowing" of it out there somewhere).

It appears that he’s involved in a new site which is documenting the various printings and editions in much greater depth. When the site is ready, a link will be posted.

Mal333 | 09/26/11 12:31 AM | link | filter

Just reread the Genii article again (great work Marty), and I was looking at the photos of the diary pages. One of them has “James” written on it and the other page has the surname rearranged to “Saunders” adding a U. We know that Wilbur’s brother was called James, am I right in saying that his full name is James U Sanders? If so then that could be were the U comes from in this rearrangement. Am I also correct in saying that James was only 2 years older? this could be where the E.S. comes from in the pseudonym. It could also have been a collaborative effort from the brothers?

Please ignore if these avenues have been previously explored or make no sense, I’m just having fun analyzing all this wonderful information.

Geno Munari | 09/27/11 11:04 PM | link | filter
why Smith was not asked to draw a resemblance of Erdnase, or maybe he has, and it is hidden away in some personal effects.

Great question.

Richard Hatch | 09/27/11 11:59 PM | link | filter

Hindsight is 20/20 and I sure many wish that Martin Gardner had asked Marshall Smith to do a portrait of the man he met. Smith did do a caricature of a magician doing card flourishes, which he gave to Gardner, but there was no indication that this was supposed to resemble Erdnase. This caricature is reproduced in TMWWE and the original sold with the large lot of Gardner's Erdnase research materials and first edition on eBay back in 2000.

Geno Munari | 09/30/11 11:32 AM | link | filter

I am sorry for being remiss, but I want to sincerely thank all the organizers of the Erdnaseum in Helena, Montana, especially Mike Vance, Marty, Dick Hatch, Bill Kalush, the Buck Brothers, (Wow do I like the playing cards they issued), the owners of the Sanders B&B, and all others I may have missed.

It was one of the great times I have ever had. Let's do it again!

Jason England | 09/30/11 07:37 PM | link | filter

We did "do it again" Geno. We did it again on Saturday night. Where were you?

Jason

Dustin Stinett | 09/30/11 07:49 PM | link | filter

I wish someone would find a B&B here that Erdnase stayed/lived in.

Richard Hatch | 10/02/11 12:56 AM | link | filter

This has apparently been up for a while but I only just now ran across it. Not sure it adds much to the discussion:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPjH_cZRIto

Tom Frame | 10/02/11 09:13 AM | link | filter
"For the Record it was Marty Demarest presenting David Alexander's theory first proposed in Genii that S E Sanders was Erdnase."

SwanJr | 10/17/11 09:17 PM | link | filter

Has anybody been able to run down the Sunday News Tribune of Duluth for Nov 10, 1901? I'd love to see the article on Sanders' writing plans.

Geno Munari | 10/18/11 10:13 AM | link | filter

Hi
What article are you referring? The Historical Newspaper base doesn't have any records on this.

Leonard Hevia | 10/18/11 09:06 PM | link | filter

Geno--

He is referring to the November 10, 1901 article in the Duluth, Minnesota Sunday News Tribune. Sanders was in Duluth, Minnesota by November the 9th and the article discussed Sanders' intention of writing a text book on mine timbering. Sanders had a manuscript with him at that time that was supposed to be the draft of the mine timbering book.

A reporter from the Tribune probably saw Sanders with a manuscript under his arm and might have asked him questions about it. Sanders may have thrown the mine timbering text book story to keep his manuscript of TEATCT sub rosa. That manuscript could have actually been his draft for TEATCT because Demarest notes that the mine timbering book actually consisted entirely of previously published articles, only two of which Sanders wrote.

Right after this Sanders heads out to Chicago to visit his parents. They are staying in the Windsor Clifton Hotel which is not far from the hotel where Smith met Erdnase.

Geno Munari | 10/19/11 07:58 AM | link | filter

Thanks Leonard. I finally found it.

Roger M. | 10/20/11 05:51 PM | link | filter

Magicana has just sent a note out indicating that the August issue (it's quite late :) ) of
It’s made clear in the mail out that there will be an article(s) on the possible identity of Erdnase.....among many other articles. The issue has EATCT as its singular topic.

It will be most interesting to see what direction the author, or authors of said articles will go in.

I got the distinct impression, based on what LIMITED (factual) information actually made it out of the Erdnaseum event, that there was, shall we say, a complete lack of agreement as to whether the Sanders theory was solid enough to warrant any sort of declaration regarding Erdnases identity being "solved" once and for all.

In fact, it seems (in the limited communications from attendees) that there was more disagreement at said event that there was anything resembling an agreement.

Regardless, I await the Magicol issue, and will enjoy re-reading the Genii/Sanders issue in the meantime.

---

**Richard Hatch** | 10/20/11 07:29 PM | [link] | [filter]

*Leonard Hevia wrote:* Right after this Sanders heads out to Chicago to visit his parents. They are staying in the Windsor Clifton Hotel which is not far from the hotel where Smith met Erdnase.

Leo, just wanted to point out that the above is plausible conjecture, not proven fact. The shortest route for Sanders to Montana by rail would not have taken him to Chicago, but the fact that his parents were in Chicago at the time, and that a typed letter from his father may have been typed by WES (as argued by Marty) do make the side trip to Chicago a distinct possibility.

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**Bill Mullins** | 10/21/11 12:33 PM | [link] | [filter]

*Roger M. wrote:* I got the distinct impression, based on what LIMITED (factual) information actually made it out of the Erdnaseum event, that there was, shall we say, a complete lack of agreement as to whether the Sanders theory was solid enough to warrant any sort of declaration regarding Erdnases identity being "solved" once and for all.

In fact, it seems (in the limited communications from attendees) that there was more disagreement at said event that there was anything resembling an agreement.
of the author, so strictly speaking, what Roger says above is true. But I hope no one reads his post and is left with the impression that the meeting was anything other than collegial, supportive, and (most of all) fun. I renewed old friendships and made new ones. The fact that I disagree with some of them about various elements of the Erdnase story is the least important part of the weekend.

Let's face it, there is a certain element of geekdom in people flying and driving from all over the country to Montana to discuss who may or may not have written an obscure century old book (as one attendee put it, maybe the event should have been called "Nerd-ways-eum"). But being geeks, we reveled in it rather than argued over it.

**crandash** | 10/26/11 11:51 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Geno,

I had the pleasure of meeting you in Helena MT during the Erdnaseum. I just finished reading Steinmeyers book on Thurston and I got a kick out of Thurston spending time in Belt Montana and devising his version of the Rising Card Trick there.

Anyhow, I could not remember if it was actually answered during the Erdnaseum weekend if Houdini actually ever made it to Butte Montana, during his vaudeville days. You mentioned some "notes?" that may be able to answer my question, but I cannot recall what it was.

**Geno Munari** | 10/27/11 12:46 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Hi

It was a pleasure meeting you as well. What I was referring to are the booklets written by Frank Koval, The Illustrated Houdini Research Diaries, wherein Houdini was tracked on a daily basis. I don't have my copy with me so I can't say for sure about his visiting Butte, however he was in Colorado at some time.

If someone has a copy, please check this out.

**crandash** | 10/27/11 05:30 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Geno that is it, the Koval diaries! I have spoken to a Tracy Thornton with the Butte Newspaper. She helped me track down an article from March 26, 1995 by Alan Goddard. In it, it lists a number of Entertainers who performed in Butte Montana and Houdini being one of them mentioned in the article.

I have also found this link [http://montanahistoricalsociety.org/mus ... Confo7.pdf](http://montanahistoricalsociety.org/mus ... Confo7.pdf)
On page 7 of the Brochure there is a talk given by George Everett titled "How Vaudeville Fell in Love with Butte." mentioning Houdini as well.

Chad

**Dustin Stinett** | 11/24/11 04:14 PM | [link] | [filter]

You fans of Erdnase really need to check out the MCA. Issue 180 of *Magicol* will be dedicated to the book and the identity of its author. Check my post here:

[http://www.geniimagazine.com/forums/ubb ... Post256300](http://www.geniimagazine.com/forums/ubb ... Post256300)

**Magicana** | 11/24/11 05:49 PM | [link] | [filter]

*Dustin Stinett wrote:* You fans of Erdnase really need to check out the MCA. Issue 180 of *Magicol* will be dedicated to the book and the identity of its author. Check my post here:

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We're happy to have anyone interested as a subscriber and you're welcome to join us for 2012.

We’ve closed off subscriptions for 2011, but the All Erdnase Issue will be available as a special limited edition booklet titled *Erdnase Unmasked*. It features the contributions from David Ben, Jason England, Richard Hatch & Hurt McDermott plus a reprint of a Martin Gardner piece on Erdnase which originally appeared in *Magicol* in 1951.

We expect the books to ship in early December. Copies will be available through your favourite dealer. Advance copies are available here:


You can also join us as a subscriber for 2012 here:


**Roger M.** | 11/24/11 07:40 PM | [link] | [filter]

Very interesting news.....exciting even!
As a subscriber to Magicol, I have a question for Magicana.

Is the limited edition book something different than the Magicol issue mailed out to you?
Are the contents the same?
Is the book bound differently, or presented differently from the magazine?

I'd love to have a copy of the book, as long as it's something different than the Magicol issue that's showing up in my mail box shortly :)

Chris Aguilar | 11/24/11 08:05 PM | link | filter

Interesting to see what (if any) new evidence (smoking gun?) Hatch has unearthed to support his candidate (E.S. Andrews).

Is the photo on the cover Andrews?

David Ben | 11/25/11 02:48 PM | link | filter

Roger

"Erdnase Unmasked" will be slightly different, but just slightly.
The Magicol "Erdnase" issue (No. 180) is the bulk of the material for "Erdnase Unmasked". The difference is that the Magicol issue will also have book reviews, obituaries, and advertisements from sponsors, as per previous issues.

As we have reached the end of the 2011 subscription year, and do not have enough back issues to fill subscription orders for 2011, we decided to release "Erdnase Unmasked". "Erdnase Unmasked" will have a different cover. We have also removed the book reviews, obituaries, and advertisements from it. To add to the page count, we have reproduced the text of Martin Gardner's article "Editions of Erdnase" which appeared in 1951. You can read this article for free, however, at the online exhibition, www.everythingerdnase.com.

If you are a 'collector', you might want to add "Erdnase Unmasked" to your collection. If you are just interested in the information, you should be fine with just Magicol No. 180, and a visit to the online exhibition.

Erdnase Unmasked is really for non-Magicol subscribers. Hopefully, they will enjoy it so much that they will also consider subscribing to the journal.

Hope this helps.

Roger M. | 11/25/11 06:18 PM | link | filter

It most definitely helped.

You answered my question completely.

Bill Mullins | 12/04/11 09:06 PM | link | filter

So who else has read the new issue of Magicol? Any thoughts? I have a couple --

1. Chris Aguilar -- the answer to your question is "yes".

2. If we regard Marty's article as the definitive case summary for the W. E. Sanders position, Richard Hatch's new article must stand beside it as the definitive argument for Edwin S. Andrews. It's great to have so much of what's been posted here on the forum since Richard's Magic article that first laid out the case for Andrews, all neatly tied up in one package.

3. I missed Hurt's presentation at the MCA weekend, and am glad to see what he had to say. There's a lot of good (and interesting, and relevant) information in it. But I'm not sure I agree with his conclusion (that Chicago is the only place that "Expert" could have been published, given the wav authorities turned a blind eye to the Comstock Laws).
poker", published only 3 years later in Columbus -- a much more overt instruction on how to cheat. At least "Expert" can make the claim that it was a "gambling protection" book.

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**Chris Aguilar** | 12/04/11 11:53 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

@ Bill Mullins.

So the Magicol (the Richard Hatch material) is basically a nicely wrapped up version of the information Richard Hatch has already posted up here?

Nothing new? Does Hatch speak to the possibility of W.E. Sanders at all? Even to debunk it?

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**Bob Coyne** | 12/05/11 12:18 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Bill Mullins wrote:* So who else has read the new issue of Magicol? Any thoughts?

Not to minimize the information and research behind it, but I think most of the info about ES Andrews was already posted here or elsewhere. It seemed familiar to me anyway. So it wasn't at all the "wow" experience I had when reading Marty's new findings on Sanders. If the possible connection to Dalrymple through Andrew's wife (Seely) could be established, then that would certainly add substantial weight to this candidate. But that possibility was something we knew already.

I didn't find David Ben's railroad worker profile convincing -- certainly not to the level of it being "obvious" that Erdnase "worked on the railroad" as claimed. Erdnase talks about playing in clubrooms etc, not on trains. So the railroad profile seemed like a force fit to match the candidate rather than the other way around. Even less convincing was the inflated claim (based on very little new evidence) that the case for ES Andrews being Erdnase was now established "beyond a reasonable doubt". Also unnecessary was the gratuitous comparison of the groundswell of support for Sanders with "popular delusions and the madness of crowds".

Anyway, I enjoyed reading the issue, but continue to find the Sanders case much more compelling. With Sanders we not only have the name (as anagram), the Chicago location (which he visited), a tenuous Dalrymple connection, matching height/age...but much more: his playing with anagrams in his notebooks, his buying multiple decks of cards, his gambling (and gambling debts), his doing magic, his education/intelligence and writing ability (and stylistic similarities), and the possible Del Adelphia connection. And I'm probably forgetting other items.
I just posted my chat with David Ben & Julie Eng of Magicana in which we discuss the latest edition of Magicol & their EverythingErdnase.com exhibit. In addition to Mr. Hatch, Mr. Mullins is mentioned as well! Enjoy: http://bit.ly/EE

Interesting to hear David Ben (in the Magic Newswire interview) refer to Marty’s research as “Utter, complete nonsense.”

Does Ben go into detail as to why he feels that way in the Magicol article? What facts does he bear to support that opinion? Or is it all pretty subjective?

Did people really think that David Alexander was "pretty much out of his mind" as Ben opines concerning the initial release of Alexander’s research?

Is there anything to back up Ben’s opinion that Marty’s primary interest in stirring the Erdnase pot lies with an interest in writing a screenplay about it?

For the record, I don’t think Marty’s take is the final word. And based on what Hatch has posted here, I don’t don’t feel any more confidence in his take. Lacking a "smoking gun" of some sort, I can't buy claims "case closed" as RK has (to some extent) put forward for Sanders or that Mr. Ben has more bluntly claimed for Hatch’s candidate. It seems very presumptuous based on the thin nature of the of the evidence. I do give Richard credit for at least admitting other points of view exist without questioning the motives of the researchers involved. It would be nice to see both sides follow that example.

I think if either take is debunked or seen in a lesser light, it has to be in light of actual evidence to support that. I wish I were hearing more of that from both sides.

In retrospect, I think that one of Marty’s biggest "stretches" was the Dalyrymple connection to his candidate Sanders. But now, after hearing David Ben’s attempt to make a similar linkage with his candidate (in the audio interview) I’m struck by how equally weak his attempt at finding a connection seems.

Unless I am reading it incorrectly—which is certainly a possibility given my addled brain—I don't think Marty claims a relationship with the cartoonist beyond the fact that...
who remembered that Erdnase brought up the relationship aspect. But its quite possible that all Erdnase said was that his father was in the drawing and Smith subsequently remembered it as more than that. If Erdnase was W.E. Sanders, it certainly would have made sense for him to mention, in conversation, that his father was in the cartoon. So from that point of view, there is, in fact, a connection between the Sanders family and Dalrymple: the proof is in the drawing.

Dustin

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**Chris Aguilar** | 12/05/11 02:48 PM | [link] | [filter]

I don't disagree with you about the Dalrymple thing Dustin. I'll have to re-read the article to remind myself what kind of weight hid put (or didn't put) on the cartoon. I think I've mentioned before that I'm unwilling to assume that a "family connection" absolutely means "related by blood or marriage".

Compared to some of the other material, I still think it's one of the weaker bits of Marty's evidence. I do find it much more plausible compared to the supposed connection that David Ben mentions vis a vis his chosen candidate (Andrews.)

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**Dustin Stinett** | 12/05/11 03:08 PM | [link] | [filter]

For me (and I am far from being invested in this whole thing; I just find it interesting), its not any single thing that makes the Alexander/Demarest candidate so compelling: Its the number of little things combined that does it:

Erdnase was educated: Sanders was educated  
Erdnase could write: Sanders could write  
Erdnase was certainly into playing cards: Cards can placed in Sanders hands  
Erdnase was a sporting man: Sanders was a sporting man  
Erdnase was into magic: Sanders was into magic  
Erdnase brought up Dalrymple: Sanders father was in the cartoon  
Erdnase had reason to remain anonymous: Sanders had reason(s) to remain anonymous  
Erdnase was in Chicago to meet with Smith: Sanders family was in Chicago at that time  
Erdnase certainly played games with his name: Sanders played games with his name  
Erdnase knew Del Adelphia: Adelphia and Sanders probably crossed paths many times

I know everyone wants to see the smoking gun, but even today, mysteries dont always have that level of evidence. Its usually a preponderance of circumstantial evidence that makes the case.
Theres a part of me that hopes that smoking gun is never found.

Dustin

Roger M. | 12/05/11 03:13 PM | link | filter

In the interest of accuracy, let's not "declare" that Dalrymple identified Sanders in the cartoon.......he didn't.

Although Dalrymple identified other State Senators in the cartoon by their actual name, and although he undertook to draw them with great accuracy, he identified the character we're talking about simply as "Montana"......and it's debatable whether it resembles Sanders with the same level of accuracy as the remainder of the characters present in the cartoon.

I took from Marty's article that he brought forward only the possibility that "Montana" was Sanders.

Taking no great leaps of faith, it may be said that there is a character in a Dalrymple cartoon who is identified as "Montana"......nowhere does it identify him as Senator Sanders......and it can also be said that other characters in the same cartoon are Senators who are identified with their actual names.

Chris Aguilar | 12/05/11 03:21 PM | link | filter

Nice list Dustin. Looking at it, I'll modify my opinion a bit and say that the Dalyrymple evidence seems a lot stronger than the Del Adelphia connection.

I will note that while I actually would like a "smoking gun" of some sort, when I see your list and re-read the full article of course) vs. some of the lists people have made concerning Andrews, I prefer the circumstantial case for Sanders. Perhaps reading the full text of Mr. Ben's and Mr. Hatch's new opus will change my mind, but lacking information far beyond what has already been published here, I kind of doubt it'll happen.

Mr.Ben goes on about how other candidates (other than his own of course) are ruled out in some way, but doesn't specify in the interview (perhaps he does in the actual magicol article.)

Short of a smoking gun, I find it hard to take any candidate seriously unless it can be shown that they were not only a writer, but a damn good writer. EATCT is a superbly written book. This certainly weighs in favor of Sanders, who could not only write, but exhibited certain idiosyncrasies in his writing that correlate closely with the style of
While I do not believe Marty (or anyone) has made a 100% solid case, I certainly do not share Mr. Ben's dismissive attitude toward it.

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**Chris Aguilar** | 12/05/11 03:23 PM | link | filter

Roger's point about the cartoon is valid.

However, Sanders was well known as the (very first State)Senator from Montana at that point and the cartoon (in my view) was drawn to closely resemble him. And the fact that he's drawn in a group of Senators and clearly labelled "Montana" makes it pretty hard to mistake him for anyone else. Is it coincidence that the guy in the cartoon is a state senator (and Montana only had one Senator at the time) of Montana who just happens to look like the well known Sanders? I certainly concede the possibility if not the probability.

So while I can't (and won't) assume 100% that it's Sanders in the cartoon, it's not implausible in any way to me that it easily could be.

David Ben's attempt at making a connection to Andrews (which boils down to "Well, the mention made wasn't to *those* Dalyrympleys, but the person might have mistaken them for the cartoonist") doesn't (in my view) seem particularly more plausible or compelling.

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**Brad Henderson** | 12/05/11 03:34 PM | link | filter

For me, If I approach Marty's work with the mindset that "Sanders IS Erdnase", then his evidence is both compelling and convincing. If, however, I consider simply the evidence without holding the pre-judgmental in mind, I find myself less compelled and convinced.

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**Roger M.** | 12/05/11 03:51 PM | link | filter

Some folks have previously noted that, in a cartoon full of Senators identified by their names.....placing another figure NOT identified by his name, but rather by the notation "Montana" was done to ensure that he wasn't to be considered a Senator.

Some posts in this thread back in August considered that he might be designed to represent Montana miners as a group, thus the moniker "Montana"......and no name.

One thing that's gone by the wayside in this thread though, was back in August, Marty made the following statement in one of his posts:
The Dalrymple family was related to the Edgerton family.

to which David Ben responded:

If you could please, please be more specific. What evidence do you have of the relationship between Dalrymple and Sanders, other than the political cartoon? Would you be kind enough to name the actual source of this information and, or produce the document?

Thanking you in advance.

David

Marty didn’t respond to David's request, and there’s been no further discussion on the topic (there probably should have been).

I believe that, when making absolute statements, it's important to follow them up or to offer substantive evidence in support of those statements. The danger of not doing so is that these "comments" over time become accepted by the uninformed as simple facts, when in reality they’re nothing more than unsupported conjecture.

When the statement like the above is made by a gentlemen who has become an important figure in the discussion (Marty), I believe it's even more important to follow up on these kinds of statements with supporting comments.

So in taking Dustin’s comment of earlier today, where he said:

I dont think Marty claims a relationship with the cartoonist beyond the fact that a family member appeared in a Dalyrymple drawing.

...in fact, Marty did make a claim far stronger than the simple cartoon connection. He didn't make it in the Genii article, but made it here in the Genii forum.

It remains completely unsupported however.
The danger of not doing so is that these "comments" over time become accepted by the uninformed as simple facts, when in reality they're nothing more than unsupported conjecture.

A very fair point.

Can we assume that you'll hold Mr. Hatch and Mr. Ben to the same standard in regards to their candidate Andrews?

Mr. Ben is making very strong claims for Andrew's and I look forward to seeing how he supports that (i.e. specifically, what are the facts and how that shapes his opinion.)

Any new substantive evidence brought to the table is much appreciated.

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Roger M. | 12/05/11 04:08 PM | link | filter

Chris, I absolutely assure you that once my VERY LATE copy of Magicol actually arrives at my door, I'll be applying the very same critical eye to the article(s) as I have to every other Erdnase article or book I've ever read.

Note that, as I've posted here previously......For me, Mr. Alexander's W.S. Sanders candidate alternated with Mr. Hatch's candidate as each brought forth more information over time.

I can honestly say I've got no horse in this race......not one.

I only seek an answer to the question that's been of great interest to me since the late 60's.

Honestly, I learned my lesson when I bought in far to early to the conclusions reached in "The Man Who Was Erdnase", in that simply because something is published (in TMWWE's case by at least two brilliant and respected authors)...there's no assurance that it's historically accurate, or even remotely correct in it's conclusions.

I won't be making that mistake again :)

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John Lovick | 12/05/11 04:10 PM | link | filter

Did people really think that David Alexander was "pretty much out of his mind" as Ben opines concerning the initial release of Alexander's research?
utter lunacy, as did I. And therefore, with the publication of the recent article, I, and many other people, were surprised that the case for Sanders is as strong as it is--it’s not completely convincing but much stronger than we expected it to be.

**Richard Hatch** | 12/05/11 04:10 PM | link | filter

On the Dalrymple/Sanders connection, I believe David Alexander's original article mentioned (and if it didn't then it was a later comment he made to me) that a Rev. Sanders officiated at the funeral of William Dalrymple, Louis' father. That would certainly be a lead worth following as well, and perhaps Marty has.

**Bill Mullins** | 12/05/11 04:11 PM | link | filter

*Chris Aguilar wrote:* and Montana only only had one Senator at the time

Both [Wilbur Fiske Sanders](http://example.com) and [Charles Thomas Power](http://example.com) took office in the Senate in Jan 1890. The *Puck* illustration was in a Jan 1891 issue. So, Montana had two senators at the time (and to my unsophisticated eye, the cartoon doesn't particularly resemble either of them).

**Chris Aguilar** | 12/05/11 04:12 PM | link | filter

*Roger M. wrote:* Chris, I absolutely assure you that once my VERY LATE copy of Magicol actually arrives at my door, I'll be applying the very same critical eye to the article(s) as I have to every other Erdnase article or book I've ever read.

I look forward to seeing you tear into that with the same tenacity that you've brought to the discussion of Sanders.

**Roger M.** | 12/05/11 04:19 PM | link | filter

It's funny how folks can read the identical article, and take very different things from it.

I've probably read David Alexanders article in Genii three dozen times since it was written, and I've only ever thought about how incredibly clever his conclusions were........especially the anagram element.

Alexanders research never struck me as even slightly "crazy". "Creative" maybe.......but "crazy", no.

Alexander took some rather large leaps of faith, as has Marty in his furtherance of
Those small to large leaps of faith are *all you've really got* when there's no smoking gun yet found...........but those same leaps of faith can be difficult to use in an effort to actually come to any sort of conclusion on the subject.

Although I haven't yet read it, and don't really like to comment on things I haven't read.......it does appear that Mr. Ben has taken some similar leaps of faith in some of his conclusions.

I look forward to having all the information at hand, in one place (my bookshelf), and available for further research and study.

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**Chris Aguilar** | 12/05/11 04:33 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

So, Montana had two senators at the time (and to my unsophisticated eye, the cartoon doesn't particularly resemble either of them).

Ah, definitely my mistake. Didn't look hard enough for the second senator. I do not agree that the Puck cartoon did not resemble Sanders.

In my view, the cartoon looked quite a bit like the above (Sanders) and very little like the following (Second Senator).

I still don't find this connection particularly strong, but I do think the Senator in the cartoon resembles Sanders.
Roger M. wrote: It's funny how folks can read the identical article, and take very different things from it.

There's a line in the song "the boxer" - "a man hears what he wants to hear and disregards the rest" that's pretty informative on the matter. Confirmation bias for the knowing. Terms like "obviously", "plainly be seen", "self evident" are pretty good markers for items worthy of further investigation. They might serve in rhetoric after you've gotten the pathos happening but to a skeptical reader/listener they may beg questions.

Bill,

I don't believe I claimed in my article that Chicago was the only city that Erdnase could have published The Expert. It was probably the most prominently known safe place to publish such a book, which might well explain why an author would take the trouble to travel there to publish -- or it might explain why a gambler would find himself in Chicago in the first place. I certainly didn't mean to suggest there was absolutely no other location in the States in which the book could be published.
**Bill Mullins** | 12/05/11 06:04 PM | link | filter

*Swar Jr wrote:* Bill,

I don't believe I claimed in my article that Chicago was the *only* city that Erdnase could have published *The Expert*. It was probably the most prominently known safe place to publish such a book, which might well explain why an author would take the trouble to travel there to publish -- or it might explain why a gambler would find himself in Chicago in the first place. I certainly didn't mean to suggest there was absolutely no other location in the States in which the book could be published.

Hurt McDermott

Hurt -- my apologies for mischaracterizing your article. I can only offer "laziness" as an excuse -- I was on one side of the room typing my post, and your article was all the way on the other side of the room, too far to check for accuracy. <G>

Regardless, though, of my poor criticism of your work, you should be commended for coming at the problem from a completely different direction. This "thinking outside the box" is a great way to gain new insights, and sets up a whole 'nother paradigm that candidates must be measured against.

Comparing candidates against a checklist of "did he cheat?" "did he write?" "did he live in Chicago?" etc. is a mechanical way of identifying the author. Figuring out how and why the book was written the way it was, though, yields greater insights into the text itself (I feel like Jon Racherbaumer here . . . someone hand me a thesaurus!), and is ultimately much more satisfying.

**Bill Mullins** | 12/05/11 06:22 PM | link | filter

*Chris Aguilar wrote:* I do think the Senator in the cartoon resembles Sanders.

Really? The guy in the cartoon has a hat, and Sanders doesn't.

Seriously, though, any argument that says "Montana" in the Puck cartoon is a senator must also apply to "Idaho", "Oregon", "Washington" and "Dakota" -- they occupy the same position in the cartoon as does "Montana". Which senators do they represent?

And the Montana cartoon has a much more hooked nose than does Sanders. A
appearance.

(And also, Chris, would you be so kind as to contact me off-line? I’ve tried to email you a couple times and had no luck. Thanks.)

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**Magic Newswire** | 12/05/11 06:35 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

It appears that there was a temporary issue with the MP3 file for my chat with David Ben & Julie Eng. If you had trouble, please try again: [http://bit.ly/EE](http://bit.ly/EE)

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**Chris Aguilar** | 12/05/11 06:55 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

> Bill Mullins wrote: And the Montana cartoon has a much more hooked nose than does Sanders. A caricaturist as skilled as Dalrymple would have been more faithful to Sanders’ appearance.

I’m not saying I’m convinced it’s Sanders, just that it could *very reasonably* be Sanders. To me, it (very subjectively I’ll admit) looks very much like him.

(And also, Chris, would you be so kind as to contact me off-line? I’ve tried to email you a couple times and had no luck. Thanks.)

Weird. Try e-mailing me at both [conjurenation@gmail.com](mailto:conjurenation@gmail.com) (I can also be found on google plus via that address) and [chris@conjurenation.com](mailto:chris@conjurenation.com) and I’m sure your message will get to me.

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**Magic Newswire** | 12/05/11 07:37 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)


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**SwanJr** | 12/06/11 01:38 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Bill, no apology necessary. I always look forward to your posts and appreciate the great amount of original material you have found and shared freely. I feel all of us writing about Erdnase are in your debt.

Hurt McDermott

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**Leonard Hevia** | 12/07/11 02:08 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)
sure that Sanders went to visit his parents in Chicago. I very much enjoyed your essay "Reading Erdnase Backwards" in the new issue of Magicol. After finishing it, I felt like an insider who was kept current on the progress of your research.

I did notice that David Ben’s essay "Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Erdnase" is missing footnote number six at the bottom of page 29. That footnote was to provide Ben’s source for his suggestion "...that Alexander was not sufficiently familiar with the content of the book to extrapolate from it the information that could contribute to a profile."

In his essay, Ben explores an aspect of Erdnase's life that I haven't read about yet. At some point in his formative years, Erdnase must have devoted a considerable amount of time to study and practice card table artifice and card magic. He also needed the spare time and place to do it.

Leonard Hevia wrote: At some point in his formative years, Erdnase must have devoted a considerable amount of time to study and practice card table artifice and card magic. He also needed the spare time and place to do it.

The time that someone of means during that period would have had.

Leonard Hevia wrote: ...a man of means, by no means--King of the Road.

If we’re talking about Sanders, it would have been during his time at Phillips Exeter Academy and later Columbia University. One can picture a young Sanders in the classrooms, halls, cafeteria, and in his dorm with a deck of cards in his hands.

Proponents of Andrews might see him as a clerk on the C&NW Railroad working on the pasteboards.

Leonard Hevia wrote: I did notice that David Ben's essay "Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Erdnase" is missing footnote number six at the bottom of page 29.

The missing footnotes were posted on http://magicol.wordpress.com/2011/12/01/some-edits/
In reading David Ben's article in MAGICOL, he notes that in criminal cases a person has be judged guilty, "Beyond a reasonable doubt." Then says it is generally(?) thought to be a standard of 90% or higher.

Not a lawyer, (Ben is) I remember sitting on a jury in California, where we were instructed that the burden of proof had to be, "Beyond a reasonable doubt, TO A MORAL CERTAINTY."

Would that suggest a need for better than 90%? Is the burden of proof different in Canada or different States in the U.S.? If I thought there was a 10% chance the defendant was innocent, I would be very careful and would need to hear more.

Saying that, I question if E.S. Andrews was proven to be at the "scene of the crime", and could be so judged with the certainty David has.

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It would seem to me that a man named E.S. Andrews, a supposed con-man, would be a very obvious answer to the S.W. Erdnase question.

Since there is no solid "proof" and a great deal of suspects, I think we allow our desire to have one last "secret" to outweigh our common sense.

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I don’t believe the recent issue of Magicol contains enough information to declare that Erdnase has been "found".

In fact, both Genii and Magicol seem to have broken more than one rule of journalism as it relates to jumping to an unproven conclusion, in the case of Genii it wasn’t within the article itself (Marty was quite careful to not definitively state that he’d found Erdnase).

Having said that, I’ll comment on the Magicol issue, and it's conclusion that E.S. Andrews was Erdnase.

First off, I’ll state that one thing that becomes apparent quickly is that Richard Hatch is IMO the most knowledgable person on record functioning as an Erdnase researcher. I don’t believe anybody else who has commented publicly has the depth of understanding, and the details of the timeline that Richard does. Frankly, his research is superior to all else out there, on DVD, in print, or on the internet.

His motives are clear and concise..he wants to find out who wrote EATCT, and he
If anybody is primed to produce the definitive statement, complete with proof as to who Erdnase was, it's Richard. Richard paints a picture which leaves the reader short one piece of information, and that's the proven relationship between Andrews wife, and Dalrymple's mother (both share the same somewhat uncommon last name). Richard makes clear that this is, to date, the best shot at closing the case. I agree with him that this piece of information (if in the positive) would cement Andrews as Erdnase without further debate.

This article by Hatch will form a major cornerstone in the available Erdnase research. (It should be made clear that Richard Hatch does not declare that he's found Erdnase, that statement was made by David Ben in a separate article.)

The David Ben article contains some serious points, and causes some serious questions to be asked and subsequently answered. David's knowledge is a product of his background and his ongoing interests. Publisher, magician, researcher, writer, executor of the Vernon estate, and a man who has a deep understanding of The Expert At The Card Table in its entirety.

It's this last statement that forms a sizable portion of the gist of David's article. He has undertaken to use the actual material in the book as a compass to point to Erdnase. This use of the material that's actually written in the pages of EATCT can't be understated. It's fine to say you're going to undertake such a project, but the actual material is (as David points out) literally a life's work to fully comprehend. Very few people can leverage the material on the pages to try and paint a picture of the Erdnase the man, simply because very few people truly understand the entirety of the work in EATCT. Ben has a complete grasp of EATCT.

Ben paints a compelling picture of Erdnase as Andrews, a train worker, and a man who could only have accomplished what he did by practicing for nearly every waking hour of the day, for years on end. Such a comment can only come from somebody who understands what it takes to master every move in EATCT such that the author could clearly explain it in writing. David Ben understands this concept. In a nutshell, David's comments fully support Richard's E.S. Andrews candidate, and his comments support him quite thoroughly.

I will diverge slightly here to say that David has done exactly what Marty has done. He's taken one of the two main candidates, as proposed by Alexander and Hatch, and he's essentially molded his "proof" to fit the candidate.
essentially a champion for another researchers candidate.

I strongly believe that what it really comes down to is the quality of the original research which led to the choice of the candidates long before David Ben or Marty Demarest were on the scene.

If David Alexander was wrong in who he chose as his original candidate (Sanders), then Marty is wrong.
If Richard Hatch was wrong in who he chose as his original candidate (Andrews), then David Ben is wrong.

In terms of original research, I would give the weight to Richard Hatch. His research is not only more extensive and ongoing, it’s also the least “reaching” in its conclusions. It simply states the facts as they are found to be, and draws together those facts into a concise picture of where the E.S. Andrews and S.W. Erdnase lines cross each other.

Unfortunately, with David’s passing, his “original” research can be developed no further. While I’m a fan (from the days of the Genii article) of David’s research, I would honestly state that one must make many leaps of faith in order to arrive at the W.S. Sanders conclusion.
It’s not a straight road, and as clever as much of it is it simply isn’t as robust as the Hatch research.
I believe those who fervently support Marty’s findings must first go back and understand fully and clearly the somewhat jagged path David took to get to Sanders in the first place.

I will conclude by saying that I believe the E.S. Andrews candidate is, based on all the available information, a stronger candidate than the W.S. Sanders candidate.
I also believe the Andrews candidate is (as Richard Hatch has pointed out) only one piece of information away from being proven to be Erdnase.

I’m not convinced the Sanders candidate has progressed that far, based on the available research.

One final thing in this overly-long post.
It was noted above that David Ben made some comments on David Alexander’s “abilities”. By parsing Ben’s writings into internet posts, it can be made to seem that Mr. Ben was somehow insulting David Alexander.
This is simply not the case.
Ben’s comments as they relate to Alexander (and Marty) are polite, professional, and made in a friendly tone throughout.

Bob Farmer | 12/14/11 08:19 AM | link | filter
Whether you agree or disagree, the Magicol issue is just a fantastic read.

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**Bob Coyne** | 12/14/11 09:19 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Roger M. wrote:*

I will diverge slightly here to say that David has done exactly what Marty has done—he’s taken one of the two main candidates, as proposed by Alexander and Hatch, and he’s essentially molded his "proof" to fit the candidate.

But the difference is that the *profile* for Sanders was created by David Alexander, not Marty. And that profile was created before finding the candidate. So David Ben and Marty have done very different things. Marty found lots of new evidence for an existing candidate, whereas David Ben constructed a profile arguing for an existing candidate. I don't think David Ben offered any new evidence. The evidence for Andrews was found by Richard Hatch, absent a profile (as far as I can tell).

*Roger M. wrote:*

I will conclude by saying that I believe the E.S. Andrews candidate is, based on all the available information, a stronger candidate than the W.S. Sanders candidate.

I also believe the Andrews candidate is (as Richard Hatch has pointed out) only one piece of information away from being proven to be Erdnase.

What's the stronger evidence for Andrews over Sanders? It seems to me the main items would be 1) the possible Seely/Dalrymple connection and 2) whether you think a direct backwards spelling (ES Andrews) is stronger evidence than a full anagram (WE Sanders). I’m not sure the backwards spelling is stronger evidence -- I liked David’s argument that the simple backwards spelling was misdirection. Plus the anagram angle is reinforced by the fact that his candidate was playing with anagrams in his diary. Regarding the Seely connection -- it hasn’t been established that it’s the same Seely and Dalrymple. Plus we have some suggestions of a connection between Sanders and Dalrymple. So the Dalrymple angle seems like it could go either way.

I really don’t see any other evidence for Andrews. Very little seems to be known about him. On the other hand, there's quite a bit of circumstantial evidence for Sanders with his gambling history, doing magic tricks, writing style/education, buying decks of cards, playing with anagrams, etc. Did I miss some compelling evidence for ES Andrews?
My point was that Ben and Demarest each championed the candidates of other researchers. Neither man claimed to have, on his own, discovered anybody new.

The original footwork in both cases was done by David Alexander and Richard Hatch.

I'm aware that Alexander and Hatch arrived at their candidate by completely different means, but neither Ben nor Demarest brought any "new" candidates to the table......which was my point.

The Dalrymple evidence is (IMO) far more compelling in the Andrews case. An actual name, as opposed to a nebulous figure in a cartoon would seem to carry enough weight to proceed with further investigation.

The cartoon is what it is, and can be taken no further.

I don't attach weight to the cartoon in terms of accepting that the character is Sanders father.

Bring up the spectre of Occams Razor, the K.I.S.S. principle, or whatever works for you.......and the reversal of E.S. Andrews simply is easier to accept than the machinations David Alexander postulated in order to arrive at W.S. Sanders. Once again, I suggest folks actually dig deep into understanding how David Alexander got to the W.S. Sanders name (if they're unaware of his process). It was hardly anything resembling a straight line.

If you choose to attach weight to Marty's additional findings, as you have in your last sentence, Sanders does indeed continue to appear interesting. I don't attach the same weight to Marty's findings as you do.

Hatch has demonstrated that there were physical associations between Andrews, the man...... and either the book, dealers for the book, or the holder of the books plates.

In the end though, neither candidate was shown definitively to have been Erdnase, and realistically, no major new evidence was presented in either series of articles.

Which candidate is currently a stronger candidate is a subjective decision to be made by those who've read all the information available to date. I find E.S. Andrews to be a stronger candidate.

As to how much stronger a candidate?.........55% vs. 45% in favor of Andrews over Sanders.
and of course the very distinct possibility remains that Erdnase was actually neither of them.

Bob Farmer wrote: Whether you agree or disagree, the Magicol issue is just a fantastic read.

I agree Bob, and put the Genii issue(s) entirely on par with it. Combined, they put everything (almost) in this thread into a well written series of articles.

Both Genii and Magicol bring some welcome new thinking to the search.

Roger M. wrote: Hatch has demonstrated that there were physical associations between Andrews, the man...... and either the book, dealers for the book, or the holder of the books plates.

I think you're mistaken about that, Roger. What evidence demonstrates such physical connections?

For starters, Atlas Novelty, remaindering First Editions......and E.S. Andrews living on the same street, at the same time, a few doors down.

That's a physical association that one might consider as "abnormally close proximity".

In a country as large as the U.S.A., having a man proposed as the author of EATCT (E.S. Andrews) living somewhat less than 5000 feet away from a novelty company selling stacks of First Editions of EATCT might be considered something a bit stronger than merely circumstantial.

I see it as more than circumstantial, others are free to put appropriate weight to it as they see fit.

The geographical proximity could easily be happenstance. You can read into it what you like if it supports your theory.
Roger M. | 12/14/11 08:27 PM | link | filter

You could I suppose, if you had a theory.

I don’t have a theory though, so I follow the evidence and form opinions.

magicam | 12/15/11 09:58 PM | link | filter

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I see it as more than circumstantial, others are free to put appropriate weight to it as they see fit.

Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts. Did Andrews live a few doors down or nearly a mile away? Seems a significant factual difference in distance for 1902.

There are only two kinds of evidence, direct and circumstantial. One can put as much weight as one wants to a set of circumstantial facts, but that will never change the essential (circumstantial) character of such facts, which will always require inferences to be drawn in order to prove the ultimate fact. Thus, there is no such thing as more than circumstantial evidence, unless by that phrase one is referring to direct evidence. Abnormally close proximity even insanely, ungodly, are-you-frickin-kidding-me? close proximity is not direct evidence, and thus far there is no direct evidence of
quarters would probably be irrelevant. Andrews could have shared the same office space with Atlas, but that, without more, would still only be circumstantial evidence.

That's not to say that circumstantial evidence can't be compelling. Judges and juries decide civil and criminal actions all the time on circumstantial evidence. But based on what I've read of Richards admirable research, he has not demonstrated any kind of physical associations between Andrews and EATCT none whatsoever, and I don't think Richard would claim that. You open the reply with For starters. I'd be interested in hearing what other evidence exists that demonstrates such physical connections.

Moving on to the essays and work by our Erdnase scholars, with this disclaimer at the outset: I am no Erdnase expert.

First, what evidence is there to support the notion that the author (whoever he was) actually sold copies of his book? Does any such evidence exist, or is this pure speculation/assumption? The authors stated desire to profit from publication of the book does not perforce mean that he actually sold copies of the book, retail or wholesale.

With respect to my friend Richard Hatch, I am not convinced of the significance of Atlas Novelty's sales of EATCT. If I understand Richards argument, Atlas sales of EATCT was significant because it was rather uncharacteristic of Atlas to do so, thereby implying that Atlas carried stock of EATCT for reasons other than to simply sell a new book on magic, which of course then makes Andrews proximity to Atlas a possible important fact. But was it really uncharacteristic for Atlas to carry this book? Richard argues that Atlas was an obscure Chicago magic dealer which heretofore specialized in selling slum magic to pitchmen. With the use of the word heretofore, Richards argument seems to be that Atlas sales of EATCT signaled a shift in its business plan, i.e., what Atlas sold, to whom it marketed products, etc. But Hurt McDermott's article states that part of Atlas business was selling slot machines and devices to cheat patrons (trade stimulators). If thats true, I do not see Atlas sales of EATCT as being uncharacteristic or unusual at all. EATCT was about gambling, cheating and magic seemingly right in keeping with Atlas business. And if Atlas was indeed a slum (low cost) magic dealer, then it would not seem unusual for Atlas to sell a book at half its published price, as Atlas did with EATCT.

There is another problem with the theory that Atlas only sold slum magic and that its sales of EATCT was somehow unusual for Atlas. How do we explain the fact that Atlas stocked and sold C. Lang Neils The Modern Conjurer at the full price of $2.00 upon its publication, as evidenced by Atlas ad in the February 1903 issue of The Sphinx? Neils book proved to be a classic and was far from low brow conjuring; in other words, Atlas sales of The Modern Conjurer represents the antithesis of Richards theory about the kind of business that Atlas was.
In summary, with the limited knowledge at my disposal, vis-à-vis Andrews presence in Chicago I do not see any significance to Atlas sales of EATCT. But to the extent that one wants to argue that Atlas sales of EATCT was at all unusual (and I don't think it was), there seems to be a very plausible reason for this which has nothing to do with Andrews. Accepting, for the sake of argument, that Atlas sales of EATCT was odd, the fact that Atlas was selling the book at half price suggests that whoever was handling the wholesaling of EATCT really wanted to see the book sold in as many stores as possible. Are there any facts to support such a motivation to wholesale to any possible retailer? Yes. McKinney's adjudicated bankruptcy in late January, 1903. Sure, the facts are circumstantial, but from Adrian Plates comments we are told that McKinney sold copies of EATCT. If that's true, would it not make sense for a financially-troubled McKinney to get copies of EATCT in the hands of as many Chicago-area dealers as possible in late 1902 and January, 1903, and possible in early February, 1903? If the heavy discounting of EATCT started in February, 1903, such timing would tie in neatly with McKinney's bankruptcy.

And if McKinney was the one selling copies of EATCT, both retail and wholesale, this might also provide a clue to the business arrangement that he had with Erdnase. After all, if the author did not want to be associated with his book, any sort of significant efforts by him to sell copies, individually or in wholesale quantities, would create the risk of being connected with his book. Again, what evidence do we have that the author actually sold copies of EATCT?

If the author really was concerned about his anonymity, for legal, family or retribution (from gambling cheats who figured out who he was) reasons, it would make sense to keep his distance from sales of the book. It would make sense for him to have a one and done financial arrangement with a man like McKinney. If Andrews was the author, he seems to have been gainfully employed, with a decent income for his family, which might suggest that his need for money in connection with publication of EATCT was not that great, so his business arrangement with McKinney might have been rather modest. And assuming that the author did have other sources of reasonably comfortable income, one could even argue that the statement that he wrote the book for money was another attempt at misdirection re his identity, in that a logical assumption from such statement would be that he needed the money.

For what it's worth, the U.S. copyright application tells us nothing about the true ownership of the copyright, in part due to the pseudonymous nature of the authors name and the fact that copyrights were (and to this day continue to be) easily transferable. As an aside, I'd add that the copyright application tells us nothing about the authors true nationality either.

Finally, if Andrews was the author and the knowledge of his true identity actually did pose serious legal risks to him as author of this obscene work (as McDermott suggests
someone else?) would select the rather weak S. W. Erdnase pseudonym.

Jonathan Townsend | 12/15/11 11:18 PM | link | filter

Is this supposed to be a magician's version of Lem's story "The Investigation" or similar?

The artist said somebody visited him.

Somebody had a specific style or tone in their writing which gives the book its distinctive flavor.

Beyond that - kind of tough to rule in/out too much.

Bill Mullins | 12/15/11 11:27 PM | link | filter

magicam wrote: First, what evidence is there to support the notion that the author (whoever he was) actually sold copies of his book?

The title page of the 1st edition says: "Published by the author."

To me, that means that the author hired the printing, owned the books after they were printed, and distributed them. At a minimum, he sold them wholesale. He may have sold a few retail. At some point, he may have remaindered existing stock.

Given that the book was self-published, I can't put together any reasonable scenario in which he didn't sell them.

Richard Kaufman | 12/15/11 11:45 PM | link | filter

Isn't it possible that the author self-published the book with the plan to simply then turn over the entire printing to a single distributor? The book is still self-published, but the author doesn't sell any copies.

Roger M. | 12/16/11 12:04 AM | link | filter

Would that distributor wait as long as was waited before advertising the book for the first time (that we know of)?

Seems more likely that a self-published, self-distributed one man operation (Erdnase publishing and selling) would try the low budget, no advertising route before a
an ad then shows up for the first time in a national publication, The Sphinx.

If it was a big distributor right off the bat, doesn’t it make sense that the ads would have started showing up much sooner than they did?

To Richards point, yes, under the circumstances it seems entirely possible (and plausible) that Erdnase paid for the printing and binding with the plan that someone else would sell the book. This brings up another point: what evidence do we have, other than the statement on the title page noted by Bill Mullins, that Erdnase actually paid for the printing and binding (which acts of payment are the very things that define what a publisher is)?

To Rogers points and argument, if McKinney was in fact the distributor, why wouldn’t Rogers same scenario (economic distribution without advertisement) be equally applicable? Ill add that until a thorough search is done of the newspapers and magazines in which EATCT ads would have likely been run, were on very shaky ground by assuming that the book wasn’t advertised earlier in 1902.

But there’s a good reason why the book wouldn’t have been advertised at the outset. See Hugh McDermott’s article in Magicol.

Bill, I generally agree with your characterization of what a modern-day publisher does, but will have to disagree that the Published by the author statement on the title page is very indicative of the author’s role in selling copies, directly or wholesale. For example, also on the title page, we are told that S. W. Erdnase wrote the book, but few people seem to believe that. So why should the Published by the author statement be credible?

I think there is a very plausible and reasonable scenario for how the Published by the author statement could appear on the title page without the author having anything to do with its sale, and the motivating reason is effectively outlined in Hugh McDermott’s article: publishers could be prosecuted under the Comstock and related obscenity laws, but almost certainly not printers, who, unlike authors and publishers, had nothing to do with a book’s content. So in EATCT the identities of the author and publisher the two parties who could be prosecuted are hidden. Makes perfect sense to me. Of course, that doesn’t prove that the author didn’t sell copies of his book, but for the reasons discussed in my earlier post, it stands to reason that the author would have good reason to distance himself from his book.

If the Published by the author statement is the only basis we have for assuming that the author sold the book himself (retail or wholesale), IMHO that is very thin evidence
authors personal involvement in the sale of EATCT is a critical component of anyones theory of authorship, IMHO any such theory has a very weak foundation.

Bill Mullins | 12/16/11 01:33 AM | link | filter

magicam wrote: To Richards point, yes, under the circumstances it seems entirely possible (and plausible) that Erdnase paid for the printing and binding with the plan that someone else would sell the book.

If Erdnase paid for the printing and binding, did he not own the books at that point? And if he lost ownership of the books but received money in return, did he not sell them? I guess I'm not understanding how one can be a publisher, and not sell the publication.

This brings up another point: what evidence do we have, other than the statement on the title page noted by Bill Mullins, that Erdnase actually paid for the printing and binding (which acts of payment are the very things that define what a publisher is)?

As I've said previously in the thread, if we discount what appear to be statements of fact from primary sources, we aren't left with anything at all other than suppositions, and there's no point in pretending what we are doing is "research". To me, Occam's Razor guides me to believe that the book was published by the author. It may not have been, but without pretty convincing fact-based or documentary evidence, I won't spend much time entertaining the possibility.

publishers could be prosecuted under the Comstock and related obscenity laws, but almost certainly not printers, who, unlike authors and publishers, had nothing to do with a books content.

HERE ARE THREE articles about a printer, arrested by Comstock himself, who was tried and convicted for printing gambling literature.

AND ANOTHER printer arrested.

Diego | 12/16/11 02:32 AM | link | filter

It's hard to believe that David Alexander passed away suddenly one year ago.

Remembering a friend whose research skills and persistence, helped many.
Bill, I could not open the third, gambling link you provided, but the other three clippings are readily distinguishable from the risk of McKinney being convicted under the Comstock or a related law for printing EATCT. The first two clippings concern a man named Marvin, who was engaged in the act of counterfeiting (green-goods) he was arrested because of the counterfeiting, not the printing per se. Moreover, it was clear he knew what he was doing by the back-room location of the counterfeit printing operations the surreptitious nature of his activities suggest knowledge of guilt. In criminal law, except for the small handful of strict liability criminal statutes, proving mens rea (loosely translated, guilty mind) is an indispensable part of convicting someone of a crime. As for the Hollaman case, I have to admit that this clipping undercuts my assumption, but I will add that there is nothing to indicate that Hollaman was actually convicted of printing the lottery ad in the program, just that he was arrested. According to McDermott, Comstocks conviction rate was only about 60%, which certainly indicates that Comstock made or caused a high percentage of ineffectual/unsubstantiated arrests.

But let me concede your point and agree, for the sake of argument, that McKinney could have been not only arrested, but also convicted, of the simple act of printing EATCT. Of what import is that concession for the subjects and theories being discussed? IMHO, not much.

Bill Mullins wrote:

*magicam wrote:* To Richards point, yes, under the circumstances it seems entirely possible (and plausible) that Erdnase paid for the printing and binding with the plan that someone else would sell the book.

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Cmon Bill! Im clearly talking about Erdnase taking an active role in the sales of the book to third parties, by retail or wholesale. Youre now talking about the hyper-abstract notion of a sale of the book to divest ownership. Dont you think theres a huge difference between the two concepts? In essence, if you believe that Published by the author equates with Erdnase taking an active role in selling copies of his book (retail or wholesale), so be it. I think thats a risky and unfounded inference/assumption, but thats just my opinion, obviously.

Bill Mullins wrote:
This brings up another point: what evidence do we have, other than the statement on the title page noted by Bill Mullins, that Erdnase actually paid for the printing and binding (which acts of payment are the very things that define what a publisher is)?

As I’ve said previously in the thread, if we discount what appear to be statements of fact from primary sources, we aren’t left with anything at all other than suppositions, and there’s no point in pretending what we are doing is "research". To me, Occam’s Razor guides me to believe that the book was published by the author. It may not have been, but without pretty convincing fact-based or documentary evidence, I won’t spend much time entertaining the possibility.

Bill, the primary source is a known liar! He used a false name. To the extent that using Occams Razor is even apt in this case, which Razor you gonna pick? :) The one saying that since the author clearly wanted to disguise his identity and role concerning EATCT, all other statements which might provide clues about his real name and role should be equally suspect, or the Razor that says its printed on the title page, so absent convincing evidence to the contrary it must be a true statement? You ignored my point about the authors apparent use of a pseudonym on the title page, but by the logic quoted above, it seems like youd be prepared to argue that the search for an author whose name isnt S.W. Erdnase means that were not doing research on the authors identity.

Bill Mullins | 12/16/11 06:54 PM | link | filter

Clay The Comstock laws, like many laws today which regulate "morality", were used arbitrarily and capriciously. The examples I provided may not have been the best, but they were ones I could find quickly, and they were not behind pay walls. I’ve also found examples where people were arrested (by Comstock) for printing post cards reproducing artwork containing naked women images that may be found in art books in schools everywhere. And cases where minions were arrested along with their bosses, perhaps to compel their cooperation (just as low-level drug dealers are arrested to get to suppliers). At any rate, my (so far, cursory) research doesn’t support the idea that printers, being parties of lesser culpability, would be less likely to be arrested than publisher. And that being the case, the logic of "the printer wanted to divert responsibility to the author, thus the 'published by the author' statement is false, to protect the printer" theory doesn’t hold up.

I took "green-goods" to refer to the green baize cloth on gaming tables, and thought it meant "gambling literature". If it meant counterfeit, that does undercut the point I was making. (and the Oxford English Dictionary does support the "counterfeit" meaning).
As far as "publishing" directly implying "selling", I guess we disagree. A publisher of books, sells books. Someone had to have taken "an active role in the sales of the book to third parties, by retail or wholesale." The book was marked as self-published. From all indications, it was a fairly small print run I think Richard Hatch has speculated that maybe a thousand were printed, and I see no reason to strongly disagree with that estimate (while conceeding that it is only an estimate). We don't know who moved it to the magic shops that were known to have sold it, but what little evidence there is points to the author, or at least is not supportive of any other party. The publication of "Expert" was a small enterprise, without much room for multiple parties. If you disbelieve the "published by the author" statement, the rest of the chain falls apart, but any other theory would be more compelling if supported by direct evidence, than if by denying contrary evidence.

In essence, if you believe that Published by the author equates with Erdnase taking an active role in selling copies of his book (retail or wholesale), so be it.

I believe so, for two reasons:
1. The book states just that, and the arguments for the statement being false just aren't convincing to me
2. Someone had to sell the book, and the author is the best candidate, given the known circumstances of its publication. Compare it to "New Era Card Tricks" a book comparable in many ways. It was stated to be published by the author, Roterberg. It was sold directly by him. It was copyrighted by him.

And I don't the use of a pseudonym (in and of itself) makes other statements suspect. Pseudonyms are a special class of "lie" (a word that I don't really think is appropriate here, but I don't know a better one). Your comments about "mens rea" seem relevant here without knowing the author's intent in the (mild) deception, it's difficult to say he was an out-and-out liar. Sometimes pseudonyms are an "open secret" everyone knew that Mark Twain was Sam Clemens. It may be that Erdnase thought people would know that Erdnase wasn't really his name, and today it is only an accident of history that we don't know now who wrote the book. (The title page of "Running Man" says that the author was Richard Bachman (pseud. of Stephen King); should we disbelieve that it was published by New American Library?)

Richard Kaufman | 12/16/11 07:11 PM | link | filter

A person (or entity) would be considered the "publisher" of a work if:
1. He paid for the printing or someone else paid for the printing on his behalf.
2. He sold the entire lot of printed books en masse to a single entity before or after they were actually printed.
3. He sold all the books one at a time.
In other words, the title of "publisher" can be conveyed very loosely.

Richard Hatch | 12/16/11 08:37 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: I took "green-goods" to refer to the green baize cloth on gaming tables, and thought it meant "gambling literature". If it meant counterfeit, that does undercut the point I was making. (and the Oxford English Dictionary does support the "counterfeit" meaning).

From the context of the newspaper accounts, I'm pretty sure the "green goods" here is in reference to this very interesting scam:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_goods_scam

No bills are actually counterfeited. Real bills are represented as excellent counterfeits, sold at a discount, then switched for worthless paper. Pretty clever, since the victim is unlikely to go to the authorities and admit to an attempt to purchase counterfeit bills.

Bill Mullins | 12/19/11 02:10 AM | link | filter

Is there anything in the text that indicates the author was a Freemason?

magicam | 12/19/11 02:55 AM | link | filter

Bill,

Im not saying that Erdnase didn't publish the book. Im simply stating my opinion that under the circumstances as we know them, its unwise to blindly accept the Published by the author statement as true, in part because we know (at least believe strongly) that S. W. Erdnase was not the authors real name.

My next argument, boiled down to its essence, is that its a pretty big and untenable leap to conclude that the author had anything to do with actual book sales simply because the title page says Published by the author. Sure, at some level of abstraction, all publishers do indeed sell books, and youre also correct in saying that someone had to sell copies of the book (retail and wholesale). But as RK has correctly pointed out, one could be a publisher and have absolutely nothing to do with "an active role in the sales of the book to third parties, by retail or wholesale." Thus, the argument that if one disbelieves the published by the author statement, the rest of the chain falls apart must fail because it incorrectly assumes that all publishers in Erdnases position actively participate in the sales of their books.
I believe the claim that what little evidence there is points to the author, or at least is not supportive of any other party is incorrect. What evidence is there that the author actually sold copies? None, I believe. But there are two bits of evidence that are indeed supportive of another party McKinney. The best of the two is Adrian Plates notation in a copy of EATCT that it was sold by McKinney. The second bit of evidence is weaker, but still very interesting given Plates notation and the timing, and that’s the fact that discounted copies seem to have appeared on the market only after McKinney’s bankruptcy.

In essence, if you believe that Published by the author equates with Erdnase taking an active role in selling copies of his book (retail or wholesale), so be it.

I believe so, for two reasons: 1. The book states just that, and the arguments for the statement being false just aren’t convincing to me. 2. Someone had to sell the book, and the author is the best candidate, given the known circumstances of its publication. Compare it to “New Era Card Tricks” a book comparable in many ways. It was stated to be published by the author, Roterberg. It was sold directly by him. It was copyrighted by him.

Well, I’m beating a dead horse here, but just to make the point (again! :) ). Yes, the book says Published by the author, but it does not say, and such statement does not equate with taking an active role in selling copies of his book!!! I’m afraid the Roterberg analogy does not work, if only because Roterberg used his real name and (so far as I know) had no reason to fear prosecution by the likes of Comstock for NECT. Even if you could find a closer analogy, I’m not sure it would prove anything vis--vis Erdnase. Think of it the other way: if I offered one or more examples of a book printed under a pseudonym with the statement Published by the author on the title page, when in fact it was known that the author did not publish such book, would you accept my argument that this somehow was a significant element of proof for showing that Erdnase did not publish EATCT? I have no doubt that such books exist, but I don’t think their existence proves anything about who published (or who did not publish) EATCT.

The title page of “Running Man” says that the author was Richard Bachman (pseud. of Stephen King); should we disbelieve that it was published by New American Library?

Actually, to properly analogize to the Erdnase situation, the question should be: The title page of “Running Man” says that the author was Richard Bachman (pseud. of Stephen King) and the publisher was Richard Bachman; should we disbelieve that it was published by Richard Bachman? The answer of course is Yes! And I think that provides some support for waiving the caution flag re assuming that Erdnase actually published EATCT. :)

Well, I think we've gone through enough iterations of trying to convince each other. I'll leave you with the last word and will hope that our exchanges may, in some small way, provide food for thought to Erdnase scholars.

Clay

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**Bill Mullins | 12/19/11 02:18 PM | link | filter**

The only "last word" I'll take advantage of is that it is good to go up and down both sides of issues such as this with people who have well-developed arguments for what they are saying. I did it several times with David Alexander, and I miss disagreeing with him.

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**Jonathan Townsend | 12/19/11 02:51 PM | link | filter**

Any feedback/contributions from community of historians in Chicago on the book?

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**Bill Mullins | 01/03/12 02:40 PM | link | filter**

The new issue of *Magic* has an ad from Lybrary.com featuring Hurt McDermott's new book *Artifice, Ruse and Erdnase*.

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**Bill Mullins | 01/06/12 05:27 PM | link | filter**

There must have been dozens of people with the initials/name "E. S. Andrews" in the U. S. ca. 1900. I've identified several beyond those we discuss here (the NM Sheriff, the WI/New England insurance executive, the Chicago Board of Trade official, etc., etc.). Every now and then one turns up that is a little more interesting than average.

Casper WY Daily Tribune 5/23/1919 p 8 [classified ad]

Colonial Oil, Jumbo of Burkburnett Fields, have drilled 1000 feet, passed thru 2 proven sands; only 700 feet to big production; stock advances Monday, May 26, to 35 cents. Buy now at 25 cents. Communicate with E. S. Andrews no later than Sunday night. Box E. S., Tribune, or call 754-R. Residence 946 S. Walnut.

Casper WY Daily Tribune 10/24/1919 p 6, repeats in 10/28/1919 p 7 [classified ad]

I candidly recommend Ferris O'Brien stock in the Ferris O'Brien field as
week. See me at the Wyatt Hotel. E. S. Andrews.

Casper WY Herald 12/16/1919 p 5

E. S. Andrews is leaving this evening for Douglas, and after a several days’ business visit in that city, will leave for the Black Hills, where he will spend the holidays at Bellefourche, with his wife who is visiting with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Hurley, prominent stock owners and farmers of that vicinity.

Casper WY Daily Tribune 4/6/1920 p 1

CHECK ARTIST UP FOR TRIAL
E. S. Andrews, who was arrested Monday on a charge of passing fraudulent checks, is to be tried tomorrow morning before Justice of the Peace W. E. Tubbs. Andrews cashed one check for $75, the warrant charges.

Casper WY Daily Tribune 4/8/1920 p 4

Alleged Forger Bound Over To District Court
E. S. Andrews, who is charged with forging the name of Mrs. Kate Winkler to a check, was bound over to the district court under bond of $1000 when his case was heard before Justice W. E. Tubbs today. Andrews is alleged to have sold Mrs. Winkler a fraudulent oil stock and to have defrauded her in other ways.

Casper WY Herald, 9/15/1920 p. 1

Defendant Disappears; Another is Discharged
When the case of E. S. Andrews who was charged with passing a fraudulent check was called in court before Judge Kimball yesterday it was discovered that the defendant had apparently left town, for he failed to put in an appearance to answer the charge against him. He was under bond of $500 for his appearance.

I haven’t located this guy in the census or city directories, so I don’t know how old he was in 1902. Everything I know about him (so far), you know as well. I am not asserting that he wrote Expert. Right now, he’s just an interesting guy . . .

Josh V. | 01/06/12 07:09 PM | link | filter

Sorry if this is a repost as I have not personally read every single letter of all 27+ pages.
However I was wondering what had been "decided" in regards to the frequent use of "we and "us" and "our" in Erdnase?

This seems to me to point to the publishing house themselves writing it as there would be more than one person then, not just an E.S. Andrews.

Does anyone have any descriptions of what the publishers looked like? Do they jive with what the artist describe Erdnase to look like?

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**Bill Mullins** | 01/07/12 12:38 PM | [link] | [filter]

I don't know if it's been "decided", but I think the general consensus is that the author is using the **authorial "we"**, and it is not necessarily indicative of group authorship.

I've never seen a picture of Drake, Galloway, or any of the others who were involved in the printing of the book.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 01/07/12 08:22 PM | [link] | [filter]

Regarding the appearance of Frederick J. Drake (that is, what he looked like), here are a few comments.

The Frederick J. Drake & Co. catalog for 1912 was 82 pages long. The third page has "A Word from Our President to Those Who Receive This Catalogue." It also has a halftone portrait of Drake. That catalog is included in a volume (August 1912) of the Publishers' Trade List Annual. I examined it many years ago at the research library of my alma mater, UCLA, when I was working on S.W. Erdnase: Another View.

I don't remember much about the portrait, but overall, he did not look as I imagine Erdnase to have looked.

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**Richard Kaufman** | 01/07/12 08:27 PM | [link] | [filter]

Welcome, Tom!

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**Larry Horowitz** | 01/07/12 08:30 PM | [link] | [filter]

Today as I was sitting in the car waiting for the wife, I was leafing thru one of my Erdnase copies. (I am one of those rare guys that only has 2 copies in the car, plus the electronic version in the phone). I just letting my eyes read whatever I landed on as I leafed the pages. I found some words or phrases that I had not noticed before. They may mean nothing. Or they may spark some thought.
We have often discussed whether the book was written by a gambler or magician. Or whether there were two authors of the two sections.

Throughout the gambling section three words are used to describe the person with the cards; player, dealer, operator. Yet the last line of the section on the Bottom deal reads, But neither of the manoeuvres is desirable, or necessary to a god PERFORMER (emphasis mine).

Is the last word performer a Freudian slip?

In the section regarding the Erdnase System Of Stock Shuffling, sub-section, Four-Card Stock, we see the following

The highest tribute that can be paid to the method is the fact that certain players we have instructed..

Whoa!! Erdnase instructed someone in his methods. This implies personal contact and personal transference of knowledge. Somewhere someone was walking around saying oh yeah, Ive known that move for years.

Finally the last little anomaly I noticed, in the section, The Erdnase System Of Cull Shuffling;

Lightning DONT strike in the same place often, and the dealer would naturally feel a little DIFFIDENT about holding the same good cards that were contained in the last hand shown.

The word DONT is the incorrect word. It should be DOESNT. This is clearly a play on the words. A very street wise turn of phrase. Predating boxing promoter Joe Jacobs (1934) I shoulda stood in bed. I dont believe this is a grammatical error. I find it hard to believe the author that uses the word DIFFIDENT in the same sentence would make this error without intent.

Why that turn of phrase, I cant say. But as we have begun of late to dissect and analyze the writing to profile the author maybe these little items that catch my eye mean something..or not.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 01/07/12 08:41 PM | link | filter

Richard, thank you! --Tom

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**Terry** | 01/08/12 12:23 PM | link | filter
Sidney Huttner has indexed the Publisher's Trade List Annual from 1873 - 1947. Listings for Drake:


From The Bookseller, Newsdealer and Stationer Jan 15, 1900 p 660:
Mr. F. J. Drake, formerly with the Werner Company of Akron, O., will start a publishing business of his own in Chicago and will also do a general agency business for eastern publishing.

The 1900 census shows that by Jun 9, 1900, Frederick J Drake and his wife Julia, and his sons Logan (?), Frederick J, and Stafford were all already living in Chicago.

Does anyone know where one could find a copy of James Harto's Chandra, Mind Reading System?

As promised, I have just published a new episode of the "Spirit of Magic" podcast with Jason England as a guest co-host and Richard Hatch as our guest. What could we possibly be talking about? Well, obviously, it must be Erdnase. It's a long but fascinating discussion on the search for the author of one of the seminal texts in the art of close-up magic. Enjoy! Here's the link: http://bit.ly/EngHatch

In my mind, the name that is most likely to be anagrammed into "S W Erdnase" is "E S Andrews"; therefore anyone who had that name ca. 1902 is worth entering into the record.

Billboard, 4/14/1906 p 32.
WASHBURN & D'ALMAS OPEN
The Washburn & D'Alamas Trained Animal Show opened at Richmond, Va., April 9, for a week's engagement. The roster is as follows: D. G. Markell, ring master and principal trainer; J. W. Brownlee, treasurer; Lew Foster, boss canvasman; Thos. Watson, boss hostler; Nick Family, caliope player; Burt Artist, trainer and wardrobe; Billy Waggon, master of transportation; H. M. Martin, chandelierman, and E. S. Andrews, general agent, with eight assistants.

The circus seems as viable a profession for a card manipulator as does a mining engineer, or railroad travelling agent.

SwanJr | 03/03/12 10:54 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins asked me to say something about my book, ARTIFICE, RUSE & ERDNASE: The Search For One Who May Not Want To Be Found, scheduled to come out on or around March 19th, both in an e-edition and in hard cover.

I just want to make a couple of points about the book. When I started researching it, I had no opinion as to Erdnase's identity. It was in writing the book that I came to certain conclusions. I did my best to keep putting off judgement as long as possible, not only until all the evidence was gathered but also until after I had plenty of time to think about the evidence within historical context.

I tried to make my thought process as absolutely clear as possible so the reader would know not only what my thoughts were, but also the process by which I reached them - and by extension whether he or she, the reader, agrees or disagrees. In the end my hope is that the reader will have attained greater clarity as to what he or she believes, not that my readers will have all come blindly to agree with my conclusions.

Hurt McDermott

Roger M. | 03/04/12 04:21 AM | link | filter

I'm really looking forward to this Hurt!

Who's publishing it in hardcover?

Brad Jeffers | 03/04/12 04:50 PM | link | filter

Does anyone have a theory as to why here, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?co ... b&recNum=4, on the title page of Houdini's copy, S.W. was changed to Samuel Edward?
Someone should be able to tell us if that’s Houdini’s handwriting, or Clinton Burgess, or someone else.

Joe Pecore | 03/04/12 05:17 PM | link | filter

Looks like it says "Samuel Robert" (not Samuel Edward) to me.

I believe David Alexander had a theory about the "Samuel Robert Erdnase" name in this thread.

Also earlier in this thread, Hatch states that a Drake catalog of 1904 list the author as "Samuel Robert Erdnase" along with "204 pages" (rather than 205) with just "45 illustrations" (rather than 101).

Joe Pecore | 03/04/12 05:26 PM | link | filter

There is also a chance that the handwriting could be Houdini’s full time librarian, Alfred Becks (who I believe spent over 10 years cataloging all of Houdini’s books.)

Roger M. | 03/04/12 07:22 PM | link | filter

The "Samuel Robert Erdnase" moniker is a catalogers error that has stuck to the book like glue down through the ages.

There are literally hundreds of references to that name to be found on the internet.......all related to (what is thought to be) the original catalog error.

In 1904, when Drake advertised a re-print in "United States Catalog: Books in America", they identified the author as Samuel Robert Erdnase.

Folks have also noticed some other discrepancies with the same catalog listing. The listing also indicates 204 pages rather than 205, and only 45 illustrations rather than the now well known 101.

There are also no known copies of this listed edition........so the entire thing is odd.

The entire Samuel Robert Erdnase matter is referenced a few times in this thread, and is detailed on page 331 of "The Man Who Was Erdnase"
Houdini's full time librarian, Alfred Becks (who I believe spent over 10 years cataloging all of Houdini's books.)

Alfred Becks spent ten years in charge of the Harvard theater library arranging Robert Gould Shaw's collection. He moved into Houdini's townhouse in July 1920 and worked there until his death 18 months later.

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**Joe Pecore** | 03/04/12 07:55 PM | [link] | [filter]

*Leonard Hevia wrote:*

Alfred Becks spent ten years in charge of the Harvard theater library arranging Robert Gould Shaw's collection. He moved into Houdini's townhouse in July 1920 and worked there until his death 18 months later.

From Silverman's book on Houdini: "Houdini's ambitions, and his affections, suffered from the death in April 1925 of his eighty-year-old librarian, Alfred Becks. On and off the genteel old man had indexed and catalogued for him for more than a decade."

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**Leonard Hevia** | 03/04/12 08:46 PM | [link] | [filter]

Silverman has given us two conflicting pieces of information: "This "'well bred courteous gentleman,'" as Houdini described him took over a small bedroom at 278 in July 1920, eating and sleeping at the house for the next eighteen months.

Since Becks passed away in 1925, he could not have worked for Houdini for more than five years.

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**Joe Pecore** | 03/04/12 08:51 PM | [link] | [filter]

*Leonard Hevia wrote: Silverman has given us two conflicting pieces of information: "This "'well bred courteous gentleman,'" as Houdini described him took over a small bedroom at 278 in July 1920, eating and sleeping at the house for the next eighteen months. Since Becks passed away in 1925, he could not have worked for Houdini for more than five years."

Not necessary conflicting. He could have started earlier but not moved in until 1920 and moved out in 18 months, but still kept working.

Although the reason I brought Becks up was that he was the librarian and those look like librarian markings in the book mentioned above.
Christopher also has Becks as working for five years under Houdini on page 212 of *Untold Story*.

But I think we can both agree that Samuel Roberts is a dead end.

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**SwanJr** | 03/09/12 07:33 PM | link | filter

I'm running a blog series on S.W. Erdnase as a literary and historical figure. This is to build interest in him among those who don't know who he is. I don't address the identity question.

The first posting for anyone interested is on Erdnase's place in the Chicago Renaissance, the intense flurry of books of lasting interest published in Chicago which began with Theodore Dreiser and L.Frank Baum, extending through to such writers as Ring Lardner and Ben Hecht. Almost every single "Renaissance" writer ended up somewhere else:

[http://theinevitablehurt.blogspot.com](http://theinevitablehurt.blogspot.com)

Hurt McDermott

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**SwanJr** | 03/16/12 11:05 PM | link | filter

New posting on *Erdnase & the 1893 World’s Fair*, two instigators of modernism.

[http://theinevitablehurt.blogspot.com](http://theinevitablehurt.blogspot.com)

Hurt McDermott

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**SwanJr** | 03/20/12 12:59 PM | link | filter

I'm not going to post buying information for my book on this forum; but I want to let you know that I will sign copies for participants on this thread. Just identify yourself as such in the buyer's comments section of the order form and let us know you'd like it signed. You can check my blog (see above) if you want more info.

Hurt

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**Richard Hatch** | 03/25/12 08:39 AM | link | filter

The search for Erdnase makes the German press:

[http://tinyurl.com/7kmf7ap](http://tinyurl.com/7kmf7ap)
Thomas Sawyer, who has been seriously studying the authorship question for longer than most of us, started an Erdnase blog about the time that Marty Demarest’s article came out in *Genii* last year. Sawyer's blog is idiosyncratic, to be sure, but there is much good information in it.

He has recently announced that he will be taking it down. Perhaps he has run out of stuff to say, or maybe he perceives a lack of interest/readership. This is a shame -- I always looked forward to anything he had to say on the subject. At any rate, I’ve archived it for future reference. Perhaps you should too.

Bill Mullins | 04/02/12 12:16 PM | link | filter

Bill, I had been following that blog as well...good reading.

Jamie | 04/04/12 10:01 PM | link | filter

Tom’s blog is a mine of useful information and thoughtful insights.

Has anyone had a chance to read Hurt McDermot's new book (Artifice, Ruse and Erdnase) yet?

Richard Evans | 04/28/12 09:23 AM | link | filter

Richard Hatch | 04/28/12 10:56 AM | link | filter

Richard Evans wrote: Has anyone had a chance to read Hurt McDermot’s new book (Artifice, Ruse and Erdnase) yet?

I had a chance to read it in several early drafts and liked it a lot. Just received the hard copy version this past week and like it even more (I’m not much of an eBook reader yet).

Richard Evans | 04/28/12 01:49 PM | link | filter

Thanks Richard. I went for the hard copy too & hope it’ll arrive in the UK this week. Looking forward to it.

Bill Mullins | 04/28/12 06:59 PM | link | filter

Got mine today, and am about half way through it. You will enjoy it. No smoking guns
is a relatively new player in the Erdnase game, and it is good to see things through a
new set of eyes. He's already helped me ask and answer some new questions; and to
reconsider some things that I thought I knew.

Sure could have used an index, though.

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**SwanJr** | 04/30/12 02:29 PM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:*

Sure could have used an index, though.

Good point. *Artifice, Ruse & Erdnase* was first conceived as an ebook, in which of course
keywords can be easily searched for.

Hurt McDermott

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**Tom Sawyer** | 05/05/12 03:37 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

I wanted to mention a couple of things in Hurt McDermotts new book, which dealt
with certain things in my book on Erdnase.

First, I appreciate the kind references by Hurt to me and my book!

Secondly, on page 153, Hurt is quite right that my Wes Sanders re-jumbling doesn't
work!

In fact, that (the re-jumbling) appeared in both the 1991 and 1997 editions of my
Erdnase book. I didn't notice that problem myself until I think the middle of 2011. (I
actually thought I had drawn attention to that on my Erdnase blog, but now, upon
checking, it seems pretty clear that I did not.)

I did find the following in some draft material I wrote: No one ever brought it to my
attention, but I did make at least one mistake in *S.W. Erdnase: Another View.* I said that
Wes Sanders was a possible name -- that it used each letter once and added no extra
letters. Wrong! I added an extra s.

(My draft actually continued that last sentence somewhat.)

Thirdly, here is a comment relating to pages 154-155 in Hurts Erdnase book.
SU... from the Erdnase title-page and rearrange those letters into S. UU. Erdnase. I don't think I mentioned there that that was supposed to equate with S. Double-u. Erdnase, or S.W. Erdnase.

--Tom Sawyer

SwanJr | 05/08/12 06:13 PM | link | filter

I just want to thank Thomas Sawyer for commenting on my Artifice, Ruse & Erdnase. Anyone who has read Artifice knows how enormously I respect his monograph on The Man Who Was Erdnase. An appropriate title for it - given how many German references pop up when looking into Erdnase's identity - would be Prologomena to Any Future Erdnase Studies.

- Hurt McDermott

Richard Hatch | 05/15/12 01:12 PM | link | filter

This seems a bit pricey for a water damaged copy of a fairly recent GENII, especially as the article was reprinted just last year, but perhaps not:
http://www.ebay.com/itm/Genii-Magazine-... 500wt_1287

Richard Kaufman | 05/15/12 01:27 PM | link | filter

The market decides the value.

Pete McCabe | 05/15/12 02:47 PM | link | filter

Not to nit pick, but the market merely decides the price. What you do with it determines its value.

Ian Kendall | 05/16/12 09:33 AM | link | filter

Thought for the day: Marshall Smith was Erdnase.

Tom Sawyer | 05/16/12 04:27 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

I have been pondering the 1905 Drake clothbound copy of Erdnase (with a pictorial front-cover) that recently sold at auction.
I have never seen any of the Drake books being addressed below in this post.

However, in *The Man Who Was Erdnase*, an excellent case is made (pages 331-334) to the effect that there were two Drake printings previous to the 1905 basic version with the pictorial cover. I think that analysis was Jeff Busbys -- he wrote the introduction to the relevant bibliographical material on the Erdnase book. (The overall discussion there is more nuanced that this. For instance, Jeff speculated -- for reasons he mentioned -- that one of those printings was not for general release.)

I don't know whether anyone else has addressed the subject.

Above, I said basic version, because (from the Everything Erdnase site), we know there were at least two colors of cloth used on that.

--Tom Sawyer

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**magicam** | 05/17/12 02:49 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

For those who consider themselves serious about the bibliographical aspects of *TEATCT*, its time to properly use bibliographical terms. The correct use of bibliographical terms will in turn lead to much clearer thinking and analysis of the various editions (not) of Erdnase. For example, please stop referring to Drake hardbound editions no such things exist. At best, there may exist Drake hardbound issues. Ignore the window dressing (the binding) of the book and focus on the text block (the printed pages). Only then will one establish the proper foundations for analysis with respect to edition, issue, and state.

P.S. This is not a comment on Tom's post above, only a general comment given all the interest in Erdnase "bibliography" nowadays.

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**Richard Hatch** | 05/17/12 03:12 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Tom, Busby's speculation that the 178 page undated clothbound Drake in the UNLV library was an earlier (pre-1905) edition now seems unlikely, at least to me. There were 190 page and 178 page Drake versions and the chronological progression seems to be from 205 pages, to 190 pages to 178 pages, though the precise dates of the 190 page and some of the 178 page versions is not clear. It makes sense that they would gradually reduced the page count in an attempt to save costs and I know of one 178 page copy that has the 190 page Table of Contents, which to my way of thinking implies the 190 page version predates the 178 page version (they eliminated the pages but forgot to change the Table of Contents initially, would be my explanation). I believe some of the 178 page versions are dated (1934 in one case, I believe). My speculation based on Drake catalog listings was that the hardback 178 page clothbound copy (of which
is my "best guess" at present, and it is just a guess. I am convinced that a cloth bound 190 page Drake version was issued, though none have turned up to date, that I know of. The 178 page clothbound version seems to be the scarcest of the known Drake variants. Offhand, I know of only 3 copies, including the one at UNLV. Working from memory here, so apologies for any imprecision! My recollection is that Busby was basing his "printer's proof" speculation on the 1904 Drake catalog entry listing the book with several strange features (page count, illustration count and author's name) and the fact that the UNLV copy was the only hard cover known to Busby with 178 pages and the blank pages at the back.

Bill Mullins | 05/17/12 11:53 AM | link | filter

Has anyone (Jason? Geno?) checked to see if UNLV has provenance information on their copy?

Richard Hatch | 05/17/12 09:04 PM | link | filter

Nice first edition copy on eBay:  
http://tinyurl.com/7eeg5ux

Richard Kaufman | 05/17/12 09:11 PM | link | filter

Used to have one! Sold it for too little money. :)

Tom Sawyer | 05/17/12 09:32 PM | link | filter

In the future I may post a more detailed post concerning Richard Hatch's post of yesterday on this thread.

As to the provenance of the UNLV book under discussion, I am not venturing a guess. (That book is described by Jeff Busby in The Man Who Was Erdnase. Jeff's description shows (page 332) that it is a (basically) 178-page book with blind-stamping, and with the title (Expert at the Card Table) in black on the front.

The following, taken from something I wrote in Aphelion, November 1993, has some relevance. I was discussing a certain specific copy of a Fleming version of Erdnase, which I had obtained from John Luckman, in Las Vegas, back in the early 1970s or so. I have changed the paragraphing a little:

In reviewing The Man Who Was Erdnase (Whaley, Gardner, and Busby) a couple of years ago, I was interested in Busby's description of a very early
He mentions that the triangular subtitle has been [largely] cut and scotch-taped back.

Something similar has been done with the title page of my copy under discussion. The words "WITH CRITICAL COMMENTS / BY / PROFESSOR HOFFMANN" have apparently been cut out (by a rectangular cut) and then taped back into place.

I have always thought that this was done in connection with the laying out of the page for photographing. A small slip of paper with the GBC logo and the address BOX 4115 / LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89106 has been taped onto the title page, on top of the imprint (CHICAGO / THE CHARLES T. POWNER CO. / 1944).

Needless to say, I don’t consider this anything like a definitive answer to the questions posed by the book described by Busby. But it does show, I think, why I was not especially surprised by the description of that book.

That seems somewhat relevant to the things being discussed.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Tom Sawyer** | 05/20/12 08:32 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

I’ll keep this post very short. That means that it is definitely oversimplified and maybe even kind of wrong in places!

It looks to me as though the following list is probably pretty accurate for determining certain aspects of the priorities among various early Drake versions of Erdnase, based on addresses found in Drake advertisements included within the books:

(a) **First, books with advertisements showing only the 211-213 East Madison Street address.**

(b) **Next, books showing both the 211-213 East Madison Street and 350-352 Wabash Avenue addresses.**

(c) **Next, books showing only the 350-352 Wabash Avenue address.**

The following are a few examples of how the foregoing might apply.
with the cover showing *Expert at the Card Table* in script. Jeff Busby indicates that it includes advertisements with the earliest address above. If it shows no other addresses, it belongs in category (a).

2. In my own collection, I have a paper-covered Drake version with 1905 on the title page. It has many interior advertisements showing the 211-213 Madison Street address. The back cover shows the 350-352 Wabash Avenue address. It belongs in category (b)" -- a later category.

3. From the Library of Congress scans (see Brad Jefferss nearby post [March 4] for a link) -- we know that the Houdini 1905 copy had Drake advertisements showing the 350-352 Wabash Avenue address, fifteen or so times. And I believe that no advertisements show any other addresses. It belongs in category (c)" -- a still later category.

The foregoing approach is not necessarily one-hundred-percent reliable. In theory, it is not the most reliable evidence.

The foregoing is based primarily upon the addresses at which Drake was located at various times (or, at least, on addresses that were used). Generally they are as shown in advertisements in periodicals. But above I tossed in a little bit of judgment.

Here is an extract from my Erdnase blog (not currently viewable), augmented by seven other references (marked with an asterisk), that shows some relevant information and references (all findable on Google Books):

May 9, 1903, **352-356 Dearborn Street** (The Publishers Weekly)
March 1904, **211 East Madison Street** (The Engineering Magazine)
May 1904, **211-213 East Madison Street** (The National Builder)
December 1904, **211 Madison Street** (The National Builder)
May 1905, **200-211 East Madison Street** (Popular Mechanics)
July 1905, **200-211 East Madison Street** (The Technical World)
November 1905, **211 East Madison Street** (The Railway Conductor)
November 1905, **214 Madison Street** (Cosmopolitan Magazine)*
December 1905, **207 East Madison Street** (Success Magazine)*
December 1905, **243 East Madison Street** (The World To-Day)*
Circa February 10, 1906, **211 East Madison Street** (The Int. Dir. of Booksellers)
April 1906, **350-352 Wabash Avenue** (The Publishers Weekly)*
September 1906, **349B Wabash Avenue** (The Business Philosopher)*
October 1906, **350 Wabash Avenue** (Popular Mechanics)
Early 1907, **350-2 Wabash Avenue** (The Electric Journal)*
November 1907, **350 Wabash Avenue** (The American Thresherman)
July 1908, 350 Wabash Avenue (Popular Mechanics)*

--Tom Sawyer

**magicam** | 05/22/12 03:14 AM | link | filter

^^^ Tom, great work! Your efforts reflect the kind of bibliographically-related digging that is sometimes necessary. I agree with you that one should not use addresses as a foolproof method of dating a book (for one reason, because the sheets and/or wrappers for a book bearing an old (i.e., out of date) address could be bound at a much later date), but addresses can be very useful in that regard.

**Tom Sawyer** | 05/22/12 03:01 PM | link | filter

Hi Clay! Very kind of you! Thank you! --Tom

**John Bodine** | 05/23/12 01:23 AM | link | filter

Hi Tom, thank you for the great information on dates that Drake operated. Many years ago Dick Hatch was kind enough to send me his notes on various printings/variants and I have expanded on it as I try to understand and catalog all of the different versions available to the public.

Below are examples from my collection that support your dating of printings.

Example 1 - Category (a)
Red clothbound, script "Expert at the card table" on the cover and spine
Block F.J. Drake on the spine
1905 and title page has the earlier eagle behind an FDC shield
Allied Printing printing bug on the copyright page
211-213 East Madison Street address on advertisements

Example 2 - Category (a)
Green pictorial cloth
Script "Expert at the card tale" on spine, block F.J. & CO. on spine
Allied printing bug on copyright page
1905 and eagle behind shield on title page
211-213 East Madison Street on advertisements

Example 3 - Category (d)
Grey pictorial cloth
Script "Expert at the card tale" on spine, block Fred J. Drake & CO. on spine
1905 and coat of arms style shield on title page
No addresses on any of the advertisements

Example 4 - Category (e)
Blue embossed cloth, "Expert at the Card Table" in script on cover and spine
Block letter DRAKE at foot of spine
No dates, no advertisements
Note: these colored non-pictorial cloth copies with script titles also include an embossed cover, this variant and the earlier (dated) red copy have the same embossing pattern and what appears to be the same font on the cover and spine

Example 5 - Category (c)
1905 paperback
350-352 Wabash Ave only on ad on back cover, no address on other advertisements

After these the addresses move to
1004 Michigan Ave
179 N. Michigan Ave

John Bodine | 05/23/12 01:32 AM | link | filter

I should also add that I am aware of 10 different dated 1905 variants (assuming the plum and red are indeed different) and 7 undated variants circa 1917-1918. Beginning in 1934 still at 179 N. Michigan and until 1937 Drake put the date back on the title page although not on every printing variant.

I forgot to add that the blue embossed described above is a 418 page and is therefore likely a later (circa 1918) variant.

Tom Sawyer | 05/23/12 01:20 PM | link | filter

Hi John:

That is an amazing listing! I imagine that a lot of work, time, dedication, and ingenuity was necessary for you to assemble such a grouping.

The list definitely advanced my own knowledge regarding what was going on with Drake and the Erdnase book in those early days.

Here are a few additional fairly early Drake addresses (findable on Google Books). The asterisks indicate information that was not on my Erdnase blog (which is not now viewable):
Drake also used the address 354 Michigan Avenue. I have seen it on Google Books in Drake books dated (on the title page) 1906 and 1908.

--Tom Sawyer

Hi All,

Concerning the Drake blind-stamped-cover versions (with script title--not the pictorial-cloth Drake versions) of *The Expert at the Card Table* . . .

I do not know whether it is generally known that that basic cover design or style (blind-stamped, with script title) was also used by Drake on a number of other Drake books, including those listed below, that are of particular interest to magic collectors and gambling collectors. The first copy is not now for sale (I contacted the person who posted the images), and the second copy has been sold:


2. *Tricks With Coins*, by T. Nelson Downs. Here is a link to an image on a bookseller website:

[Link to image of "Tricks With Coins"]

I think that elsewhere on this thread, it is mentioned that William J. Hilliar was not actually the translator of the Drake *Card-Sharpers*. (I believe that it is generally reported that that translation was by Joseph Forster.)

Although Drake used the blind-stamped cover (with script title) on a number of books, I don't think I know for certain of a single case of such books where there were not other covers as well. I think that typically there was at least one other basic clothbound version and also at least one other basic paper-cover version for each title, though I have not verified that.

--Tom Sawyer
Correction: In a recent post, toward the end, I mentioned "354 Michigan Avenue." That was a mistake. I should have mentioned "354 Wabash Avenue," instead.

--Tom Sawyer

John Bodine | 05/24/12 02:19 AM | link | filter

October 20, 1920, 1004 Michigan Ave. (Scientific American)
January 1931, 179 N Michigan Ave. (Popular Mechanics)

I didn’t do much digging to find the earliest referenced date for these addresses but include them here as I referenced printing variants with these addresses.

John Bodine | 05/24/12 02:36 AM | link | filter

I also found a 1903 reference to Drake at 350-352 Wabash in "the complete songster" with copies of "The Expert" priced at $1. This book also includes the same Allied printing bug found in the earlier copies of Erdnase.

And now my memory tells me Dick Hatch has already done all of this research...

Perhaps a The Genii wiki page would be a good location for all of this consolidated research on Drake, then Frost,, then Powner, etc.

Richard Evans | 05/25/12 04:05 PM | link | filter

To what extent do the advertisements in the back of the book help to date the editions? Are the ads always the same in the various editions?

Richard Hatch | 05/25/12 04:59 PM | link | filter

Richard, I have found the advertisements in the back, like the address information when given, to be very helpful in dating the various copies. The ads do change and often make reference to dated editions of other books ("new 1904 edition"), or one can track the publication dates of new titles advertised to put a lower bound on the books. The pricing information also helps. Drake consistently advertised the first edition copies (the true first, not the first Drake version) at $1, and initially its own editions at 25 cents and 50 cents for the paperback and cloth bound editions respectively. Eventually Drake priced the paperbacks at 35 cents, but by then I believe they were no longer issuing the book in a cloth bound variant. Hopefully John Bodine will issue an
Richard Evans | 05/25/12 06:28 PM | link | filter

Thanks Richard - very interesting

Bill Mullins | 05/27/12 08:28 PM | link | filter

The ebay copy just sold for $4500. Too rich for my blood.

Doug Thornton | 05/27/12 09:39 PM | link | filter

And the shipping was just $5.35?! Hopefully the buyer got some insurance added...

erdnasephile | 05/27/12 10:06 PM | link | filter

1+ Hopefully, for that price, overnight shipping and insurance would be included.

Tom Sawyer | 06/05/12 12:49 AM | link | filter

One of the things some researchers have done is to compare S.W. Erdnase’s writing to texts of known authorship. For example, people have compared Erdnase’s text to various writings of W.E. Sanders, to see whether similarities or differences are detected.

This post is not anything like a treatment of that topic. But a while back, on my blog about S.W. Erdnase (not now viewable), I showed extracts from a number of works, so that readers who felt so inclined could, for fun, see whether they noticed any similarities or differences among the texts. (I also had some extracts from mining publications, but all of the extracts below deal with playing cards.)

The following is a much simplified version of that. I shortened the extracts. If -- for fun (no prizes or rewards) -- you wish to try your hand, here are the (shortened) extracts.

I don’t think this proves much of anything, for a variety of reasons. (Just as one example, the extracts are quite short.) But it might tend to show that it can be difficult to be successful at guessing who wrote what.

It is very easy to search for extracts from the quotations below (on Google Books) and determine the sources. That is not the idea. The idea is to see whether you can guess who wrote each of the extracts. (Of course, if you recognize an extract, all the better.)

I’ll probably post the answers (that is, basically, the book titles) on Wednesday. I am
Just to be clear, I am **not** trying to find the sources of the quotations. I already **know** who wrote them. Uh, I mean, I have it written down.

Again, this exercise is just for fun. There are no prizes or rewards of any kind!

Oh, and FYI, at least one, and at most all ten, are from *The Expert at the Card Table*.

**Extract No. 1**

The art of card palming can be brought to a degree of perfection that borders on the wonderful.

**Extract No. 2**

After the necessary degree of proficiency in the sleights has been acquired, each trick that the beginner intends to perform, must be carefully laid out and clothed, as it were, with a certain speech, technically termed patter, the object of which is to cause the trick itself to assume, in the minds of the spectators, a plausible appearance.

**Extract No. 3**

This is a capital trick with which to commence an entertainment; when coming, as it should do, unannounced, and before the performance proper has commenced, it has an air of improvisation, which greatly enhances its effect, and at once awakens the attention of the audience.

**Extract No. 4**

The performer circles the knife over the cards with a slight trembling movement of the hand, and suddenly plunges the knife into a card.

**Extract No. 5**

With the third finger of the left hand, which is now immediately below the card, press it upwards into the right hand, which should half close over it. You must not mind about bending the card, which will lie curled up against the inside of the hand.

**Extract No. 6**

Of course, in each instance the performer has noted the bottom card after
formulated the following rules for determining the card that will be found at the number given, and for ascertaining the number at which any particular card called for will be located.

**Extract No. 7**

We consider this trick a capital one if performed with some address. Of course the patter is all a matter of taste and any invention may answer. The possibility of getting a perfect view of the table when the eyes are bandaged is never suspected by the uninitiated, but it is a fact well known to conjurers.

**Extract No. 8**

The performers manner should be suave, but not over polite, a mistake made by most beginners. Over politeness tends to reduce the performer to a level below that of the spectators; whereas, his object is to convey the impression that he is a being gifted with an inexplicable power.

**Extract No. 9**

A glance at the cards acquaints the performer with the position of the reversed card, and he forces that row on the spectators, taking away the other row.

**Extract No. 10**

The usual plan is to arrange the whole pack in the order suggested by the following jingle, viz.:

Eight Kings threatened to save Ninety-five Queens from one sick Knave.

Thus indicating the order of the thirteen values, as Eight, King, Three, Ten, Two, Seven, Nine, Five, Queen, Four, Ace, Six, Jack. The suits are taken in a regular order, say, Diamonds, Clubs, Hearts, Spades.

--Tom Sawyer

**Richard Kaufman** | 06/05/12 01:01 AM | link | filter

Excellent, Tom ... excellent.
This is so fascinating, all of this work, that everyone has contributed and put together. Has anyone put a timeline together, that I may have missed?

Thank you again for all of this Brilliant Work!

Chad Randash
Bozeman MT

Regarding the little "no-prizes challenge" stated in my most recent post on this thread . . .

It seems possible that some people are not posting their "guesses" for fear of spoiling the fun for others.

At this point, I don't think that needs to be a concern.

I'll wait till sometime tomorrow morning (California time), and then I'll post the answers--unless some kind of discussion on the topic gets going here before that.

--Tom Sawyer

Hi All,

Here are the answers:

S.W. Erdnase, *The Expert at the Card Table*: 1, 2, 6, 7, 10

Professor Hoffmann, *Modern Magic*: 3, 5

Downs/Hilliard, *The Art of Magic*: 4, 9

August Roterberg, *New Era Card Tricks*: 8

--Tom Sawyer

You definitely had me on a few, Tom.
Richard, thank you for participating.

I very much appreciated your kind words right after my post that had the ten quotations!

--Tom

This one, in particular, is tricky:

"Extract No. 5: With the third finger of the left hand, which is now immediately below the card, press it upwards into the right hand, which should half close over it. You must not mind about bending the card, which will lie curled up against the inside of the hand."

Many excellent thoughts in that sentence!

I was lucky enough to read the blog before it was private, and it was terrific. It's amazing how much really great magical advice was written in all the early literature, and especially in Erdnase. Bob White has mentioned several times that in Erdnase is almost everything you need to know about not just card magic, but about magic as a whole.

Thanks, Tom for the great refresher course. I really enjoyed this!

I agree with Richard that this one (#5) is especially tricky as the precision with which the writer describes the working of the 3rd finger of the left hand sounds very much like Erdnase.

However the colloquial tone in which Prof. Hoffmann cloaked the imperative of the second sentence just isn't Erdnase "the magisterial".

I guess it's not surprising Hoffmann would sound like Erdnase at times, given the influence ARTIFICE, RUSE had on him and how deeply he immersed himself in THE EXPERT.
Hurt

I think you have it backwards. Modern Magic was much more of an influence on Erdnase than Erdnase was on Hoffmann. Modern Magic, in particular, was published decades before The Expert.

David

CORRECTION!

Extract 2 is from *New Era Card Tricks*, by August Roterberg.

Hi All,

I am sure that Clay Shevlin knows a lot more about bibliographical terminology and its application than I do, and probably about book-collecting terminology as well. However, I thought I would take a stab at mentioning a few things I think I know with respect to *The Expert at the Card Table*:

1. From the standpoint of the **collector**, the "first edition" consists of "the first impression" of the first edition. In other words, normally the "first edition," to the book-collector, is the first printing. In the case of *The Expert at the Card Table*, that term refers to the edition printed by (apparently) McKinney in (apparently) 1902. I say "apparently," because having your address be in care of McKinney on a copyright form (see Whaley, et al.) doesn't necessarily mean he printed the book. And having the book be released in February or March of 1902 does not necessarily mean that the book was printed in 1902.

2. From the standpoint of the **bibliographer**, all of the copies of *The Expert at the Card Table* published by the author, as well as all those published by Drake, are part of the first edition. This includes copies with 178 pages and copies with 190 pages, and in making that determination, it doesn't matter what kinds of advertisements are in them. (Certain other books -- many, in fact -- are also part of that edition.)
probably subjective.

4. The first version released by Drake would be the second "issue."

5. After Drake began creating the Drake versions, various "states" were involved. The various versions with differing numbers of pages would be different states. The varying advertisements represent different states as to the advertisements.

6. The various Drake covers do not represent *ipso facto* varying editions -- in fact, in the case of *The Expert at the Card Table*, from a bibliographical standpoint, they do not.

7. Not to complicate matters, but even from a collector's viewpoint, varying covers do not necessarily by themselves indicate much.

8. The varying covers of *The Expert at the Card Table* do not represent different states.

The reason I say "I think" I know those things is that, well, I am not sure that everything above is accurate. But I thought I would mention the foregoing, in part because, as far as I know, no one else has (publicly) really gotten into the subject of how the different variants of *The Expert at the Card Table* "should" be classified from (a) a bibliographer's standpoint, or (b) from a collector's standpoint.

Also, above I have just hit a few of the highlights, and I have not gone into any detail. So, yes, even I could probably pick the above apart, if I wanted to.

--Tom Sawyer

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**SwanJr** | 06/11/12 10:38 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

David,

You're absolutely right. I was thinking of Hoffmann's commentaries on THE EXPERT and not the work he is mainly known for today. That's the danger of coming at a subject too much from your own field of interest.

Hurt

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**Tom Sawyer** | 06/19/12 11:19 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Below are a few more Frederick J. Drake addresses, compiled from Google Books. Actually, the addresses listed below are all the same, but I went ahead and kept the usual format:
November 1910, 1325 Michigan Avenue (Locom. Firemen and Enginemen’s Mag.)
January 1912, 1325 Michigan Avenue (Popular Mechanics)
February 1913, 1325 Michigan Avenue (Telephony)
September 1914, 1325 Michigan Avenue (The Publishers’ Weekly)
October 1914, 1325 Michigan Avenue (The Publishers’ Weekly)
February 1915, 1325 Michigan Avenue (Electrical World)

--Tom Sawyer

Richard Hatch | 06/20/12 09:37 AM | link | filter

Another first edition on eBay, starting at just $1,000. The last one listed there sold a few weeks ago for $4,500. And there is a copy in the Potter and Potter auction. Here's a link to the current eBay one: [http://www.ebay.com/itm/The-Expert-At-T ... 500wt_1287](http://www.ebay.com/itm/The-Expert-At-T ... 500wt_1287)

Bill Mullins | 06/23/12 01:36 PM | link | filter

How much did the Potter & Potter copy bring?

Daniel Bain | 06/24/12 07:59 AM | link | filter

First edition Erdnase sold at yesterday’s auction for $6,000 ($5,000 plus 20% buyer’s premium).

[http://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/117 ... ble-1st-ed](http://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/117 ... ble-1st-ed)

1905 softcover Drake Edition signed by illustrator Marshall D. Smith sold for $2,880 ($2,400 plus 20% buyer’s premium).

[http://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/117 ... ble-signed](http://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/117 ... ble-signed)

Athan | 06/30/12 09:26 PM | link | filter

Hi everyone,
I have to say that this is the most interesting topic on the internet so far. Even though I haven't read the entire topic and I do not know if you have reached to a certain conclusion I would like to express a thought about the mysterious identity of Erdnase.

To begin with I was watching Dai Vernon's Revelations series and I noticed that Dai
heard it right, and so as a Greek myself I wanted to know more about this guy. I started googling his name but no results came up with this name. Then I tried to google ‘greek gamblers’ and of course the very first result was the famous Nicholas Dandalos aka Nick The Greek. As I started reading his bio I noticed something interesting (I don’t know if somebody has mentioned Nick The Greek before on the topic).

Nicholas Andreas Dandalos which is his full name was born in 1883, and studied and got his degree in philosophy from the Greek Evangelical College. He was sent to USA (and was settled in Chicago) when he was 18 years old (which is around 1901). It is also known that Dandalos moved to Montreal at some point (I don’t know the exact time) where he used to gamble on horse races. Dandalos used to win big amounts of money and also lost a lot of money on that races. Dandalos then moved back to Chicago where he lost almost everything on card and dice games. Without a doubt Dandalos was a master at card games and other forms of gambling.

A few things to point out. Dandalos at the time The Expert At The Card Table was written was at Chicago. Dandalos can be also put at Canada which may also explains the Canadian copyright declaration on the book. He had a strong passion for gambling and also won and lost lots of money (which may explain the statement on the book as he needs the money). Dandalos middle name was Andreas which is an anagram of Erdnase (if you change one ‘a’ to ‘e’ maybe for making it sound better). Dandalos was from a wealthy family and he had a degree in philosophy which also explains the beautiful writing of the book. We can certainly put a deck of cards in his hands. BUT! We cant link him to the illustrator of the book.

I certainly cant prove that Nick The Greek was Erdnase but there are many coincidences (as with many of the candidates mentioned before) that one could think that he could be a candidate too.

I am not an expert about Erdnase nor claiming that I have done any sort of research. But the whole mystery around he true identity of S.W. Erdnase is fascinating at least and had me wondering of who that man really was.

Anyway you guys here have done great work so far.

Jonathan Townsend | 06/30/12 09:30 PM | link | filter

Those are interesting findings Athan. Would you post links to your source data for those findings?

Athan | 06/30/12 09:51 PM | link | filter
As I said I didn’t do any in depth research about Dandolos (or if the information I found about him is true). The only thing I did is to google ‘greek gamblers’, ‘Nicholas Dandolos’ and ‘Nick The Greek’. I found the information I mentioned here:

http://www.hellenism.net/cgi-bin/display...html?c=105

but again this is a very brief description of his life without many details. I am sure you could find a lot more about Dandolos than I did.

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**Geno Munari** | 07/01/12 08:04 AM | link | filter

I doubt very, very much that Nick D. was Erdnase. I saw him play on a few occasions at the Stardust when the Bank was still in operation at the Stardust Hotel and at the Dunes in 1964 in the poker room.

There are many reasons in my opinion that would negate the candidate as writing the EATCT that I will not get into here. Jimmy Grippo’s brother Jan Grippo actually wrote a screen play on the story of Nick the Greek that never hit the screen.

But still great that theories are still emerging.

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**Ian Kendall** | 07/01/12 08:34 AM | link | filter

"Dandalos then moved back to Chicago where he lost almost everything on card and dice games. Without a doubt Dandalos was a master at card games and other forms of gambling."

Ironic much?

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**Athan** | 07/01/12 09:17 AM | link | filter

Ian

Maybe the way I wrote it in the post seems like that but it wasn’t my intention. In fact Dandolos during his lifetime made lots of millions from gambling ($500 million according to some websites). But he was a passionate gambler and near the end of his life this high roller ended up playing $5 limit poker. I am sure that every professional gambler has his ups and downs in his career.

Again I am just pointing out some coincidences (most probably) that in my imagination Dandolos would fit Erdnase’s profile. As Geno mentions above he has seen...
Hi All,

I just noticed a rather interesting old advertisement which I had never heard of before -- for *The Expert at the Card Table*. The advertisement was in a booklet that was offered in an auction back in 2010. The booklet was an Atlas Trick and Novelty Co. item, and the street address was (from the images) 113 W. Illinois St., Chicago, Ill.

On what appears to be the front cover of the booklet, it says, in part: *How to Do Tricks With Cards* by Salvail. The seller indicated that the item was an undated 10-page catalog, so I don't know how much Salvail material was included.

The full-page advertisement for the Erdnase book was headed, Another New Book of Great Interest to Conjurers. The price for *The Expert at the Card Table* was stated as 25c.

The advertisement also says:

PUBLISHERS ORIGINAL PRICE, $2.00

(That may not be exact, because the image is a little unclear.)

Details above are based on the listing and on the images that were included there.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Bill Mullins** | 07/24/12 12:26 PM | link | filter

**THIS** 1906 advertisement in *Billboard* from Atlas refers to Savail. I'd bet the item you linked to is early -- 1905, or soon after.

And [HERE](#) is a profile of Savail. And his [Obituary](#).

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**Tom Sawyer** | 07/27/12 04:57 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

Clay Shevlin (who, by the way, has been a friend of mine for multiple decades) showed clearly -- in an [earlier post](#) -- certain problems with the nine blocks proximity argument, regarding the distance between the Atlas Trick and Novelty Co. and E.S.
the first to determine the relevant addresses and to draw attention to that proximity.)

Although I do find the proximity interesting, another problem with it (it seems to me) is as follows. Again, the following are basically opinions.

First, in general, if E.S. Andrews (the railroad man) really was Erdnase, and if he lived close to any magic dealer, I pretty much assume that is a simple coincidence, which proves nothing relating to the authorship question. Well, it might be more than a coincidence if (for example) I knew that Erdnase selected that exact residence. (I might assume that he had some reason for selecting it -- the reason being, perhaps, to live near a magic dealer.)

At least, that is what I pretty much have to assume, in the absence of any information suggesting that Andrews intentionally moved to a place near Atlas, or that Atlas set up business there because the proprietor knew Andrews was living in the area.

But that is nothing like the present situation. In the present case, Andrews simply moved into his parents dwelling there on Austin Avenue, in October 1901, months before the book was published. (See Richard Hatch's Reading Erdnase Backwards.) The apparent reasonable assumption (though I dont know for certain) is that the Austin address was chosen by his parents completely independent of any writing of *The Expert at the Card Table*. Yes, it is possible that there is a more involved factual situation (unknown to anyone) that would demolish that assumption, but that seems unlikely.

If Andrews had moved to that Austin Avenue address in early 1903, then I would probably think, Hey, he moved there so that he would have easy access to a dealer who might sell his book. But no--it appears that the fact that Andrews lived near the Atlas Trick and Novelty Co. is nothing more than happenstance.

Anyway, the foregoing is part of how I myself view the proximity argument. The above is a quite simplified treatment. Also, the foregoing comments are kind of inextricably wound-up with other aspects of the situation -- but I have not gotten into that above.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Richard Hatch** | 07/28/12 02:50 AM | link | filter

Hi Tom, thanks for continuing to share your opinions and insights on this topic. I really appreciate and value your thoughts and have learned a great deal from your scholarship. Just to make clear my own opinion on the proximity issue of Atlas in 1902-1903 and E. S. Andrews at the same period: I do believe that the proximity was accidental. Atlas happened to have its location on the same street, same side of the
whose home he moved when transferred from Denver to Dekalb, Illinois by the railroad in October 1901. What I suspect is not so accidental (if E. S Andrews is Erdnase) is that Atlas wound up with copies of the book when E. S. was transferred to San Francisco by the railroad in Feb/March 1903 (working from memory so don’t have the exact dates, but it was essentially within a month of when Atlas began to advertise copies at half price). My only explanation for why Atlas would choose to devote ad space in the Sphinx and elsewhere (Police Gazette, that we know of) to this title, previously only advertised once (that we know of) in the Sphinx (from Vernelo at full price a few months earlier) and even offer to send a brochure of the contents, is that Atlas had recently obtained a quantity of copies on very favorable terms. Why Atlas and not Vernelo or Roterberg or Burlingame? If the author was not (as I believe) part of the magic fraternity (his own words in the legerdemain section indicate his distance from the magic community), it would make sense for him to dump unsold copies on the most convenient magic dealer, which for E. S. Andrews would have been Atlas. And the fact that they end up with these copies at the very moment he moves from that location to the West Coast neatly explains his motivation and timing of the sale (not wanting to drag them with him). I find the overall circumstantial case ("right" name, right age, possible relationship by marriage with Dalrymple, in Chicago at the right time, evidence of card playing activity, association with Denver as recalled by Hugh Johnston, interesting profession) strengthened by the timing of the Atlas ads (just when he leaves Chicago) and the location of Atlas at that time (closest magic dealer to him). Certainly not proof by a long shot, but I find it hard not to like him!

Bill Mullins | 07/29/12 11:01 AM | link | filter

Sperber's Checklist of Conjuring Catalogues lists a 1901 catalog from Atlas, and other undated copies that likely are soon after.

Has anyone specifically examined these for possible listings of Expert?

There has been some discussion of Atlas as primarily a dealer in "slum" magic, and that it may be out of character of them to be selling a book like Expert, and thus their offering of the book is of some small significance. My own cursory look at contemporary ads (Billboard, Sphinx, etc.) shows that, yes, they did advertise a number of "pitch" products, but the also advertised apparatus and other items we’d associate with a "standard" magic store. A detailed examination of their catalogs from 1902 -1905 or thereabouts might be interesting in this context.

Tom Sawyer | 07/29/12 06:00 PM | link | filter

Richard Hatch:
Hi All,

In the March 17, 1906, issue of *The Billboard*, there is an Atlas Trick and Novelty Co. advertisement. It says, in part:

> We are the oldest in the country. Goods always on hand. Successor to M. Inez and Victor Novelty House. Our new book is a peach.

I may have tossed in a few periods that are not quite obvious from the image on the internet. In view of the date, I don't think their "new book" was the S.W. Erdnase book.

As I have mentioned elsewhere, the item described at [this link](#) may imply some kind of a connection between William J. Hilliar and the Atlas Trick and Novelty Co.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Roger M.** | 07/29/12 08:05 PM | link | filter

It's refreshing that Tom has regenerated serious academic discussion in this thread, inspiring Bill and Richard to respond :)

Personally, I've never thought that Richard's observation about the geographical proximity had anything to do with any predisposition to Andrews having any sort of desire to be near Atlas.

Rather I had envisioned a man, living where he did, out and about .......walking to a bus, taking in the night air, walking his dog, or just generally noting the various business in his neighborhood while going about his day to day business (as we all do, and come to know our neighborhoods like the backs of our hands). In his travels he would have invariably noted the business called **Atlas Trick and Novelty Co.**

At a later time, when he wanted to dispose of his remaining inventory of EATCT, he wandered a few blocks and engaged in a discussion with the Atlas Trick and Novelty Co. to determine their interest in remaindering his books.

One could then posit that Atlas said "yes", they were interested in his books, and from
Tom Sawyer | 07/30/12 01:20 AM | link | filter

Roger, thank you.--Tom

Bill Mullins | 07/30/12 11:05 AM | link | filter

For those who are keeping score, [HERE](#) is another early advertisement for *Expert* -- from Sept 5, 1903.

And I just noticed that this thread has received over a MILLION views. Wow.

Richard Hatch | 07/31/12 01:16 AM | link | filter

Hey, thanks for finding that, Bill! The Billboard ad text is identical (though the typography is different) to what Atlas had in *The Police Gazette* a few months early (March 28, 1903). Curious that they are still (in September) saying the book has 204 rather than 205 pages. Wish someone would turn up their advertised "List of Contents free". In answer to your earlier inquiry about checking Atlas Catalogs from the period, I have checked all those I have found in the major magic catalog collections I have had access to (Sperber, Ray Goulet, and George Daily come to mind) and have not found anything of interest (yet!) on this topic, alas.

Again, to me the fact that Atlas is flogging the book aggressively (*Sphinx*, *Police Gazette*, *Billboard*) at half price strongly implies that they took stock of a goodly quantity on very favorable terms in February 1903. Did they get them from the author and supply Drake, or did Drake get them and supply Atlas (E. S. Burns)? And who did the Mahatma Offices get their copies from (advertised at the $1 price on Feb. 1st, two weeks before the *Sphinx* Atlas ad)? Atlas' proximity to one of the candidates (Edwin S. Andrews) and the ad campaign and price drop coincident with his transfer to the West Coast inclines me to think that Atlas got them from him (if he is Erdnase) and supplied both Mahatma (who beat him to the punch with their ad) and Drake (and Roterberg, who took over his inventory when they bought out Atlas shortly thereafter. Atlas later re-opened at the old Roterberg address when he moved, but Roterberg continued to offer the first edition copies on wholesale terms off the $1 price to other dealers as late as 1911, so I assume he got and kept most of the Atlas stock...)

Richard Kaufman | 07/31/12 01:23 AM | link | filter

... and therein lies the real secret to the identity of Mr. Andrews.

magicam | 07/31/12 02:19 AM | link | filter
strongly implies that they took stock of a goodly quantity on very favorable terms in February 1903. Did they get them from the author and supply Drake, or did Drake get them and supply Atlas (E. S. Burns)? And who did the Mahatma Offices get their copies from (advertised at the $1 price on Feb. 1st, two weeks before the Sphinx Atlas ad)? Atlas' proximity to one of the candidates (Edwin S. Andrews) and the ad campaign and price drop coincident with his transfer to the West Coast inclines me to think that Atlas got them from him (if he is Erdnase) and supplied both Mahatma (who beat him to the punch with their ad) and Drake (and Roterberg, who took over his inventory when they bought out Atlas shortly thereafter. Atlas later re-opened at the old Roterberg address when he moved, but Roterberg continued to offer the first edition copies on wholesale terms off the $1 price to other dealers as late as 1911, so I assume he got and kept most of the Atlas stock...)

Again, what evidence do we have that the author actually sold copies of EATCT?

Seems to me that McKinney's bankruptcy may have better explanatory power re the timeline noted by RH.

From an earlier post:

magicam wrote: In summary, with the limited knowledge at my disposal, vis--vis Andrews presence in Chicago I do not see any significance to Atlas sales of EATCT. But to the extent that one wants to argue that Atlas sales of EATCT was at all unusual (and I dont think it was), there seems to be a very plausible reason for this which has nothing to do with Andrews. Accepting, for the sake of argument, that Atlas sales of EATCT was odd, the fact that Atlas was selling the book at half price suggests that whoever was handling the wholesaling of EATCT really wanted to see the book sold in as many stores as possible. Are there any facts to support such a motivation to wholesale to any possible retailer? Yes. McKinney's adjudicated bankruptcy in late January, 1903. Sure, the facts are circumstantial, but from Adrian Plates comments we are told that McKinney sold copies of EATCT. If thats true, would it not make sense for a financially-troubled McKinney to get copies of EATCT in the hands of as many Chicago-area dealers as possible in late 1902 and January, 1903, and possible in early February, 1903? If the heavy discounting of EATCT started in February, 1903, such timing would tie in neatly with McKinney's bankruptcy.

And if McKinney was the one selling copies of EATCT, both retail and wholesale, this might also provide a clue to the business arrangement that he had with Erdnase.
Richard Hatch | 07/31/12 02:46 AM | link | filter

*magicam wrote:*

Again, what evidence do we have that the author actually sold copies of EATCT?

Seems to me that McKinney's bankruptcy may have better explanatory power re the timeline noted by RH.

Hi Clay, I fully agree that if McKinney did indeed have a large inventory of The Expert on hand when they declared bankruptcy, that could have been one source of the half price copies. The newspaper notices announcing their pending bankruptcy mention a law firm that had an inventory list of their assets. Wish someone in Chicago could track that list down!

I don't see evidence, though, that the half price copies were widely distributed coincident with the bankruptcy. I don't think Vernelo, who was first to advertise the book to magicians (at full price in November 1902), advertised the book at half price, nor did Roterberg until after he acquired Atlas, as best I can tell. It is not yet clear when in 1903 Drake began to advertise the first edition copies (at $1). Other companies did offer the book at half price not long after the Atlas ads, but Atlas is clearly the leader in focusing attention on the book at that price in its ads, with the exception of the very small mention in Mahatma that "scooped" Atlas by two weeks. The others, like Mahatma, mention the book at that price among many other offerings. Atlas has ads featuring the book and nothing else (and not limited to the magical press) and offering to send a list of contents free (an offer I don't believe any others made). To me, Atlas' priority and focus on the book are significant, and their address and proximity to one of the candidates of interest.

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*magicam | 07/31/12 03:42 PM | link | filter*

Richard, in the spirit of rigorous debate

Lets step back for a moment. You wrote that McKinney's stock of The Expert (assuming he had any copies, which is clearly an assumption, although not unreasonable if Adrian Plates comments are correct, and there is no reason I know of to doubt Plates assertion or to imagine why Plate would conjure up such a fact out of thin air) could have been one source of the half price copies. Why stop at accepting the possibility that McKinney could only have been one source? How about the possibility that McKinney was the only source? Is it unreasonable to hypothesize that McKinney was the distributor of The Expert on behalf of the author, or that the author sold the entire stock of copies to McKinney and thus cashed out shortly before or after publication? I think such theories are entirely reasonable.
To me, Atlas’ priority and focus on the book are significant, and their address and proximity to one of the candidates of interest. We’ve already addressed the proximity issue. I agree that it could be relevant, but see no compelling evidence to suggest that it is relevant. But the question is, how is Atlas’ priority and focus on the book incompatible with the theory that Atlas acquired McKinney’s entire stock of TEATCT? You seem to imply that the lack of widespread distribution somehow undercuts the theory that McKinney held the entire stock of The Expert or that Atlas bought all of McKinney’s stock in bankruptcy liquidation. I don’t see how that is, though. Please explain if that is indeed one of your points.

To me, its not at all unreasonable to postulate that (i) McKinney owned or controlled the entire stock of unsold copies of The Expert and (ii) when he went bankrupt, Atlas bought such stock for a song, which would in turn enable Atlas to wholesale some of the copies to others. The fact that Atlas was arguably more aggressive in marketing copies of The Expert is not at all inconsistent with the foregoing.

Finally, you argue that Atlas is clearly the leader in focusing attention on the book at that price, to which my counterpoint would be: Well, what of it? What, if anything, does that prove or imply? Could it be that this was simply a marketing choice made by a company? Perhaps other companies simply didn’t feel moved to promote The Expert so heavily? Is that so unusual? (I don’t think it is.)

Richard Hatch | 07/31/12 04:13 PM | link | filter

Clay, I have no problem with McKinney having the entire inventory of the book, distributing it, and selling copies on favorable terms to Atlas (and possibly others) as a result of the bankruptcy. But I also see no evidence of this yet, other than the one known copy that Adrian Plate apparently obtained from them (and the copy owned by Galloway). My basic working assumption is that the mysterious author (and publisher) of the book was initially selling copies, since his stated purpose in writing it was that he needed the money. The fact that we don’t yet know how or to whom he was selling copies (possibly only to McKinney, but that seems unlikely to me. McKinney was a printer, not a publisher or bookseller) doesn’t mean he wasn’t doing so.

magicam | 07/31/12 05:04 PM | link | filter

I have no problem with McKinney having the entire inventory of the book, distributing it, and selling copies on favorable terms to Atlas (and possibly others) as a result of the bankruptcy. But I also see no evidence of this yet, other than the one known copy that Adrian Plate apparently obtained from them.
Sure there is! Its not direct evidence, but rather good circumstantial evidence: the timing of McKinney’s bankruptcy and the very nature of bankruptcy proceedings. The timing of McKinney’s BK and the heavy discounting of The Expert are just about perfect. By their nature, bankruptcies are about liquidating the bankrupts estate, which nearly always means selling for pennies on the dollar. Seems pretty clear that Atlas bought a stock of The Expert cheap.

Richard, I think your willingness to accept alternate theories is admirable—its, indeed, a necessity for historical scholarship. But I think its a mistake to indulge to any significant degree the assumption that the mysterious author (and publisher) of the book was initially selling copies. To my knowledge, there is absolutely no evidence of that, circumstantial or otherwise. What evidence, direct or indirect, exists other than the extremely weak inference drawn by the title-page statement, Published by the Author that the author actually sold copies of his book?

It is, in my view, a mistake to place too much weight on the veracity of the authors statement that he was writing the book for the money. It is also perilous to equate making money with obtaining a living wage. It appears that the candidate E. S. Andrews was gainfully employed throughout the period in question were his wages so poor that he couldnt earn a living? Did he really need the money, or was he simply seeking to supplement his income and stating his reason therefor in the book?

It seems reasonable to assume that the author knew quite a bit about gambling and cheating, and somehow ran in, or was closely associated with, the inner circles of gamblers. It also seems a given that The Expert laid bare many of the gamblers subterfuges then in vogue. Doesnt it stand to reason that the physical well-being of the author would be in peril if gamblers found out that he wrote a book exposing their secrets? Seems to me that the author would have good reason to remain anonymous and steer clear of association with the book. That he wrote it for the money is at least better nominal reason than I wanted to screw all my gambling friends/associates.

That McKinney was a printer and not a publisher per se means little to me. That he was clearly associated with the author in some manner means much more. Do we know anything about how the author paid for the printing and binding of the book? Have any facts been adduced in this area? Given the reasonable assumption that author anonymity might have been very desirable considering the expos nature of the book, why would it be unreasonable to guess that McKinney played some role in the distribution from the start?

On a side note: have we assumed that McKinney bound the book as well? Has anybody explored what company may have bound the book, or made any inquiry into binders that McKinney used? Compared cloth and stamping styles to other contemporary publications in Chicago? Perhaps there are clues there?
It appears that the candidate E. S. Andrews was gainfully employed throughout the period in question were his wages so poor that he couldn’t earn a living? Did he really need the money, or was he simply seeking to supplement his income and stating his reason therefor in the book?

It seems reasonable to assume that the author knew quite a bit about gambling and cheating, and somehow ran in, or was closely associated with, the inner circles of gamblers. It also seems a given that The Expert laid bare many of the gamblers subterfuges then in vogue. Doesn’t it stand to reason that the physical well-being of the author would be in peril if gamblers found out that he wrote a book exposing their secrets? Seems to me that the author would have good reason to remain anonymous and steer clear of association with the book.

The train agent E. S. Andrews was a widower supporting two teenaged children, a second (non-income producing) wife and an invalided father and aged mother. I think he could have used the money.

Magicians seem to think that the author of the book was in danger of violence from the gambling community for having written the book. I have never heard from anyone in the gambling community who felt that was even remotely likely. I don’t think gamblers view exposure the way magicians do. As the author states up front, the book would not "curtail the annual crop of suckers" nor was that his stated intent. Gamblers don’t seem to have cared about the book one way or the other.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 07/31/12 08:57 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

I have found the recent comments above (relating to the Atlas Trick and Novelty Co.) to be interesting and educational.

The following is from the "Answers to Correspondents section of William J. Hilliars Magic & Magicians column in the November 1, 1919, issue of *The Billboard*:

Van Hoven billed himself as the Dippy Mad Magician, and made a great hit with his nut style of magic. He is at present a big feature in England. We believe he originally came from Chicago, in fact Friend Burns of the old Atlas Trick & Novelty Co. told us once that Van Hoven when a kid used to
tricks.

This would be Frank Van Hoven and E.S. Burns.

Richard Hatch discusses Atlas's E.S. Burns in I think a number of places, including his article "Reading Erdnase Backwards."

Hurt McDermott discusses Burns in his *Artifice, Ruse & Erdnase* as well as in his article "Erdnase in Chicago."

It seems to me that the stronger the connection between Hilliar and Atlas, the more likely it is that Hilliar had some role in the book's creation.

I do not have a link to the page with the quoted text, but you can easily find it by going to the [Fulton History](https://www.fultonhistory.com) website, then going to a search page, then searching for (for example):

Hilliar Hoven Friend Burns Atlas

--Tom Sawyer

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*magicam* | 07/31/12 11:19 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

^^^^ Interesting, Tom. I believe Hilliar had the background to write or provide information for such a book, although if memory serves, his physique would not appear to jibe well with that of the person Smith recalls meeting in the hotel room.

Richard, thanks for the info. I agree, a man in Andrews position would likely have found the extra income useful.

I don't know how deeply you have explored the possible repercussions accruing to an author of a gambling expose in that era, so I must take what you say at face value. The only quibble I'll raise is with the comment that [g]amblers don't seem to have cared about the book one way or the other. You have been circumspect with the expression of that view, and appropriately so in my view, for how can there be any reasonable certainty that there was either indifference or antipathy in the inner circles of gamblers? If gamblers did resent the publication of The Expert, it seems highly unlikely that they would have publicized it why call attention to something that could adversely affect ones living?

Lets assume for a moment that Andrews is our man. If I recall correctly, Andrews spent a considerable amount of time traveling as part of his career. So when it comes to the assumption that he sold copies of his book, how practical would it be to handle
Did he approach people on the train to sell this book? And if he were wholesaling copies, how practical would it be to fill orders to dealers while he was traveling? Given Andrews career, it does not seem unreasonable to postulate that he would have asked someone else to wholesale and/or sell the book for him. McKinney would have been an excellent candidate for that, because Andrews already knew the printer, who was clearly familiar with the book trade; moreover, Andrews would not have to face or answer any questions from someone new as to where the book came from or who S. W. Erdnase was.

I dont know if the research has been done, but it seems to me that if Andrews were the author, we should be able to find evidence of copies of his book being offered for sale by dealers located in the major towns and cities along the routes frequented by Andrews in his work.

Finally, to those reading my comments to Richard, I want to make clear something that Richard already knows: I have great respect for Richards research, and no matter how pointed my comments, they are made in the spirit of vigorous debate and a desire to fully vet the facts and theories in play about the author of TEATCT. As Im sure Richard would attest, attacking a theory, including questioning the very foundations which underpin it, from all possible angles can only make such theory stronger if it has any legs to it, or at least expose its potential weaknesses.

**Bill Mullins | 07/31/12 11:28 PM**

*magicam wrote:* Doesnt it stand to reason that the physical well-being of the author would be in peril if gamblers found out that he wrote a book exposing their secrets? Seems to me that the author would have good reason to remain anonymous and steer clear of association with the book.

Not so much. Only a few years before (1896), also in Chicago, Henry Royal (aka "Kid Royal") started his second career as a gambling exposer, giving lectures not only to educate the public, but to expose those behind the gambling rackets (both the gambling bosses, and the civic officials who accepted bribes and otherwise tolerated the vice). "The gamblers and their political allies made every effort to prevent me from getting [an amusement license to give lectures]." His lectures included demonstrations of cheating techniques, gaffs, and a confessional (although his talks were not religious).

Royal went on for several years in a very public and non-anonymous manner that included writing, publishing and selling "The Only Reformed Confidence-Man and Gambler That Exposes and Executes Confidence and Gambling Tricks" (Chicago: 1896).
Baltimore, St. Louis, etc. He was much less anonymous than Erdnase, and much more of a rabble-rouser; some of his statements seemed calculated to incite those whose methods he was exposing. "I was 'done' by the gamblers of Chicago, and I am after them because they 'did' me."

I think that the way that Royal operated overtly, exposing the same type of secrets in the same environment that Erdnase would, argues against the theory that Erdnase needed anonymity for his own safety. Further, Royal did make money as an exposé. Perhaps Erdnase intended to follow up on his book with a lecture tour (that never panned out).

[Note: For a while, I was _very_ interested in Royal as a "person of interest" in the Erdnase mystery. He was from Chicago, used pseudonyms, skilled in gambling sleights and magic, wrote a book that included card sleights that was self-published, and had a publishing/writing background having worked at a newspaper in Atlanta. But after I read his book, I realized that the writing style and content had nothing to do with EATCT, and that the likelihood that Royal was Erdnase was very small. But I continue to think it possible, if not likely, that Erdnase may have seen Royal speak, and read his book.]

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**magicam** | 08/01/12 12:05 AM | link | filter

Bill, I dont know how important the anonymity for safety argument is and am not sure that its worth pressing much more. It seems a given that cheating was a shadowy culture and rough justice could be meted out in that world, so to me the matter of an exposés personal safety seems a natural concern. In any case, besides offering some possible distinctions to Royal’s situation in your good post, I’ll pose a fairly obvious follow-up question:

If not to avoid backlash from the gambling community, why did the author of The Expert wish to hide his true identity? David Alexander had a plausible answer for his candidate, but what of Andrews motivation?

Whether they are valid or not, I can see potentially important distinctions between Henry Royals situation and that of The Experts author. For starters, how much of the real work was exposed in Royals lectures and book? Was Royal exposing state-of-the-art methods of cheating? Second, if harm came to Royal, people in gambling circles would probably be suspected. But if harm came to the anonymous Expert author, who would suspect gamblers if they didnt know he wrote The Expert? IMO, its much easier to get away with a crime if the motives therefor are unknown.

Edit:
"I don't know if the research has been done, but it seems to me that if Andrews were the author, we should be able to find evidence of copies of his book being offered for sale by dealers located in the major towns and cities along the routes frequented by Andrews in his work."

I meant to write the following:

"I don't know if the research has been done, but it seems to me that if Andrews were the author **and engaged in the sale and/or distribution of his book**, we should be able to find evidence of copies of his book being offered for sale by dealers located in the major towns and cities along the routes frequented by Andrews in his work."

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/01/12 01:50 AM | [link] | [filter]

Clay I can't fundamentally disagree I have no idea how much Erdnase may have feared repercussions. All I'm doing is offering a counter-example of someone who would seem to have put himself at even greater risk, but didn't let that stop him from working under his own name. I just don't think "it stands to reason" is a good way to argue much of what is said about either side of so many of the issues that come up in the Erdnase mystery. So much of it is supposition. You can take a particular set of facts and draw one circumstantial conclusion. I can look at the same set, add a couple of new facts or look at the old ones from a slightly different perspective, and draw a different one. I don't think that makes either of us wrong (although we certainly could both _be_ wrong).

Hurt McDermott has offered the theory that it was dangerous to publish EATCT in any city other than Chicago because of the Comstock laws. That made perfect sense to me, until I started to realize that gambling literature was offered in other cities at that time with no action against the non-anonymous authors or publishers publishing in NY may not have been all that dangerous. You've suggested that McKinney offered Atlas the stock of EATCT as part of his bankruptcy, and that is just as valid an explanation of Atlas having a bunch of books for sale as the proximity to Edwin Andrews. Again, a reasonable conclusion, but it begs the question of why McKinney would go to Atlas, rather than the other magic dealers in Chicago, none of whom other than Vernelo (that we know about) offered it for sale at that time (and I agree with Richard, Atlas was pushing it harder than Vernelo). Richard has described Atlas as a dealer in pitch and slum products, which they did, but they also offered items consistent with a mainstream retail operation. When I got a sneak peak at Marty Demarest’s article, my first reaction was "case closed", but on reflection I backed down from that enthusiasm. On those four separate issues associated with Erdnase (as well as many others), I've been on the side of two different conclusions at different times because I've learned new things about the issue, or reconsidered old things in a newer light.
We know so little, that when we find out anything new, it has the potential to completely upset everything that we thought we knew before. Even though we think we know a lot about Edwin S. Andrews or Wilbur E. Sanders, remember that it all can be summarized in a few paragraphs. I can think of at least 3 other "E S Andrews" who lived in 1902 that I started researching, and when I was able to accumulate a bare minimum of information about them, I started finding similarities to what I suppose Erdnase must have been like. There are many similarities between Edwin or Wilbur and Erdnase because we know enough about Edwin and Wilbur to find similarities not so much because either Edwin or Wilbur _is_ Erdnase. If we find out more about E. S. Andrews from Wisconsin who later became an insurance executive with Hartford Insurance, I’m sure some of it can support the conclusion that he could have written Erdnase. Likewise the newspaper printer E. S. Andrews whom Richard has mentioned in the Forum.

My post of earlier tonight was mainly intended to get on the record some interesting things about Kid Royal. This one is mostly to discuss how fragile (to me, at least) are the conclusions we have drawn about Erdnase they could so easily be overturned by a single "real" piece of data (a signed contract, a cancelled check, a contemporary letter saying "so and so wrote Expert", a signed inscription from the author, publishing records, etc.) And such new conclusions would in no way call into questions the facts we base the old conclusions on we weren't wrong up until then, we just didn't know.

And I need to correct something I said earlier that Kid Royal's book was published in Chicago. I was going from memory, and upon reflection, it may have been published in NY (some online evidence indicates that, at least, and I'm too lazy and tired right now to dig out my copy and check).

As far as your question:

If not to avoid backlash from the gambling community, why did the author of The Expert wish to hide his true identity? David Alexander had a plausible answer for his candidate, but what of Andrews motivation?

As I think I've mentioned before, are we sure the author wanted to be anonymous? If his name truly was "E S Andrews", the pseudonym is weak. "Erdnase" is contrived under any circumstances true anonymity that did not wish to draw attention to itself would go for "John Smith" or "James Jones" or the like. The illustrator's name is there in black and white while Smith's recollections of 45 years later didn't answer all of Martin Gardner's questions, I'll bet he could have been much more informative in 1903. The copyright application leads to an easy to find Chicago printer. Who's to say that E. S. Burns or William Hilliar or Roterburg or Vernelo or other Chicagoans active in magic didn't know who wrote EATCT? The identity of Erdnase may have been an open secret in a small Chicago subset of either the magic or gambling community, and...
Sam Clemens used a pseudonym but he didn't want to be anonymous.

Here's something to consider the publisher of the Centennial edition of EACTC wished to remain anonymous. What conclusions can we (or should we) draw from that fact? Is he scared of repercussions? Would it embarrass his family or a professional reputation? Is he publicity shy?

And finally, let me say "Amen" to the final paragraph of your post #271369 above.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/01/12 07:57 AM | link | filter

What does the graph of all this research and conjecture look like? Are there some nodes of conjecture that are very high in degree (number of fact-nodes) that could be priority research items? Are there some people that are referenced in so much of the conjecture (again high degree) that they might be worth seeking out in terms of diaries/correspondence?

Whether or not the graph also presents an updated Mayan calendar is besides the point.

magicam | 08/01/12 05:53 PM | link | filter

Ah, Jonathan, once again applying centrifugal force to a fixed circle And BTW, the Mayans may well regard your phrase updated Mayan calendar as a double pleonasm.

Bill, I take your points about a weak pseudonym. But I still wonder: why bother? And who's Sam Clemens?

Bill Mullins | 08/01/12 06:12 PM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote: Are there some nodes of conjecture that are very high in degree (number of fact-nodes) that could be priority research items?

Jon -- the point of my post above was to say that if we have many clues about an individual with respect to Erdnase, it is because we have a lot of source material about that individual to search, not because a lot of random relevant facts all point to that individual.

To rephrase in Jon-speak, yes there are many fact-nodes about W.E. Sanders. You are
reversing cause and effect.

One of the problems of Erdnase research is that what we know is driven at least as much by what research resources are available, as by the questions we'd like answered. When the two overlap, we are happy, but the intersection is small and almost random; it seldom lies on the places that are really informative.

Edwin Andrews lived in Chicago, Colorado, and California, all of which have extensive digitized newspaper databases. That is one reason why he is a strong candidate. Not the only one, but a big one.

_magicam wrote:_ Bill, I take your points about a weak pseudonym. But I still wonder: why bother?

Well, that's the $64,000 question, isn't it?

And who's Sam Clemens?

Mark Twain

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_Jonathan Townsend_ | 08/01/12 06:52 PM | link | filter

Hi magicam, folks,

Re: "Who's Sam Clemens?": You may go to see Mark Twain or read works by Mark Twain but Sam Clemens is the guy who gets paid. :)

This entry into the larger dialog is about adding tools to the project.

I was shown something by a student in an anthropology course where they were asked to group artifacts and come to some conclusions about which are from the same culture and which might be from other cultures. To do that they were asked to build a table of characteristics and put check-marks in the column for each applicable for each item and then sort/group the rows to make our cases. I was asked to write a program to help do some sorting.

The graph approach mentioned earlier is similar - where each person, place or thing introduced gets a node, a point on the graph, and every connection, textual, physical or hypothetical becomes a line between two of those nodes. Some nodes will have lots of connecting edges and some will have next to none. The same kind of analysis as done using a table for the artifacts can then proceed and cases made for each path between the text and the person in question can be "weighed" in a sense.
PS and maybe not BS:
First, per agreement with our host I'm not going to distract from historical explorations or justify things using occult tools from other fields. I'll challenge stories that seem "just so" but I'm done suggesting authors from other species, planets, dimensions or why the text could be evidence of the big bang... on this thread. As another Jon likes to put it, "forward".

I'm about done with the story of the text per se. Some time ago I discussed the narrative here of "finding the ideal author of a text" and its relation to works by Eco and Borges. JLBorges had much to say about interpreting text by mis-attribution of authorship in his tale of Pierre Menard and the text of Don Quixote. He (Borges) also discussed the importance of the reader's needs in how a historical character is to be perceived in his tale "Three Versions of Judas". I'm fine with folks creating their ideal writer for the text as their preferred author. It's telling and that's fine too.

Last time around I discussed how applying Occam's Razor leads to "the printer (or his immediate circle) did it". That such a tale does not meet other's demand that the claimed model for the images was necessarily the same person as the contact for the printing as well as the sole author of the text is understandable. That's about the mythos desired by some in this community. One could distract by arguing rhetorically "Was someone named Kilroy the author and the artist for all those graffiti found?" - but not here/now on this visit to the thread. Let's leave off textual analysis and Occam's Razer which may cut too deep for some and instead explore using another tool used by researchers.

Jonathan raised some points (in the "nodes" post earlier today) that I think really were not addressed. I think he was raising the issue of whether there are some good topics for research that are for some reason being ignored, and that he suggested criteria that might be used for determining what should perhaps be explored.

It does occur to me that overall the "search for Erdnase" does seem quite unorganized - again, overall. Some people are undoubtedly very organized in their own search activities. (I am not, though.)

Back in June 2005 there was a little discussion (on this thread) of possibly tracking down the records from Erdnases bank. I have wondered whether anyone ever followed up on that. Maybe a broader idea was to check with all of the likely banks.
hasn't been answered unequivocally one way or another. I don't know much about genealogy, but I was under the impression that such questions were generally not impossible to find answers to. I gather that that issue (regarding the railroad man's wife) has been there for well over a decade.

Also, I kind of wonder about the E.S. Andrewss (the railroad mans) descendants. I would have thought them rather easy to track down. I guess I am wrong on that. But I dont think I have even heard of anyone attempting to find them.

**IMPORTANT: I am not even remotely criticizing anyone in this post. And I am not in this post challenging anyone, and I am not here asking anyone to do anything, or suggesting that they do anything!**

I would have thought that certain things would have been discussed a little more -- even if it is just people saying, "I haven't done this [for such and such a reason]."

Oh, also, the comments above may reflect incomplete knowledge on my part. (Maybe people have discussed these things in detail, for instance.)

--Tom Sawyer

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**Richard Hatch** | 08/02/12 12:54 AM | [link] | [filter]

Tom Sawyer wrote: Also, I kind of wonder about the E.S. Andrewss (the railroad mans) descendants. I would have thought them rather easy to track down. I guess I am wrong on that. But I dont think I have even heard of anyone attempting to find them.

The one photo I have of E. S. Andrews came from the widow of his last surviving heir (a grandson). She knew nothing about the book but did provide me with a copy of a short letter he had written to his infant grandson. Other than providing a sample of his handwriting, it didn’t seem too useful (content was not relevant to compare with Erdnase, alas).

Similarly I tracked down and spoke with two grandchildren of James DeWitt Andrews, a candidate I favored early on. Only one of the two had met him, and that was when she was an infant. Neither knew anything about the book.

I think at the time (this was about 10 years ago), I expected the grandkids to tell me that they had the original manuscript or a signed first edition or some other compelling clue. I was disappointed that was not the case in these instances, but you never know what you'll find until you look...

I also tried to track down bank records, which led me to the archivist of Bank One, the
was the Bank. It was one that M. D. Smith though the check he received might have been written on). Alas, I was told that no records from that period would have survived the many business changes, which was certainly disappointing. Jay Marshall had made similar inquiries at Chicago banks in the 1950s on behalf of Martin Gardner, with null results, but he was focused on Milton Franklin Andrews accounts and came up empty.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 08/02/12 01:55 AM | link | filter

Richard Hatch -- thanks for the great reply!

I saw that photo in your article, "Reading Erdnase Backwards," as well as in Hurt McDermott’s book on Erdnase, and wondered where that photo came from.

It’s a fabulous photo!

Thanks for that other information as well -- I was aware of little, if any, of it.

I suppose it is possible (though I am sure you have thought about this) that other relatives of Andrews might have some interesting information.

I am in possession of quite a number of old (like maybe 70 to 100 years old) photographs of relatives of my own, taken in Norway. (To be clear, the photos are of some of my own relatives.) I seriously doubt that any of my Norwegian relatives would know I have them. (My mother's parents were born in Norway.)

--Tom Sawyer

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**magicam** | 08/02/12 02:31 AM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:*

*CHS wrote:* And whos Sam Clemens?

Mark Twain

And who's Mark Twain?

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**Edwin Corrie** | 08/02/12 06:10 AM | link | filter

Wait, didn’t Mark Twain write about Tom Sawyer, who’s writing about Erdnase? I’m confused...
You have probably seen this, and if so sorry to be repetitive.

Geno

http://www.fourmilab.ch/etexts/www/drake ...ologue1903/

Richard Hatch | 08/02/12 09:16 AM | link | filter

Geno, although the catalog is listed as a 1903 Drake catalog, if one examines the entries, two books are listed in it as new for 1904 and one is listed as new for 1905! So I would have dated it as late 1904 or early 1905 based on those entries. Curious that it does not include (that I could see) Erdnase...

Jonathan Townsend | 08/02/12 09:49 AM | link | filter

Maybe I missed these items:
Are there diary/letter references to folks learning the blind shuffles from someone of even remotely similar description to the author of the text?

Are there contemporary reviews of the book? - dialog about its utility?

Tom Sawyer | 08/02/12 03:23 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

Concerning that "1903" Drake catalog, the "350-352 Wabash" address may place it around 1906 or later.

It looks to me as though it is a Drake catalog from the back of one of the books published by Drake. Not including the series of law books, it looks as though it lists 45 or so books.

Anyway, I consider such catalogs (in the back of many Drake books) to be more like regular advertisements, even though Drake calls the "1903" one (in the very first word) "Catalogue." (That may have been semi-routine for such lists.)

The actual original Drake catalogs for that early era that I have seen (in volumes of PTLA) were, as I recall, much larger format than the typical 12mo or so Drake book (such as The Expert at the Card Table). As I seem to recall, they may have been printed on glossy paper, and perhaps with colored ink. (Some Drake advertisements actually picture a catalog with a regular cover.)
considered scarce or even rare -- outside of libraries which have originals of the relevant volumes of PTLA. Of course, bound-up in PTLA, I guess they are not freestanding.

On the other hand, the ones in the backs of books are overall extremely common -- but the point I am trying to make is that I don't think that there is much similarity between the two general types.

A "Catalogue" in the back of a Drake book with a 1902 copyright date (Photography Self Taught) has six pages of illustrated advertisements for books, followed by a rather plain listing of about 100 books (all of which were "Practical Mechanical Books for Home Study"). I think their formal catalogs listed a larger number of books.

Another advertisement in the photography book shows the address 1006 Michigan Avenue. From The Editor, May 20, 1916, it looks like Drake moved there (the 1006 address) in 1916 -- so now I wish I had chosen an earlier book to discuss in this post.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Tom Sawyer** | 08/03/12 03:55 AM | link | filter

Hi All,

I thought I might mention at this time one of the reasons why I am not convinced that E.S. Andrews (the railroad man) is S.W. Erdnase.

I will start out by saying that there are some quite good arguments that support the proposition that he was Erdnase, and many of them were developed at some length by Richard Hatch in his article Reading Erdnase Backwards, and many have been discussed in some depth on this thread -- and elsewhere, for that matter.

Also, I am not super-comfortable about the views stated in this post -- I am just not all that sure of them. I think they are plausible, but they are pretty subjective. I guess that some of the comments below are based to some extent on stereotypes, or preconceived views on what S.W. Erdnase should look like.

Anyway, the point I want to mention in this post has to do with the photograph of E.S. Andrews and his family. The photograph was discovered by Richard Hatch, as discussed recently on this thread. The places I have seen the photograph are:

1. Richard Hatchs article Reading Erdnase Backwards

2. Hurt McDermotts book *Artifice, Ruse & Erdnase* (a less-cropped version of the
I suppose that the first issue that may exist is whether the photograph has any probative value whatsoever in connection with the authorship controversy. Some people might say that it has no such value whatsoever, because, hey, it just shows a man and his family, and that, ipso facto, such a photo can't prove anything as to whether he wrote the book. (I suppose that a photograph could show certain physical attributes that might render it highly unlikely that a person portrayed could have written the book. But I am speaking generally.)

On the other hand, I think such things are a matter of degree. If you had photographs of people with certain widely varying occupations, you might be able to tell which person was which at a glance (depending on the occupations). I know there are probably many exceptions which make it hard to generalize, but one were a guitar-player in a rock band, and the other were a professional weightlifter, I imagine that typically you would be able to tell which was which from typical photographs.

So, maybe it is a matter of degree. In the case of the E.S. Andrews photograph, the indicators -- if they exist -- are apt to be somewhat subtle.

There is essentially nothing about the photograph, in my mind, that supports the idea that this E.S. Andrews was Erdnase. Maybe if it were a photo of Andrews and his pals, hanging around the railroad station, that would be different. But no, it shows him, next to his (second) wife, with his daughter and son. A family like that doesn't usually just appear without significant time and effort by (I would suppose in this case) both parents, and a reasonable conclusion might be that Andrews spent a lot of time with his family, and not in practicing card sleights.

I realize that wonderful families have been raised under widely varying circumstances. I am just saying that from this photograph, I infer that both parents were closely involved in raising the children. The main reasons I say this are perhaps too subtle and involved to easily go into in this post.

I have seen enough old photographs to be of the opinion that something of the personality of the people depicted sometimes shows through, even in somewhat serious, posed photographs. Admittedly, this often could be my imagination. But I think it does in this case -- and I cannot easily reconcile that with the personality of S.W. Erdnase as apparently (or possibly) demonstrated by certain aspects of Erdnases book.

I guess that most people interested in the Erdnase authorship questions have seen photographs of W.E. Sanders and Milton Franklin Andrews. Such photos seem of a completely different genre from the E.S. Andrews photograph. I don't particularly think either of them (W.E.S. or M.F.A.) is Erdnase, but at least (to my mind) the
As to concrete things, it seems pretty plain that, in the photograph located by Richard Hatch, Dollie (Andrews's second wife) is smiling. It also appears to me that Andrews is smiling slightly. And his daughter seems to have the trace of a smile. This all seems inconsistent with some of Erdnase's often dry, and sometimes (I believe) negative, way of expressing himself.

Now that I have read through the foregoing, I see that it only scratches the surface and may not be very persuasive. But I think it sketches the basic idea. The photograph does not fit my idea of S.W. Erdnase, and it does not fit my idea of S.W. Erdnase's family.

In another post, I may get into certain things I have read about E.S. Andrews which seem to support the above view of who he was. In other words, I am not basing the foregoing strictly on my interpretation of the photograph -- I think my interpretation has been colored by some things I have read.

Also, I fully realize that photographs can be very deceiving. But if the Richard Hatch photograph is to be treated as being even in the least bit helpful in resolving the S.W. Erdnase authorship questions, well, then it must mean something, even if the suggestions it makes are extremely weak and unconvincing. And to me, even if ever so weakly, it suggests that E.S. Andrews is not Erdnase.

--Tom Sawyer

Bill Mullins | 08/03/12 11:38 AM | link | filter

When Richard sent me a copy of the photo a couple of years ago, he estimated its date as 1907 or so. A person can change a lot in five years.

Also, if a man travels a bunch, then surely he would be happy to be home in the bosom of his family.

And even really morose, dry, cynical, negative people can put on a smile for the few seconds it takes to make a photograph.

I guess I'm saying that I don't interpret the (apparently) pleasant demeanors of Mr. and Mrs. Andrews as being evidence that Andrews was not Erdnase. (nor do I find it to be evidence that he was Erdnase -- the photo is mute on the issue, and serves only to show what the Andrews family looked like)

Richard Hatch | 08/03/12 11:59 AM | link | filter

The only information I draw from the photo concerning the identity issue is that it seems to support his candidacy weakly on the height issue, based on the recollection of
and slightly shorter than his two teenage kids, supporting the idea that he was not tall (relatively speaking!). Other than that, I have a hard time drawing any conclusions from it on the candidacy issue. (At one point I tried to estimate his height by measuring it against the width of the bricks - if that's what they are, assumed to be a standard size, on the structure behind them. I came up with a height of 5'6", exactly the height recalled by Smith. I give this no weight whatsoever. But it was fun!)

Roger M. | 08/03/12 01:05 PM | link | filter

I believe most folks are capable of some serious chameleon-like behavior....be it good, or bad :)

It seems almost any newspaper story with a personal bent speaks to the ability of pretty much anybody to morph (if even temporarily) into something that leaves even people who know them well saying "I'd have never believed he/she was capable of something like that".

There are so many examples of pictures of people looking peaceful and happy, those pictures usually having been published after that person has done something quite unappealing.

That said, I'm not sure pictures are a good measuring tool as to what a person might be capable of. I recall seeing the Sanders picture for the first time, and having it send a few shivers up my spine...thinking that I may be looking at Erdnase. In the end though, the evidence itself (despite my "feelings" towards the picture) seemed less than compelling.

SwanJr | 08/04/12 10:44 PM | link | filter

Richard Hatch wrote:

magicam wrote:
Hi Clay, I fully agree that if McKinney did indeed have a large inventory of The Expert on hand when they declared bankruptcy, that could have been one source of the half price copies. The newspaper notices announcing their pending bankruptcy mention a law firm that had an inventory list of their assets. Wish someone in Chicago could track that list down!

All right, Richard, I'll run down to the Chicago Historical Society and see if this law
Hi All,

There are now a large number of facts that have been stated on this thread and elsewhere relating to the S.W. Erdnase authorship controversy. Personally, it would be an exaggeration for me to say that I am "having trouble" keeping them straight -- because I am NOT keeping them straight. Also, I have not seen everything relating to the topic.

But I don't think I have ever seen the name of any law firm in connection with the James McKinney (the apparent printer of the book) bankruptcy. A rather interesting post by Bill Mullins in early 2008 quotes from a 1903 item that mentions The Equitable Trust Company as "Receiver in Bankruptcy for the Estate of James McKinney."

That company was also mentioned by Richard Hatch in his article "Reading Erdnase Backwards."

However, another highly germane post on this thread, by Richard Lane, is this one: Richard Lane post.

I gather that Richard Lane has posted many times on the Genii Forum, but I didn't see any Erdnase posts from him after the one mentioned.

--Tom Sawyer

Joe Pecore | 08/05/12 09:18 AM | link | filter

Tom Sawyer wrote: There are now a large number of facts that have been stated on this thread and elsewhere relating to the S.W. Erdnase authorship controversy. Personally, it would be an exaggeration for me to say that I am "having trouble" keeping them straight -- because I am NOT keeping them straight.

Is there any free software out there (possibly used by detectives) for keeping track of facts, theories, etc. and help with analyzing their relationships? I'd help set it up if it was something that could be used on a server.

You could use MagicPedia to start collecting some of data
software for debating theories and analyzing relationships.

**Bill Mullins** | 08/05/12 11:24 AM | link | filter

Perhaps Mind Mapping tools? like FreeMind?

I've never used this software, or the technique, although I seem to recall Roberto Giobbi using in his Dai Vernon notes.

**Joe Pecore** | 08/05/12 11:30 AM | link | filter

I had integrated a mindmapping tool into MagicPedia, which will automatically mindmap the information on the page and links to and from the page. To see the Erdnase MindMap: [http://geniimagazine.com/mindmap/index...ic=erdnase](http://geniimagazine.com/mindmap/index...ic=erdnase)

Not sure how helpful it is or not.

**Richard Hatch** | 08/05/12 04:10 PM | link | filter

Tom Sawyer wrote: But I don’t think I have ever seen the name of any law firm in connection with the James McKinney (the apparent printer of the book) bankruptcy. A rather interesting post by Bill Mullins in early 2008 quotes from a 1903 item that mentions The Equitable Trust Company as "Receiver in Bankruptcy for the Estate of James McKinney."

My bad, I was working from memory when I said "law firm" and it was indeed the entry found by Bill Mullins that I was thinking of, as they note at the end:

"An inventory of the property of said estate may be seen at the office of the undersigned, No. 152 Monroe street, Chicago, Illinois, and the property is open to inspection at the shop lately occupied by said bankrupt, No. 73 Plymouth Place, Chicago, Illinois.

THE EQUITABLE TRUST COMPANY
Receiver in Bankruptcy of the Estate of James McKinney."

Naturally it would be interesting to learn if their inventory included copies of Erdnase and equally interesting who purchased them.

Alas, it appears Richard Lane searched in vain for those records, but perhaps Hurt McDermott will be more successful in turning something up? Good luck, Hurt, and thanks for looking!
Bankruptcy records might be found in the records of the receiver; in the records of McKinney’s attorney (if he had one); and on file with the relevant court.

Joe Pecore | 08/05/12 09:50 PM | link | filter

I found the free online tool [http://debategraph.org/](http://debategraph.org/) which provides a way for "geographically distributed groups to collaborate in thinking through complex issues".

It seems like it might be useful for organizing all the issues and positions found in this thread.

I created a "map" for Erdnase to check out it’s capabilities. I made it "public" and it’s at [http://debategraph.org/who_was_erdnase](http://debategraph.org/who_was_erdnase) if anyone else would like to register (for free) and check it out.

Tom Sawyer | 08/07/12 04:24 AM | link | filter

Hi All,

I have been thinking a little about some of the things that (in my view) are not known with certainty about *The Expert at the Card Table* (when one is looking only at the book itself). I know that topic has been explored on this thread, but there could be something new below.

Of course, we do know that the title page of the book says by S.W. Erdnase.

But I don’t think anyone really knows (just from the book) what that means. It could refer to someone named S.W. Erdnase (highly unlikely). It could refer to someone named E.S. Andrews (the reversal) or someone whose name is otherwise made up of those letters. Or it could refer to someone else. But if it does refer to any of those people, that does not appear to be demonstrated by the wording of the title page.

But we don’t even know *(from that title page wording)* that one specific person (as opposed to more than one person) wrote the book.

Some people more or less assume that one person wrote it, the basic position being, I suppose, that there is not much proof that more than one person wrote it. And I think that maybe some people look at Occam’s Razor and figure that the simplest explanation is that there was one author, maybe somehow based in part on the fact that the title page does not list multiple authors.

And yet . . .
or which have the name of "Professor Lorento," or which perhaps name other authors, where we know that is not a very good representation of the authorship. In fact, I suspect that some collectors could name many magic books for which the title page is not a very good guide as to who the author was (even apart from ghostwritten books and books written under pen names).

You might say, well, the Romanoff book basically has somewhat-edited Hoffmann material (i.e., material by one author). I think that is so, but I believe that the Lorento book *Amateur Amusements* has material by more than one author.

By the way, those who are interested can get some idea of how "messy" things sometimes can be regarding magic-book authorship by looking at Charles L. Rulfs’s fine article *"Origins of Some Conjuring Works,"* which was originally published in *Magicol*. I remember when I first saw that article (back in the olden days, when I was an MCA member), and, wow, to me it was like Greek! But it is really a great article.

We also know that the Erdnase book says, Published by the Author, but we don’t know exactly what that means. This has been discussed at length elsewhere in this thread, but in the end there are varying sensible opinions.

Those two facts (author and publisher) are actually pretty basic facts to be lacking definite information upon.

I’m not speaking for Jonathan Townsend, but I suspect that it is in part the existence of considerations such as the foregoing that lead him away from the one-author hypothesis.

If one considers that magic classic, *Modern Magic*, by Professor Hoffmann, the situation is vastly different. There exists a ton of evidence of various types, which confirm Hoffmanns authorship of the book. Hoffmanns contract with Routledge, in Hoffmanns handwriting, exists, or did back when Roland Winder saw it. A letter from Hoffmann to a relative, transmitting a copy of the book and discussing it a little, was in Adrian Smiths collection. Hoffmann discussed his authorship of the book in an article by George Knight in 1896, and Hoffmann himself stated a similar account of his authorship in one of Will Goldstons annuals.

So, if the usual Hoffmann title-page (from, say, Routledge) is at one end of the spectrum, then I suppose that the title page of *The Expert at the Card Table* is at the other end.

(I could not find my copy of the Lorento book to confirm what I said about it above, but an advertisement for the book almost confirms the "authorship" part of what I said about it.)
Joe Pecore wrote: I found the free online tool http://debategraph.org/ which provides a way for "geographically distributed groups to collaborate in thinking through complex issues".

It seems like it might be useful for organizing all the issues and positions found in this thread.

I created a "map" for Erdnase to check out it's capabilities. I made it "public" and it's at http://debategraph.org/who_was_erdnase if anyone else would like to register (for free) and check it out.

Thanks, great find. Impressive resource. We now have both rhetorical and graphical tools at our disposal. Graph Theory may offer some useful results to apply along with Aristotle's Logic. Do elegant arguments correspond to elegant graphs? Do specific path lengths and cycles factor in persuasive argumentation? IE does effective argumentation come in recognizable shapes?

Jon

Richard Evans | 08/07/12 05:29 PM | link | filter

Interesting, Tom. Things can be made even messier with the 'anagram' of the author's name in order to make the case for multiple authors.

I don't think the following possibility has been discussed previously -

Although most people have traditionally reversed the 'SW ERDNASE' to create 'ES ANDREWS', the name can also be reversed in a slightly different way: by reversing pairs of letters around the central letters 'DNA', making the author(s):

SW ERDNASE --> WS ER and ES

Several names spring to mind immediately!

There are several different ways the pairings can be read in this way and could possibly explain why the plain reversal is a red herring (referencing the reversal of the book's title: 'and Ruse [Andrews] Subterfuge').

Slightly lateral thinking, but food for thought...
Hi All,

This post is an effort to clarify things a little regarding my discussion of Professor Hoffmann in my most recent post on this thread.

Jonathan Townsend very kindly alerted me to the fact that my post did not mention the other identity issue relating to Professor Hoffmann, namely the fact that "Professor Hoffmann" was a pen name that referred to Angelo Lewis.

That's a great point, especially since the post deals with identity issues.

Thus, in some ways, Professor Hoffmann was not the greatest example for me to use. That is to say, some people might say, "Fine, we know that Professor Hoffmann wrote Modern Magic, but how do we know who Professor Hoffmann was?"

For magicians today, the names of Professor Hoffmann and Angelo John Lewis are nearly synonymous, and the fact that they were the same person is an unshakeable "truth."

But at one time, the mysteries surrounding his real name were pretty profound, for many of his readers, especially in the early days.

Also, I noticed that two of the items of "proof" I mentioned (the handwritten contract and the letter to a relative) would prove that Angelo Lewis wrote the book -- not necessarily that Professor Hoffmann did so, because neither specified his pen name!

But the fact that Angelo Lewis and Professor Hoffmann were the same can be shown conclusively by various other items of evidence.

To me, it has long been almost an axiom that they are the same person. For a long time, I have been interested in Hoffmann's pen name, as part of a wider interest in Angelo Lewis and his works.

One of my theories was that Hoffmann first became comfortable with minimizing the
The first edition of *Conjurer Dick*, which was published in late 1885, carried both his pen name and his real name on the title page. This was shortly after Lewis had won a $500 short-story prize offered by *The Youth's Companion*. His authorship of the short story (“Better than Victory”) was also mentioned on that title page.

I actually think he probably wanted to drop the use of the pen name at that time, but if so, that was a wish that was not fulfilled.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Tom Sawyer** | 08/08/12 03:03 AM | link | filter

Well, the recent post by Richard Evans shows that the possibilities of the title page have not been exhausted.

--Tom

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 08/08/12 10:01 AM | link | filter

The letter pairing idea offers intriguing possibilities. Is there any reference to nuclein in the erdnease text? In this case, since Johann Friedrich Miescher’s discovery of 1871 was not so well known, I’m less than convinced that DNA and base pairing is a decryption key.

One may as well consider the DNA as "and" in reflection and go from there using both two and three letter combinations for initials.

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**Asser Andersen** | 08/08/12 12:31 PM | link | filter

*Jonathan Townsend wrote:* The letter pairing idea offers intriguing possibilities. Is there any reference to nuclein in the erdnease text? In this case, since Johann Friedrich Miescher’s discovery of 1871 was not so well known, I’m less than convinced that DNA and base pairing is a decryption key.

One may as well consider the DNA as "and" in reflection and go from there using both two and three letter combinations for initials.

The term DNA was introduced in the 1920’s and the concept of base pairing was not known before Watson & Crick published their classical discovery of the structure of DNA in 1953, so I think that interpretation of Erdnase is unlikely :(
Richard Evans wrote: Although most people have traditionally reversed the 'SW ERDNASE' to create 'ES ANDREWS', the name can also be reversed in a slightly different way: by reversing pairs of letters around the central letters 'DNA', making the author(s):

SW ERDNASE --> WS ER and ES

Perhaps I misunderstand (which wouldn't surprise me!), but wouldn't reversing the pairs around the DNA yield WS RE and ES (not WS ER and ES)? Gotta say my "intuition" tells me that such parsing of the title page can yield almost any desired result and is likely to be more distracting than productive. I think the simple reversal of the pseudonym is unlikely to be a coincidence, so the question becomes, is it a clue (and if so, what does the clue tell us) or is it a "red herring"?

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Tom Sawyer | 08/08/12 02:02 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

Still on the subject of the title page, Clay Shevlin, in an earlier post, drew attention to the use of three words with pretty similar meanings ("Artifice," "Ruse," and "Subterfuge").

Even if you place some significance on the "Ruse and" reversal producing "and Ruse" (Andrews), that still would not explain the use of three words, since the title could have been (say) *Ruse and Subterfuge at the Card Table*, and the "Ruse and" would be preserved.

In short, I can't remember seeing any purported explanations of the use of those three words.

Also, if I had been putting that title page together, I think I would have placed . . .

ARTIFICE, RUSE,

. . . on the first line. There was a ton of space for that.

And it seems a little unforeseen that there are zero commas in the title shown on the title page.
Thanks for the comments. I'm by no means trying to say that the different way of reversing Erdnase's name is in any way proof of multiple authorship: merely an observation that the 'pseudonym' can be looked at in a slightly different way and that this throws up other possibilities.

There was an error in my previous post about the pairings, hopefully this will set that straight -

Richard Hatch wrote: Perhaps I misunderstand (which wouldn't surprise me!), but wouldn't reversing the pairs around the DNA yield WS RE and ES (not WS ER and ES)? Gotta say my "intuition" tells me that such parsing of the title page can yield almost any desired result and is likely to be more distracting than productive.
I think the simple reversal of the pseudonym is unlikely to be a coincidence, so the question becomes, is it a clue (and if so, what does the clue tell us) or is it a "red herring"?

Thanks, Dick: Completely agree that the simple reversal of the name is by far the most likely solution. And thanks for pointing out my typo.

As with other interpretations of the 'anagram' there different permutations. I just found it interesting that the central letters 'DNA' could be reversed to form 'AND', which led to other possible interpretations. I think there are only two ways of doing this though:

SW ERDNASE = SW ER DNA SE

You could keep the three pairs of 'initials' in the same order and just reverse the 'DNA', making:
SW ER and SE

Or, you could reverse each of the 'sets' of letters, making;
WS RE and ES
(I forgot to reverse the 'ER' in my previous post)

I agree with others that there may be a clue in the difference between the cover title (TEATCT) and the title on the first page (AR&S ATCT) - though this could simply have
However, might there also be a case to argue that the use of three synonyms in the registered title alludes to multiple authors – eponymously called 'Artifice', 'Ruse' and 'Subterfuge', and the fact that all three are 'at the Card Table'? Just putting that one out there for consideration!

Richard

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/08/12 05:29 PM | [link] | [filter]

We are assuming that S W Erdnase is
1. A pseudonym and
2. An anagram or other combination of letters that reflect the real author(s) names or initials.

If we go from Erdnase to presumed names/initials of author(s), we may come up with something that we can convince ourselves makes sense, and settle on a name. But that is backwards from what the original author did -- he went from his name(s)/initials, and came up with S. W. Erdnase.

Now to me, "S. W. Erdnase" is such a contrived sounding name that you have to have an explanation for why the original author ended up there. For E. S. Andrews, it's easy -- a simple reversal. For Wilbur Edgerton Sanders, Tom Sawyer and David Alexander provide an answer -- "Erdnase" can be read as German for "earth nose", and Sanders was a mining engineer whose job it was to sniff out high-grade ores.

But if you come up with other names or initials that might "work", you have to justify them as well. If you have three magicians (Walter Scott, Richard Evans, and Edwin Sachs) and you surmise that they took their initials and cobbled them into "S. W. Erdnase", it seems to me that you also have to answer the question of why they took that particular anagramatic pseudonym, instead of something that would sound more natural, like "Ward Essen" or "Dan Sewers" or "Ed Warness" or something.

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**Richard Evans** | 08/08/12 05:43 PM | [link] | [filter]

*Bill Mullins wrote:* But if you come up with other names or initials that might "work", you have to justify them as well. If you have three magicians (Walter Scott, Richard Evans, and Edwin Sachs) and you surmise that they took their initials and cobbled them into "S. W. Erdnase", it seems to me that you also have to answer the question of why they took that particular anagramatic pseudonym, instead of something that would sound more
Agree, but the reversal as described is a way of preserving the three (hypothetical!) authors' initials in the correct order within the pseudonym. That is the justification in this case.

It comes back to the interesting thought about psudonymous authors somehow half-wanting to conceal their true name while at the same time wishing to recognise it themselves. If Erdnase was ES Andrews, he could equally have buried his identity in a more complex (and plausible?) anagram.

Jonathan Townsend 08/08/12 06:15 PM | link | filter

Aside from those assumptions discussed elsewhere something about ES and REWS simply does not satisfy. The "expert" being a fourth player at the table with ES, RE and WS appeals though to be fair it also seems too contrived IMHO.

Richard Evans 08/08/12 06:27 PM | link | filter

Sorry, to clarify -

I wasn't suggesting the 'Expert' as a fourth author - that would indeed be a step too far from what is already something of a left-field idea! I was simply observing a discrepancy: that the cover title (The Expert) suggests a single author, while the title page (Artifice, Ruse and Subterfuge) could possibly be interpreted as supporting the case for three authors...if you chose to take on the multi-author case as presented.

Roger M. 08/09/12 12:08 AM | link | filter

Some thoughts and questions about the check Erdnase wrote to M.D. Smith in order to pay for the illustrations.

That Erdnase used a (possibly First National) check to pay Smith for the illustrations is known through a first party reference made by Smith in one of his letters to Martin Gardner. That he may have used other checks from the (possibly) First National to pay for printing and binding is likely, but not confirmed in the same sense as M.D. Smith saying, "he paid me by check". The use of cancelled checks could have been one of the methods Mr. Erdnase might have used to support his copyright if he were required to.

Personalized checks were first used in the UK in the early 1800's, and were commonplace in the UK and North America in 1902.
My question is, does M.D. Smith take a counter check or a personalized check from Erdnase?

As the check was numbered #1, and if Erdnase knew that checks were a worthy paper trail were he ever required to prove copyright (which he might need to do if he were to sell the rights to the book) it would seem that the check would have had to be personalized.

If it was personalized, what name was it personalized with?

Although M.D. Smith doesn't outright state that the check was personalized (and thus whose name it might have been personalized with), he does strongly imply through a comment made in his letter to Gardner on October 18, 1949 that the check may have very probably been a key piece of evidence when he says "I should have framed that check".

Why does Smith believe the check to be such a strong piece of evidence? What exactly is written or printed on it that he might think would be of great assistance to Gardner? It's 1949, can M.D. Smith be thinking of handwriting analysis in the sense we think of it today? (something that check could prove invaluable for in 2012, if not to prove who Erdnase was, but who he wasn't :))

If it’s assumed that the check wasn’t a counter check, but was in fact personalized, was it personalized with S.W. Erdnase, or with something else? (Smith doesn't comment directly on this question, but once again he strongly implies "something" is important about the check through his statement re: framing the check).

Banking in 1902 would be entirely a "hand done" affair. I wonder what the identification required might be to open a checking account in 1902?

If there were no ID requirement, and one was simply taken at their word, with their word supported through an initial cash deposit......then Erdnase would have simply have said "I'm S.W. Erdnase" and deposited some cash. One might posit that he would have to supply something beyond S.W. though, perhaps indicating to the teller one or both of the names those initials stood for........is this (the given names) what M.D. Smith thought might be of such great value?

But......if there actually were any form of I.D. required to open a checking account in 1902, it would imply that Mr. Erdnase would have had to engaged in the creation of some sort of fraudulent identification, either having made it himself, or having it made for him.

It would seem near impossible that the check was drawn on an account of the authors actual name, with that name personalized on the check........although once again, M.D.
from the reference to it being #1 of a series......and he did feel that something on the check would have made it worth framing, and would have (as he implied in his letter to Gardner) perhaps been the key to Gardners search.

A by-product of this search vector might be a discovery as to what degree Mr. Erdnase went about Chicago as "Mr. Erdnase". There is the distinct possibility that he was only "Mr. Erdnase" for an hour or so in grand total......throughout the entire process. He'd only need the masquerade for a bit of banking, a bit of drawing, checking into a hotel room, and perhaps a bit of printing and binding.

But there is also the possibility that he was "Mr. Erdnase" on a fairly fulltime basis, writing checks as Mr. Erdnase, and becoming known to various and sundry folks (like the H.C. Evans clan) as S.W. Erdnase.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 08/10/12 01:32 AM | link | filter

Hi All,

On the subject of the title page . . .

I have the impression that a number of people have assumed that S.W. Erdnase himself wrote the wording of the title page of the first edition. However, I do not recollect ever having read any of the reasons why anyone believed that to be true. Maybe reasons have been set forth -- but I don't remember seeing any.

To me, an analysis of the title page that seems to give forth clues as to authorship might be considered (by some people) to be incomplete without some proof that Erdnase wrote the title page -- or without some indication of why the "authorship" of the title page doesn't matter.

This always vaguely bothered me. If someone found something unequivocal and undeniable about the title page, like some hidden code that explained some things in detail, that would be one thing. But for the most part, I would have been more comfortable if I had established a solid premise that Erdnase was responsible for the title page wording -- other than, "He wrote the book, so, hey, he wrote the title page."

After a little research, I came up with a few things which to me make it fairly likely that Erdnase was at least largely responsible for the wording of the title page. Numbers below in parentheses are page numbers. Again, the following may be old news to many.

1. All three of the main synonyms (or semi-synonyms) -- the first three words of the title, namely "artifice," "ruse," and "subterfuge" -- are mentioned in the text.
2. The phrase "card table" is used in the text.

3. The word "calendar" is used in the text: "single card feat in the whole calendar" (122) and "every slight in the calendar" (127).

4. The word "expedient" is used at least twice (96 and 116).

5. The word "manoeuvre" is used at least once (137).

6. The word "stratagem" (correctly spelled) is used at least once (167).

7. The phrase "card handler" is used several times in the book.

Some may say, "Wow, Tom, that's pretty flimsy proof."

And maybe it is.

I think the most compelling item is number 3, relating to the use of the word "calendar."

--Tom Sawyer

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**magicam** | 08/10/12 02:16 PM | [link] | [filter]

^^^ Thoughtful post, Tom! Thank you.

I have the impression that a number of people have assumed that S.W. Erdnase himself wrote the wording of the title page of the first edition. However, I do not recollect ever having read any of the reasons why anyone believed that to be true. Maybe reasons have been set forth -- but I don't remember seeing any.

To me, an analysis of the title page that seems to give forth clues as to authorship might be considered (by some people) to be incomplete without some proof that Erdnase wrote the title page -- or without some indication of why the "authorship" of the title page doesn't matter.

This always vaguely bothered me. If someone found something unequivocal and undeniable about the title page, like some hidden code that explained some things in detail, that would be one thing. But for the most part, I would have been more comfortable if I had established a solid premise that Erdnase was responsible for the title page wording -- other
Spot-on.

From a rather run-of-the-mill Published by the Author statement on the title page, a whole host of (as yet) unproven assumptions have been made, e.g., that the author designed the title page and selected its wording, and that the author had something to do with the actual sales of the book, either retail or wholesale.

That said, IMHO Toms points are worthy considerations for the premise that the author did have something to do with at least the wording of the full title.

In the spirit of spit-balling

Does anyone know much about McKinney? What other books did he print? What did those books look like? How were they designed and composed? What if we discovered that some of McKinneys work was very similar in look and feel to The Expert?

Bill Mullins | 08/10/12 03:05 PM | link | filter

I think Tom has squeezed the title page text about as hard as it can be, and his analysis seems sound to me.

A couple of other notes: "Slight" for "sleight" appears on the title page text, and also in the body of the book (on pp. 125, 127 (5 times), 128 (3x), 137, 149 and 177. However, the body also uses "sleight" on pp. 8, 12, 24, 60, 82, 152, 153, 169, 171 (3x), 172, 175, 185, 191 (2x), 194, 197, 200, 202, 204

Using the Google Books N-Gram viewer, "slight of hand" was just as common as "sleight of hand" in the first part of the 19th century, and then "sleight of hand" started to dominate at 1820 or so; by 1902, "sleight of hand" looks to be about ten times as common as "slight of hand".

(Note that the CARC "bible edition" page numbers don't always correspond to the original page numbers, and that they "corrected" the "slight" on original pp. 125, 127, 128 137 to "sleight" on bible pp. 127 129 130 140)

Is it of significance that all uses in the body of the book that use "slight" are in the legerdemain/card tricks sections? The uses in the card table artifice sections all are of the conventional spelling "sleight". The body of the book uses the word "magician" twice, both times in the magic sections, while "conjurer" appears in both the magic and gambling sections. Others have surmised that the two sections were written by different people, but I'm not aware of any other quantitative analyses.
Does anyone know much about McKinney? What other books did he print? What did those books look like? How were they designed and composed? What if we discovered that some of McKinney's work was very similar in look and feel to The Expert?

How would one identify other McKinney printed books?. And remember, we are only assuming that McKinney printed Expert (from his name on the copyright application, from Adrian Plate's notation that a copy had been sold by McKinney, and from the connection between Galloway, who owned a copy, and McKinney, for whom he worked).

I've done a fair amount of research on McKinney (and his company), including tracking down and speaking to one of his grandsons. I also own a copy of another book he printed, *Moon Children* by Laura Dayton Fessende. It is an illustrated children's book, published in Chicago in 1902 by Jamieson Higgins Co. It bears no resemblance to Erdnase that I can see: different size (much larger), different paper (much thicker), full color illustrated pages. Opposite the title page in green ink is printed: "Press of James McKinney & Co., 73-75 Plymouth Place, Chicago." That book is not too hard to obtain. I believe there are other books he printed and similarly noted, but this is the one that comes up first in search engines. I believe someone here on the forum was first to point this out to me (Richard Lane or Richard Evans, perhaps?)

_The Printing Trade News_ Dec 12, 1911 p 31
"Since James McKinney died the business of McKinney & Co., 618 Sherman street, Chicago, has been carried on by the widow. This adds another to the list of ladies who manage printing establishments."

Hi All,

The "Press of James McKinney & Co., Chicago" also printed *Fuzzy Four-Footed Folks*, by Ada May Krecker (Chicago, Jamieson-Higgins Co.).
The front cover is very different from that of *The Expert at the Card Table*.

The title page is somewhat similar to certain title-page designs of Drake books that use rectangles -- not saying that is necessarily important, just saying it is so.

Also, here is a link to a Yale University Library [catalog entry](http://www.library.yale.edu/catalog) for *Old Mother Hubbard*, printed by McKinney. The listing shows Chicago Book Binding Co. as the binder (not McKinney).

--Tom Sawyer

**Richard Hatch** | 08/11/12 02:05 AM | link | filter

Here's a listing for the OLD MOTHER HUBBARD book printed by McKinney for sale from a German vendor: [http://www.en.zvab.com/displayBookDetail ... 222&ref=bf](http://www.en.zvab.com/displayBookDetail ... 222&ref=bf)

The cover and taped spine binding appear quite similar to that on the copy of Moon Children that I have. Jamieson-Higgins also published YANKEE MOTHER GOOSE by Benjamin F. Cobb in 1902. This same author in 1902 had a book published in Chicago that was illustrated by Marshall D. Smith. If (as seems likely) YANKEE MOTHER GOOSE was printed by McKinney, perhaps the Cobb-McKinney-Smith connection might yield useful information if it can be developed. Gardner-Whaley-Busby speculated that author had likely been put in touch with the illustrator by the printer. According to a 1903 entry in Bookseller, volume 8, which may be found on Google books, Jamieson-Higgins introduced a number of juveniles in 1902 and failed that same season (perhaps contributing to the bankruptcy of McKinney?). Their line of copyrighted juveniles was taken over by Hurst & Co., perhaps not coincidentally the publishers of B. F. Cobb's books illustrated by Marshall D. Smith...

**Tom Sawyer** | 08/11/12 01:52 PM | link | filter

Richard Hatch:

That is a great post immediately above this one -- regarding *Old Mother Hubbard, Yankee Mother Goose*, Jamieson-Higgins, Benjamin F. Cobb, and M.D. Smith.

I found the following, from *The Bookseller*, Volume 8, which you mention, quite fascinating. It is from the January 1903 issue:

**FAILURE OF JAMIESON-HIGGINS COMPANY.**
the hands of George W. Stanford as receiver by Judge Kohlsaat on December 23. The house was organized in 1900 by Charles Higgins and Samuel W. Jamieson, and had of late made a specialty of new juvenile books with colored pictures. Indications have pointed to this failure for some months back, but it was hoped that the holiday sales would enable the company to tide over the danger.

The house was tangled up with the printing business of James Kinney, which is also in the hands of a receiver. Mr. Kinney is said to be a heavy stockholder in the publishing business. Liabilities are placed at about $40,000, with assets nominally valued at $30,000. The books show to be due by the company in open accounts $4,231.27, notes $31,791.60. Books sold on consignment all over the country, with a small stock on hand, plates and copyrights comprise the principal assets.

There may be a few implications there as to the types of things that McKinney's had available, or didn't have available, at the time of the McKinney bankruptcy. Of course, Jamieson-Higgins was a publisher, and McKinney a printer.

Maybe it is too obvious to mention, but it is my assumption that "James Kinney" is "our" James McKinney. (If he is not, that would certainly be an unforeseen wrinkle.)

If McKinney was a creditor of Jamieson-Higgins, the latter's financial condition probably didn't help McKinney. If, as hinted in the article, McKinney was a "heavy stockholder" in Jamieson-Higgins, and since Jamieson-Higgins was stated to be "tangled up with the printing business of James Kinney," I find it hard to speculate upon the impact each business had upon the other!

--Tom Sawyer

Bill Mullins | 08/11/12 04:12 PM | link | filter

I concur that "James Kinney" found by Tom Sawyer is in fact "James McKinney", the printer.

The next statement in the passage quoted by Tom is

The receiver has advertised for bids for the whole or any part of the assets, to be received up to January 19.

This would have been Jan 19, 1903; it was Jan 30 of 1903 when James McKinney's bankruptcy was announced in the Chicago Tribune.

Looks possible that the bankruptcy of Jamieson-Higgins dominoed into the
From _Publisher's Weekly_ Mar 28 1903, p 908

The assets of the Jamieson-Higgins Company were sold on the 10th inst., the Western News Company buying most of the books and plates.

Other contemporary articles and ads indicate that Hurst & Co. of New York bought the plates of JH. Hurst may be a subdivision or imprint of Western News.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 08/11/12 09:49 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

Here are a few follow-up comments on McKinney.

I have long thought -- and I am not the only one -- that an intense investigation of James McKinney, including those whom he worked for, and those who worked for him, and of people who worked near him (for example, other printers), might yield significant results. I think Jonathan Townsend has suggested basically the same thing, but for some reason the idea does not seem to have gained much footing (as far as I know).

Even if everything relating to McKinney’s own records has disappeared, one might think that something findable and useful relating to other businesses in the area might exist -- such as records of the binder of the book (if the binder was not McKinney). But interestingly, it does not appear to be generally known whether McKinney bound the book, or whether printers in that place and time normally had binding capabilities!

Of course, all this kind of assumes James McKinney & Co. printed the book, which, as Bill Mullins points out, is not known for certain -- although I suppose the company must have had some relationship to the book.

The following is a greatly shortened (and maybe a little edited) extract from a post I made on my old blog on S.W. Erdnase (now not viewable):

> Although a lot of evidence is now gone, there must be many records public records, newspapers, and periodicals, for example that now are in essence permanent. Even if the results might do nothing whatsoever to advance the Erdnase-identity investigation, at least some interesting information relating to the era and vicinity could probably be found.

For example, I see on the website of the University of Notre Dame Archives that the university is in possession of an archive of Notre Dame Presidents.
from 1895 a letter from James McKinney, The Gothic Printing House. So that might be a means of determining James McKinney’s handwriting, or possibly at least his signature, for comparison to the writing on the Erdnase copyright application.

Advertisements exist from that era, showing James McKinney as Agent for The Gothic Printing House, or referring to The Gothic Printing House of James McKinney.

Then there is the situation regarding 73 Plymouth Place and its environs during the period in which The Expert at the Card Table was produced.

A significant point at the moment is that there were a lot of printers in the area, and it is possible that Erdnase had some reasons for choosing McKinney that no one has hypothesized about.

I’m not sure whether anyone has ever discussed the issue of why Erdnase would have chosen McKinney. It is not as though McKinney was a small “mom and pop” operation -- I gather it was nothing like that.

Bill Mullins pointed out elsewhere in this thread that the building at 73-75 Plymouth Place was 80 feet tall. On my old Erdnase blog, I mentioned that it had a frontage of 50 feet and a depth of 100 feet -- according to an 1895 Illinois Bureau of Labor Statistics report. (Yes, I don’t think McKinney was the only tenant there. But it was not a small building.)

A Miehle advertisement in The American Printer, April 30, 1901, seems to show that McKinney had three Miehle printing presses at about that time.

--Tom Sawyer

Richard Hatch | 08/12/12 12:58 AM | link | filter

I believe I have pointed this out elsewhere, but the nearest neighbor to the future train agent E. S. Andrews when he was born in Eliota, Minnesota was an Irish immigrant farmer named James McKinney who had a son named Patrick. These are not the same James and Patrick McKinney of the printing company, whose father was an Irish immigrant, but McKinney is not a common name and there may be a family connection there, which might explain why this printer was chosen, if the train agent was Erdnase. I suspect this is merely a coincidence. But perhaps not...

(PS: working from memory here and may not have all the name details correct.)
My memory on the McKinney/Andrews connection was a bit off, here are the details: In the 1865 Minnesota census (when future train agent, E. S Andrews, was just 6 years old), their nearest neighbor is listed as an Irish immigrant farmer named Patrick (not James) McKinney. The printer James McKinney had a brother named Patrick who worked for him, but the brothers James and Patrick were the son's of an Irish immigrant laborer named Thomas. I have not established a relationship between Thomas McKinney in Illinois and Patrick McKinney in Minnesota and my gut tells me this is a coincidence, but one worth exploring if this E. S. Andrews is believed to be Erdnase, since it might "explain" why McKinney the printer got the job. (I vaguely recall - and I could well be wrong - that the farmer had a son named James...)

Ray Eden | 08/13/12 08:38 AM | link | filter

Anyone know anything about the "teaser" Gazzo has dropped about a letter revealing Erdnase's identity?

Mr. K | 08/13/12 10:06 AM | link | filter

This is old Genii revealed him a while ago, Is it real?? no idea they say they did. If you get a chance find the issue with it, or I think there is a book out now that is all about Erdnase. He is still the ONLY man I think that all magicians use his method in cheating magicians & card cheats... & He is the MAN!!! Good luck on your journey on what gazzo is talking about.

Tom Sawyer | 08/14/12 08:47 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

Ive always been interested in the situation surrounding the copyright and copyright notices relating to The Expert at the Card Table. One of the reasons for this, I suppose, is the fact that, when taken as a whole, the published information relating to the Erdnase copyright possesses enchanting inconsistencies. Also, no one, as far as I know (and I could be wrong) has seen fit to publish the entirety of the copyright application.

I imagine that there is no more complete, or more accurate, account of the main facts (relating to the copyright) than that at the beginning of Richard Hatch’s article Reading Erdnase Backwards, although the facsimile of a portion of the form on page 274 of The Man Who Was Erdnase is also rather revelatory (though the corresponding text is not necessarily completely accurate). (This is not imply criticism of other works that may be just as complete and accurate on the topic.)

I recently ran across a booklet on Google Books entitled Directions for the Registration of
The little book is dated "July, 1901," on the title page, and though I cannot vouch for the booklet or its applicability to The Expert at the Card Table, it seems quite possible that it deals with the situation as of the time the Erdnase application was submitted. It also seems likely that the booklet on copyright was at least pretty accurate as to the time the booklet (the copyright booklet) was published (apparently July 1901).

The copyright application form reproduced in the little book is quite different from the segment reproduced in TMWWE.

Here is an excerpt from the booklet.

2. When application is made for a book, chromo, lithograph, or photograph, it is necessary to state where the article is printed or made, or whether it is printed or made, or to be printed or made, in the United States.

3. It is not necessary to state the name of the author if it is desired to keep the book or other article anonymous, but the nationality of the author of any literary, dramatic, musical, or artistic work is required in order to determine the fee to be charged, and also to determine whether the article, in the case of a foreign work, is the production of a citizen of some country to the subjects of which country the privilege of copyright in the United States has been extended.

In the case of an author who is a native of a foreign country but a legal or permanent resident of the United States, that fact should be stated, or the citizenship should be given as of the United States. If the author is of foreign nativity but has declared his intention to become a citizen of the United States, that fact should be stated.

4. An entry of copyright claim can not be made unless the application for such entry contains a distinct statement in whose name the claim of copyright is to be registered. The Copyright Office can not infer from the form of application who is the intended claimant. The application must distinctly state the full name and address of the person who claims to be the proprietor of the copyright. No entry can be made in a fictitious name, such as a nom de plume or pseudonym. The real name of the claimant should be stated. Not only does the law require that the real name of the copyright claimant shall be printed in the notice of copyright which it is obligatory to print upon each copy of any article copyrighted, but it also requires that the name of the copyright claimant shall be printed in the
anonymity and to avoid putting his name on record, he should arrange to have some other person make the copyright entry in such persons name as proprietor, under an arrangement with himself as author. Entry may be made in the name of a firm, of a corporation, or trustee, or in two or more names as joint authors or proprietors.

5. The blank should be filled up to state whether the copyright is claimed as author or as proprietor of the work whose title is recorded.

I suppose that the following section is of one of the more interesting segments:

No entry can be made in a fictitious name, such as a nom de plume or pseudonym. The real name of the claimant should be stated. Not only does the law require that the real name of the copyright claimant shall be printed in the notice of copyright which it is obligatory to print upon each copy of any article copyrighted, but it also requires that the name of the copyright claimant shall be printed in the catalogue of copyright entries.

So much for Erdnase's vaunted knowledge of copyright law!

Please note, I am not claiming that anything in this post is definitely accurate. I am not any kind of expert on copyright law, past or present.

--Tom Sawyer

Richard Hatch | 08/16/12 12:18 PM | link | filter

In my research on Edwin S. Andrews, the train agent, one of the things that made him attractive to me was that the more I found out about him, the better he seemed to fit my expectations for the author. I stumbled across him looking for a possible relationship between Louis Dalrymple and attorney James DeWitt Andrews (my preferred candidate at that time, in late 1999). Edwin married Dollie Seely in Sterling, Illinois, J. D. Andrews' hometown. But I soon learned that this E. S. Andrews was living in Denver at that time (1898), working as a travelling agent for the Chicago and Northwestern RR. Denver was of interest as the site of a possible Erdnase sighting (by Hugh Johnston). Andrews dropped out of the Denver directories in 1901 and I found he had been transferred to DeKalb, Illinois, about 60 miles west of Chicago, a move in the right direction since we need the author near Chicago at about that time to meet with the illustrator and printer. I soon learned that although he was stationed in DeKalb, he was actually living in Oak Park, an enclave of Chicago, just minutes by train from downtown Chicago where the author would meet with the illustrator and printer. When I learned that the street he was living on was Austin Blvd, and that the second...
pretty much "clinched" my conviction in him, since it seemed to me extremely unlikely that an E. S. Andrews living on the same street as Atlas and moving away the same month the book dropped in price would be a coincidence. However, thanks to the research of Bill Mullins, I am now convinced that the "proximity" issue (117 S. Austin Blvd. in Oak Park and 295 Austin Ave in Chicago) is just that, a coincidence. We both agree that 117 S. Austin Blvd in Oak Park in 1902 was about 1/3 of a block south of the C & NW RR line which runs east to west. While I had been bothered that Austin Blvd in Oak Park became Austin Ave in Chicago (as shown on maps), I had not taken into account the possibility of a second Austin Ave in Chicago at that time. Bill took a closer look than I had at the 1900 census records for Emil Sorensen (a.k.a., E. S. Burns, owner of Atlas) which do show him residing at 295 Austin Ave in Chicago (his profession is listed as grocery salesman). But Bill took a closer look at the Enumeration District for the census and neighboring streets and found that this particular Austin Ave. was a totally different street, running east-west rather than north-south and was about 5 miles east of E. S. Andrews' residence in Oak Park (both within easy access of the C&NW RR line). While I still personally favor Edwin S. Andrews among the current crop of candidates, the fact that he was not living in the same neighborhood (let alone on the same street) as Atlas certainly weakens the argument in his favor on those grounds.

Thanks to Bill Mullins for sharing his research with me privately and allowing me to post this report here.

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Roger M. | 08/16/12 03:16 PM | link | filter

That's a big piece of news Richard, thanks for sharing it (and thanks to Bill for his simply excellent research).

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Bill Mullins | 08/16/12 10:35 PM | link | filter

For anyone who cares, some details on what Richard Hatch posted above.

I believe that Edwin Sumner Andrews did live at 117 S Austin at the times that Richard placed him there. I think we could go to Austin Ave on the east border of Oak Park, and go a couple hundred feet south of what is now South Blvd (Oak Park)/ W. Corcoran Pl (Chicago), and stand in front of the large white apt building that is visible on Google Maps at 328 Austin, Oak Park, IL and wed be very close to where Edwin Sumner Andrews lived during the time that EATCT was finalized. In fact, the white house just to the left (south) of the apt building may be 117 (but I think it is more likely that it was 115). (You can zoom in tighter and use "Street View" to see the facades of the buildings in question).

But that doesn't locate 295 Austin. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps for 1908 show that 295 Austin in Oak Park (west side of the street) isn't occupied. If you go across the street to
side of the street appear to have street addresses located on the cross streets; not on Austin. If you go far enough north on Austin so that you are out of Oak Park altogether, that doesn't work either.

I started searching for E. S. Burns. I found Emil Sorenson's 1900 census record HERE.

Hes living at 295 Austin, and is listed as a grocery salesman. I figure that either he hasn't established Atlas as a business yet, or he's lied to the census taker. But the match of name and address makes me believe that this 295 Austin is the same one that Atlas came to operate from.

Censuses were (and are) conducted in Enumeration Districts small geographically contiguous areas. If you page forward and backwards from the page that Sorenson is on, you can find other streets in the same Enumeration District: Ohio, Centre, Grand, Elizabeth, Sinnott. Grand and Austin intersect a couple miles north of 117 S. Austin, but otherwise you can't find these streets near the Oak Park area that Andrews lived in.

And note that the Enumeration District is called West Town. Google Maps shows an area with that name about 5 miles to the east, near the intersection of Damen and Grand. If you look at contemporary Chicago maps for the area little farther still to the east, you get a neighborhood that has all the right streets. If you compare the historical maps for that district to current Google Maps and allow for the facts that Centre is now called Racine, that N Ogden has obliterated Sinnott, and that Austin is now called Hubbard (it was renamed in early 1936), you are in the neighborhood that Sorenson lived in. Tom Sawyer posted on his blog a document listing the re-numbering of many Chicago streets in 1909; what was 295 Austin has been renumbered to 1208. I think 1208 Hubbard used to be called 295 Austin, and is the lot where Atlas used to be located (but probably not the same building).

Conclusions:
Edward Sumner Andrews lived at 117 S. Austin Blvd in Oak Park in 1902, a few hundred feet south of the C&NW Railway for which he worked. At the time he moved away, Atlas Trick and Novelty was located on 295 Austin Ave in Chicago, five or so miles east, in a building across the street from, and facing, the same rail line. If Andrews' work for the railway took him into Chicago, he would have gone right by Atlas. In fact, it probably would have taken Andrews no more time to ride the train east from his home to Atlas than it would have taken him to walk 9 blocks north to the location that we've been suspecting for Atlas for several years.

To the extent that this new understanding of the geography "weakens" the case for E. S. Andrews = Erdnase, I don't think it is by very much.
"So much for Erdnase's vaunted knowledge of copyright law!"

His using a pseudonym doesn't likely implicate his knowledge of copyright law. In all of time, I doubt anyone has been criminally or civilly prosecuted for violating this provision.

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/17/12 06:47 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

In my post yesterday, I suggested that E. S. Andrews' work for the C&NW railroad may have taken him from Oak Park into Central Chicago, in which case it would have gone right by Atlas.

In fact, the C&NW's [Wells Street Station](#) was only 1.2 miles east of 295 Austin on the C&NW line (located approximately where the Merchandise Mart is now), and it was 7.2 miles east of 117 S Austin, where Andrews lived.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 08/20/12 08:34 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Hi All,

A number of the issues that have been raised by some of the recent posts have to do with the locations of various people and businesses.

Specifically, for example, it is kind of surprising how little is generally known (overall) about the locations (home addresses) of many of the people who are important to the S.W. Erdnase story, during the period of, say, mid-1901 through, say, mid-1903. (The same applies to the addresses of many of the relevant businesses.)

It might not be immediately apparent how such information might be useful. But if (as a made-up example) it turned out that James McKinney lived one door down from E.S. Andrews, that would be rather interesting.

When I saw those census records that Bill Mullins provided a link to, I definitely looked at the names of some of Emil Sorenson's neighbors, to see if I recognized any names (which I didn't).

--Tom Sawyer

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**Richard Kaufman** | 08/20/12 10:58 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Mr. Mullins's skills at research enabled me to discover just the type of odd connection to which Tom refers to in the preceding post. I refer to Theodore DeLand, whom at one
provided by Mr. Mullins, I found a guy named "Espenship"! I wonder if the guy ever knew that DeLand was using his name.

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/21/12 12:29 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

**Some cartoons** by **Marshall D. Smith**.

A photograph of Smith in his studio. (Or perhaps a self-portrait painting?)

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**Tom Sawyer** | 08/21/12 03:52 PM | [link](#) | [filter]

Hi All,

The way I interpret that photograph, it is not necessarily a portrait of Marshall D. Smith. It is a photograph which Smith made. (More precisely, it is a halftone of a photograph that Smith made with a camera.)

I realize that Smith’s name is listed as an "Illustrator" in the bound volume, but then so are the names of others, photographs (halftones) by whom (not "of" whom) are shown.

An example that is probably parallel is a portrait of an artist (William Paul) by photographer Norman Butler, on page 5 of the same bound volume of *American Photography*.

Still, the picture on page 71 definitely could be a self-portrait of Smith. (For instance, he could have composed everything, and then left it to someone else to snap the picture.)

The foregoing is based on a little spot-check, not on any comprehensive analysis of the periodical!

--Tom Sawyer

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**magicam** | 08/21/12 11:27 PM | [link](#) | [filter]

*Bill Mullins wrote:* A photograph of Smith in his studio. (Or perhaps a self-portrait painting?)

Bill, Prove it.

C.

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/22/12 12:02 AM | [link](#) | [filter]
I can't. It's a link to a picture, with speculation about what it is. I don't mean to assert more than that.

Richard Kaufman | 08/22/12 02:17 PM | link | filter

Let's not get into a back and forth about it.

Tom Sawyer | 08/23/12 01:52 AM | link | filter

Hi All,

By the way, complicated notices similar to those typically on the back of the title page of *The Expert at the Card Table* are not unheard of elsewhere. An example that is easily findable at the Hathi Trust Digital Library website is:


The back of the title page includes the following:

Copyright, 1903, by C. Ropp.

Entered at Stationers' Hall, London, 1903.

Entered according to act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year 1903, By C. Ropp, at the Department of Agriculture.

I do not know whether that, or that type of thing, is (or was) considered a good approach -- I don't know anything about the legal ramifications of such notices.

--Tom Sawyer

Bob Coyne | 08/26/12 05:07 PM | link | filter

Ray Eden wrote: Anyone know anything about the "teaser" Gazzo has dropped about a letter revealing Erdnase's identity?

I just listened to the Gazzo interview on Magic Newswire and heard him mention this letter too. It'll be very interesting to find out if it's for real and what it actually says.
No single letter will identify the true identity of Erdnase with certainty for obvious reasons.

**Bob Coyne** | 08/26/12 08:17 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I guess it depends on what it says :-)  

But failing absolute certainty, any new evidence one way or the other for any candidate would be great.

**Richard Kaufman** | 08/26/12 08:41 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Frankly, it doesn't matter what the letter says--anyone could have claimed to be the author of Expert Card Technique.

The only kind of letter that would offer some genuine proof would be dated (including its postmarked envelope) prior to the publication of the book and evidence knowledge of the contents.

The postmarked envelope is necessary because anyone could have written a letter and back-dated it, and even the postmarked envelope wouldn't be conclusive because it could have been from an earlier unrelated letter.

**Richard Hatch** | 08/26/12 09:02 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* Frankly, it doesn't matter what the letter says--anyone could have claimed to be the author of Expert Card Technique.

Wasn't that written by D. R. Aguh and E. U. Arb?

**Richard Kaufman** | 08/26/12 09:13 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Dang. You caught me.

**Bob Coyne** | 08/26/12 09:53 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Both the authenticity and content of the letter matter. For example it might be authentic (proved by whatever means you wish) but have vague or ambiguous content and not really be that conclusive or illuminating. Conversely, as you note, it could have very specific content saying exactly who Erdnase is, but be a forgery or an empty claim. And all sorts of variations of the above.
the letter said "Erdnase is a mining engineer named wilbur sanders" prior to david alexander's article, that would be good enough for me! And there are other ways to establish a date besides a postmark. It would depend on how the letter was discovered, who could vouch for how it was discovered, what the letter actually says, its consistency with other evidence (are there other letters by the same person), etc.

Anyway, it's hard to say much without knowing more about it. But I find this intriguing and hope it actually pans out to be something...even if inconclusive.

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/26/12 10:22 PM | link | filter

Galloway or Gallaway?

Jay Marshall owned a copy of the first edition of *Expert* with a bookplate from Edward Gallaway, a printer. This is often said to be the person with whom James McKinney formed a partnership "McKinney & Galloway". I think there is reason to believe that they were two different people.

Gallaway:
The May 2007 auction from Jay Marshall's estate includes the above copy of *Expert* (lot 101), and the auction catalog reproduces a copy of a note from Marshall referring to Edward Gallaway (unfortunately, the bookplate is not pictured).

**TMWWE** makes multiple references to Edward Gallaway, but all can be traced back to research by Marshall.

1910 census
Edward Gallaway, age 41, address 3353 Polk St. Occupation printer, works at a print shop. Born Ohio, mother born Ireland, father born US. Wife Rose (age 37), daughter Julia (age 16), son William (age 7)

*The American Printer* (May 20, 1922, p. 62) tells of Edward Galloway of Chicago offering a class in estimating (I think this is Edward Gallaway with the name misspelled).

From the *Chicago Tribune*, May 11, 1930, p. 16

Ed. Gallaway, Printing Trade Estimator, Dies

Edward Gallaway, 67 years old, 5429 West Harrison street, president of the Printers' Estimating school, died Friday afternoon. He was widely known as a printing estimator. He established the school in the Transportation building six year ago, at which time he was chief estimator for R. R. Donnelly & Sons company.
Galloway:
*Chicago Daily Tribune*, 3 Feb 1903 p. 11

New Incorporations. . . .

1905 *Biennial Report of the Secretary of State of the State of Illinois* (for years 1 Oct 1902 30 Sept 1904) (online at Archive.org)
McKinney & Galloway, incorporated Feb 19 1903

1900 census has William J Galloway, printer, 6032 Halsted St

1901 Chicago City Directory has:
Edward Gallaway printer h 147 Dearborn Av
William J Galloway printer h 6032 Union av

I think it is entirely possible that McKinney formed a partnership with William Galloway, not Edward Gallaway. If the incorporation papers from the Illinois Secretary of State could be examined, that could resolve the ambiguities from the two different spellings of "Galloway/Gallaway".

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**Tom Sawyer** | 08/31/12 02:07 AM | link | filter

Hi All,

In a recent post, I discussed one of the reasons why I am not convinced that Edwin S. Andrews (the railroad guy) was S.W. Erdnase. That had to do with the photograph of E.S. Andrews and his family.

By the way, I am not necessarily super-enamored of such arguments, even though I did make that argument. It seems to be such a hyper-subjective type of thing, at least the way I made the argument, and based a lot on "feelings" or "impressions."

In this post, I am going to summarize one of the other main reasons I am not convinced. The argument below is also quite subjective, or so it seems to me. It is certainly not enough to demolish any clear proof to the contrary.

Anyway . . .
realize that people can and sometimes do change. I realize that no one person can be placed into one simple category, even for any short period of the person's life. I realize that S.W. Erdnase might have been nothing like the way the book portrayed him. So this post represents some impressions and opinions, but it is based on much of what I have seen regarding *The Expert at the Card Table* and about E.S. Andrews (the railroad man).

But from what I have observed, the following seems un-"Erdnase-like."

In an obituary for E.S. Andrews, in the October 1922 issue of *Pere Marquette Magazine*, it is stated, in part:

> He was undoubtedly the best liked railroad man in California is the succinct statement made by one of his friends. He was generous to a fault.

> . . . Piedmont Columbaria chapel at Oakland, where the services were held, was crowded to the doors for the first time in its history. Friends, among the railroad fraternity, attended the services from all parts of California.

I have discussed that a little on one of my blogs, but really, the foregoing depiction of Andrews seems completely inconsistent with the image of Erdnase as portrayed by his book (as far as my incomplete knowledge of the book goes).

Hmm . . .

> . . . generous to a fault."

> . . . undoubtedly the best liked railroad man in California."

> . . . crowded to the doors for the first time in its history."

To me, that doesn't sound like S.W. Erdnase.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Tom Sawyer** | 09/05/12 02:33 AM | link | filter

Hi All,

A man named David Levy is a collector and bibliographer of books on card games and related subjects, primarily of works by Edmond Hoyle. He operates a blog called [Edmond Hoyle, Gent](http://edmondhoylegent.blogspot.com).
Even though it is only remotely related to magic, I imagine that most magic collectors and people interested in magic history would find it of considerable interest.

In a recent post, David sets forth the five top questions he would pose to Edmond Hoyle, if he had the opportunity.

When I saw that post, I immediately thought something like this: What five questions would I ask S.W. Erdnase if I had the opportunity?

Fairly quickly, three things dawned on me:

1. I don't have any well thought-out questions ready to ask S.W. Erdnase.
2. To come up with decent questions would take quite a bit of thought.
3. The less one knows about S.W. Erdnase and his book, the more difficult it is to come up with good questions.

There may possibly be a tendency to come up with questions which are probably more or less mundane, or a waste of the opportunity.

For instance, I seriously doubt that one of my top questions would be, Did you really 'need the money'? That question could probably be answered yes, or no, so unless Erdnase were in talking mood, I might regret having asked such a question.

I know that many people have pondered that question, but I doubt that it would be in my top five.

If I could ask him a hundred questions, it wouldn't be so hard.

Limiting it to five makes it a bit difficult.

On the other hand, if I could ask him only one question, I think I know what that would be!

--Tom Sawyer

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**Bill Mullins** | 09/05/12 08:25 AM | link | filter

1. Why did you write the book? (Was it really because you "need the money"?)

2. Have you ever used any of the moves you described to cheat in a game?
4. When describing the back palm, you say it helped you out of a difficult situation -- "but that is another story." What is the story?

5. Who was your teacher? or better still, How did you come to learn the material in your book?

While some of these could be answered with a single word, I'd hope he is a talkative sort, and would elaborate.

Richard Kaufman wrote: I have just received the facsimile first edition of Expert at the Card Table which is being distributed by Michael Canick and it is THE edition to have if you love this book. I do have a first edition and it looks virtually identical.

Are these first edition copies still available?

I realise this is a post from 2003 I was just wondering as I’d love to get my hands in a first Ed. fake or not.

That facsimile now sells for a high price and has become a collectible.

I don't know if "fake" would be the right word Neil, nobody is now, or ever was trying to fob it off as an actual first edition.

It’s a near perfect facsimile, which due to acid free paper, modern bindings, etc should last a very long while.

But for all that’s identical between this and a first edition, the facsimile is clearly identified as a such on the title page.

These facsimiles have been going for anywhere from $250.00 to a high of just over $350.00 lately.
I wasn't intending to imply anything by the word "fake"
Though for fear of sounding cheeky the word facsimile is a synonym of the word fake

The price is too rich for my blood right now but I'll keep an eye open.

---

**Roger M.** | 09/05/12 01:03 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

OK, if you risk being cheeky, I'll tread into being boringly pedantic :)

I believe "fake" implies an intended element of deception to some degree, whereas "facsimile" only indicates that there's been an effort to "make alike", with absolutely no deception intended or resultant.

There, seriously pedantic :)

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**Corneilius Jay** | 09/05/12 01:53 PM | [link](#) | [filter]

So what your saying in less words "facsimile" is a nicer less offensive way of saying "fake"?
Ok I'll agree with that.
;)

---

**Richard Kaufman** | 09/05/12 01:56 PM | [link](#) | [filter]

Let's just stop this now. A "facsimile" is a self-proclaimed reproduction. A "fake" is attempting to pass itself off as original.

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**Roger M.** | 09/05/12 02:17 PM | [link](#) | [filter]

It was *all* in good humor Richard.
Thus the numerous emoticons from both Neil and myself.

Geez.

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**Richard Kaufman** | 09/05/12 06:46 PM | [link](#) | [filter]

I misinterpreted your messages as facsimiles of a genuine disagreement. :)

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**Tom Sawyer** | 09/05/12 07:13 PM | [link](#) | [filter]

Hi All,
Those are five really good "questions for S.W. Erdnase" that Bill Mullins stated, in my opinion.

One that I might have might be similar to one of David Levy's questions that he would ask Hoyle. I would probably want to ask S.W. Erdnase something like this. I would count this as one question:

What were the names of your students? Where did you meet them? What did you teach them? How did you teach them? Where did you teach them? How long did you spend with each student?

--Tom Sawyer

Bill Mullins | 09/06/12 11:19 PM | link | filter

Tom Sawyer recently linked to David Levy's fascinating blog on Edmond Hoyle. Although Levy's interest are mainly 150 years prior to Erdnase, some of his posts are quite relevant to our discussion.

For example, in this post he discusses reasons that a copyright holder might wish to obscure who published a book -- sound familiar?

Daniel Bain | 09/07/12 06:47 PM | link | filter

Tom Sawyer wrote: Hi All,

Those are five really good "questions for S.W. Erdnase" that Bill Mullins stated, in my opinion.

One that I might have might be similar to one of David Levy's questions that he would ask Hoyle. I would probably want to ask S.W. Erdnase something like this. I would count this as one question:

What were the names of your students? Where did you meet them? What did you teach them? How did you teach them? Where did you teach them? How long did you spend with each student?

--Tom Sawyer

Hmmm.... I suppose I'd ask: What is your real full name, where were you born, and how and where did you acquire your knowledge about card manipulation?!
Daniel, to me those seem like excellent questions.

If you asked him his name, and no other questions regarding his identity, and if he said "E.S. Andrews," that might not help much in establishing who he was! Hence, asking his place of birth is a good idea.

However, I would like to think that one could ask, "Who are you" (or "Who were you"--not sure what the tense should be), and that he would give enough information to establish his identity.

--Tom

Pete McCabe 09/09/12 12:59 AM | link | filter

1. How are you still alive? You must be 140 years old.

2. Do you follow the thread about your book on the Genii forum?

3. Did Houdini really invent the First Transformation, Two Hands?

4. Did you ever use any of the moves in your book to cheat people out of money, and if so, can I have some? Answer the second question first.

5. Are you thinking of making a video?

Geno Munari 09/11/12 07:12 AM | link | filter

I have really enjoyed the previous posts on the questions.

One more:

Where did you get the material for the 8 King set up?

Larry Horowitz 09/11/12 12:43 PM | link | filter

Question: If you needed the money, why didn't you just use you knowledge and win it?

Question: Why did you want anonymity?

Question: Why are there two sections in the book? Who was your target audience?
Hi All,

Concerning the "Eight Kings" arrangement that Geno Munari mentioned, one of the interesting features of the Erdnase version is that it says "from one sick knave." I suspect, but am not sure, that "for one sick knave" was more prevalent.

*New Era Card Tricks* and *Modern Magic* both show "for one sick knave."

It seems that there were (and are) a number of variations of that mnemonic, some of which may make the meaning a little more obscure than others.

*The Man Who Was Erdnase* mentions a number of references to the arrangement that predate Erdnase.

--Tom Sawyer

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Hi All,

One of the "Eight Kings" or related mnemonics that uses "from one sick knave" is found in *The Games Book for Boys and Girls*.

The version in that book is:

- Eighty kings threatened to save
- Ninety-five ladies from one sick knave.

I believe that the book is undated, and that no name is given for the author. The Hathi Trust Digital Library shows [1906].

Here is a [link].

Obviously, the foregoing was apparently published after *The Expert at the Card Table*.

A much earlier version that includes the phrase from one sick knave is found in the May 9, 1863, issue of *The Saturday Review*, in an anonymous review of an 1863 edition of Robert-Houdin’s *The Sharper Detected and Exposed*.

The review says:
All schoolboy conjurors in England are familiar with the deep meaning which underlies the surface of

Eight kings threaten to save
Nine fine queens from one sick knave.

Here is a link.

Those two, and Erdnase, are the only ones I know of from 1906 or before that say "from one sick knave," but none of the three are wholly identical to each other. However, the basic jingle, with variations, appeared in quite a few places earlier than 1902, a number of which I am not familiar with. (The 1906 item, because of the year, probably is not super-relevant, and I am not completely sure why I mentioned it.)

The following is part of what Erdnase said. He capitalized "Knave." I suppose that probably makes no difference:

The usual plan is to arrange the whole pack in the order suggested by the following jingle, viz.:

Eight Kings threatened to save
Ninety-five Queens from one sick Knave.

--Tom Sawyer

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Geno Munari | 09/20/12 07:04 AM | link | filter

Tom
Thanks for the link. Most fascinating.

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Bill Mullins | 09/23/12 04:19 PM | link | filter

From time to time I see queries about hardback copies of Erdnase. Right now, there are a couple of copies of "Card Mastery" by Mickey/Michael Macdougall in HB available on Abebooks for $40-45. This includes the full text of "Expert at the Card Table".

This is substantially less than I see the HB 1944 Fleming/Powner editions offered for lately.

As to whether either of them are "worth" these figures, I won't say (I got a HB "Card Mastery", with DJ, for about $15 on Abebooks a year or so ago, and a HB copy with DJ went for $17 plus shipping on ebay last month.)
Leonard Hevia | 09/23/12 06:40 PM | link | filter

The prices for the 1944 Powner editions are rising out of control. The late McKinven's copy from the last Potter Auction sold for well over $100.00. Copies on eBay have sold for more than $200.00. One copy did sell for $9.95 on eBay this past August by a seller who had no idea of the value of this book. I can imagine the buyer grinning from ear to ear like the Cheshire cat from Alice in Wonderland.

Roger M. | 10/10/12 12:26 PM | link | filter

A regression to a few "pages" ago in this thread.  
I'm reading Hurt's book, "Artifice, Ruse & Erdnase" for the third time over, and I'd just like to give a shout out to just how well written, and well researched it is.

Although I can't really imagine any serious Erdnase researcher not already having a copy, if in fact you don't have a copy, you might definitely consider picking one up.

It's tempting to (based on posts in this thread) think of Hurt's book as only a summation of pre-existing Erdnase research (which it does contain), but Hurt also introduces new and different ways of looking at elements of the case, such that he definitely provides new insight in to some of the old nuggets and theories that folks hold as their own.

Hurt cautions folks not to let their predisposed ideas and theories about who Erdnase is (or isn't) interfere in a negative manner with keeping an open mind and continuing the search until something of substance is found.

This Genii thread (IMO) remains the most important written document on the search for Erdnase, and Hurt references this thread (along with many other sources) in his book. Although there are many points in this thread that he doesn't reference, those he does are certainly important enough to warrant specific re-reading.

I find that there are two critically important books in the timeline of Erdnase research.  They are "S.W. Erdnase: Another View" by Thomas A. Sawyer, and "Artifice, Ruse & Erdnase" by Hurt McDermott.

"The Man Who Was Erdnase" remains an important, reference, but doesn't (IMO) hit the mark of the two books above due to the multiple unconfirmed leaps of faith taken by the authors, and the utter failure (of the authors) to consider that their conclusion could be in error.

Hurt's book... it's a winner... buy it, read it, enjoy it!
Roger,

Thank you so much for your words about Artifice, Ruse & Erdnase. Knowing it has brought pleasure and, hopefully, enlightenment to such a careful reader has really made my day.

Thanks again,

Hurt

Hear, hear.

It is unimaginable that any future writings about Erdnase will fail to build on what Hurt has written.

An excellent book, and no one who is interested in the subject should be without it.

Hi All,

I thought about posting something in reply to Rogers post about Hurt McDermotts outstanding book *Artifice, Ruse & Erdnase*. I even wrote something I was thinking about posting, but I didnt post it.

It is hard for me to write something that is adequately refined, and expresses certain nuances that I might want to include.

I am still leaving out the nuances, at least for now.

However -- from what I have read of Hurts book -- I think I can say that it is easily the best book out there with regard to coverage of the S.W. Erdnase authorship controversy.

I have not read everything relating to the authorship of *The Expert at the Card Table*, but I have read a lot of it, and as of now it would be hard for me to imagine that anything
I have corresponded a little with Hurt about the book, but I dont think that influenced the foregoing opinions!

--Tom Sawyer

SwanJr | 10/19/12 04:52 PM | link | filter

I want to thank Tom Sawyer and Bill Mullins for taking the time to take notice of my work, ARTIFICE, RUSE & ERDNASE. Given the great respect I feel for both these men's work and the influence Thomas Sawyer's work in particular has had on my own thinking concerning the authorship question, nothing could be more gratifying than the positive feelings they express towards my book. Thank you both.

--Hurt McDermott

Rick Ruhl | 10/20/12 01:36 AM | link | filter

After reading Hurt's book. I went back and looked at the illustrations.

Has anyone noticed that none of them have a wedding band, or any sort of ring, on Erdnase fingers?

Could that narrow it down?

Bill Mullins | 10/20/12 03:24 PM | link | filter

Did married men typically wear wedding bands in 1902?

John Signa | 10/20/12 05:07 PM | link | filter

Male wedding rings didn't become commonplace until 1930s or so.

Jonathan Townsend | 10/20/12 05:53 PM | link | filter

Commonplace among the wealthy? among Americans?

Okay, where do you look to see if a wedding ring is male?

Rick Ruhl | 10/23/12 01:07 PM | link | filter

More 'out loud' thinking.
Let's 'assume' the notation in Houdini's copy of EATCT is correct. Just at a glance and I'm no handwriting expert, it looks like Bess's handwriting.

So if we do a search on Samuel Roberts Andrews, we find one in East Fallowfield, PA Born in 1861.

According to E.L. Pratt, Erdnase was identified as Andrews but not with the E.S and that he was from PA.

According to Marshall Smith, we have a man in his 30's or 40's (which would fit this person)

Louis Dalrymple was born in 1865, so that would put these two men at the same age.

And there were many Dalrymple's in PA at the time.

Nothing conclusive here.. just thoughts... but you take that one leap of faith and things start to fall into place.

Rick

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**Rick Ruhl** | 10/23/12 02:16 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Whoops and it's Samuel Robert Andrews not Roberts, Birthday March 5, 1861. Lived in Crump MI, also.

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**Bill Mullins** | 10/30/12 12:33 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Theo Hardison's *Poker* (1914) is of some interest to Erdnase enthusiasts -- it covers some of the same ground, and copies some of the text.

Potter and Potter sold a copy last June for $450. It looks like Natalie Galustian got it.

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**Rick Ruhl** | 10/30/12 08:41 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Interesting...no one claimed copyright infringement then?

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**crandash** | 11/08/12 07:40 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Excuse me if this has been covered previously, I had an opportunity to visit the special archives at UNLV this past week. I spent some time with the 1918?? Drake Edition
Invisible Flight.

And the other 11 card tricks as well as the additional 27 pages were left out of this edition.

Chad Randash

Richard Hatch | 11/08/12 09:29 PM | link | filter

crandash wrote: Excuse me if this has been covered previously, I had an opportunity to visit the special archives at UNLV this past week. I spent some time with the 1918?? Drake Edition Embossed copy. I found it strange that the book only has 178 pages finishing with the Invisible Flight.

And the other 11 card tricks as well as the additional 27 pages were left out of this edition.

Chad Randash

Noted in previous bibliographies. Busby/Whaley speculated that this might have been an earlier prototype, but at that time it was the only known such copy (undated 178 page Drake Hardback). Since then, other copies of this edition have surfaced. Many of the later Drake editions had just 178 pages. There was also a 190 page edition, which seems to be the scarcest of the Drake editions. To date, no hardbound 190 page editions have surfaced, though it seems likely one was issued.

crandash | 11/10/12 01:02 PM | link | filter

Thank you for that Sir!

SwanJr | 11/15/12 10:05 PM | link | filter

Thank you, Roger, for being the 1st one to call attention to my book, ARTIFICE, RUSE & ERDNASE on the Genii thread. I really appreciate your public support!

With Warm Regards,

Hurt McDermott

Bill Mullins | 01/05/13 08:52 PM | link | filter
railroad agent who Richard Hatch has put forward as a possible author of *Expert*, lived in Denver in the late 1890s. We think of these potential authors as magicians or card players, but it’s easy to forget that their lives included the same mundane concerns as we all do.

From the Denver *Rocky Mountain News*, of 3/16/1899:

Lost 2 Fox terrier dogs, white with black spots; return E. S. Andrews 1434 Champa; reward.

And two weeks later, in the Denver *Post* of 3/29 and 3/30:

Lost Two fox terrier dogs, white, two black spots and three black spots. Drop card or return E. S. Andrews, 1434 Champa; reward.

Something must have happened about that time, because the next ad (Denver *Post*, 4/1 and 4/2) is of a much stronger tone:

Lost Fox terrier dog, white, three black spots; reward. E. S. Andrews, 1434 Champa; will pay $5 for information that enables me to successfully prosecute any person detaining this dog.

I wonder did one dog get returned or come home? Or did he have evidence that someone had taken them?

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**Richard Kaufman** | 01/05/13 10:06 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

"Luca Brassi sleeps with the fishes"

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**Bill Mullins** | 01/05/13 10:31 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Do you think Giorgio was involved?

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**J Christensen** | 01/06/13 09:08 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

While reading Roberto Giobbi’s book "Confidences" I encountered the following sentence: One of the hottest theories I’ve recently heard is one by Jaun Tamariz, who believes l’Homme Masque (1835-1913), Peru’s Jose Antenor de Gago y Zavala, was Erdnase, or at least behind part if not all of the text, text that some think was written by William Hilliar (1876-1936), founder of the Sphinx magazine and ghost writer of several magic books of the period.
along information from the enigmatic Charlier.

Wow! Anyone know anything about this? I co-authored a biographical piece about l'Homme Masque published in Genii, Vol. 63, No. 7, July 2000 don't recall anything hinting at a connection between de Gago and the writing and publication of the Expert at the Card Table.

Joe Pecore | 01/06/13 10:01 AM | link | filter

I believe that Tamariz explained his reasons for l'Homme Masque as a candidate for Erdnase during the 9th Congress of the Latin American Federation of Magic Societies (FLASOMA 2009) held in Peru.

J Christensen | 01/06/13 11:41 AM | link | filter

Joe, thanks for the information. Would you share some of his evidence for such a claim?

Richard Hatch | 01/06/13 11:49 AM | link | filter

De Gago is one of the few performers of the period known to have been equally active in the worlds of gambling and magic. He was also highly regarded for his creative sleight of hand skills. He was also a close friend and associate of T. Nelson Downs (they roomed together for several months in Monte Carlo I believe) and Downs, in turn, was associated with Hilliar, to whom Busby/Whaley give ghostwriting/editing credit on the book. He also clearly enjoyed disguising his identity. Those seem to be the primary points in his favor. Alas, the circumstantial evidence against him being the author (did not speak English well, never came to America, nothing like the man remembered by M D Smith) seems pretty overwhelming.

J Christensen | 01/06/13 12:02 PM | link | filter

Good to hear from you Richard. Some of those reasons are why I was so surprised to read the statement in Giobbi's book.

J Christensen | 01/06/13 12:48 PM | link | filter

I assume this has nothing to do with Gazzo's letter. So Tamariz had no real evidence for his supposition?

Richard Kaufman | 01/06/13 01:13 PM | link | filter
Bill Mullins wrote: From the Denver Rocky Mountain News, of 3/16/1899:

Lost 2 Fox terrier dogs, white with black spots; return E. S. Andrews 1434 Champa; reward.

And two weeks later, in the Denver Post of 3/29 and 3/30:

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Something must have happened about that time, because the next ad (Denver Post, 4/1 and 4/2) is of a much stronger tone:

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Card revelation(s) via newspaper?

Trouble, Huey and I always suspected Erdnase was a dog lover. This clinches it.

Jason

This may be related to Todd Karr's candidate for Erdnase, a swindler who went by the name of E. S. Andrews.

Nevada State Journal 8/30/1939 p 1
TWO SWINDLING SUSPECTS HELD
Sparks Woman Fails To Bite Bait
SPARKS, Aug. 29. Chief of Police Al Bassimier and Officer M. O. Anderson, set and baited the trap that landed two swindlers behind prison bars late Tuesday night.

Anderson received a call early Tuesday from Mrs. M. A. Benson on C street explaining an unusual offer that had been made to her by two strange men.
She had been told by the men that her husband, who died several years ago, had owned property in Texas and that taxes had to be met at this time, and other miscellaneous bills had to be paid, the sum amounting to $98. She stalled the men off and sent a telegram to Texas and found that no property had been owned by her husband.

The men had been told by her, after instructions by the chief of police, to return at 7:30 when she would pay them the money, as she had to borrow it from a friend. Bassimier went to Mrs. Benson’s home at 6:30 and there had one of the men tell him the story and asked him if he could prove his claim of having the lease on the property. The man said he could and showed him the lease, a forgery. He was told that there was no property of that nature in Texas owned by Mr. Benson and was arrested. His partner was arrested outside in a parked automobile by Police Officer Anderson and the pair admitted the charge of swindling after questioning.

J. B. Mitchell, alias J B. Crawford, alias E. S. Andrews has served time in San Quentin, Folsom, Los Angeles county jail, and is wanted in Woodland, Calif., for swindling. His accomplice is also wanted in connection with the swindling in Woodland. They are now lodged in the Washoe county jail awaiting trial.

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**Richard Evans** | 01/27/13 04:35 PM | link | filter

Very interesting, Bill. Would be good to know how old they were.
Richard

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**Futura** | 01/28/13 04:42 PM | link | filter

What happened in the book of Hurt Mc Dermott Artifice, Ruse and Erdnase on page 183 ?? He asks what Erdnase mean with "rimed" and takes this for an evidence supporting Erdnase`s authorship......

It took me some time to figuer it out: it is a misprinting in the online lybrary.com version of the Expert on page 90. It must be read " riffle"and not "rimed" !!!! - thats all. No need to ask OED!

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**Ian Kendall** | 01/28/13 06:54 PM | link | filter

Since that paper report was from 1939, and the ES Andrews name appears to be an alias, would it be far from possible that Mitchell was familiar with the book, and chose the name as an inside joke?
To me, a major reason to discount Milton Franklin Andrews as author of *Expert* is that the style of writing of the book is strongly dissimilar to the known samples of MFA’s writing.

Busby and Whaley, in *TMWWE*, made a comparison of the Alibi letters written by MFA (1 complete letter, another partial letter, both reprinted as Appendix A in *TMWWE*) but found them to be similar. Holmes and Wiseman, in their stylometric analysis of *Expert* and other texts published in *Genii* Feb 2011, did not find MFA’s writing to be strongly similar to *Expert*.

One weakness of these analyses is that there is so little of MFA’s writing to work with. Busby and Whaley used a computer program called Corporate Voice which they said worked best when the writing sample being analyzed contained at least 20,000 words, but the total word count of the two Alibi letters was only 7573 words. Holmes and Wiseman needed only a few thousand words for their software package. They used only the first Alibi letter from MFA for analysis, about 6500 words.

I recently ran across another sample of MFA’s writing. In 1906, Jennie Andrews (MFA’s widow) gave a deposition in support of her efforts to claim her late husband’s estate. The deposition included Jennie’s descriptions of MFA and some of his effects, including the jewelry which she was claiming. It also reproduced a letter she had received from MFA. The *San Jose Evening News* of Oct 2, 1906 reproduced the letter in its entirety on page 5.

This letter, to my non-computer-aided mind, seems consistent in tone and voice to the Alibi letters previously published. It does not sound like the writing in *Expert*. I have not subjected it to any digital analysis, but it should be made public for researchers who wish to do so.

Colorado Springs, Sept. 24, 1905

My own poor, sweet bird,

I am so sorry you are so lonesome, but as I am the same I suppose it evens things up a little. I just received your two letters to Colorado Springs and it is a miracle I did get them, as I had been to the postoffice every day asking for mail for Milton Hart.

Do you remember the telegram I sent you from California, telling you to address me instantly in Colorado Springs as Milton Hart? I distinctly said in the telegram address ‘Milton Hart, Colorado Springs,’ and when I got there what reason should I have to call for mail in any other name than the
postoffice, that you probably had went for a visit in Hartford and did not get the telegram from California.

As days went by I had lots of reasons pass through my mind, but finally it struck me like a shot. 'Suppose through forgetfulness she forgot,' I said, 'to address M. Hart, and she put Andrews instead.' So I sent a messenger boy with a note to the postoffice to see if there was any mail for 'Andrews,' as the general delivery clerk remembered my face has having called for M. Hart's mail, and I will be darned if the boy didn't bring me back two letters. Well, I suppose you will not forget to follow directions next time, so we will forget it. I am sorry, as I know it caused you to worry. I am glad you are lonesome for me, as that shows true love and I am going to manage to be with you very shortly.

I will not come to Holyoke, never, but I will probably come to Hartford, and have you meet me there, as I have made quite a little money. When you come only bring the very extremely best clothes you have for yourself and Rosella, as my poor bird you are going to have the best clothes, when we meet again, that you ever had in your life. In the last couple of months I have been watching the styles in the best drygoods windows, and I found out just how many yards of material it takes for a skirt, suit, shirtwaist, coat and so forth, and I have twenty yards of the swellest blue velvet, with square white dots it in, you ever saw. It is to make you a suit and an extra skirt, and I bought twelve yards of thin lavender cloth with black markings, that is a peach for a suit for you in mild weather, and I brought some blue shirtwaist cloth with extra trimmings. I am going today or tomorrow to buy six yards of swell broadcloth for a black suit for you and when you see the swell trimmings I bought for three of your suits you will drop dead with pleasure. I bought four yards of trimmings at three dollars and a half a yard, fourteen dollars for just the trimmings alone for one dress, so you can see what you are going to wear. The other trimmings cost me two dollars and a half a yard, four yards to each suit.

We are going to live in the very best hotels in the land, as I do business among such a high class of people nowadays that I have to do so for appearance sake. I do not stop in them for any other reason that to butt in with the wealthiest class of people.

I will explain my system better to you when I see you. I have a trunk full of the very best clothes myself, and I am now capable of making our fortune in short order. I am done forever with the small class of business you used to see me do.
away, and bring only the very best you have. I bought a couple of swell ostrich feathers to trim a couple of hats for you. I paid $23 for one immense one, and $12 for a medium sized one.

Well, you may expect to hear from me at Hartford inside of two weeks at the longest, and possibly in one week get ready, and I will send a telegram the minute I get there, and you grab the next train that leaves Holyoke. Do not bring any household dishes or anything like that, but just yourself and Rosella, and a big smile and we will be happy. I will explain all about Catalina Island when I see you and all my other business. Well, good luck and good bye.

Don’t tell everybody I am a millionaire. Don’t buy any clothes whatever with it for Rosella or yourself. Just put it in your pocket, and I want to buy all your clothes myself, as I know what you will need in the places we are going to better than you do. Love to our Rosella and everybody else.

Do not answer the letter as I may leave here. I do not want everybody to know that I am going to be in Hartford, except my folks and your folks. No outsiders whatever. I have also a pleasant surprise for you and Rosella, which I will explain when I see you. I have a little money for your folks. You can send it to them from Hartford. Good-bye, my own true, sweet wife,
Your own, Milton.

Richard Kaufman | 02/07/13 11:57 AM | link | filter
A new letter from MFA!!!
Nope, he’s still not Erdnase.

Richard Hatch | 02/08/13 01:41 AM | link | filter

Bill, the date and place of the letter would seem to be a misprint. According to Busby/Whaley’s account (which I think is correct in this regard), MFA was in Honolulu (en route from Australia to California) on Sept. 24, 1905. He would have been in Colorado Springs a year earlier, so possibly the letter is from Sept. 24, 1904?

Bill Mullins | 02/08/13 11:53 AM | link | filter

Richard Hatch wrote: Bill, the date and place of the letter would seem to be a misprint. According to Busby/Whaley’s account (which I think is correct in this regard), MFA was in Honolulu (en route from Australia to California)
so possibly the letter is from Sept. 24, 1904?

Classic blunders:
1. Never get involved in a land war in Asia
2. Never go against a Sicilian when death is on the line.
3. Never make an Erdnase post without checking every detail first, lest Richard Hatch catch your blunder.

Although the mistake comes from the San Jose paper, I should have caught it.

The date I quoted is an accurate transcription of the original newspaper article (I just double checked it), but Richard is right -- the letter must have been written in 1904.

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**W Kalush** | 02/26/13 06:48 PM | link | filter

As you all know today is the 111th anniversary of Erdnase being granted copyright protection for The Expert At The Card Table.
To celebrate we wanted to break the news that we found an interesting angle on Erdnase that hasn't been discussed in a huge way previously; the decks of cards that were around at the time and what the ones Erdnase himself might have used were like.
For a teaser you can go to [http://erdnase.com](http://erdnase.com). More information will be posted over the next few days.

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**Richard Kaufman** | 02/26/13 08:06 PM | link | filter

Two things:

1. Aaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhh!!! Bill Kalush posted on the Genii Forum. That's a big day.
2. You guys want to click on that link in his post, and then get ready to open your wallets.

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**Pete McCabe** | 02/26/13 08:39 PM | link | filter

This W Kalush has only one post? He's obviously a teenager shilling his friend's product. I can't wait until the goat gets a hold of him.

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**Chris Aguilar** | 02/26/13 09:17 PM | link | filter

"W Kalush" wrote: For a teaser you can go to [http://erdnase.com](http://erdnase.com). More information will be posted over the next few days.
I don't see much resemblance at all.

Hopefully the final product is more attractive than this rather unappealing image.

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**Dustin Stinett** | 02/26/13 11:33 PM | link | filter

Hmmm...

I don’t see it either, but I've seen what’s in the illustrations quite a lot during my life.

My late father used to paint as a hobby. He used that squiggle to denote a shadow or a reflection in his pre-paint sketches. I wonder if it was an old school sketching thing he learned along the line (he went to classes and had a ton of books).

I picked it up as a kid in my own drawings. To this day anyone who receives a note from me might see a similar squiggle under my name at the end (not as tight, but a squiggle).

Dustin

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**Aron Prins** | 02/27/13 01:14 PM | link | filter

Chris Aguilar wrote:

"W Kalush" wrote: For a teaser you can go to [http://erdnase.com](http://erdnase.com).

More information will be posted over the next few days.

I don't see much resemblance at all.

Hopefully the final product is more attractive than this rather unappealing image.

The image states that it "MAY be a coincidence that M.D. Smith used wavy lines to illustrate the backs of the cards throughout THE EXPERT" cause you have to admit...
They look pretty wavy! So, it MIGHT be that as a shortcut Smith used a scribble line to resemble this Bee 216 back design...

Roger M. | 02/27/13 05:04 PM | link | filter

Considering the limited variety of card types available in and around 1900, and taking into account that nobody is actually making any concrete claims about anything......I can certainly see enough of a resemblance between the Bee 216's and the diagrams in EATCT to stop and take note.

I can (with even more certainty) not see evidence such that one could accurately claim that Bee 216 backs definitely weren't the cards used in the EATCT illustrations.

The fact that the folks at CARC continue to entertain us while making a little profit (as much as a non-profit org can "profit") off the Erdnase story and Erdnase fans is great fun all around.

Dustin Stinett | 02/27/13 05:22 PM | link | filter

I see horizontal lines versus vertical, and I consider that a major difference in my opinion of what I am seeing. But, using the same logic of what they have not been proven to be, these Steamboats have just as good a chance of being the cards used (though they would not have been new, but who's to say SWE didn't prefer them and kept a stash)...

http://a.trionfi.eu/WWPCM/decks05/do2297/do2297r02.jpg

Of course, none of it matters to me: I still can't afford to buy all the cards I wish I could buy including these from CARC!!!

Ian Kendall | 02/27/13 06:00 PM | link | filter

Not sure about the Steamboats, when figure 101 clearly shows a Bee ace of spades?

Dustin Stinett | 02/27/13 06:12 PM | link | filter

Okay, good point. (But I really don't care because we're never going to know for sure.) I just don't see the resemblance in CARC's new back design to the squiggles in the book.

Richard Kaufman | 02/27/13 07:29 PM | link | filter
There's zero chance they're Steamboats, or any other non-Bee brand for that matter.

Not to put too fine a point on it, but there's a pretty good chance that, with the back design drawn as it was by M.D. Smith the cards Erdnase used were likely either Bee 35's (Worm Back), or the 216's as per the pending CARC release.

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**Eric Fry** | 02/28/13 01:49 PM | link | filter

I don't think the illustrator is portraying a back design. I think he's found a very efficient way of showing a surface in perspective.

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**Chris Aguilar** | 02/28/13 02:47 PM | link | filter

*Eric Fry wrote:* I don't think the illustrator is portraying a back design. I think he's found a very efficient way of showing a surface in perspective.

Well sure, but something like that wouldn't help sell these new decks.

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**Eric Fry** | 02/28/13 03:25 PM | link | filter

Right. I made my comment because some posters seem to be discussing whether the illustrations are of this or that back design. My point is the illustration doesn't represent any back design at all.

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**Jason England** | 02/28/13 04:26 PM | link | filter

Not to put too fine a point on it, but it's entirely possible that Erdnase didn't use Bee cards at all.

M.D. Smith could have sketched the general shape of the deck SWE was using and then added in details from his own deck of cards at home that was just lying around.

I don't necessarily believe this, but it's well within the realm of possibility. All we know for sure is that a single Bee face (the Ace of Spades) is depicted in a single illustration. We can't know for certain how it came to be depicted there.

Jason
Bill Mullins | 02/28/13 04:38 PM | link | filter

Jason England wrote: Not to put too fine a point on it, but it's entirely possible that Erdnase didn't use Bee cards at all.

M.D. Smith could have sketched the general shape of the deck SWE was using and then added in details from his own deck of cards at home that was just lying around.

I don't necessarily believe this, but it's well within the realm of possibility. All we know for sure is that a single Bee face (the Ace of Spades) is depicted in a single illustration. We can't know for certain how it came to be depicted there.

Jason

True. But the title page says "drawings from life", so it's not unreasonable to say Bee cards.

Eric Fry wrote: I don't think the illustrator is portraying a back design. I think he's found a very efficient way of showing a surface in perspective.

I don't think it is perspective so much as it is shading, to add visual interest to what would otherwise be a blank back. Fig 100, for example, doesn't really have perspective since the back of the card is perpendicular to the reader's line of sight.

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Chris Aguilar | 02/28/13 06:49 PM | link | filter

Eric Fry wrote: Right. I made my comment because some posters seem to be discussing whether the illustrations are of this or that back design. My point is the illustration doesn't represent any back design at all.

Agreed. Attributing a back based on a few squiggles (and an AS that might well have been added later) seems pretty unsupportable to me.

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mrgoat | 02/28/13 08:37 PM | link | filter

Ruh roh

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Roger M. | 02/28/13 08:50 PM | link | filter

I guess when M.D. Smith went to great lengths to portray the Bee Ace of Spades he
Makes total sense.......draw the front of the card with great accuracy, and draw the back of the card with no accuracy whatsoever.

M.D. Smith wasn’t some hack, he was a well regarded painter and illustrator. I think it may be safer to ascribe that he drew what he saw, rather than assign a silly notion that he scribbled something for a card back which looked nothing like the cards Erdnase was using in the hotel room that day.

No way to know with any certainty, but deductive reasoning never hurts when making statements one way or the other. With the Bee Ace of Spades illustrated in the book, one can more safely presume a Bee deck was used than one can presume a Bee deck wasn’t used.

But, as noted above, nobody can know for sure. Of course common sense indicates quite strongly that a Bee deck was most likely the deck used.

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**Chris Aguilar** | 02/28/13 09:07 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Perhaps Smith chose to simplify the back illustrations for the sake of clarity, a decision that has been used by many magic illustrators over the years. Or maybe it was just a shortcut to save time when having to draw a lot of such illustrations. Such simplification would allow him to devote more time/detail to the hands and other more important parts of the illustration.

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**Roger M.** | 02/28/13 09:30 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Smith wasn’t a magic illustrator though, he was a fine artist who did illustrations on the side for cash (or cheques in Erdnase’s case).......as many artists do.

Considering the time and effort put into some of his brilliant paintings, Smith doesn’t seem like an artist who ever took "short cuts".

Again, the Bee Ace of Spades in EATCT speaks volumes, and speaks them loudly.

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**Eric Fry** | 02/28/13 11:58 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I agree that the drawing of the Bee ace of spades shows that Erdnase was using a Bee deck. But there would be no need to draw the backs with accuracy. That kind of detail is not relevant to conveying hand positions on a deck of cards. It would muddy the drawings, as Chris said. It has nothing to do with the illustrator being lazy or a poor
Roger M. wrote: of Spades in EATCT speaks volumes, and speaks them loudly.

Ok, what exactly does it mean in terms of the backs used? You go on about the "great lengths" needed to portray the ace, but it's a pretty crude job really, just a few squiggles and the word "bee". I wouldn't exactly think of it as fine art or as something that required much thought or effort.

Roger M. | 03/01/13 12:17 AM | link | filter

It only means that the chances are extremely high that, having clearly using a Bee Ace of Spades in his illustration, Smith was referencing that a Bee deck was being used by Erdnase, "drawn from life" and all that.

Taking that thinking one step further, other than the Bee Worm Back 35's, the Bee 216 most closely resembles the backs as drawn by Smith in the book.

We don't agree Chris, and that's OK......but for over 35 years, I've been of the opinion that Erdnase used Bee cards based on the Ace in the book......and that thinking still works extremely well for me. There's absolutely nothing presented by anybody that would indicate Erdnase used any other brand of card......absolutely nothing!

Richard Kaufman | 03/01/13 12:25 AM | link | filter

Are any of the tricks in the book reliant on a reversed card? I can't recall offhand. But you can't really do tricks with reversed cards in a deck with an all-over back design (unless it's white).

Chris Aguilar | 03/01/13 02:46 AM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote: It only means that the chances are extremely high that, having clearly using a Bee Ace of Spades in his illustration, Smith was referencing that a Bee deck was being used by Erdnase, "drawn from life" and all that.

Taking that thinking one step further, other than the Bee Worm Back 35's, the Bee 216 most closely resembles the backs as drawn by Smith in the book.
the opinion that Erdnase used Bee cards based on the Ace in the book.......and that thinking still works extremely well for me. There's absolutely nothing presented by anybody that would indicate Erdnase used any other brand of card......absolutely nothing!

I don't put as much stock in "drawn from life" as you do. It's quite possible that the artist did quick sketches/thumbnails and then finished off the detail work later. That sort of thing is quite common. Or that Smith simply liked the look of the Bee Ace and used it. Or that perhaps Erdnase used what was available at the time and that deck just happened to be on hand that day (in which case, little or no case could be made that those were his preferred brand) Or (as been mentioned before) there could simply be no relationship between a single Ace and the card back that were illustrated. It's quite possible (and quite believable) that the backs illustrated were just generic and didn't represent any true back. Or how do we know that Smith didn't provide the cards to Erdnase?

To me, the squiggled card back illustrations look almost nothing like that weird Bee back they will soon be selling. I've given it an honest shot at finding similarities, but I guess my imagination (or desire to support a desired notion) simply isn't up to it.

I know it's tough to question a 30 years old, cherished pre-conceived notion ("Bees!")and perhaps it's unfair of me to expect you to entertain any possibilities beyond that.

.........or perhaps Chris you're just failing to see the perfect simplicity of the fact that a Bee ace would indicate that a Bee deck was being used!

Perhaps it's unfair of me to expect you to entertain that simple and logical line of thinking.

Your somewhat abundant "other" options have no real grounding in fact, and by and large make little actual sense in light of the facts and observations that have long been available to us.

Bill Mullins wrote:
True. But the title page says "drawings from life", so it's not unreasonable to say Bee cards.

Of course it isn't unreasonable. In fact. it's the one piece of evidence we DO have. I'm
that it was just something MD Smith added later I wouldn't exactly fall out of my chair gobsmacked. I'd just shrug and say, "Huh. That's interesting."

Jason

PS: I happen to really like the new CARC Erdnase cards and added the few decks I have to my Erdnase shelf immediately.

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**Eoin O'hare** | 03/01/13 07:38 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

The back design appears to be an anamorphic illusion, of sorts, if the design is viewed end on, a series of squiggles is the dominant design. Viewed side on, at an acute angle, and the dominant design seen is a series of parallel lines. (I'm doing this on an iPhone and the illusion is pretty clear)

If you had to illustrate this back design, wouldn't the squiggle Smith came up with, a line zig zagging from side to side and meandering from end to end, be a simple and elegant solution to suggest these two conditions.

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**Aron Prins** | 03/01/13 11:59 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Jason England wrote: I’d just shrug and say, "Huh. That's interesting."*

Isn't this what this whole thing is about?

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**Bill Mullins** | 03/01/13 12:26 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Erdnase liked his cards "new, thin, flexible and of best quality." Just like he liked his women.

*Chris Aguilar wrote: Or how do we know that Smith didn't provide the cards to Erdnase?*

Obviously we don't, but: Erdnase arrived prepared. He brought his own baize-covered board. Surely he brought his own cards.

I know it's tough to question a 30 years old, cherished pre-conceived notion ("Bees!")and perhaps it's unfair of me to expect you to entertain any possibilities beyond that.

When the artist drew the cards as Bees, it seems to be more than just a "cherished pre-conceived notion."
Ian Kendall | 03/01/13 02:52 PM | link | filter

Or how do we know that Smith didn't provide the cards to Erdnase?

I don’t have Revelations, or access to Smith’s letters, but I remember something about him not knowing in advance that he was to illustrate a magic book (or am I completely wrong here?). I cannot see how the illustrator would supply the cards for the 'expert' to use. I'm having a hard time even considering that this might be the case.

Larry Horowitz | 03/01/13 03:22 PM | link | filter

Would someone please look at hand drawn magic illustrations in a book from the same era and see how card backs are depicted.

Dustin Stinett | 03/01/13 03:33 PM | link | filter

Larry Horowitz wrote: Would someone please look at hand drawn magic illustrations in a book from the same era and see how card backs are depicted.

I just looked at Roterberg (before Erdnase) and it has ornate card backs. Hatton & Plate (after) also uses detailed (diamond backed) drawings.

Bill Mullins | 03/01/13 03:52 PM | link | filter

Larry Horowitz wrote: Would someone please look at hand drawn magic illustrations in a book from the same era and see how card backs are depicted.

More Magic  More Magic, Hoffman 1890

New Era Card Tricks, Roterberg, 1897

Magician’s Tricks: How they are Done, Hatton & Plate, 1910

Sharps and Flats, Maskelyne, 1894

Art of Magic, Downs, 1909

They are done lots of different ways, depending on the artist.
that which appears in any earlier magic books.

Eric Fry | 03/01/13 05:28 PM | link | filter

The drawings for the Hoffmann and Roterberg books are examples of the clutter of too much information.

Roger M. | 03/01/13 05:50 PM | link | filter

Not to deviate too far from the actual illustrations in EATCT, but the M.D. Smith oeuvre contains some quite stunning paintings of Old New Orleans, amongst other exotic locations.

http://thejohnsoncollection.org/marshal...w-orleans/

Viewing Smith in light of some of his other artwork tends to indicate that things like shortcuts, quick fixes, and a lack of accuracy really don't seem to fit his style.

Taking into account what's already been highlighted over the past day or so, it is quite safe to consider that Smith drew the very cards that Erdnase used that day, and drew them accurately.

There is no factual evidence or reason to believe that Smith undertook any complex (or otherwise contrived) process whereby Smith might have a reason to illustrate a brand of card other than the one that would have been used by Erdnase, whom one could presume further that (as Bill noted above) having brought his train table to the cold hotel room, Erdnase would have also brought the deck of cards he intended to use on his train table.

Considering the sole undertaking that day was for Smith to illustrate the playing cards in Erdnase's hands, it's safe to proceed knowing that Smith did just that, and did it with the accuracy of a professional illustrator and fine artist.

Smith drew Bee's for no other reason than Erdnase used Bee's as he posed his hands for Smith.

Beyond that, nothing has ever been presented to date that would remotely indicate any other brand of card being used that day. Throwing out a bullet list of unrelated "possibilities" the cards used were a brand other than Bee is simply baseless.

I'll be glad to eat my words should I be proven wrong. Until that time, the fact that Smith illustrated Erdnase using Bee cards should carry the day.
Roger M. wrote: Taking into account what’s already been highlighted over the past day or so, it is quite safe to consider that Smith drew the very cards that Erdnase used that day, and drew them accurately.

I wouldn't go that far. The cards in Fig 2 have no indices, only pips. The cards in other figures have indices. I don't recall many decks like that.

Other shortcuts/licenses/places where the illustrations don't reflect reality:
Fig 8 shows shading/reflections on the table, while Fig 7 does not.
In Fig 22 the left hand thumbnail is 1/3 the width of the deck; in others, it is much smaller (this is an example of why I don't think the drawings were traced from photos).
Erdnase's jacket appears to be white. No one as sophisticated as the author would have worn white before Memorial Day. :/

I don't think Smith was trying to do photorealistic drawings that reflected as accurately as possible what he saw in all details. He was making technical illustrations designed to convey particular points of information, as described by the author in their meetings. If the detail (position of fingers) was important to the author's text, it is probably good (and the expert opinion of much better card men than me tends to confirm this). If the detail was superfluous (French cuffs or not?), then it wasn't conveyed as rigorously.

Roger M. | 03/01/13 08:31 PM | link | filter

I would posit Bill, that Smith simply had no reason to draw anything but the cards Erdnase was using.

I think you're accurate in your representation that Smith only drew details to the point where he felt Erdnase's message was clear enough to come across to the viewer......but in my view that's still no reason to draw any card other than the one Erdnase actually used.

It remains guesswork of course, using the evidence Smith provided......we simply can't know for sure.
I noted it was "quite safe" to consider the cards Erdnase used to be Bee brand........but stopped far short of saying I absolutely knew it to be true :)

Chris Aguilar | 03/02/13 12:28 AM | link | filter

Nattering and wishful thinking about a single bee ace illustration aside. I still don't
In the interest of not overreaching, I would amend the text above to read "It's probably a coincidence that M.D. Smith used wavy lines..."

Now that the other shoe has dropped and the reproduction deck has officially been announced, at least they've dialed back the claims to:

Available Soon:

Erdnase 216 Playing Cards
Conjuring Arts' attempt to produce a deck that looks and feels just like the cards from Erdnase's time. Available in Green and Tan soon.

The demo photo for the reproduction deck (and also the original deck) looks visually unappealing to me, but I'm sure the decks will be nicely produced and appeal to the deck collectors out there.

Leonard Hevia | 03/02/13 03:45 AM | link | filter

Wishful thinking is not required about that Bee Ace of Spades in figure 101. It's already there in the illustration. Smith obviously knew what a Bee Ace of Spades was.

There had to be a Bee deck somewhere in the business deal between S.W.E and Smith. It's possible Smith had a Bee deck at his place and whipped out the Ace of Spades to put in the finishing touches on figure 101--or--S.W.E. loaned Smith the deck so that he could use it as reference to finish the drawings.

Smith did not illustrate any borders on the backs of the cards. If S.W.E. posed with a bordered deck, it is possible that Smith would have drawn the borders in.

I Like the back design and hope that CARC will also issue this new Erdnase deck in a Cambric finish. I prefer the feel of Cambric or air cushion to a smooth finish.

Bob Coyne | 03/02/13 04:05 AM | link | filter

It seems to me that if this is the deck, then Smith both simplified/abstracted the pattern and rotated it 90 degrees so that the wavy lines go across the width of the deck (rather than across the length of the deck). If you visualize the pattern on the actual
convincing. It seems possible that Smith remembered the wavy pattern but
misremembered the direction (or found it stylistically easier or better to depict it the
way he did).

Chris Aguilar | 03/02/13 05:05 AM | link | filter

I'm out guys.

This whole "Cards that may have been used by Erdnase!" nonsense has served as a
reminder of the unpalatable taste of constant confirmation bias and fairy tales.

Here's hoping that the new cards turn out well and that CARC sells plenty of them to
collectors and those willing to buy into the fantasy.

Bill Mullins | 03/02/13 11:00 AM | link | filter

Why are these called Bee 216s? The box says Bee No. 92 -- do the cards not belong with
this particular box?

Aron Prins | 03/02/13 12:18 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: Why are these called Bee 216s? The box says Bee No. 92 --
do the cards not belong with this particular box?

View this image of the original box: http://conjuringarts.org/wp-content/upl ... No-216.jpg

Kind regards,
Aron

Roger M. | 03/02/13 12:35 PM | link | filter

It can be difficult to hold a structured conversation with somebody when they have an
agenda unrelated to the discussion thats ongoing (and that they're taking part in).

I had been thinking we were speaking about the Bee Ace illustrated in the EATCT,
combined with the multiple illustrations of the back of the (same?) playing card......and
how that evidence might lead us to ponder what brand of card Erdnase used in his
hotel room while demonstrating for Smith.

In fact, it appears much of the recent discussion was egged on by a desire to disparage
perceived confirmation bias.

It's a shame, because it's never a bad idea to oblige forum posters to explain their statements, and Chris was obliging me to explain statements I was making here (something that I believe is always a good thing).

Frankly, I don't see any of this as "nonsense", but rather a quality discussion on a topic of mutual interest, combined with a bit of fun offered by CARC related to a deck of 1900 playing cards that most of us have never seen before.

I also see the bulk of this very thread not as fantasy, but as history. Making history interesting is CARC's specialty, and they do it very well.

Richard Kaufman | 03/02/13 12:38 PM | link | filter

Smith, I believe, made sketches from life and then actually drew the illustrations later. It would be very easy for a non-magician to falsely remember which direction the lines on the backs of the cards were going, (i.e., from end to end or from side to side). That could easily account for the difference in the direction of the lines between the deck and the drawings in the book.

Chris Aguilar | 03/02/13 02:24 PM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote: It can be difficult to hold a structured conversation with somebody when they have an agenda unrelated to the discussion that's ongoing (and that they're taking part in).

I had been thinking we were speaking about the Bee Ace illustrated in the EATCT, combined with the multiple illustrations of the back of the (same?) playing card.....and how that evidence might lead us to ponder what brand of card Erdnase used in his hotel room while demonstrating for Smith.

In fact, it appears much of the recent discussion was egged on by a desire to disparage CARC and be contrary for contraries sake in order to defeat the much broader issue of perceived confirmation bias.

It's a shame, because it's never a bad idea to oblige forum posters to explain their statements, and Chris was obliging me to explain statements I was making here (something that I believe is always a good thing).

Frankly, I don't see any of this as "nonsense", but rather a quality discussion on a topic of mutual interest, combined with a bit of fun offered by CARC related to a deck of 1900 playing cards that most of us have never seen before.
I also see the bulk of this very thread not as fantasy, but as history. Making history interesting is CARC’s specialty, and they do it very well.

Ok, that sort of personal attack (i.e. "agenda") requires a response. I like CARC. A lot. They have a great team there and I support what they do. I even support buying their decks as I feel it probably provides good margin for them and helps continue their mission. I would recommend their services (e.g. "Ask Alexander") strongly. And, to their credit, their new advertising text for this deck now more accurately reflects it as a product of Erdnase’s time, not necessarily (or verifiably) used by him.

However, my "agenda" (which doesn’t exist and is actually just my opinion and disagreement with you) has almost nothing to do with CARC, but rather with the nature of what constitutes true (or useful) evidence and a bit of distaste and the lengths people here will spin even the smallest, least convincing (and in this case obviously commercially based) nugget into some grand conclusion.

After recent years of seeing this sort of highly questionable "evidence" proliferate (often drowning out good thoughts and actual history) I’ve wearied of the trend toward fantasy, confirmation bias and sometimes just making crap up. I’m admittedly guilty of this myself. It’s fun to spin stories and theories out of essentially nothing and I do understand the appeal. But I think we look increasingly desperate (and frankly kind of foolish) when we deign to equate solemn discussion of such trifles as examples of validated history.

Now unless Roger would like to continue to spin my simple disagreement with him into more sinister motives, I’ll leave everyone to their further discussion of this momentous new "discovery".

Richard Kaufman | 03/02/13 03:42 PM | link | filter

I’ve discovered a relic from Wilber Sanders that proves he was S.W. Erdnase--it’s the bone of his little finger, which has wear on it that could only have been caused by repeated bottom dealing over a period of many years.

I will be donating (not selling!) this amazing artifact to a famous institution shortly, where all will be able to view it.

Yes, I am giving Erdnase the finger.
Is there anyone here who really thinks the drawings in the book are actually meant to depict Bee No. 216s? (and thanks, Aron, I missed that photo)

I never took the CARC statements to be more than tongue-in-cheek marketing.

Roger M. | 03/02/13 07:07 PM | link | filter

In light of the selection of Bee cards available in 1900, and in my own personal opinion, the 216's fit the bill of "squiggly lines" somewhat better than some of the other, more pictorial Bee back examples.

At the least, the 216's might be considered "closer to" rather than "further from" whatever card Erdnase used with Smith that day.

But all this fantasy and occasional bit of fun seems to rub folks the wrong way, so I wonder how many here really give a crap one way or another.

Bill Mullins | 03/12/13 09:33 PM | link | filter

Earlier today, I made a post in this thread about an classified ad from 1879 in which someone would teach deceit at the card table. Richard Kaufman commented on it, as did Joe Pecore.

Now all three posts are gone. What happened???

Leonard Hevia | 03/12/13 10:51 PM | link | filter

Bill-can you repost it? An 1879 ad on the pedagogy of card cheating sounds interesting.

I tried to locate any reversed card maneuver in the Card Tricks section with no luck. I also studied the sections on the Pass, Second Deal, Bottom Deal and Top Change for any mention of the design of the card backs or the borders, but S.W.E. remains tight-lipped on this issue as well.

Bill Mullins | 03/13/13 12:33 AM | link | filter

Leonard Hevia wrote: Bill-can you repost it? An 1879 ad on the pedagogy of card cheating sounds interesting.

It went something like this . . .

***********repost starts***********

I just ran across an interesting 1879 classified ad from the NY Herald (bold type is mine,
INSIGHT AND EXPLANATIONS GIVEN TO DECEIT at all games of cards; will teach any one how to protect themselves from the most expert at the card table by addressing C, box 140 Herald offices.

I wonder if the man who placed the ad was named Andrews . . . .

Then Joe Pecore followed up with an observation that Marty Demarest’s article about W. E. Sanders mentioned that Sanders went east about this time. Coincidence?

**Brad Jeffers** | 03/13/13 05:52 AM | [link] | [filter]

*Bill Mullins wrote:* Bart Whaley tells us (in *The Man Who Was Erdnase*) that Mickey MacDougall came up with the term "mechanic's grip" in his 1939 book *Gamblers Don't Gamble*. Historical lexicographers (like those who edit the *Oxford English Dictionary*) always search for the first printed use of a word or phrase when researching. *Gamblers Don't Gamble* was published Feb 23 1939. But *Life* magazine, in their [Feb 6 1939](#) issue, had an article about gambling and included a few pages of MacDougall demonstrating some sleights, and it used the phrase two weeks ahead of MacDougall’s book (although it’s pretty obvious that they got it from MacDougall). So, *Life*, not MacDougall, gets credit for the first use in print of the term (unless someone finds an earlier citation).

Today, I found an AP article in the Trenton Evening Times (Trenton NJ) dated March 27, 1938. The headline is "Woman with Shiny Nose May Be Gambling Cheat, Declares Card Sleuth, Exposing Racket". In the article, Mickey MacDougall uses the term "mechanic's grip". As far as I am aware, this is the first use of the term in print.

The exact quote is, "There’s one best way to spot a cheat. Beware if you see a player holding the deck with his index finger backing up one end of the pack, three fingers curled on the side, and the thumb held diagonally across the top. That’s the mechanic's grip, the only grip that permits the bottom deal, the second deal and the top deal with the same hold."

**Joe Pecore** | 03/13/13 09:36 AM | [link] | [filter]

*Bill Mullins wrote:* I just ran across an interesting 1879 classified ad from the *NY Herald* (bold type is mine, and isn’t in the original ad):
INSIGHT AND EXPLANATIONS GIVEN TO DECEIT
at all games of cards; will teach any one how to protect
themselves from the most expert at the card table by ad-
dressing C, box 140 Herald offices.

I wonder if the man who placed the ad was named Andrews . . . .

From Unshuffling Erdnase by Marty Demarest in Genii September 2011

"In 1878, Wilbur Fisk and Harriet decided that the boys needed to complete
their education someplace more sophisticated than Helena. So they
arranged for them to attend Phillips Exeter Academy, late that summer
W.E. and James travelled by train to the East Coast. Upon arriving in New
York they discovered they were short on funds. Somehow or other, along
the way, they had lost their money. To make up the difference, W.E. traded
in a gold nugget that he wore on a pin. W.E. wrote to his mother about the
incident, but did not write about it to himself. According to his diary, it is
clear that before and after their stop in New York City, money was not a
problem. The Sanders parents had sent their children across the country
with sufficient funds. And the boys did not spend excessively. But for some
reason that he never specified, after departing Chicago, something
happened that forced W.E. to conduct some "business," as he put it, when
he reached New York. It is the first evidence that W.E. Sanders was
beginning to lead a double life."

Leonard Hevia | 03/16/13 02:24 PM | link | filter

Is there a link to a photo of the actual ad?

Once again, Sanders is at the right place at the right time. In the future, he would be in
or near Chicago in 1901-1902. It's easy to think that Sanders may have placed this ad,
but I wonder if in this instance he might have been the student. He was 18 years old in
1879, still an "unlicked cub" who might have needed "karate lessons" to defeat those
who had cheated him at cards.

If Sanders answered this ad and took classes, who then was the master here?
Somebody in New York who was damm good at cards in 1879.

Bill Mullins | 03/17/13 09:51 AM | link | filter

Is there a link to a photo of the actual ad?

It is behind a pay wall.
Leonard Hevia wrote:
If Sanders answered this ad and took classes, who then was the master here? Somebody in New York who was damm good at cards in 1879.

An interesting concept indeed. That Erdnase might have been a astute student of a single master.

He always seemed to write (at least to my eye) as if he had accumulated his knowledge from his varied travels and experiences, but he never writes anything so explicitly that one could reject that he (in fact) only had a single teacher.

Bill Mullins | 03/17/13 04:50 PM | link | filter

For the record, I don't really think that the 1879 ad has anything to do with Erdnase or his book. More of an amusing coincidence than anything else.

Richard Kaufman | 03/17/13 05:31 PM | link | filter

Or perhaps more than a coincidence. Bill, how often do you find that the phrase "expert at the card table" in print at that time?

Leonard Hevia | 03/17/13 07:05 PM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: Or perhaps more than a coincidence. Bill, how often do you find that the phrase "expert at the card table" in print at that time?

I'm thinking the same thing. This is the first time that I have seen this phrase in print before the book was published, and for me, this is too compelling to ignore. If this ad had been published in 1869 when Sanders was 8 years old, or if Sanders had been in Montana when this ad came out, then I would at least dismiss Sanders from any connection.

If Sanders is connected in some way to this ad, I believe he might have been the student because 18 years of age is not a considerable amount of time to be an expert at card cheating. He would have been too young while growing up in Montana to gain admittance to the gambling clubs that hosted the big guys who smoked cigars and drank brandy as they cut and shuffled the cards.

This ad raises more interesting points. David Alexander pointed out in his essay that although S.W.E. mentioned in *The Expert* that he authored his book because of financial difficulties, the profits in book publishing were not substantial. Is it possible that...
century to teach card cheating techniques and pad his income?

I've been scanning *The Expert* for the words "teacher" and "student" and found each word once so far. I haven't completed this yet and will continue to search for these two words and see what I come up with. This book has the appearance of a companion textbook to a course in card cheating. Is it possible that S.W.E. had already accepted students from his ads and decided that at some point that he needed to write a companion textbook?

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**Bill Mullins | 03/18/13 12:17 AM | link | filter**

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* Or perhaps more than a coincidence. Bill, how often do you find that the phrase "expert at the card table" in print at that time?

I wouldn't consider the phrase to be common, but neither is it unknown before Erdnase's book.

_The Publishers' Circular_ 12/6/1879 p 1193
"Here we have another form of "sport" discussed by as accomplished an expert at the card-table as the previous author is with a rifle." [a UK publication, from Google Books. A book review reprinted from _The Globe_.]

_Galveston Daily News_ 4/6/1882 p 2
"In fact gambling is, if not so respectable, less demoralizing, and causes less suffering to the innocent, because these speculations in futures, when applied to the necessities of life, frequently distress the poorer class who take no part in the speculation, but suffer the consequences, while only the dupe and those dependent on him suffer from the expert at the card table." [reprinted from the _Victoria Advocate_.]

_Trenton [NJ] Evening Times_ 7/27/1890 p 4
"Miss Louise Decker, of Trenton, is very expert at the card table. At a progressive euchre party given by a leading hotel, she capture a fine cracker jug, as third prize."

_Ft. Worth Daily Gazette_ 12/21/1890 p 16
"Gambling, in other forms than betting on the race track, is greatly on the increase in London. In all the clubs frequented by the golden youth, cards are played for money, and some men of high aristocratic pretensions are known to act as cappers or ropers in for gentlemanly experts at the card table."

Given that only a fraction of 19th century literature is digitized and searchable, and given that much of what has been scanned is poorly OCR'ed, I'd bet that the phrase
Leonard Hevia wrote: If Sanders is connected in some way to this ad, I believe he might have been the student because 18 years of age is not a considerable amount of time to be an expert at card cheating.

Though most 18 year olds 'think' they know a considerable amount at that age

Richard Kaufman | 03/18/13 08:22 PM | link | filter

I see that Joe now fancies himself as Harry Houdini from his new avatar! I like it.

Joe Pecore | 03/18/13 08:32 PM | link | filter

It was the Genii cover when I was born.

Leonard Hevia | 03/18/13 11:01 PM | link | filter

Joe Pecore wrote:

Leonard Hevia wrote: If Sanders is connected in some way to this ad, I believe he might have been the student because 18 years of age is not a considerable amount of time to be an expert at card cheating.

Though most 18 year olds 'think' they know a considerable amount at that age

You got that right, Joe!

Bill Mullins | 03/19/13 01:45 AM | link | filter

Joe Pecore wrote: It was the Genii cover when I was born.

Joe’s Birth Certificate says that issue’s date, but he was running behind schedule and was actually born a few months later . . .

Bill Mullins | 04/12/13 04:43 PM | link | filter

Erdnase mentions, in passing, the back palm. It is described in detail by Roterberg in 1897, with illustrations.
HERE is a 1903 photograph of it being performed/demonstrated by Imro Fox.

Bill Mullins | 05/23/13 12:50 PM | link | filter

Earlier in this thread are a number of discussions of Erdnase color change, which is more or less the same as the one in Selbit and attributed to Houdini. The earliest known mention prior to Erdnase (1902) is Selbit (1901), so the timeline is interesting -- how did Erdnase learn about it in time to get it into the book?

In the Watertown NY Daily Times, 3/10/1900, is a copy of an article taken from the Buffalo Express describing a Houdini performance given to a group of reporters prior to the evening public show. First he does a handcuff and a strait jacket escape. Then the needle trick. Then he does a number of card effects in which he "proved himself the equal of any of the famous magicians who have made card tricks a specialty and the superior of most of them."

His performance included a multiple selection routine, 3 card monte, a poker deal, and a blindfolded card stab. He also did some color changes:

"Then he took the pack of cards which a reporter had provided and , after performing several difficult shuffles with apparent ease, held the pack face upward, showing the ten of hearts on top. He passed his right hand lightly over the top of the pack and the ten of clubs appeared. It looked as if he had dexterously palmed the ten of hearts. He passed his hand over the pack again and the ten of hearts appeared on top. Once more he passed his hand over the pack. The queen of clubs was on top. Those who saw it and were more or less familiar with conjurer's tricks asked him to turn over his right hand expecting to find two cards palmed there. The hand was empty."

I think this sequence included the Erdnase change (along with some other stuff). This would be the earliest we know of it being performed (although not explained) -- plenty early for Erdnase to have either seen it and worked it out himself, or to have had it explained to him by Houdini (or someone else).

Leonard Hevia | 05/24/13 08:43 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: Earlier in this thread are a number of discussions of Erdnase color change, which is more or less the same as the one in Selbit and attributed to Houdini. The earliest known mention prior to Erdnase (1902) is Selbit (1901), so the timeline is interesting -- how did Erdnase learn about it in time to get it into the book?

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it out himself, or to have had it explained to him by Houdini (or someone else).

Erdnase had enough time to purchase Selbit’s book and practice this color change before publishing it in his own book. The time line here does make sense. Houdini performs this in 1900 months before his summer trip to Europe, and it appears in Selbit’s book with credit to Houdini in 1901. It then surfaces again in Erdnase’s book a year later.

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**Richard Kaufman** | 05/24/13 10:40 PM | link | filter

This is pretty amazing: this thread is up to almost one million, three hundred thousand views so far. And where is Mr. Andrews?

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**Zenner** | 05/26/13 07:16 AM | link | filter

I know where his body lies, Richard, but I am not prepared to show my hand just yet. The research is done, now all I have to do is write the book.

It took me four years to find the name of the man who wrote the Shakespeare works. It only took me two days to find a candidate for Erdnase. A two week free trial with ancestry.com gave me an outline of his biography; now I am just filling in. He ticks ALL the boxes.

Thanks for an interesting thread, everybody, but, I am pleased to say, nobody has even mentioned my man. I am travelling in virgin territory.

Best wishes,

Peter Zenner

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**Bill Mullins** | 05/26/13 10:08 AM | link | filter

Zenner wrote: It took me four years to find the name of the man who wrote the Shakespeare works.

That name would be William Shakespeare, I believe.

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**Roger M.** | 05/26/13 10:51 PM | link | filter

Zenner wrote: Thanks for an interesting thread, everybody, but, I am pleased to say,
Well I'm sure everybody who's contributed to this thread over the years is glad for the "thank-you".
BTW, have you ever looked up the definition of "hubris"?........you should.

I found an image of Zenner's candidate. It's either the man on the left, or the man on

In regards to Bill Mullins post regarding the "Erdnase Color Change" or First Method, I have always wondered about the Houdini connection. As I recall the change was put into Selbits book which appeared in Print in 1901 as previously discussed. In addition I recall that Selbeit credited Houdini "for knowledge of the movement" in latter additions.
in the first edition, is it safe to assume Selbit received feedback from Houdini, therefore crediting him in later editions?

On page 176 of the Annotated Erdnase, Mr. Ortiz credits the invention of the color change to Harry Houdini and goes on to say, "The Selbit description is accompanied by an illustration which is almost an exact duplicate of Erdnase' fig 84."

I also recall reading somewhere, of Dai Vernon showing the ambitious routine to Houdini over and over going against the boast of Houdini, that if shown a trick twice he could figure it out. But failed on this particular night, as Bess dragged Houdini away. I believe Mr. Vernon went with the moniker of the "Man who fooled Houdini."

In the Vernon Chronicles, Vernon discusses that Houdini was not much of a Card Magician.

In earlier posts on this Forum it has been mentioned that in Houdini’s vast library he did have a copy of TEATCT. And I also believe that the Houdini’s were God-Parents to one or both of Vernon’s sons.

My question is as follows:
If Houdini had such a huge ego, it must have burnt him up that Vernon fooled him with the card trick and went about using that as his moniker? And as they appeared to have a relationship later on. I am merely speculating, that, Houdini knowing Vernons love of Erdnase, the greatest "poke" would be to open up the book that Vernon valued as his bible, to the Houdini Color Change and set the record straight?

Any thoughts on this...

Chad Randash

Bill Mullins | 06/05/13 11:08 PM | link | filter

Vernon fooled Houdini in 1922; Houdini died only 4-1/2 years later. "The Man Who Fooled Houdini" sounds like a moniker that grew over time. David Ben would be the guy to ask, but I bet Vernon wasn’t using it immediately after the incident, but rather some time later; and I bet further that Houdini never heard Vernon say it.

Yes, Houdini had an ego, but it sprang from supreme self-confidence. That Vernon did a trick that Houdini couldn’t figure out didn’t threaten Houdini.

Also, the importance of Expert wasn’t nearly as well recognized in the 1920s as it is now. While Vernon may have been saying privately to people how good a book it was...
years.

Put all this together, and the scenario that you lay out -- that Houdini took satisfaction at his trick being in Vernon's favorite book -- doesn't seem likely.

(A copy of Expert formerly owned by Houdini is scanned and is on the Library of Congress web page. Too bad he didn't make any marginal notes about the paternity of the sleight.)

In the Vernon Chronicles, Vernon discusses that Houdini was not much of a Card Magician.

The newspaper reporters who saw Houdini do card work in the 1890s and wrote about it would disagree. Pretty strongly.

Larry Horowitz | 06/06/13 01:17 AM | link | filter

The Vernon's were particularly friendly with Houdini's wife Bess. That is most likely how the God-parentage came about.

Richard Kaufman | 06/06/13 01:31 AM | link | filter

Houdini was widely known to be quite expert with cards. He can be seen performing flourishes as well as other sleights in short films made by Pathe, I believe. He was also noted (by Gaultier, I think) for doing an excellent Classic Pass: putting the selected card in the middle of the deck and doing the Pass to make it appear on top.

As far as Vernon fooling Houdini, Vernon used a double-backed card which, aside from two tricks by Theodore DeLand, was entirely unknown in the United States. Vernon was the first person that I know of to put a single double-backed card into a regular deck and do something with it.

Marty Jacobs | 06/06/13 08:20 AM | link | filter

I'm afraid I don't have any additional information on the man himself, but I have started studying Erdnase's book in detail, and I'm posting my thoughts on my blog. You can read all of my Erdnase related posts on one page here:

http://www.magiconthebrain.com/tag/exploring-erdnase/

Marty
Library of Congress. Thanks for mentioning this in your post Bill.

**Jonathan Townsend** | 06/06/13 08:39 AM | [link] | [filter]

Per the title page of the text:

A whole calendar of slights? Might make an amusing title for a companion to Max's Protocols book. IMHO, as per the introduction, it will not "make the fool wise, or curtail the annual crop of suckers".

Is a confidence game a betrayal?

**crandash** | 06/06/13 11:09 AM | [link] | [filter]

Ahhh, great information! 2 more questions, In Selbit's 1st edition is Houdini credited, or does the credit come after the first edition?

Bill, I understand what you said regarding the timeline of the moniker and the death of Houdini. Going with your hypothesis, I am making one more stab, that in all of these years, in all of the road trips with various friends, and as found in "REVELATIONS" 1984 page i....Diaconis talks about road trips around 1959 where Vernon would not only discuss the book but would quiz him...
"Where does Ernase ever mention a pair of shoes?"
"Where does Erdnase talk about overcoming friction?"
Etc...

In the 50's when Martin Gardner searches for Erdnase and Vernon's conversation(s) with Sprong, I just think it odd that this was not a big enough deal to point out in print or in either of the Revelations/Revelation books (unless I missed it) from the individuals that are/were still around during the time of the printings.

Am I trying to make too much of this connection?

**Roger M.** | 06/06/13 04:25 PM | [link] | [filter]

I think most of the "individuals" who were (and are) still around when the book(s) were written had long ago quit discussing in public any specific, or personal details of this era.

Other than a few short, repeated, and terribly glib and pat comments in assorted magazines and perhaps a recent publication, the "individuals" in question don’t speak about any of it, to anybody (perhaps they share with each other, who knows?).
Bill Mullins | 06/07/13 02:18 AM | link | filter

crandash wrote: In the 50's when Martin Gardner searches for Erdnase and Vernon's conversation(s) with Sprong, I just think it odd that this was not a big enough deal to point out in print or in either of the Revelations/Revelation books (unless I missed it) from the individuals that are/were still around during the time of the printings.

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Remember, Vernon's point in annotating Expert in Revelations was to explain the text of Expert. Not to explore or identify the mysterious author.

Gardner did work on the identity problem, and assumed he was correct in identifying M. F. Andrews in the late forties. Once that I.D. was made, the mystery was "Case Closed" with no further investigation required, until David Alexander and Richard Hatch re-opened it at the LA History conference a dozen or so years ago (by which time anyone who would have been able to shed first-hand light on the subject was long dead).

Didn't Vernon speak with Sprong in the 1930s?

Don Hendrix | 06/07/13 09:07 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote:

Zenner wrote: It took me four years to find the name of the man who wrote the Shakespeare works.

That name would be William Shakespeare, I believe.

Zenner comes to a different, although, I think, bogus conclusion. If his Erdnase candidate is no more credible than his Shakespeare candidate, it will not cause a ripple in the Erdnase debate.

Bill Mullins | 06/07/13 09:40 AM | link | filter

He doesn't think that Expert was written by Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, does he?

Bill Mullins | 08/03/13 11:31 AM | link | filter

From time to time I see people looking for a hardbound copy of Expert. Right now,
Mastery, which includes the full text of Expert. This is probably the least expensive HB way to get it.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 09/12/13 02:31 AM | link | filter

Hi All,

It’s interesting the way this thread seems largely to move forward in "waves" of posts. In the past ninety days or so there has been only one new post I see on this thread. I guess that we are now in the trough of a wave, and I don’t imagine that this post will lift the thread into a new wave crest.

But I wanted to mention that my most recent video posted to my YouTube channel deals with a 1905 Drake version of *The Expert at the Card Table*, in paper covers. Here is a link:

http://www.youtube.com/user/TomSawyerTV/videos

As I mentioned in the following post in this thread . . .

viewtopic.php?f=1&t=1240&start=2400&p=266842

. . . it would appear that there were at least three different variants of the book dated 1905, which can (it seems) probably be set into a more-or-less definite chronological sequence. Based on the information in that post, the copy I discuss on YouTube is an example of the second of the three.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Bill Mullins** | 12/07/13 10:58 PM | link | filter

Earlier in the thread the subject of the Houdini/Erdnase color change has come up.

This magazine from Spain ("Por Esos Mundos" of Apr 1901) shows a photograph of someone doing the color change, and attributes it to Houdini:

El notable profesor de cartomancia, Houdini . . . practicaba un bonito juego titulado el nuevo cambio, que consiste en tomar una baraja con las cartas vueltas hacia el público.

Se ruega á uno de los espectadores mostrándole la primera carta que diga el palo que es, y enseguida se pasa la mano sobre la carta y como si al hacerlo...
I don't understand Spanish, but believe the passage says something like:

The notable professor of card magic, Houdini . . . practiced a nice trick entitled the new change, that involves taking a deck with the cards turned toward the audience.

Request to one of the spectators by showing the first card stating what it is, and then passes his hand over the card as if doing so would have vanished it, a different card should appear causing the admiration of the audience.

Note also on the page a photo of what I believe is the classic pass, being used to reveal a face-up selection which has previously been inserted into a face-down deck. And the previous page shows a photo of the back palm, predating the one from Imro Fox by two years.

Richard Kaufman | 12/07/13 11:19 PM | link | filter

Houdini is cited by Gaultier, I believe, for being a master at doing the Pass with a face-up card inserted into the face-down deck and bringing it to the top.

Marty Demarest | 01/05/14 10:33 PM | link | filter

The article and photographs of Houdini from "Por Esos Mundos" are the same as printed in "The New Penny Magazine," No. 120, Vol. X. "The New Penny Magazine" doesn't give any date, but a copy in the New York Public Library was sent from Howard Thurston to Saram Ellison in January of 1902. (According to a hand annotation on the article.)

The text in "The New Penny Magazine" states that the photographs were taken for that article, so it presumably predates the 1901 Spanish magazine. Houdini posed for the photos himself at the Press Studio. The face-up card is being used in the classic pass simply to better illustrate its position in the deck. Also exposed are a quadruple pass, crimping, bridging, second dealing, the waterfall cascade and the back palm.

The color change is not explicitly claimed as original by Houdini, but it is titled "The New Change," and it is identical with Erdnase's First Transformation. I think that there is more than enough evidence that Houdini originated this sleight, especially considering that Houdini's name is the only one associated with it prior to the publication of The Expert at the Card Table.

As for Houdini's skill with cards, the article certainly reveals him to be widely
"Magic as Theatre" in Tarbell 6: "I have seen audiences sit spellbound as Houdini, stalling for time when something went wrong backstage, performed (and none too well at that) the back and front hand palm with a deck of cards."

Richard Kaufman | 01/06/14 12:44 AM | link | filter

You can judge Houdni's ability with cards for yourself. Pretty good, I'd say.

John Carney | 01/06/14 12:59 AM | link | filter

Of Houdini's skill with cards, Vernon used to say, "He was a BUTCHER!"

Richard Kaufman | 01/06/14 01:05 AM | link | filter

Yes, Vernon used to say that, but he hated Houdini as a magician.

Thomas Van Aken | 01/06/14 08:37 AM | link | filter

Indeed.

Camille Gautier hated Houdini for his attacks on Robert-Houdin but confessed that he never saw such an skillful manipulator.

Regards
Marty Demarest wrote: The article and photographs of Houdini from "Por Esos Mundos" are the same as printed in "The New Penny Magazine," No. 120, Vol. X. "The New Penny Magazine" doesn't give any date, but a copy in the New York Public Library was sent from Howard Thurston to Saram Ellison in January of 1902. (According to a hand annotation on the article.) This would indicate that the date of the magazine is Feb 9, 1901.

Bill Mullins wrote:

Zenner wrote: It took me four years to find the name of the man who wrote the Shakespeare works.

That name would be William Shakespeare, I believe.

Zenner's book on Shakespeare is as wacko as anything you will ever read. It has been out for a while now and most serious Shakespeare scholars have yet to hear of it.

Richard Kaufman wrote: You can judge Houdni's ability with cards for yourself. Pretty good, I'd say.
Disagree. Although it's very difficult to judge from this sort of footage, it seems to corroborate Vernon's sentiment.

**Pete McCabe** | 01/13/14 12:20 PM | link | filter

Yeah, I have to say that if Vernon saw that footage, I don't think he'd praise it.

**Brad Henderson** | 01/13/14 01:32 PM | link | filter

Let us not forget we have the benefit of judging houdini's technique after experiencing the effects of Vernon's influence re naturalness and technique. We have in our experience acts of manipulation that would have been inconceivable in that day. Shoulders of giants, and all.

The back and front palms were still novel at that time - was Thurston’s handling more refined?

I'm sure the first cave man who pretended to take a rock from one hand and vanished it into the air with the other would be considered a butcher by our standards.

Yet they called him Preist.
deck and bringing it to the top.

You mean he fooled Gaultier by doing that? ... That's impressive.

Oh come on put the card back in the middle

No way - it's back on top. How did you do that?

No wonder Vernon messed with him using just the second card.

Bill Mullins | 01/14/14 09:35 AM | link | filter

There are several pdf versions of the book online. (Erdnase Bible from CARC, the Library of Congress scan of the 1st Drake hardcover, the Learned Pig version, etc.).

I just ran across this version, reformatted and retypeset by Marty Jacobs.

Bill Mullins | 01/24/14 09:03 PM | link | filter

And Daniel Madison has a printed edition I just learned about.

Has anyone seen it? Any comments, good, bad or indifferent?

MarkAndrew | 01/26/14 12:17 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: And Daniel Madison has a printed edition I just learned about.

Has anyone seen it? Any comments, good, bad or indifferent?

Hello, Bill!

My comment would be: Irregardless of what is on offer, when the offer itself is done with subterfuge/blatant misleading, I wish no further part in the endeavor. (I understand Daniel makes his living with the image he has carefully crafted/great mechanics. However, to me the image becomes a falsity when used to garner money.)

Bill Mullins | 01/26/14 12:20 PM | link | filter

MarkAndrew wrote: when the offer itself is done with subterfuge/blatant misleading,

The offer is pretty straightforward: "Send me 25 pounds. I'll send you a book."
I'm missing your point, I guess.

**MarkAndrew** | 01/26/14 05:53 PM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:*

*MarkAndrew wrote:* when the offer itself is done with subterfuge/blatant misleading,

The offer is pretty straightforward: "Send me 25 pounds, I'll send you a book."
Not much subterfuge.

I'm missing your point, I guess.

Hi, Bill,
Maybe you did not read the "offer" for the book? "The author wishes to remain anonymous..." We are to believe that it is not DM? Even though it is his personal website, and he has said elsewhere that it is him? Also, the reason they are on offer: "left over" from a print run he made for his friends? Unless he is that wealthy (which he seems to not be, because he is now selling them instead of giving them away) where he told the printer to run as many as the printer felt like, or he lost dozens of friends recently, that dog doesn't hunt.

If you are familiar with him, as you are, many of his sales pitches are premised on misleading/false advertising. The 'reformed' card sharp? Gotcha. An image that has held sway in magic since at least the book in question was put on the biblical pedestal by The Professor. But claiming rarity/originality for work and pieces that you've only added the cool, dark, 'extreme' facade to established thoughts and mechanics to me is subterfuge at its' worst connotation.

**Bill Mullins** | 01/26/14 07:28 PM | link | filter

I don't know if Daniel Madison's persona reflects his actual life history, or not. Johnny Thompson's presents himself as a slightly baffled Polish aristocrat. Pretty sure he's not from Poland.

Not everything on the order page is the literal truth (and that is probably true of many order pages for many magic products . . .). I was interested in the product itself -- is it a quality binding? Is there any content beyond the original text? Has it been reformatted and typeset?
Bill Mullins wrote: I don't know if Daniel Madison’s persona reflects his actual life history, or not. Johnny Thompson's presents himself as a slightly baffled Polish aristocrat. Pretty sure he's not from Poland.

Not everything on the order page is the literal truth (and that is probably true of many order pages for many magic products . . . .). I was interested in the product itself -- is it a quality binding? Is there any content beyond the original text? Has it been reformatted and typeset?

Johnny is Polish, but I don't believe he sells his services and ideas by conning people into believing he is a Polish aristocrat? His sells his 'persona'/act as that. (Hence you pointing out the obvious, that we know the difference). That was my point above. And I would add for me, if there are other magic products that are SOLD with deception, that is a condemnation of the many, rather than a buttress for DM. (To clarify this point, Bill: No problem with persona. Problem with actual falsities to take my money out of my pocket. Would you yourself sell an effect that wasn't yours, and claim it was, because it fit with your gestalt? Or Ortiz pull a con on the consumer, because that is part of 'what he does'? ) OKAY: I am paying homage to SWE. Here is my book and why you should buy it. NOT okay: Here is a secret book that was never intended for the public, but because I'm a good guy, I'll let you have one of only a 'few' limited editions that I happen to have.

As for the book itself, the binding is not what I would call 'quality', but it is not cheaply done. (The money seems to have been spent on the paper, and having it feel like quality). The text is a reprint of the original: nothing added, nothing taken away. For those who have mentioned frequently cropping editions or printing parts to carry in back pockets, this is exactly what this book was meant to be: carried with, studied, always at hand. (Although I would like to echo John Racherbaumer; I have yet to see anything other than DV’s echos as to WHY this manuscript is imbued with such scholarly enigmas?)

Here is a link to DM's Erdnase green deck sold on Ellusionist http://www.ellusionist.com/madison-dealers-green.html You can get a glimpse of the book at 25 seconds in or so. Or at least the page size/format.

Bill Mullins | 01/26/14 10:35 PM | link | filter

So you bought one?

MarkAndrew | 01/26/14 11:18 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: So you bought one?
(ellusionist, Dan & Dave, XCM) and a collector as well. He will purchase almost any book or magazine that pertains to cards in magic or poker. (I am a huge bibliophile as well) He lives three towns from me, so there is not much we miss between the two of us! (anytime you see a readership to a serious card magazine such as Antinomy, any of Fulves whenever they are shipped , etc., a subscription or two can be counted from us.)

So, I have held his. If you are looking for another in your collection of Artifice Ruse And Subterfuge, it is probably worth the price. If you are looking for anything other than a scaled down facsimile of the 1902 edition, probably not worth it.

Marty Demarest | 01/31/14 11:21 AM | link | filter

Via private channels, I have received several questions about an article I wrote that is published in the current (Winter 2013) issue of Montana, the Magazine of Western History. The title of the article, "Montana's Conjurers, Con Men and Card Cheats," sums up the general subject. But the specific focus is on W.E. Sanders and S.W. Erdnase. Since this forum is the best place to go for Erdnaseana, I thought it best to answer the questions here, publicly.

The Montana article is based fundamentally on a different article of mine, "Unshuffling Erdnase," that was published in the September 2011 issue of Genii magazine. The two articles take the same starting point--David Alexander's and Richard Kyle's theory that The Expert at the Card Table was written by Wilbur Edgerton Sanders. But, while the basic facts of the matter haven't changed--history hasn't been rewritten in the past few years--the context and presentation of many of those facts is substantially different in the Montana article.

So in response to the question of whether the current article is "merely a reprint or a retread" of the earlier article, I would say that no, it's not a reprint or a retread. Several sections of prose are similar or identical between the two articles. Some of the same photos appear in both articles. And, as noted above, the basic facts of the story haven't changed--they are a matter of historic record. But the current article introduces new information, both about The Expert at the Card Table and W.E. Sanders. And it offers an analysis of the previously unexamined worlds of magic and card cheating in frontier Montana. These subjects are tied together in an attempt to see how the Sanders theory fits with historic evidence.

But it would be misleading to imply that the Montana article is profoundly different from the Genii article. If someone has read the Genii article and feels the need to pursue the subject no further, I'm not sure the Montana article will add very much to the pleasure of their lives. However, if the Sanders theory, or Erdnase in general, is of interest to someone, then they may well find something new to enjoy in the Montana article.
I have also been asked why I chose to write another article about the same subject, and the short answer is: Because the mystery still hasn’t been solved. The identity of the author of The Expert at the Card Table is still unknown, and so I don’t feel the need to cease my investigation. Moreover, the current article was written for a scholarly reviewed, widely respected history journal, and I wanted to take the opportunity to introduce other readers to the Erdnase subject. The magic community, while fostering Erdnase’s work for years, has also burdened it with a cult of personality and exclusivity. Haphazard, sloppy editions of this "bible" have proliferated, and the investigation into its origins has regularly devolved into armchair punditry. Invective has often replaced analysis, and ego has come to dominate a discussion about art and history. I think The Expert at the Card Table deserves better. The Montana article is one attempt to accomplish that.

I was also inspired by Richard Hatch’s excellent article, "Reading Erdnase Backwards" (first published in Magicol and then reprinted in the booklet Erdnase Unmasked). I found Richard’s article to be a coherent and comprehensive presentation of evidence relating to E.S. Andrews and The Expert at the Card Table--a well-written summation of Richard’s work, composed with the perspective of time and analysis. It encouraged me to do the same for W.E. Sanders, since my investigation had unearthed and verified new information after the Genii article’s publication. Also, much as I hope that Richard’s article doesn’t represent his final word on the subject, I’m also far from finished. The Montana article should not be seen as the conclusion of this project. There is more to come.

Bill Mullins  | 01/31/14 10:09 PM | link | filter

Marty Demarest wrote: If someone has read the Genii article and feels the need to pursue the subject no further, I’m not sure the Montana article will add very much to the pleasure of their lives.

Marty is far too modest. Owning a copy of the current issue of [img]Montana[/img] will add greatly to the pleasure of your life. It will also reduce your cholesterol, tone up your abs, relieve the aches of rheumatism, improve your complexion, conquer biliousness, and encourage a natural and healthy action of the bowels.

All kidding aside, even if you have only a passing interest in the subject of Erdnase, serious and scholarly articles like this are exactly what magicians should be supporting -- they are a wonderful antidote to the far too-common "Burt Wonderstone" stereotypes. Magic has a rich and fascinating history that for the most part doesn’t include coins from behind ears and sponge bunnies, and it is to the benefit of all that the popular press explore that history. (And there is a good chance that this will be a collectible in its own right in years to come.)
Marty Demarest wrote: The title of the article, "Montana's Conjurers, Con Men and Card Cheats," sums up the general subject. But the specific focus is on W.E. Sanders and S.W. Erdnase.

Is this article available online in some form?

Bill Mullins wrote: Is this article available online in some form?

No.

Marty Demarest wrote: The article is not available online. But according to the ever-helpful Julie Eng:

Julie Eng wrote: If you are interested in purchasing a back issue of the Winter 2013 Vol 63, No. 4, Tammy Ryan from subscriptions is a very helpful lady who suggests that you either email her or call her to place your order:

Email tryan@mt.gov or Phone 406-444-4708.

I know that some bookstores and museums can order copies of the magazine, too, which might save on shipping costs. Around Montana you can buy it in gas stations.

And thanks, Bill, for 😂 our comments. But I must disagree with you about one thing: Burt Wonderstone was an incredibly accurate movie. To my reporter's eyes it captured magicians perfectly.

Richard Kaufman wrote: Shame on you, Marty!

Bill Mullins wrote: So I got my copy of Montana now, and I look forward to reading it in depth. But a couple of quick comments.

1. I like footnotes better than endnotes.

2. Marty does not assert that WES was SWE. In fact, at the end of the article, in his
3. The notes about Marty Demarest at the end of the article says he is "the author of a forthcoming article about S. W. Erdnase in *Genii: The Conjurer's Magazine*." When is this coming out, Richard?

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**Brad Jeffers** | 02/05/14 10:54 PM | link | filter

Don’t miss your chance to purchase a *first edition of Erdnase and the ultra rare Hutchinson book*, at the Saturday’s Potter & Potter Sperber auction.

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**Bill Mullins** | 02/06/14 09:15 AM | link | filter

If you want a copy of the Hutchinson book, this is likely your only shot for a while. If you only want the material, Sperber reprinted it twice -- the book in linked auction, and in one of the issues of his "A Real Miracle" series. Neither is as costly as the original book.

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**Bill Mullins** | 02/08/14 01:21 PM | link | filter

*Brad Jeffers* wrote: Don’t miss your chance to purchase a *first edition of Erdnase and the ultra rare Hutchinson book*, at the Saturday’s Potter & Potter Sperber auction.

The first ed Erdnase went for $13,000 plus 23% -- right at $16,000. A new record.

(I dropped out at a level SUBSTANTIALLY below that.)

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**Richard Evans** | 02/08/14 03:08 PM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins* wrote:

*Brad Jeffers* wrote: Don’t miss your chance to purchase a *first edition of Erdnase and the ultra rare Hutchinson book*, at the Saturday’s Potter & Potter Sperber auction.

The first ed Erdnase went for $13,000 plus 23% -- right at $16,000. A new record.

(I dropped out at a level SUBSTANTIALLY below that.)

It didn’t look in quite as good condition as others I’ve seen for auction in the last few years. Was there anything special about this one?
Bill Mullins | 02/08/14 04:42 PM | link | filter

I'm sure that Gabe would have noted any special issues with the book. I think it's just a situation where a couple of people wanted it badly. It is probably the most desirable/important (pick your adjective) 20th century magic book.

It looks like Potter and Potter are having a good day. The Discoverie of Witchcraft went for $25k, I think, and the other stuff I was interested in (the lots of trade cards from 250 to 261) mostly went for at least twice high estimate.

Richard Evans | 02/08/14 07:17 PM | link | filter

Thanks Bill. As ever, the price depends on how badly someone wants it!. It's always interesting to watch the auctions live online. It was a beautiful first edition of Discoverie. The reprint of Hutchinson's book on Erdnase did well too (almost as well as the first ed). Burt Sperber had quite a collection.

James Smith | 02/10/14 05:46 AM | link | filter

It did seem a crazy price for the Erdnase but then desirability does that if you have two people who want something badly enough!

I have to disagree with the first edition Scot being a beautiful copy. It had been restored well but with many facsimile pages, including the entire section on conjuring, it was not a great copy and the price achieved ($19,200) was really quite high considering. The second edition was a much better buy.

Richard Evans | 02/10/14 05:30 PM | link | filter

James Smith wrote: It did seem a crazy price for the Erdnase but then desirability does that if you have two people who want something badly enough!

I have to disagree with the first edition Scot being a beautiful copy. It had been restored well but with many facsimile pages, including the entire section on conjuring, it was not a great copy and the price achieved ($19,200) was really quite high considering. The second edition was a much better buy.

I hadn’t appreciated that about the first ed of Discoverie. That was a high price in that case. The 1886 edition was a nice one too.
I found Marty’s article in *Montana* quite insightful, informative, and just plain fun reading. I knew that there would be no smoking gun, but four items stood out to me:

1. Sanders and Erdnase spelled the 19th century card game "cassino" the same way with the double letter "s".

2. Sanders had some knowledge of self-publishing and copyright law before *The Expert* was published.

3. The connection between the Dalrymple and Sanders family appears to be substantiated from a Sanders family genealogist who corresponded with Demarest. This would corroborate Smith's recall that Erdnase mentioned a family relationship to Louis Dalrymple, the political cartoonist.

4. It was in the winter of 1901-02 yet Erdnase was not wearing an overcoat when he met Smith in the unheated hotel room. Since the Windsor Clifton Hotel where Sanders' parents were staying was only a few blocks away, it’s not inconceivable that he would skip the coat and head quickly to the hotel room to rendezvous with Smith.

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**Bill Mullins** | 02/14 01:47 AM | link | filter

*Leonard Hevia wrote:* I found Marty’s article in *Montana* quite insightful, informative, and just plain fun reading.

Agreed

1. Sanders and Erdnase spelled the 19th century card game "cassino" the same way with the double letter "s".

Robert Frederick Foster has been proposed as a candidate by Peter Kane and Jerry Sadowitz. See [here](#), where Foster also spelled the game as "cassino".

2. Sanders had some knowledge of self-publishing and copyright law before *The Expert* was published.

Whether or not a particular candidate had knowledge of copyright law seems to be something of a red herring, since the copyright notice in *Expert* is, at best, awkwardly worded. It doesn’t inspire confidence that Erdnase himself had any specific knowledge of copyright law.

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**Bill Mullins** | 02/17 02:25 AM | link | filter
the Windsor Clifton Hotel where Sanders' parents were staying was only a few blocks away, it's not inconceivable that he would skip the coat and head quickly to the hotel room to rendezvous with Smith.

Smith recalled to Martin Gardner that he'd met Erdnase at a hotel possibly at the intersection of Congress and State. The Windsor Clifton was at the NW corner of Monroe and Wabash, 1 block East and 4 blocks North of Congress and State.

This [1898 map](#) shows the area.

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**Bob Coyne** | 02/19/14 07:35 PM | link | filter

I just received a copy of Montana and Marty's article. I really enjoyed it -- well worth getting and reading!

As Marty mentions, it covers mostly the same ground as the Genii article, but from a different context. Plus there's new stuff also. To my thinking, the most significant piece of information is something Marty briefly mentioned on this thread a while ago -- namely that the Sanders and Dalrymple families were related. The article supplies a bit more on that, though still no details. Hopefully there will be more about that in the future.

The Montana history and context was interesting as was some of the magic background pointing to what sources and influences Sanders may have used or encountered.

There were also some new (unpublished) quotes from Sanders' diaries in the both the body of the article and the endnotes section. It would be *great* if those diaries were transcribed or scanned and available for all to see...

Yes, and there was a nice teaser at the end about a forthcoming article in Genii. So seems like there's more to look forward to!

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**Richard Kaufman** | 02/19/14 08:00 PM | link | filter

There is always more to look forward to in Genii.

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**Marty Demarest** | 02/21/14 11:37 AM | link | filter

Leonard and Bob--thanks for your thoughts on the Montana article. I'm glad that you enjoyed it.
Sanders for doing some heroic work! There will be more details to reveal later, but the initial family connection between the Dalrymples and Sanders seems to date back to at least the 18th Century. From Ben:

Sir John Dalrymple is a prominent surname in and around the same areas occupied by Sanders and their kin and at a minimum the families new, traded, bought and sold property to and from each other and in one instance have likely produced offspring together from legitimate unions. On 18 Feb 1790, Elizabeth Dalrymple, of Stair, Cumberland, England married Sir Myles Sandys of Edinburgh, Midlothian, Scotland. This is significant because the likelihood of this being a direct family link to today’s Sanders and Dalrymple is fairly high.

That’s a pretty old connection, and it should be placed in W.E. Sanders’ context. The Sanders family was remarkably well-informed about even its most distant family connections, and the Dalrymple relation dates back only 100 years before the time period in question. One of the most interesting aspects of W.E.’s journal-keeping is how detailed and informed he is about his family connections. And of course, closeness isn’t something that’s conveyed only by a family tree. Physical proximity to even distant relations will often make them more familiar than immediate family members. So it becomes a matter of working out HOW the families were related, and HOW W.E. might have known this. Regardless, there is a family connection.

Just a note about the Montana article: It does not reproduce the Puck illustration in which Wilbur Fisk Sanders was caricatured by Dalrymple. That’s only in the Genii article. However, Montana does include a number of very good reproductions of photos of W.E. Sanders, including one not reproduced in Genii. It’s a picture of W.E. on a camping trip, and the reproduced image is actually one side of a stereoscope. (So if anyone wants to visit the Montana Historical Society, it might be possible to see Erdnase in 3D!)

One thing that struck me upon looking at the photos was how nicely W.E. always dressed. Even out in the midst of a camping trip, he posed in what looks like a well-cut jacket, collar and tie with his guns fashionably displayed. It recalled M.D. Smith’s first-person testimony that described Erdnase "as a good dresser (quiet)." [sic] (M.D. Smith to Martin Gardner, 7/17/1950)

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**Bill Mullins** | 03/09/14 12:02 PM | [link] | [filter]

So Erdnase says: "It is not our purpose to describe the various kinds of . . . prepared or mechanical cards, that play so great a part in the professional conjurer's startling exhibitions."
thing yet, in 1902. Hofzinser would not have been well known in the United States at this time. "Mechanical" doesn't seem to be an apt term to describe Stripper decks (which were well known).

Acrobatic cards show up in Roterberg's "New Era Card Tricks"; perhaps this is what Erdnase is referring to?

**Marty Demarest** | 03/09/14 11:09 PM | link | filter

I've always thought that Erdnase's "mechanical cards" were things like the cards described in the "Prepared and Mechanical Cards" chapter of Roterberg's *New Era Card Tricks* (1897), which include things like mechanically diminishing cards and moving pip cards. Likewise in Hoffmann’s *Modern Magic* (1876), where he includes a mechanical torn corner card and a card that stands on edge. *The Secret Out* (1859) includes specially-printed cards and a hollowed-out deck.

**Richard Kaufman** | 03/10/14 10:25 PM | link | filter

The term "mechanical" playing card gaffs was used to describe gimmicks with moving parts, such as those cited above (moving pips, restored corner, flower appearing on a playing card--there are a lot of them). I believe the first person to use the term "mechanical" in relation to gimmicked cards that were specially printed, and had no moving parts, was Theodore DeLand.

His definition of "mechanical" was that the cards did the work for you and required no sleight of hand.

**mrmagik68** | 03/27/14 11:07 PM | link | filter

Wow!!! It's hard to believe that almost 11 years ago I started this thread in search of how to best tackle The Expert at The Card Table and the thread is still going strong. This is pretty awesome. I’ve been out of the magic scene for some time, looks like I have some catching up to do. Good to be back.

Roberto

**Jason England** | 03/28/14 05:55 AM | link | filter

Am I the only person just now finding out about this?

I figured it would have been posted in this thread if anyone else knew about it, but I
Very sad news.

http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/chicago ... =162108796

Jason

Bill Mullins | 03/28/14 12:52 PM | link | filter

Sad news, and I hadn’t heard. Thanks for posting.

His book was a thorough review of the "State of the Art" of Erdnase research when it came out.

I knew he had some sort of cancer soon after it was published, but hadn't heard any status since then.

Roger M. | 03/28/14 02:28 PM | link | filter

Hurt authored the Grand Overview of the search for Erdnase.

He wrote a completely fair and accurate account of where each of the "searchers" stood at the time in their individual searches.

He gave every searcher fair and balanced exposure, and whatever his personal opinion might have been, Hurt really did know how to write such that there was no appearance of "playing favorites".

I was impressed throughout as I read the book, as such a balanced presentation was something that could have proved difficult to do on this particular subject matter.

I absolutely treasure his book.

Thanks for bringing this to our attention Jason, albeit truly sad news.

lybrary | 03/28/14 09:29 PM | link | filter

Jason, thank you for letting us know. I did not know that Hurt passed away. I was in loose contact with him because he was working on a book on mentalism and I helped him with source material. I knew he had cancer but he wanted to push it aside and lead a productive life despite it.

It is worth telling the story how it came to Hurt writing his exceptional book on
looking for writers for a challenging but rewarding project. I received a good amount of replies among them Hurt with whom I had no prior contact. I had several qualified candidates for my idea but something struck me with Hurt’s email and I pitched my idea first to him. The idea was to write an objective book on all major Erdnase candidates. The goal was not to find Erdnase or to conclude with the most likely candidate, but rather to summarize all existing research and present and evaluate it in an objective manner. He liked the idea and dug himself into the problem matter. I really did not expect him to do it that well. He had no prior knowledge of Erdnase and the mystery about who it might be. But that was also his biggest advantage, because he could objectively approach the matter not having been exposed to the issue before and not having already acquired his favorite candidate. And I must say that Hurt really took his objectivity very serious and paid particular attention to not having any personal bias enter his writing.

He also delivered much more than I ever asked him to do. The entire linguistic analysis was his doing, the search for the hotel also completely his own work. I think he got so fascinated that he did not only write the summary as I asked him to, but that he spent a lot of time adding his own research. It is a book I am extremely proud of as publisher, even though I merely initiated the idea. Hurt delivered beyond my wildest dreams. I think it is fair to say that it is by far the most objective and scientific work on Erdnase to date.

For those looking for the link to purchase it: http://www.lybrary.com/artifice-ruse-er...51122.html

Bill Mullins | 05/17/14 10:42 AM | link | filter

Alibris (aggregator for booksellers) uses this as sort of a "stock" illustration for several of their listings of EATCT.

Anyone have any idea where it comes from?

Joe Pecore | 05/17/14 10:52 AM | link | filter
Possibly. But Obscure Press, I think, finds public domain digitized books (like on googlebooks) and prints them out. I don't get the impression that they do much artwork or design on their own. Are they the original source for the cover design?

Just found another online edition of Expert at the Card Table:

- Formatted for 8.5 x 11 paper.
- Formatted for A4 paper.

It's by "Read Books" out of the UK, printed in 2013. It is indeed the cover, 226 pages, includes a 3 page intro discussing magic and a few of the greats in magic. This is followed by 1.5 pages about Erdnase referencing potential candidates and possible reasons to remain anonymous.

Paperback, glossy cover, references Lightning Source UK and Milton Keynes UK on the last page. Print on demand I think.

And some day I'll put online the complete (as complete as I know of) list of variants. I have listed over 90 variants.

Now who has some of those 1905's to fill the gaps in my collection!

I'd be interested in seeing that list, John.
McDermott having passed away. I just saw this today for the first time. In an earlier post, I summarized my views on Hurt’s book about the Erdnase authorship controversy. Overall, I like the book better than my own works on that subject.

I corresponded with Hurt quite a bit in mid-2012 regarding the hotel. He seemed very modest and unassuming.

I don’t think Hurt’s Erdnase book has been discussed all that much on this thread. At least, though, several people (including me) did say nice things here about his book, and Hurt replied on this thread. So, at least we (or some of us) don’t have to think, “Gee, if only I had said something nice when he was living.” But that is not much of a consolation.

Anyway, very sad -- a great loss to magic.

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**Leonard Hevia** | 05/18/14 01:34 AM | [link] | filter

Very sad to read that McDermott passed away. I found his book a highly informative and entertaining read on Erdnase. McDermott believed that the best candidates are M.F. Andrews and Edwin Sumner Andrews. He stated his concluding reasons in the book’s epilog.

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**Bill Mullins** | 05/18/14 01:49 PM | [link] | filter

Checklisters have noted editions of Erdnase in Spanish, German, Italian, and Japanese.

Now there appears to be a version in Chinese.  
[Link](#)  
[Link](#)  
(150 Yuan is about $24, so it isn’t too expensive)

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**Bill Mullins** | 06/18/14 11:14 AM | [link] | filter

A copy of the Centennial edition just went for $455 on eBay.

I wish I had bought two.

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**Rick Ruhl** | 06/27/14 12:38 AM | [link] | filter

Rill
eBay is strange... I just won one shrink wrap for $300....

It will stay in the shrink wrap.

**Bill Mullins** | 06/29/14 01:08 AM | [link] | [filter]

*Expert* wasn’t the only book illustrated by Marshall D. Smith. Ebay currently has four Jack Henderson books he illustrated. It's not often you see them as a group.

And while you are throwing money around, [here's](#) a painting of his.

**John Bodine** | 07/26/14 06:34 PM | [link] | [filter]

Reading through the book again and I’m curious to know if anyone has researched or created a family tree of shifts. Specifically, the author claims to have created a number of the shifts in the book but perhaps there is something to be learned about the author by tracing backward from the shifts. For example, was the open shift or a variant of it ever in print before 1902?

John Bodine

**Tom Sawyer** | 07/28/14 04:02 PM | [link] | [filter]

Hi All,

I am now working on another book about many of the S.W. Erdnase authorship questions.

In connection with that, I recently started a new blog, called "My Quest for S.W. Erdnase." If you are interested in the authorship of *The Expert at the Card Table*, you may find the blog of interest. Here is a link: [https://erdnasequest.wordpress.com/](https://erdnasequest.wordpress.com/).

At least for the present, I expect to post a new post very frequently -- probably every day, and perhaps more often than that.

--Tom Sawyer

**Richard Kaufman** | 07/28/14 04:35 PM | [link] | [filter]

Great blog, Tom!
Richard, thank you. I appreciate that! --Tom

Rick Ruhl | 07/29/14 05:05 AM | link | filter

Good stuff, Tom.

makes me wish I could take the next 5 years of my life and focus on the authorship.

Jonathan Townsend | 07/29/14 07:55 AM | link | filter

That's great. Best of luck in the project.

Post graduate work on card magic is beyond me - still working on the basics here.

Roger M. | 07/29/14 03:04 PM | link | filter

This is fantastic news Tom!

It was when I finally got my hands on your S.W. Erdnase: Another View that the search for Erdnase began to make sense to me, and I began to read all that was available on Erdnase and his book.

Tom Sawyer | 07/29/14 04:57 PM | link | filter

Hi Rick Ruhl, Jonathan Townsend, and Roger M. --

Thank you all very much for the kind and encouraging comments. I especially appreciate the comments because I know from the Genii Forum that all three of you have done serious thinking about the Erdnase authorship controversy. (This applies to Richard Kaufman’s comment, as well.)

Roger, that is really nice to hear about my S.W. Erdnase: Another View. Thanks for saying that.

I was recently reviewing some information on that book. The first run (1991) was a 67-page book, and there were only 100 copies. The second run (1997) was revised and enlarged, and it was 87 pages. That run consisted of only 65 copies!

Thanks again,

Tom Sawyer
Bill Mullins | 07/29/14 08:14 PM | link | filter

And if you’d be willing to do a second printing of either version, I’d sure buy one!

Rick Ruhl | 07/30/14 08:06 AM | link | filter

Or even a password controled PDF. I would think most of us Erdnase hunters have ethics..

Marty Demarest | 07/30/14 09:58 AM | link | filter

Great blog idea--and good to see you writing again about Erdnase, Tom! I’ll add my voice to those asking for reprints. Or maybe just bind all your Erdnase work together? In any case, it’s well worth seeking out.

Tom Sawyer | 07/30/14 08:43 PM | link | filter

Hi Bill, and Rick, and Marty,

Thanks for the interest in my old S.W. Erdnase: Another View!

I'll think about your above suggestions on that, and I'll probably discuss that subject on my new S.W. Erdnase blog within the next few days.

--Tom Sawyer

Richard Kaufman | 07/30/14 09:44 PM | link | filter

If you're looking for an eager publisher ...

Tom Sawyer | 07/31/14 02:52 AM | link | filter

Hi Richard,

I don't think I am, but that definitely kinda made me smile!

Thanks,

Tom

Tom Sawyer | 08/01/14 07:30 PM | link | filter
Thank you to everyone who has visited my new S.W. Erdnase blog!

The blog has been up for less than a week, and yet I have managed to post 18 posts so far. As of now, I have definitely kept up with my stated intention (for the time being) of at least one post per day.

There has not been as much “audience participation” as I would like to have seen. So far, none!

Posts have dealt with Marshall D. Smith, people’s views after the Whaley-Busby-Gardner book appeared, David Ben’s “Erdnase profile” versus David Alexander’s, a few problems I have with certain “profiling,” and the use of computers in analyzing Erdnase.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Bill Mullins | 08/01/14 10:07 PM | link | filter**

*Tom Sawyer wrote:* There has not been as much “audience participation” as I would like to have seen. So far, none!

Until now, I didn’t realize that your blog accepted comments. It’s not real obvious.

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**Tom Sawyer | 08/01/14 10:48 PM | link | filter**

Bill, thank you for mentioning that! I intend to do something about it. I looked at a post just now and did not discern any place to comment. I did some research and finally found the answer.

For those who wonder "how to comment" on the blog, there is a little "speech balloon" by the title of each post -- you can click on that little icon.

I may end up overhauling the look of the blog. On my other blogs that allow comments, there is a clear place to comment at the end of each post.

Thanks again,

Tom

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**Rick Ruhl | 08/02/14 08:08 AM | link | filter**
guestbook and sees he was there in the 20's.

There are many upscale Hotels in Chicago near State Street... wonder if they have guestbooks for their history archives?

The other thing is, could Martin Gardener have prompted M.D. Smith on what to answer for certain questions? That we will never know, but could we have been led astray due to the goal of finding Erdnase?

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**Roger M.** | 08/02/14 10:34 AM | link | filter

Rick, the interaction between Martin Gardner and M.D. Smith is covered in the limited edition booklet, **The Gardner-Smith Correspondence** released by H&R Magic Books in 1999.

The actual exchange of letters (contained in the book) between the two men don’t appear to demonstrate any level of conspiracy or coaching taking place.

Although I don't believe Gardner fabricated answers, or coached Smith in what to say, Gardner *did* ask some leading questions of Smith, and when he got an answer from Smith that he didn’t like, it could be said that on a couple of occasions Gardner appeared to rephrase the question until he got an answer he did like.

But they were all Smith's own answers, as shown in the actual Smith letters to Gardner in **The Gardner - Smith Correspondence**. Although the book was initially released in a limited edition of 250 copies, I believe it was recently included electronically on one of the Erdnase DVD sets, and is now easy to get a hold of.

As an aside, a question for Tom. Do you have a copy of the Gardner-Smith book noted above? Contained within it on page 12 is a drawing that Smith did for Gardner that is done *very much* in the style of the Wayside drawings in your blog post of a couple of days ago. This doesn’t resolve your thinking that the drawings in EATCT don't seem to match the style Smith used in the Wayside drawings, but does indicate that the style Smith used in the Wayside drawings in 1922 most definitely match the style used by Smith in the drawing he did for Gardner in 1946.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 08/02/14 03:35 PM | link | filter

Hi Roger,
**Man Who Was Erdnase.** With that assumption as a premise, here are a few comments.

Your observation about that drawing is very perceptive.

As you said, that drawing and the *Wayside Tales* drawings are all similar in style. Not only that, but to my eye, those drawings, which were obviously (in their original form) pen-and-ink drawings, seem markedly superior, as art, to most if not all of the other Smith art I have seen in mediums other than pen-and-ink.

His oil paintings I have seen seem to vary significantly in their quality. His non-pen-and-ink illustrations -- the ones I have seen -- have usually seemed rather primitive and non-memorable. (The one from *The Mother's Magazine* on my blog is an example of that.)

But the pen-and-ink drawings are beautifully executed, and that seems (to me) to be where his art really came to life.

This may seem like, "Oh, great. Now Tom thinks he is an art critic." But for decades one of my major interests has been American illustration art, and I am pretty familiar with works of many of the major American illustrators of the early twentieth century.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Roger M.** | 08/02/14 04:02 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Hi Tom, yes that's the same drawing as in the Gardner-Smith booklet.

It would appear that Smith had a few fundamentally different styles he could draw from as the situation required ... his pen and ink drawings, his New Orleans style paintings, and the drawing you highlighted in your blog from The Mothers Magazine ... a drawing which seems very different again from the two styles highlighted above.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 08/04/14 05:04 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Hi All,

One of the more interesting aspects of the whole S.W. Erdnase case has to do with the publisher known as the Jamieson-Higgins Company, which appears to have been connected with James Kinney's printing company. Everyone will recall that there is pretty good (but in my view not 100% conclusive) evidence that McKinney printed *The Expert at the Card Table*. 
It has been shown earlier in this thread (in a post by Bill Mullins) that a contemporary issue of Publisher's Weekly indicated that the "Western News Company" bought "most of the books and plates" of Jamieson-Higgins.

However, for those interested in the relationships of the various companies that were possibly connected in some way (even though maybe remotely) with McKinney, the following might be of interest. The April 1903 issue of The Bookseller (easily viewable on Google Books) says in part:

... the plates and books on hand were purchased by the Western Book and Stationery Company, not the Western News Company.

To be clear, that refers to the purchase of materials of the Jamieson-Higgins Company.

--Tom Sawyer

Roger M. | 08/10/14 10:36 PM | link | filter

I don't use Facebook, Google+, or Twitter, so can't sign into your blog Tom.

Regarding your recent post about the Centennial Edition Tom, and the reference to the loose one page Colophon sheet that came in the book.

The reference to "Fouled and broken type and illustrations were restored" as you noted indeed is on the sheet ... but it's important to note the sentence immediately preceding it, which was there to give the paragraph its context.

The full text reads:
Current techniques were used to create a modern version of the original plates. Fouled and broken type and illustrations were restored.

(the underlining and bolding are mine)

It's safe to assume that the Publisher had a true First Edition, and the reference in the Centennial Edition was to restoring condition to the original plates used to print the first edition, which in the absence of a true First Edition in my collection I will have to presume was in the publisher of the Centennial Editions hands at the time.

As the note from the Publisher states, "Research was conducted and every effort has been made to create a replica as true as possible to the original at the time it was printed, rather
The publisher goes on to state, "The only features that have been altered from the original are in the use of archival-grade materials and a modern binding technique to better withstand handling and use".

The above is a more complete take of the text off the Publishers note and the Colophon attached to the Centennial Edition.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 08/11/14 05:11 PM | link | filter

Roger, thanks!

If I were to do a facsimile edition of the first edition of *The Expert at the Card Table*, I would want all of the typographical components to be precisely the same as in a certain specific exemplar of the first edition.

On page 273 of *The Man Who Was Erdnase* is a reproduction of the text on the verso of an Erdnase title page. I'm not sure, but in context, it seems as though that is from the first edition. The first line includes the name “Erdnase,” but the name is essentially illegible.

Maybe it was that way on all copies of the first edition.

In any event, if I were doing a facsimile edition, I would not change that, if it was that way in the copy I was reproducing.

(I have never examined a copy of the centennial edition, and I have no knowledge as to what the back of the title page looks like.)

--Tom

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**Roger M.** | 08/11/14 11:53 PM | link | filter

Hi Tom,

I don’t have all the various editions, but I do have a few. Here's a few interesting things I’ve found by taking your note about the damaged type in TMWWE on page 273, and comparing it to the reverse of the title pages of the editions I do have in my library.
1) The 1944 Fleming hardcover (blue) does not include the reverse of the 1st Ed. title page in this edition.
2) The Casino Press edition does not include the reverse of the 1st. Ed. title page.
3) Both the comb bound and the perfect bound editions of the Gamblers Book Club editions do not include the reverse of the 1st. Ed. title page.
4) The Coles edition doesn’t include the reverse of the title page.
5) On the K.C. Card Co. Edition, the 1st. Ed. reverse title page text is present, and it’s been completely repaired.
6) On the Frost paperback edition, the 1st. Ed. reverse title page text is present, and it’s been completely repaired. (Frost printed for K.C. Card, so this isn’t surprising).

Now for the editions that match the damaged type exactly as noted in your post:

I have two paperback copies of what Jason England describes as the “Drake-Undated-Green” (link below).
Interestingly, both copies appear identical except for the reverse of the title page. In one copy, the type has been fully repaired, and in the other copy the type is damaged exactly as it is on page 273 of TMWWE.
This would seem to imply that at some point Drake made efforts to repair what were becoming seriously damaged printing plates.

I also have what I refer to as a Wheman Brothers edition, which is damaged in exactly the same way as the one copy of the Drake edition and the illustration on page 273 of TMWWE.
I haven’t pulled these old editions out in a while, and my memory is hazy, but I believe the Wheman Brothers edition is actually an edition that was printed by somebody else … perhaps Drake. I just can’t recall, and it’s not specified in Jason Englands excellent lecture notes on Erdnase editions, which form the basis of the Magicana website section on Erdnase editions linked below. (Perhaps Jason is reading this thread and could clarify?).

So it might appear that the broken and damaged printing plates were simply getting too banged up to use, as shown on page 273 of TMWWE, and that at some point while the plates were in the possession of Drake, efforts were made to restore the plates, as indicated by my two copies of the Drake Undated Green edition, one with damaged type, the other with perfect type.

What does all this mean? … Probably not much, but I found it all quite interesting and it was a nice way to kill an hour looking further into your reference to the damaged type as shown on page 273 in The Man Who Was Erdnase.
It was also the first time I’d had all the old, delicate Erdnase editions out of their plastic sleeves in at least a few years.
A few years ago, I found an article about Edwin S. Andrews that linked him to Watsonville CA. The article was punning on the word "pippins", using it to mean young girls but also referring to its actual meaning of "apples". Apples were (and are) a major export from Watsonville.

I just found out that Andrews spent some time as a Watsonville agent for J. and H. Goodwin, an apple exporter. LINK. Similar ads run from July to Sept of 1919.

I have the drake undated green only and it has the repaired reverse title page.

The quality of your research continues to amaze Bill!

I still believe your 2011 research putting E.S. Andrews at a card table such that he was specifically contacted by other players and asked to play cards carries substantial weight.

You succeeded in putting a deck of cards in E.S. Andrews hands, and in at least as compelling manner as some of the competing candidates have had decks of cards put in theirs.

Thanks, Roger.

While I was glad to be able to check that particular box for Edwin S. Andrews, I don't think it is really dispositive. My assumption is that any man who would be old enough to have written the book would also have some familiarity with playing cards -- they are just too common throughout society. I suppose that there are some segments of society that have a moral problem with cards in general -- certain religious groups -- but otherwise, everyone plays cards.

As of 1902, Hoyle's had gone through multiple editions and was continuously in print. "According to Hoyle" had already become a commonly used expression, as had other phrases from the card table such as "pass the buck" and "deal from the bottom"
and reported the results of the big tournaments.

What would be unusual would be to show that someone did NOT play cards.

Roger M. | 08/13/14 11:42 AM | link | filter

I agree with you Bill.

My observation speaks primarily to the fact that in the broader search involving multiple candidates, importance has come to be placed on placing a deck of cards in the candidates hands ... something your research demonstrated in the positive for Andrews.

I guess the distinguishing factor is that (as you noted) there were obviously some folks who didn't engage in card play, so actually putting a deck of cards in somebodies hands is one small step closer to being able to note that they at least had some knowledge of card play in general.

But I agree that sitting down and playing cards was likely a primary form of entertainment for a majority of Americans at that point in history, and that noting a man actually played cards would be peripherally similar to noting that a man wore a hat ... somewhat standard stuff for the time period.

Tom Sawyer | 08/13/14 12:45 PM | link | filter

Bill and Roger,

I too found the additional facts pretty interesting, and for a couple of reasons.

First, and maybe foremost, it gives a more complete picture of what Edwin Sumner Andrews was all about. Even if he was not an agent for Goodwin as far back as the "pippin" article, it tends to show that that his excuse was plausible.

Also, the advertisement tends to validate the original story, and that support is nice, because newspaper articles as a class are not necessarily the most reliable source of information.

Also, regarding the card-playing evidence . . .

It seems to me that if a person rarely plays cards, an article such as the original "pippins" article is not too likely to appear. (I have a feeling that others may already have said something like this.)
is unlikely that anyone will come up with evidence that he never played cards.

--Tom Sawyer

Bill Mullins | 08/13/14 12:50 PM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote: . . . and that noting a man actually played cards would be peripherally similar to noting that a man wore a hat ... somewhat standard stuff for the time period.

The last magic effect in Expert is "The Card in Hat". In it, the performer has to borrow a hat -- HE DOESN'T OWN ONE!

The only known picture of Edwin Sumner Andrews shows an uncovered head -- HE DOESN'T OWN A HAT!

Need I say more? Case closed . . . .

Bill Mullins | 08/13/14 01:22 PM | link | filter

The 1920 census showed Edwin Andrews as a fruit farmer on Fruitvale Ave in Saratoga, CA. While much of that region is now developed into housing, there are still orchards on Fruitvale:

LINK

That orchard is Novakovich Orchards.

Tom Sawyer | 08/14/14 03:01 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

One of the things that isn't talked about too much (as far as I know) is the possibility of name confusion. I'm talking about situations where "everything" points to the conclusion that a specific published name refers to a specific candidate. But sometimes maybe it doesn't. (I'm not talking about the related, broader problem of seeing a name more or less in isolation, and having no idea of which specific person is being mentioned.)

So, anyway, I recently searched on Google for:
And, of course, various things came up, including the results of some 2001
genealogical investigations by Richard Hatch.

But one of the things that came up was the May 17, 1902, issue of United States
Investor, with the following:

... the Saratoga Pyritic Smelting Company, of Ironton, Ouray county, Colo.
E.S. Andrews is president ... .

Now in this example, there is no possibility of confusion.

But if the name had been "W.E. Sanders," instead of "E.S. Andrews," I think most
people would assume that the reference was to Wilbur Edgerton Sanders, because of
the date, the mining connection, and the location. But in essence, there would be no
solid reason to assume that.

--Tom Sawyer

Over years, I've found at least half a dozen people who were named E. S. Andrews ca.
1902 and were prominent enough to be mentioned in digitized magazines or
newspapers or books enough times that I can recognize them and remember them as
individuals. These include:
Edwin S. Andrews (Richard Hatch's guy)
E. S. Andrews, con man (Todd Karr's guy)
E. S. Andrews, newspaper publisher of Williamston MI
E. S. Andrews, insurance executive from WI and CT
E. S. Andrews, NM Bicycle dealer (also on local board of education)
E. S. Andrews, the mining guy mentioned by Tom above

I've also occasionally mentioned specific individuals in this forum.

This doesn't include dozens of other people with the initials that show up -- enter "E. S.
Andrews" into any searchable text database, and all sorts of people fall out. And while
I haven't exhaustively looked at the matter, my guess is that the 1900 U.S. Census has
at least 25 and maybe 50 or so people named "E. S. Andrews" who were adult males in
that year.

Just finding someone named "E. S. Andrews" doesn't make them a strong candidate for
having writing EATCT. It's other supporting facts that make them interesting -- the
fact that Todd's guy is a swindler, for example, or the many coincidences of time and
that makes them a "person of interest". When Marty's Genii article first came out, I found at least one other guy named W. E. Sanders in Montana, and it was complicated to keep him separate from Wilbur E. (and I'm not sure I was completely successful -- some of the references that I suppose are for Wilbur may be for the other guy, and some of those that I discounted as being the other guy, may in fact be Wilbur).

**Tom Sawyer** | 08/17/14 09:12 PM | link | filter

Bill, that's an interesting list.

If the E.S. Andrews who was a publisher had been located in Chicago -- bingo! (Not really.)

Another E.S. Andrews was one mentioned by John Bodine in a post back in 2010. Here is the link John posted (or a similar link):

http://books.google.com/books?id=-ot-O5 ... ws&f=false

The page before that refers to "E. Andrews, M.D."

The following (from 1902) may be a reference to the same person (line 13 from bottom):

http://books.google.com/books?id=u7ZXAA ... 312&dq=Homœopathic+%22E.+Andrews%22&hl=en&sa=X&ei=XUzxU46EG4vuoASf9Iw&ved=0CCUQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=Homœopathic%20%22E.%20Andrews%22&f=false

The foregoing references overall make clear the Chicago location.

The following (also from 1902 or thereabouts) is a reference to an E.S. Andrews, M.D., who was apparently based in Delaware. (The information is after a "Delaware" heading.)

http://books.google.com/books?id=Og42AQ ... 22&f=false

--Tom Sawyer

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**Tom Sawyer** | 08/18/14 01:23 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

Well, it has been over two weeks (I think) since I have talked here about my new S.W. Erdnase blog. This is a little update.
The most recent nine posts have discussed the illustrations in *The Expert at the Card Table* -- so even those of you who may have burned out on the authorship issues might see something of interest.

The blog has now been "up" for about 23 days. I have now posted a total of 59 posts during that period -- so I have been averaging more than two posts per day there.

Also, thanks to those of you who have submitted comments -- I think five different people have submitted at least one comment.

--Tom Sawyer

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**John Bodine** | 08/18/14 01:25 PM | [link] | [filter]

And here is a book that lists E.S. Andrews as the printer/publisher out of Michigan.

[http://www.ebay.com/itm/380837487716](http://www.ebay.com/itm/380837487716)

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**Tom Sawyer** | 08/19/14 06:26 AM | [link] | [filter]

Hi All,

I've been thinking some about the writing of *The Expert at the Card Table*, and about how little is really known about the process of writing that book.

Although the writing may have been spread over a number of years, it seems semi-accepted that Erdnase probably relied to some degree on a book by Selbit that was released in late 1901. (That release date was discussed by Richard Hatch on this thread back in 2009.)

A transformation described beginning on page 151 of Erdnase has been mentioned many times in this connection.

It is illustrated by Fig. 84, and this situation may have implications for the order in which Erdnase wrote the book, as well as the sequence in which the illustrations were produced.

Anyway, one wonders -- if the book was basically completed in late 1901, and it pretty much must have been -- why Erdnase felt compelled to include that sleight. My own attitude perhaps would have been, well, I would like to include it, but I have already completed the book!
been needed after everything else was already drawn. (My own solution to this -- if I thought a new illustration was really needed -- might be to delete the old Fig. 84 and substitute the new one.)

Overall, it seems unexpected that Erdnase would be adding things at the last minute, but I think he probably did so.

--Tom Sawyer

Bill Mullins | 08/19/14 09:34 AM | link | filter

Fig 2 shows a card with pips only and no numbers, while other figures (see Figs 30 or 43, for example) show the number/letters.

Were cards without numerical indices still fairly common in 1902? I think of such cards as being older, and most of the cards I've seen from the turn of the century have numbers.

Does the use of two different styles of cards imply two different posing sessions, or that Erdnase brought two different decks with him at one session?

Or does it simply mean that Smith cut a few corners while drawing the pictures, and left out some non-pertinent details?

Tom Sawyer | 08/20/14 05:00 PM | link | filter

Bill, great questions.

I'm not what I would call an expert on playing-card evolution, but I do discuss certain playing cards of the latter part of the nineteenth century on my card-game booklet blog (not my Erdnase blog), largely because of my interest in questions like, “What kind of playing cards did Professor Hoffmann use?”

But I have never been clear on when the transition to cards with indices can be said to have ended, as to mainstream US cards. R.F. Foster, in his Foster's Whist Manual (in an edition dated 1890), says:

The card next demanding attention is the Jack. This card was formerly called the Knave; but since the general adoption of the index, or squeezer mark, on the edges of playing cards, it has come to be known by the initial J, which stands for "Jack."
example at Harvard University. The particular copy referred to is actually inscribed by Foster to the Harvard College Library!

In any event, it is difficult to generalize. And I have the impression that a lot of people writing about with the indices don't really have a handle on when the transition can be said to have concluded, in part because you will see many generalizations that don't add up to much.

Personally, I doubt that Erdnase posed with different styles at different times, but it is quite possible that the differences portrayed in the illustrations are significant in various ways.

--Tom Sawyer

Hi All,

One of the reasons Bill Mullins’s most recent post on this thread is so interesting is that the presence or absence of indices on the fronts of the cards is an objective way of discriminating between different types of drawings in *The Expert at the Card Table*.

In that sense, it is somewhat parallel to the presence or absence of individual copyright notices on the pictures, as discussed a long time ago on this thread by Richard Hatch.

With regard to the indices, Bill’s post more or less presupposes that all of the illustrations were produced by one person -- and Bill provides a few possible explanations for the differences. (I don’t know what Bill’s opinion is on the question of whether more than one artist might have been involved.)

But if one surmises that more than one artist was involved, I guess a hypothesis would be that the drawings with indices were drawn by one artist, and that the ones without were drawn by a different artist.

Upon quickly going through all of the illustrations, the ones I see that portray cards without indices are Fig. 2, Fig. 33, and Fig. 83.

At the moment, I don’t see anything about those three that particularly distinguishes those illustrations as a group from the ones showing indices. (I see maybe 27 that seem to portray indices.)

Also, Fig. 27 is one of the illustrations for "Two-Card Stock," which starts on page 60.
only the backs, but Fig. 34 appears to show a little of one index, toward the right of the illustration. It seems reasonable to presume that those three illustrations were all drawn by the same person, and if this is the case, then one artist drew a card with an index and without an index.

Of course, the majority of the illustrations do not show the fronts of any cards. (By the way, I don't necessarily think all of the illustrations were drawn by one person.)

--Tom Sawyer

Richard Kaufman | 08/22/14 09:34 PM | link | filter

If the artist was working very quickly, the easiest thing to leave out are the indices, because they're a pain in the ass to draw because they're so small.

Bill Mullins | 08/23/14 12:18 AM | link | filter

Tom Sawyer wrote: (I don't know what Bill's opinion is on the question of whether more than one artist might have been involved.)

I believe:

1. That all illustrations were done by Marshall Smith.

2. That the illustrations were from life (not traced from photographs).

3. That Smith did a good job of conveying important details (for example, finger placement), and was sloppy on unimportant details (cuffs, indices, fingernails, etc.)

4. That the squiggle lines on the card backs were not meant to convey that the cards used were Bee 216s.

5. That Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone.

6. That there ought to be a constitutional amendment outlawing Astroturf and the designated hitter (oh, sorry, went off on a Bull Durham tangent there).

Smith probably didn't get paid a lot, and he didn't put more into the drawings than they required. Court cards take more effort to draw than low-value number cards, so we get lots of low-value number cards. The only illustration that requires specificity and accuracy in the values of the cards is the last one, so it is detailed.

(I've always been amazed at how much detail Kelly Lyles puts into Bicycle card backs.)
Just an FYI, by 1902 it would have been very difficult to find a deck of cards intended for serious play that did NOT have indices. They start showing up in the mid-1860s, roughly 35 years before TEATCT was published. Just a few years later in 1905, the Ritter book puts dozens of marked decks on display (he mostly shows the backs) and every single one of them is a deck of cards with indices.

Indices caught on so quickly that it’s entirely possible Erdnase never saw a deck of cards without them.

Jason

I don’t know if anyone has brought this up before, but for some time now I’ve believed that the copyright notices were placed only under the illustrations where Erdnase felt he had some original thinking or innovation.

For instance, the Erdnase system of shuffling has plenty of copyright notices. Some of the more common shuffling moves do not. His system of palming has them, but not cutting to bridges, crimps or jogs. The Erdnase bottom deal section has them, as does the first second deal (the one he prefers). The other does not.

The vast majority of the Erdnase-invented shifts have them. The classic pass which is mush older than Erdnase, does not. Three card monte, which was ancient, does not.

Incidentally, the Erdnase first transformation has them, but the back palm and top change (2 moves we know he didn’t invent) do not.

You guys get the idea.

Now, I’m not saying Erdnase was always correct when he assigned or omitted a copyright notice to/from something, and of course copyrighting an illustration doesn’t protect the idea presented in that illustration, but I still think there’s something to this theory. I think Erdnase thought he was protecting his ideas by copyrighting the illustrations that depicted those ideas. When the idea being illustrated wasn’t his idea, he didn’t add the notice.

By the way, considering the strange copyright notice at the front of the book, this sort of makes sense that the author misunderstood the kinds of protections he was or wasn’t getting by adding a bunch of individual copyright notices throughout the illustrations.
Thanks, Jason, for the info on indices. Your comments reminded me of the 1900 article on Alfred Benzon. Those photographs also show cards with indices.

Also intriguing thoughts about copyright notices. Under current law, I believe, if the book were assembled and published today, the copyright to the illustrations would be held by Smith even if Erdnase put a notice under them. For Erdnase to hold the copyright, his agreement with Smith would have to explicitly transfer them, either as "work for hire", or another agreement in which Smith conveys them outright.

I don't know how it worked 100 years ago.

Jason, thanks for the clarification regarding the timeline of card indices. As for the hypothesis that Erdnase's copyright notices match techniques that he invented, I also followed that line of inquiry a few years ago.

I won't reiterate your examples, but I will note that there are meaningful exceptions. A few:

--Copyright notice for the first two illustrations of the Diagonal Palm-Shift (an Erdnase original), but not for the final illustration.

--Copyright notice for the First Method Transformation, as you point out. But that move had been previously published in several sources (in all cases attributed to Houdini), and as Darwin Ortiz observes, even the illustration closely matches one previously published.

--Some of Erdnase's original techniques are not marked with a copyright. His system of palming, for example, gives several methods for palming, but includes copyright notice for only some of the illustrations. More obvious might be the Sixth Method Transformation or the Longitudinal Shift--both explicitly Erdnase originals that lack copyright notices on their illustrations.

--Some of the techniques that we assume as ancient may not have been so old--at least not in the way that Erdnase describes them. Three Card Monte, as you say, was ancient. But Erdnase's methodology (or at least his writeup of it) was, as far as I can tell, original to him. (Just try learning Erdnase's Monte from Robert-Houdin or Maskelyne's write-up!)
were being used before Erdnase wrote his book, we don't have very good evidence that Erdnase was describing commonly used moves. Despite his lack of sticking his name on them, I think it's important to put an asterisk next to things such as his Monte hypes and his Mexican Turnover. Until evidence proves otherwise, they may be original.

In any case, I think it's a useful line of inquiry, but that there are too many exceptions to prove the rule.

(I do have a personal theory about the copyright notices. "But that is another story.")

Jason England | 08/23/14 05:42 PM | link | filter

Marty,

Completely agree with your exceptions to the "rule" as it were. I'm just wondering if the intent was to protect the images he felt contained information that was completely original with him vs ones where he was building on other work.

Somewhere between that intent and the actual execution could account for the discrepancies.

By the way, I know of one place the First Transformation was published prior to Erdnase, but the author (Selbit) only credits Houdini for showing him the move, not necessarily inventing it. Where is another?

Jason

Bill Mullins | 08/23/14 06:22 PM | link | filter

*Jason England wrote:* By the way, I know of one place the First Transformation was published prior to Erdnase, but the author (Selbit) only credits Houdini for showing him the move, not necessarily inventing it. Where is another?

Jason -- [Here](mailto:Bill.Mullins) is a description of Houdini doing what appears to be the color change. [Here](mailto:Bill.Mullins) is a description of the change, credited to Houdini (and the *New Penny Magazine* of 2/9/1901 it is reprinted from would also contain it). Both predate Erdnase. They don't explain it but do describe it. (check your email for the newspaper account and the *New Penny Magazine* article)

[Here](mailto:Bill.Mullins) some guy named Kaufman mentions that there are multiple publications linking
Marty Demarest | 08/23/14 06:57 PM | link | filter

Sorry, Jason, I should have included those references. Thanks Bill!

I will say that although we don't have an explicit statement along the lines of "Harry Houdini invented this lovely color change..." in the early literature, the first pictures of the effect show Houdini performing it, and the earliest appearances of the effect in magic literature name Houdini as the source. So for my money, it's Houdini's.

The only thing we really don't have--that I think we should have--is Houdini thumping his chest about "his" move being in Vernon's favorite book.

Jason England | 08/24/14 04:39 PM | link | filter

Marty,

I agree that Houdini has the strongest case. If I had to vote, I’d vote for him due to the published record.

But Houdini’s reputation as a sub-par card handler makes you wonder if a third party (not Erdnase) didn’t show it to him and Houdini got it into print first.

Jason

Bill Mullins | 08/25/14 01:52 PM | link | filter

Richard Hatch once asked

Anyone know . . . the date of publication of Selbit’s book?

after having just previously posted

But Selbit’s book also reached the States quickly and could well have been read by Erdnase while preparing his book. Frederick J. Drake advertised copies of Selbit's book in 1901,

.David Alexander asked the same question.

Some data points:

Martinka advertised the book for sale in early Jan 1902.

Mahatma Jan 1902 lists the book for sale from the Mahatma offices.
dated 11/7/1901, saying the book has arrived.

Henry Ridgely Evans, writing in the 11/8/1901 issue of *The Showman*, says "We are all waiting for Selbit's book to arrive in America." Two pages later in the same issue are excerpts of reviews of the book from *The Star*, the *Glasgow Herald*, and *Sporting Life*.

The 11/1/1901 issue of *The Showman* has letter from T. Nelson Downs and will Goldston favorably reviewing the book.

The Oct 11 1901 issue of *The Showman* lists the book as being "on the market". However, in the 9/20/1901 issue is a letter from an Arizona Bill, now of Los Angeles, asking "Please forward me a copy of the Magician's Handbook, by the showman's friend, "Selbit," to whom kindly convey my compliments." So word of the book had gotten out in America by Sept 1901. Note that the 9/1901 issue of Mahatma said that Selbit was a sub-editor of *The Showman*, and he did in fact have regular conjuring columns in the magazine. There was an unsigned profile of Houdini in the 1/18/1901 issue which may have been done by Selbit, offering an occasion at which Houdini could have taught the transformation to him.

The 10/4/1901 (a Friday) issue of *The Showman* says that ""The Magicians' Handbook" will be ready next Monday [10/7/1901]."

The 9/27/1901 issue of *The Showman* has this exchange in letters to the editor:

I sent you 2/9 for "The Magician's Handbook" last week, and received a receipt, but no book. How is this?

The book is not quite ready yet. At the last moment it was decided to put some more matter into the work, and consequently this delayed the date of publication. It is almost ready to be sent out now, and will be published during the next fortnight.

Selbit was on the front cover of the Sep 1901 issue of *Mahatma*, and the text says "He is just putting the finishing touches to an encyclopedia of the magic art, a work entitled "The Magician's Handbook"."

So, best guess is that the book was published in the UK on or about 10/7/1901, and copies were in America by the first week of November. It was widely available (as these things go) by the first of the year. It is possible that people who knew Selbit had advance notice of the book and its contents (Arizona Bill did a snake handling act and was a regular correspondent of *The Showman*).
I have linked several times to a set of photos of Alfred Benzon doing some gambling sleights. They include the earliest photos that I know of anyone doing either a second deal or a bottom deal.

Here is another early photograph of bottom dealing, from The Harmsworth London Magazine v10 #58, May 1903. An odd technique is depicted -- the card is withdrawn lengthwise, instead of from the side.

billmccloskey | 08/27/14 02:38 PM | link | filter

I'm sure this data is either not available or it has been discussed but it occurred to me while reading the 1902 ad for EATCT in the Sphinx that Erdnase was most likely a subscriber to The Sphinx. I wondered if anyone did a cross check on the old Sphinx subscriber list with the names of the usual suspects when it comes to his identity. That would assume there was an extant subscriber list for the Sphinx, which is a big assumption.

baabaablacksheep | 08/27/14 06:38 PM | link | filter

I never heard of Erdnase, I was going to go back and read through the thread but I don't have a month to go through the thousands of posts. This topic has more than 1.3 million views, amazing. I read up on Erdnase on Wikipedia so at least I know what it is about. Pretty interesting.

Richard Kaufman | 08/27/14 08:17 PM | link | filter

You've never heard of Erdnase? You must not read magic books or do close-up magic. What type of magic do you do?

baabaablacksheep | 08/27/14 10:36 PM | link | filter

I like close-up but don't have any books (at least not yet).

Tom Sawyer | 08/28/14 06:13 AM | link | filter

Bill McCloskey . . .

I can't remember having heard that idea before. It seems like quite a good idea, too, though as you say it seems pretty unlikely that a subscriber list from The Sphinx (or, say, Mahatma) in those days would have been preserved -- but maybe such exists somewhere.
name) to one or more magic magazines of that era. Or at least he might have been mentioned in some context or other. And I believe that membership rosters of the SAM exist, but I am not sure when the earliest ones date from.

I do think at least some checking of known names has been done already (people have said that R.F. Foster -- who some consider to be a candidate -- was an SAM member), but it occurs to me that such lists (membership rosters and such) might be the source of new names that could be considered.

(Personally, I don’t consider Foster a candidate, in part because he was very concerned about protecting people from being cheated.)

Again, it’s possible that these lines have already been investigated.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Tom Sawyer** | 09/02/14 12:05 AM | link | filter

Hi All,

To my way of thinking, any Chicago publisher which was operating in that city around the time *The Expert at the Card Table* was first published (in 1902) should be of some interest -- at least, if they published magic books.

One Chicago publisher which many magicians know is the Max Stein Publishing House. A predecessor of that company was The Stein Co., which was in operation in Chicago during the Erdnase era (though I don’t know whether Stein issued any magic books during that era).

The Stein Co. was at 348-350 State Stret in 1902, according to *The Publishers’ Weekly*, January 25, 1902.

This is within what one might consider the "Erdnase area" of town.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Bill Mullins** | 09/02/14 01:53 AM | link | filter

Interesting. So it was maybe 400-500 feet south of where State met Congress. In other words, a short walk from where Smith recalled meeting Erdnase.

And while recent posts on your blog seem to rule out the existence of a hotel at the SE
Congress; Congress started at State and went east, and State was uninterrupted from Vanburen to Harrison on the west) had several hotels. It also had two theaters (the Trocadero, which seems to have been a burlesque house, and an unnamed Dime Museum).

Stein was a bit of a seedy outfit. In Nov 1898, one Max Weiss was arrested there and charged with printing and circulating immoral literature and pictures.

The Chicago History Museum has some records from Max Stein Publishing in their archives.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 09/02/14 03:31 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

Bill Mullins makes a very good point about other hotels, and there were undoubtedly yet others in the general area as well. The State Hotel (or Bartl’s Hotel) looked like the best candidate, and maybe it still is, even though it turns out to be a little further away from the intersection of State Street and Congress Street than previously thought. I have the vibe that Smith’s account leaned toward the east side of State Street.

The Stein Co., and Bartl’s Hotel, and Drake, and McKinney were all extremely close to each other. *(The Publishers’ Weekly*, February 22, 1902, shows Drake’s location as 352-356 Dearborn Street. McKinney’s address is often seen as 73 Plymouth Place. The other two addresses are shown a couple of posts ago. Of course, modern Chicago maps are very different than maps from the 1902 era.)

--Tom Sawyer

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**Marty Demarest** | 09/04/14 02:11 PM | link | filter

*The Expert at the Card Table* exhibits an interesting mix of printing variations across the first edition. These aren’t major changes--I’ve not seen evidence that any of the book was re-set during the first edition. But there are still differences that enter the print run, probably due to the technology used.

As Tom and others have discussed, the copyright page (page 2, unnumbered, first edition) seems to have suffered some damage. I’ve not seen a first edition copy with any major differences from the errors that have already been discussed.

Similar damage is noticeable on page 29 (first edition), but I have seen some variety in how that damage printed across the first run. The copy that I have seen with the least
every first edition I've seen has damaged text on that page, and as a result you will see some punctuation variance--a colon or semicolon after the word "dealing," for example--in editions of the book that have been re-typeset (the "bible" edition) or copied and repaired (Revelations).

However, it's not always reliable to examine only first editions in order to determine the author's original text. Because of the printing and plate-making processes that were probably used, there are various artifacts that entered the first edition. A notable example would be on page 181 (first edition), where it appears that a semicolon follows the phrase "the two-handed shift" near the middle of the page. But an examination of subsequent editions reveals that the dot on the semicolon disappears, suggesting that the actual text might be a simple comma that has been joined by a printing error in the first edition. Indeed, an inspection of the layout standards that were used in the first edition show that it was intended to be a comma--the dot does not align perfectly with the comma, it is misshaped according to other semicolons used, and the spacing used in the text differentiates between commas and semicolons.

So what matters more: the particular way that the first edition was printed, or Erdnase’s original text? That was the question I confronted while editing a new edition of *The Expert at the Card Table*.

SHAMELESS PLUG: It is now available for sale here: [https://www.createspace.com/4585106](https://www.createspace.com/4585106)

It should be available through Amazon.com shortly. This edition re-sets the original text in a slightly larger format, preserving the page- and line-breaks of the first edition, but determines its text and punctuation from an examination of a variety of copies and editions. (It also includes a 20-page index to the entire book, along with a few other extras.)

It’s not always possible to know Erdnase’s original text. But I’d rather aim for using his work as a standard, instead of accepting the quirks of any particular printing.

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**Rick Ruhl** | 09/04/14 02:59 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Bill Mullins wrote:*

6. That there ought to be a constitutional amendment outlawing Astroturf and the designated hitter (oh, sorry, went off on a Bull Durham tangent there).

😊

They didn't have AstroTurf or the DH in 1902...
I found Marty Demarest's post of earlier today to be of high fascination, in part because I have been intrigued by the possibilities of variations within the first printing of *The Expert at the Card Table*.

As I mentioned on my blog, John Bodine provided me with information regarding the verso of the title pages of four different copies of the first edition. They all seem to exhibit the same degree of damage, type-wise.

I'm pretty sure that the first edition was printed from plates, and generally any further plates derived directly or indirectly from those are going to be basically the same, or, more likely, become worse with each new plate. But with all of the publishers involved, it is possible that there was some branching along the way, and a publisher may have gone back to an earlier printing and derived new plates from there. (This could even happen where the publisher doesn't change.)

I'm wondering how Marty -- in his new version of the book -- handled the oft-mentioned "five mistakes" in Erdnase.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Marty Demarest** | 09/05/14 09:51 AM | [link] | [filter]

I'm wondering how Marty -- in his new version of the book -- handled the oft-mentioned "five mistakes" in Erdnase.

Tom, the short answer to your question is that *The Indexed Expert* (as I've come to think of the new edition) handles the famous "five errors" by including nineteen of them.

The long answer is that, in addition to the complete, original text of *The Expert at the Card Table* and a full index, the book also features an "Errata" that describes and corrects nineteen errors of description and depiction that are in *The Expert at the Card Table*. (The errors are retained in the main text of the book.) These errors are purely instructional---they are those that might mislead or confuse a reader with regard to Erdnase's techniques and tricks. An example of one of the "Errata" listings is below:

Page 53, BOTTOM DEALING.
"The [s]second[/s] [third] finger and thumb do the work." (DAI VERNON)
(The word "second" is struck-through, but I don't know how to display that here.)

Each of the nineteen errors is credited to the person who first openly explained and corrected it. This crediting may not be exact, given the underground nature of Erdnase's "scholars" (I use the word "scholar" with a deliberate dose of sarcasm. The
find, ridiculous and unscholarly.) For example, Dai Vernon spoke of three technical errors in the book, and yet I could only find a single one of those errors that he first explained himself, either in print, audio or video. As a result, some of Vernon's discoveries are probably credited to Ray Grismer in the "Errata," because it was Grismer who discussed them openly.

Typographical, grammatical, mechanical and linguistic errors have been left unchanged and unnoted in the text of the book. One reason for doing this was to restore Erdnase's text to the publisher/author's original version. *The Expert at the Card Table* has become so edited, annotated and expurgated in recent years, that I felt it was time to make a serious effort to conserve a masterpiece of literature. I also think that Erdnase's errors are characteristic of the author, and lend a distinct flavor to his book. They can even provide clues to his identity. Anyone professing to make a textual comparison between Erdnase and another writer should probably be working with Erdnase's original text, and not the many erroneous versions that have been published. The difference between a comma and a semicolon, or the words "sleight" and "slight," are essential in that sort of work.

However, I am also personally very interested in all the variations that creep into a book--especially first editions of *The Expert at the Card Table*. I've greatly enjoyed the posts on your blog, Tom, that delve deeply into that aspect. It would also be interesting to hear, from collectors and scholars who have substantial Erdnase collections, about the changes that gradually entered into subsequent editions. For example: Who changed the "Table of Contents" on page 5 (first edition), from "Top Loosing One Card" to "Top Losing One Card"? And why were two illustrations and more than two dozen important pages--by Erdnase and Vernon's own admissions--cut from Revelation? (Even more mysterious to me: How could magicians praise that book for including "the entire working content" with "all the original illustrations," as it was in reviews such as Jamy Ian Swiss's in *Genii*)

*The Expert at the Card Table* has an extensive and fascinating history of publication. I'm happy to have been able to add to that legacy, and I hope that the restoration of the book's text, the creation of a full index and the inclusion of an "Errata" will be useful to all readers of Erdnase.

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John Bodine | 09/06/14 06:28 PM | link | filter

Marty, thank you for all your contributions,,I look forward to the new book

I believe that between Jason England’s collection and my collection of various printings we have the most complete printed history of Erdnase. I have been assembling a document that lists all of the known (to me) variants and plan to out it online. Would you be willing to contribute?
hardback. I would be happy to share the current list with anyone who is interested ahead of it going online. I believe my collection spans approximately 80 of the over 90 known variants. Should you be interested in me looking anything up in any of my copies I'm also happy to do that.

John Bodine

Marty Demarest | 09/08/14 10:54 AM | link | filter

John--yes please! (Will try to contact you through other channels.) Jason England brought some of his collection to The Erdnaseum and it was inspiring to see the extent of The Expert's printed history.

One of the variations that interests me the most is the change made to page 5 (first edition). As far as I know it's the first example of Erdnase's text being entirely reset in an edition of The Expert. When did that happen? And did the "new" page 5 replace the old one in all subsequent editions, or is there evidence that the original survived?

The new edition--"The Indexed Expert"--is now available through Amazon.com. Shipping should be faster than they state. For my money, the index is my second favorite part of the book: 20 tightly packed pages of reasons and ways to reencounter the original.

John, can you tell me if this is the first complete index?

Tom Sawyer | 09/08/14 03:09 PM | link | filter

Marty, thanks for the kind words about my current S.W. Erdnase blog a few posts ago. The index (as portrayed on Amazon.com) to your new edition looks amazingly detailed.

I'm sure that John Bodine will have a better answer regarding page 5, but I have a copy with one page of advertisements in the back, showing the Drake address of 179 North Michigan Avenue.

The book's main text ends on page 178. There is no page number whatsoever at the bottom of page 5. (I suppose it had worn away from the plate, or someone may have removed the remaining fragment.) That page uses the word "Loosing."

The Publishers' Weekly, Volume 113, Part 2, 1928 (based on a "snippet view" on Google Books) appears to show that Drake planned to move to that address on April 1, 1928.
I believe they used that address until probably 1940.

In summary, I have a copy from 1928 or later that has the word "Loosing" on page 5.

--Tom Sawyer

Richard Evans | 09/08/14 04:35 PM | link | filter

*John Bodine wrote:* I would be happy to share the current list with anyone who is interested ahead of it going online. I believe my collection spans approximately 80 of the over 90 known variants. Should you be interested in me looking anything up in any of my copies I’m also happy to do that.

John Bodine

Hi John - I’d most definitely be interested to take you up on that offer. I’ve sent you a PM. Thank you.

Richard

John Bodine | 09/08/14 10:48 PM | link | filter

Regarding page 5, the number 5 was clear on the first edition first printing but my 1905 dated copies all have the 5 all but gone, just a little bit of I but not at all discernible. By c1918, none of the copies I have show signs of the number 5 at the bottom of the page.

The first time the wording is changed from loosing to losing is in the 1934 Powner edition.

As Richard Hatch has previously noted, the plates moved from McKinney to Drake to Frost and then to Powner. The Frost variants also have the broken Chicago and misspelled "loosing" on page 5.

John Bodine

John Bodine | 09/08/14 11:52 PM | link | filter

Not about typesetting but about binding. A while back I spoke with someone who has done lots of research on the Oz books (first printed and published in 1899/1900) and he has found that it was not uncommon for a printing house to print many copies of the signatures but not bind them all immediately. He also found that with the Oz books there were copies with the same signatures inside but different color boards, as is the case with the different variations of Erdnase.
the later c1918 HB that can be found in different colors but with exactly the same cover art.

This could also explain why some HB variants have the script "the expert at the card table" on the front board but have a 1905 date and others of the same HB style are c1918. Drake could have been using up earlier printings of the signatures with a newer style binding. This would imply that despite the 1905 date in some of the HB, the signatures had been printed in 1905 but the binding and shipping was done later.

From what I gather, at the time it wasn't uncommon to grab the next piece of cloth, bind some of the signatures, and ship the book. When the printing house ran out, they would grab the next available piece of cloth for the next binding run, having already printed a stack of signatures that may have been sitting a while in the stock room.

I know of 3 variants (maybe 4 as I think Jason has one I haven't accounted for) with the 1905 date, 205 pages, embossed script boards and I know of 2 variants with only 178 pages and the same board treatment.

Also worth noting, one of the first editions I have is signed by G. R. Reeves, Aug. 1903. Mr. Reeves was a magician from Australia. I suspect that he subscribed to the Sphinx and ordered shortly after the first advertisement, giving enough time for the book to be shipped to Australia by the time he dated it.

John Bodine

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**Marty Demarest** | 09/10/14 02:52 PM | link | filter

Speaking of Drake's involvement with *The Expert*, I've always had my doubts about any direct, personal connection between Erdnase and the firm. I believe that there have been claims and implications of a relationship between Drake and Erdnase, but I've never seen any evidence for it.

The evidence suggests that Drake could have acquired the plates for the book during McKinney's bankruptcy sale, and that might have been the extent of their involvement.

Moreover, Drake was publishing card books at the same time Erdnase published his. (*Card Tricks and How to Do Them*, for example, was published by Drake in 1902.) If there were a relationship between Erdnase and Drake, it doesn't seem to have prompted Erdnase to use the firm as either a publisher or a printer.

**Marty Demarest** | 09/10/14 03:00 PM | link | filter
As Tom implied above, it is possible to preview the index to the new edition of *The Expert* at Amazon.com.

--I will be discussing some new Erdnase evidence at an upcoming [history conference in Helena, Montana](link), next weekend. However, before you buy your ticket, please note that the presentation I’m giving is not specifically about Erdnase, and is directed toward (an albeit very informed) layman audience. A small amount of the Erdnase material will only be touched upon as it relates to the subject at hand. Nevertheless, it is new, evidence-based material that hasn’t been discussed elsewhere. There will be a Q&A after my talk, and I’d be happy to discuss more in person with anyone there. (At some point, I’m sure, it will find its way to magicians. I know Richard--an article is coming...)

**Bill Mullins | 09/10/14 04:30 PM | link | filter**

Marty -- I note that one of the other participants in the conference is Martha Edgerton Plassmann. Is she related to Wilber Edgerton Sanders?

**Richard Hatch | 09/10/14 08:00 PM | link | filter**

Just got my copy of Marty Demarest’s new edition of Erdnase and am very favorably impressed! Great job, Marty and designer Jake Spatz! I can’t imagine anyone interested in the text not needing/benefiting from this fine and affordable edition. I did spot one errata omission: The only magician (other than Erdnase, who may not have been one!) who is referenced by name in the text is Charlier, but his name is misspelled in the original, as it is here, as “Charlies” on page 128. The index does show the ”Charlier” reference on p. 128, but the Errata section doesn’t mention the typo. It may have been a typesetter error in the original, or it may be that the author misremembered the name of the sleight, which might tell us something about his familiarity with the magic community and conjuring literature. In any case, great job and I encourage everyone to order copies! I got mine from Amazon, ordered on Sunday, September 7th and received it today, Wednesday, September 10th (I do have amazon prime, so got free 2 day shipping...).

**Richard Kaufman | 09/10/14 08:37 PM | link | filter**

Marty, just ordered it!

**Marty Demarest | 09/11/14 10:52 AM | link | filter**

Bill -- Martha Edgerton Plassmann was indeed related to Wilber Edgerton Sanders.
Governor, and a second cousin of WES. Unfortunately, she died in 1936, so I've been unable to ask her about her cousin! The Martha Edgerton Plassmann mentioned in the Conference brochure is (I assume) a part that is being reenacted for a fictional "debate" between Wilbur Fisk Sanders (WES's father) and Samuel Word. I do not know who is taking Plassmann's part.

Dick--thanks for the nice words! It's great to see you posting here again as well as on Tom Sawyer's blog.

Just a note, the omission of "Charlies" [Charlier] from the "Errata" is deliberate. The "Errata" in the new edition only lists The Expert's nineteen technical errors--errors of description or depiction that might confuse students of Erdnase's techniques and tricks. Since "Charlies" doesn't really lead to any misunderstanding of the technique itself, it is treated as a typo or printing error. Those are reproduced in the text of the book, but not noted in the "Errata."

I contend that "Charlies" is either a printer's error or a typo on the part of the author, since it is correctly spelled "Charlier" in "The Acrobatic Jacks," p. 192 (first edition). It is indexed in that context under "Shift (One Hand)," since it is a technique, not a person that Erdnase is discussing there.

Richard Hatch | 09/14 07:08 PM | link | filter

Understood, thanks, Marty! Again, I'm very impressed with the work that has gone into this, as well as the production value, and it certain deserves to become the "standard" edition for students of the work for some time to come...

Bill Mullins | 09/14 11:30 PM | link | filter

I'm surprised I haven't seen this posted before now.

Back in the spring, Jason England did a streaming "At the Table" lecture that is available now for download from various dealers. I'm watching the DVD version as we speak (which I got from Jason). During the lecture, Richard Hatch emailed a question: "Jason, is it true that Steve Forte is doing a commentary on Erdnase?"

Jason hemmed and hawed a bit, and said the question put him on the spot, but did end up saying that, yes, Forte is doing a book for magicians on cards, and it will include a section on Erdnase.

So there's that to look forward to.
I wanted to follow up the recent discussion of the color change that is commonly called "The Erdnase Color Change." In addition to the (much older) sources cited above that attribute the move to Houdini, it is claimed outright by Houdini in his editing of *Elliott's Last Legacy* (1923) under the heading "Two Effective Moves by Houdini," pp. 133-134.

FWIW, in the new edition of *The Expert at the Card Table* that I edited, the move is directly indexed under "Houdini Color Change." The index listing for "Erdnase Color Change" says "See Houdini Color Change." I'll stand by that.

Marty

Any plans for your book to be made available on Amazon.co.uk?

Andrew

Also amazon.ca

We have no option to list the book on Amazon.ca right now (I'm told they don't carry any titles manufactured by CreateSpace), so customers in Canada must order via the link above. If Amazon.ca change their policy in the future, we'll update accordingly.

In the meantime, thanks for the kind words about the new edition! We hope you enjoy
Here is my bit of Erdnase fame:

Back in the late 90's before the internet boom, I was working for an internet startup. The founder was friends with a young woman from the Wall Street Journal and we went out for lunch one day. I was fairly new into magic at the time and I told her the story about Erdnase and how no one knew who he was, but that it was this bible for magicians. She was intrigued and decided to write a story on it. She interviewed folks like Ricky Jay and about a week or so later, the Erdnase story ran on the front page of the WSJ.

Immediately after that, the book sold out.

Hi All,

Regarding the origin of the color change . . .

The following post by Jeff Pierce quotes from an earlier post of Jeff's, which stemmed from a post by Richard Hatch on a different thread.

Richard had discussed an item by Victor Farelli in The Magic Wand -- in which Farelli discussed what Houdini told him about the sleight.

viewtopic.php?f=1&t=1240&p=186414#p186414

I don’t know whether the exact issue is mentioned, but from the listing of contents on the Lybrary website, it must be the June 1947 issue of The Magic Wand.

--Tom Sawyer

Hi All,

I’ve been thinking a little about the possible dates for the meeting between S.W. Erdnase and M.D. Smith. In his Genii article on Erdnase, David Alexander focused on December 14 or 15, 1901.

However, one assumption David made, which may not have been very solid, was that the hotel room was unheated because of an unexpected cold snap. Hurt McDermott showed pretty well in Artifice, Ruse & Erdnase that an unheated room likely would
have been the norm.

According to the National Weather Service, here are the highs and lows for a string of dates in December 1901:

Dec. 13: 49 . . . 8
Dec. 14: 8 . . . minus 9
Dec. 15: minus 2 . . . minus 12
Dec. 16: 9 . . . minus 5
Dec. 17: 9 . . . 3
Dec. 18: 4 . . . minus 1
Dec. 19: 13 . . . minus 5
Dec. 20: 4 . . . minus 8
Dec. 21: 17 . . . minus 2
Dec. 22: 33 . . . minus 14

This link is of interest:


Apart from the lows stated above, in December 1901 there were 14 other lows that were below 30. So, there were a lot of extremely cold days to choose from, even if you limit yourself to December 1901. I do have problems with December 1901 in general, in part because it was so close to the completion of the manufacturing of the Erdnase book. (The Library of Congress received copies on March 8, 1902.) I realize that Selbit’s The Magician’s Handbook appeared in late 1901, and that complicates things a little.

--Tom Sawyer

Jake Spatz wrote: "INDEXED EXPERT" INT'L ORDERS
[...] We hope to list the book on Amazon sites in Europe very soon

Update: The "Indexed Expert" is now available from EU Amazon sites, as well as the US site and our CreateSpace page. Take your pick---

https://www.createspace.com/4585106
http://www.amazon.com dp/1937620026/
http://www.amazon.co.uk dp/1937620026/
http://www.amazon.fr dp/1937620026/
http://www.amazon.de dp/1937620026/
http://www.amazon.it dp/1937620026/
Enjoy!

Leonard Hevia | 09/25/14 01:48 PM | link | filter

Tom--did you eventually follow up on the Victor Farelli article in the June 1947 issue of *The Magic Wand*? It's probably in Ask Alexander but I still haven't signed up for that. Farelli supposedly discusses what Houdini told him about the color change.

Interesting that you pointed out in your blog that Erdnase possibly met up with Gardner the winter before December 1901, since the publication date was cutting it close. Demarest points out that Sanders was not far from the area at this timeline. If one believes that Sanders is a viable candidate, then the December 1901 meeting holds.

Bill Mullins | 09/25/14 03:21 PM | link | filter

Leonard Hevia wrote: . Demarest points out that Sanders was not far from the area at this timeline. If one believes that Sanders is a viable candidate, then the December 1901 meeting holds.

According to the Duluth *News Tribune*, Sanders was in Duluth on November 10 1901, to prepare his book on mine timbering (which wasn't published until 1907, in New York). He had had two technical articles on the subject published in mining journals in 1900 and 1901.

Google maps tells us that Duluth is 468 miles from Chicago by road (by comparison, Butte MT to Chicago is 1500 miles). A rail trip via the Wisconsin Central Railway in Dec 1901 would have departed Chicago at 6:15 p.m. and arrived at Duluth the next morning at 9:38 a.m. -- 15 hours. The Duluth Limited, on the Chicago and Northwestern (and the line that Edwin S. Andrews worked on), departed at 10:00 p.m. and arrived at 7:00 a.m., still an overnight journey but somewhat faster. (I can't find details of the Duluth to Chicago trip, but assume it would have taken about as long).

Demarest's article in *Genii* mentions that Sanders's parents were at the Windsor Clifton hotel in Chicago that winter, and he surmises that Sanders went from Duluth to Chicago to visit them, providing an opportunity to meet M. D. Smith.

Tom Sawyer | 09/26/14 08:37 PM | link | filter

Leonard--

Well, after your post, I delved into the color change again. Based on a quotation of the pertinent part of the Victor Farelli article (on the Magic Cafe, in a discussion by Hideo
Selbit’s description of the operation was not correct in all particulars. Farelli also says that Erdnase’s description was “better.” Of course, this is just a paraphrase, but it shows the general idea.

To me, this opens up a can of worms.

According to Farelli, Houdini’s problem with Selbit’s description was that the “wrong card” (that’s me using Erdnase’s term) is slid forward “openly.” This problem, if it is one, does not necessarily exist in Erdnase’s account.

Again, the foregoing involves paraphrasing.

What does all the above mean? Well, although it isn’t totally clear, it looks to me as though Houdini invented the color change, but that Erdnase may well have picked it up from a source other than Selbit -- since the "sliding" of the "wrong card" in Erdnase's version is not handled in the same way that Selbit handled it. Erdnase’s method seems more in keeping with Houdini’s. (I’m not saying this is a new theory, but maybe the basis of the theory is.)

This is a rather abbreviated discussion!

--Tom Sawyer

Quiz Question

(No prizes. The answer is below.)

What is the title of a 1911 magic book that has about thirty references to *The Expert at the Card Table*?

Answer: *Our Magic*, by Maskelyne and Devant. The Erdnase book is referred to many times in Professor Hoffmann's "Bibliographical Index of Card Tricks," as found in that book.

--Tom Sawyer

I just saw a Q&A that Jason England conducted on the Magic Café last month, and since *some of it relates directly to Erdnase*, I think it’s worth linking to it. It’s
post my response and questions below.

I agree with much of Jason’s profile of a credible candidate for Erdnase. In fact--name aside--Jason provides an excellent description of W.E. Sanders. (I’ll omit profiling Sanders here, since I’ve written two substantial articles about the subject: *Genii*, September, 2011; and *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, Winter, 2013.) Additionally, I don’t think Jason’s description fits any of the other proposed candidates.

However, in the discussion, Jason clearly states that he doesn’t think that W.E. Sanders could have been Erdnase, but he doesn’t give any of his reasoning behind that conclusion. So I’m curious: What evidence suggests that W.E. Sanders COULDN’T have been Erdnase?

I’m also curious about why Jason (as well as Richard Hatch, earlier in this thread) casts doubt upon Erdnase’s status as a magician. What evidence suggests that Erdnase might NOT have been a magician?

Leaving aside the equivocating fact that we don’t know much about Erdnase, and that he therefore could (or could not) be anyone or anything, I find it strange to give much credence to the notion that Erdnase wasn’t a magician. I think that Erdnase MUST have at least been an amateur magician. As evidence, I’ll first point to his creation of the Diagonal Palm-Shift. Who, but a magician, would devise that move? Moreover, the logic that Erdnase demonstrates in his discussion of how a selected card might best be returned to the deck and controlled (pp. 126-127), and the role that the Diagonal Palm-Shift can play in that procedure (pp. 127, 141) evince thinking that no one other than a magician—-at least an enlightened amateur—-would use. Finally, as I show in my article in *Montana*, Erdnase displays a familiarity with more general sleight-of-hand magic, and not just card manipulation. I can’t imagine Erdnase NOT being a magician. Notably, evidence shows that W.E. Sanders was likely an amateur magician.

I’d also like to point out what I consider to be major flaws in Jason’s profile. I think it is essential—primary, even—-that a candidate for Erdnase be both a writer and a self-publisher. The text of *The Expert* is too polished and professional to be the work of anything other than a practiced writer. (I think anyone who asserts that a raw beginner can produce a work of the caliber of *The Expert* doesn’t know much about writing. It would be like claiming that I can deal flawless seconds under fire without ever practicing. Statistically possible, perhaps—-but so unlikely as to be absurd.) The evidence demonstrates that Erdnase was an educated, skilful writer.

Additionally, Erdnase refers to himself as the publisher of *The Expert*, and evidence suggests that is the case. (No credible evidence of a collaborator or ghost writer has emerged, and the only eyewitness account we have of Erdnase has him procuring the
as a publisher.

E.S. Andrews shows no capacity to write at anything other than an elementary level, and has no demonstrable publishing experience or knowledge. In contrast, W.E. Sanders was a highly educated, professional writer with great stylistic diversity and skill, and was a publisher with knowledge of Chicago printers, the process of obtaining illustrations, and the functional skills needed to create a book.

To my mind, even in light of Jason's profile, W.E. Sanders is the most credible candidate to be S.W. Erdnase.

Richard Hatch | 10/20/14 10:18 PM | link | filter

I don't think Erdnase was a magician in the sense of being a part of the magic community of his time. And although he was clearly interested in magic and likely performed tricks for his social circle, he doesn't seem to regard himself as a magician, based on his writing in the legerdemain section. He sounds more like an interested outsider looking in: "We are aware that all conjurers advise the shift or the pass, as the first accomplishment... But as far as we can learn from the exhibitions and literature of conjurers, not one of them knows of, or at least employs or writes of, a satisfactory substitute..." This doesn't sound to me like someone who regards himself as a conjurer, but rather an "enthusiast" who felt "acquiring the art is in itself a most fascinating pastime" and who did not rest until every "slight in the calendar" had been perfectly mastered (see pp. 125-7 of the Charles & Wonder and first, Drake, Frost and Powner editions).

While I agree with Jason in not thinking Erdnase was a professional card cheat, his attitude in the card table artifice section is different than in the legerdemain section. He professes no grievance against "the fraternity" (p. 10), nor sympathy with their victims, despite several references in the text to his having been such a victim himself. Most of the text references to "the expert" are references to gamblers, not magicians, and I suspect he identified more with the ideal of "the expert at the card table" than the conjurer of the legerdemain section. Had he been a magician in the sense of being active in the magic community, I think it unlikely that his identity would remain a secret to this day. Magicians are very poor at keeping such secrets!

Roger M. | 10/21/14 02:15 PM | link | filter

I think Jason's post describing Erdnase is probably the best one I've read to date from anybody.

In his search for insight into the manipulation of playing cards, it makes sense that Erdnase would investigate any and all crafts of which such card manipulation was a
card magic.

Erdnase would however, have to be involved in at least one of these fields at some level in order to develop the interest in the first place. Based on the tone of EATCT, it’s far more likely he was interested in card cheating originally than it is he was interested in card magic, although this doesn’t automatically imply that he was a professional card cheat. That he would (as a person interested in card cheating) choose to delve further into card magic makes perfect sense.

I feel Jason gets the closest (in his Cafe description) so far in describing a personality that is, in many ways, similar (or very similar) to the kind of folks who post their thoughts in this very thread. Few, if any, professional cheaters here in this thread, but lots of folks who have a working knowledge of card cheating and some others with an abiding interest in learning as much as they can about different elements of hustling with a deck of cards.

Further, although I wouldn’t call Erdnase’s interest in card cheating a "hobby", it certainly tends to reflect a man who had a compulsion to fully explore all that could be accomplished by the practiced card cheat ... and could in many ways also be similar to hobbyists of varying interests whose hobbies came to be a major element of their lives, some of whom even have experienced their chosen hobbies quite literally taking over their lives.

As I have noted previously, I see Sanders today in the same light as when David Alexander first presented him to us. A candidate, but no more a "done deal" now than he was when David first brought his name to light.

Jason England | 10/22/14 06:52 AM | link | filter

Marty,

I should’ve probably clarified some of my comments at the Café, but they lock the doors on you after a week!

When I say Erdnase probably wasn’t a cheater – I mean a professional cheater making his living from gambling on a daily basis. We know from his book that he gambled at faro and I don’t think it’s unreasonable to assume he gambled at other games as well. I also don’t put up much of a fuss when someone says that he must have cheated in at least some of his games on occasion at some point during his lifetime. I’m fine with all of that, although I always point out that we’re purely speculating whether he cheated (ever) or not. He never once claims to have done so.
Did he play around with card tricks and even offer improvements when he thought he could? Yes. But was he a working, professional magician? I seriously doubt it. So, an “interested amateur” might be the best way to describe him.

More speculation: A strange thing about Erdnase though is that to me, reading the book 100 years later, I get the distinct feeling that performing magic wasn’t really his thing. I think he was more akin to a tinkerer with a strong fascination for sleight of hand. That’s why I made the comparison to Ernest Earick on the Café. Ernest loved card sleights and invented several of his own while improving others. But not only did he not perform any actual card magic – he was borderline incapable of it! I met him in Colorado Springs in 1999 and when I asked him to do some magic he told me flat out that he didn’t really do any magic. He did show me about 6 hours worth of fantastic sleights though. That’s what he loved. I’m convinced Erdnase was very similar; the only difference being Erdnase appears a bit more interested in complete effects than Ernest was.

Another thing that I don’t agree with is the assertion that Erdnase must be a practiced writer and self-publisher. The fact that he wrote and self-published Expert isn’t really in contention, but what on Earth makes you think he has to have done that before? Since the writing part is clearly the most difficult part, let’s focus just on that. What you seem to be saying is that an author can’t produce a great first book. But we know that’s not true. To Kill a Mockingbird, Invisible Man, and Gone With the Wind were not only first books, but also they were the only books written by Lee, Ellision, and Mitchell. Clearly it can be done. For whatever reason, sometimes an author writes a great first book and then never writes another one. Other times, you write a great first book and then go on to write many other great (or not so great) books. The point is, arguing against Erdnase writing a great book without any other serious writing under his belt is arguing against any great book coming from a first-time author.

Second to that point – I’m not convinced Erdnase is all that well written. It’s a very clear magic book to be sure and it’s much better than other magic books published before it. But I don’t know if it’s great literature, nor should it be. That type of writing isn’t nearly as difficult to do as great fiction. I’ve never written much of anything before apart from some Internet posts and a few sets of lecture notes. But if you told me to write a book on how to rebuild an automobile engine (assuming I knew how) I think I could handle it. Instructional text with accompanying illustrations for 200 pages isn’t the same thing as writing a 400-page novel. I couldn’t do that if my life depended on it.

My take is that Erdnase having previous professional or semi-professional writing is a complete toss up. Maybe he had tons; maybe he had none and this was a great first book (for the genre).
Alexander’s original theory. I’ve really enjoyed meeting you and reading your continuing research into Sanders. I bought 4 copies of the *Montana* magazine article that you wrote because I liked it so much. I’m impressed with your passion for the search for the author and I think you’re a great guy.

But….

You have a huge hurdle that I don’t think you’ve overcome yet. One that prevents me from thinking that Sanders is a serious candidate in any way. It’s the same hurdle that Alexander had – in fact, he created the hurdle in the first place.

First a story: You’ve heard of the old farmer that shot bullet holes into the side of his barn and then painted targets around the holes to make himself look like a crack shot? We’ll come back to that.

Now, let me give you an analogy. Imagine we were looking for who killed J.F.K. We open the Dallas phone book and throw a dart that lands on a man’s name. What are the odds that we’ve landed on the right guy? Astronomical, right? So we do some digging.

Turns out the guy was *in* Dallas on November 22!

And he owns a rifle!

And he works 3 blocks from Dealey Plaza!

And he’s a Republican!

Got to be our guy right? Well…no. Throwing a dart was a massive step backwards. Just because we’ve made a few steps forward doesn’t overcome in any significant way the fact that you started with such a long shot (pardon the pun).

I think rearranging the letters in S.W. Erdnase is the equivalent to throwing a dart at the phone book. Sure it brought up the name W.E. Sanders, but it’s such a preposterous initial condition that it overshadows any small steps forward you might make with Sanders after that.

David Alexander’s decision to rearrange the letters in S.W. Erdnase was *not* an evidence-based decision. He didn’t find an old document in Drake’s archives (if they existed) that said Andrews wasn’t the right name. He simply made the assertion that E.S Andrews wasn’t the right name and ran with that. He then started painting targets all around his dart.
or David Alexander’s complex anagram theory (and subsequent location of Sanders) is the single greatest piece of insight and amateur detective work in the history of mankind. I’m voting for the former.

Chris Aguilar | 10/22/14 10:54 AM | link | filter

Jason England wrote: Marty,

... First a story: You’ve heard of the old farmer that shot bullet holes into the side of his barn and then painted targets around the holes to make himself look like a crack shot? We’ll come back to that.

Yep, Confirmation bias.

Larry Horowitz | 10/22/14 02:57 PM | link | filter

Jason,

I agree with most of your thoughts. However, I am firmly in the camp that believes this was a very experienced writer.

In point of fact, both Harper Lee and Ralph Ellison were published writers prior to their breakout books. Ellison had numerous short story and book reviews published in magazines. Lee had also been a literary critic and assistant to Truman Capote during the writing of In Cold Blood. There has always been speculation that Capote had a hand in To Kill a Mockingbird.

While you could definitely write a fine technical treatise on the first try; i.e. how to do these moves. The flow of nuances described by Erdnase with regards to mannerisms, the telling of stories, the very turning of a phrase, “In offering this book to the public the writer uses no sophistry as an excuse for its existence....” suggests a skilled, competent and confident writer.

Larry

Jason England | 10/22/14 04:27 PM | link | filter

Larry,

I freely admit that the author may have been an experienced writer. I’m just saying that good/great first works do come along from time to time (especially in a genre where
But I think it’s dangerous to assume a priori that the author "had to be" an experienced writer.

As for the Preface to Erndase (where the "sophistry" line comes from), take a look at this:

"The main object of this book is to let the public into the secrets of professional gamblers, and it may as well be stated here, that the revelations in the following pages are all founded on professional experience. Attempts have been repeatedly made to take the tyro behind the scenes, and induct him into the arts and mysteries of card-sharping; but hitherto these attempts have all been more or less failures. The explanations have been confusing rather than enlightening, and it is questionable if any of them have answered their ostensible purpose - that of protecting the honest card-player against the dexterity of the practiced advantage player. The author of the following work, who is of the opinion that he knows everything that can be known about the manipulation of cards, has endeavored, and the thinks successfully, to make the whole theory and practice of the "advantage player" so clear and intelligible that "he who runs may read," and reading, comprehend."

And also look at Erdnase's "In offering this book to the public the writer uses no sophistry as an excuse for its existence. The hypocritical cant of reformed (?) gamblers, or whining, mealy-mouthed pretensions of piety, are not foisted as a justification for imparting the knowledge it contains."

Compare that to: "In writing this book, we intend to come out flat-footed. Hypocritical cant we despise."

Does this language sound familiar to you? There are several more examples. These other quotes come from How Gamblers Win which was published in 1865/1868.

I'm convinced that Erdnase read this and other books on gambling. In fact, he practically tells us as much in his introduction.

It’s not hard to sound like a good writer when you’re copying from someone else (at the worst) or simply aping another writer's style (at best).

Jason

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Ian Kendall | 10/22/14 04:52 PM | link | filter

It does suggest that Erndase was probably Jon Racherbaumer...

I would say that writing technical prose well is harder than fiction. It is something that
the period, to a deliberate attempt to obfuscate the plagiarism.

I don't have a horse in this race, but I think that the authour had more than a little writing experience in one form or another.

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**Bill Mullins** | 10/22/14 06:00 PM | [link] [filter]

 Larry Horowitz wrote: The flow of nuances described by Erdnase with regards to mannerisms, the telling of stories, the very turning of a phrase, "In offering this book to the public the writer uses no sophistry as an excuse for its existence...." suggests a skilled, competent and confident writer.

Skilled, competent, confident -- yes. Experienced, not necessarily.

Just because we perceive EATCT to be well-written does not necessarily prove that Erdnase had been writing before that (every good writer has a first book), or that there are other examples from his pen waiting to be found (see Gone with the Wind, as Jason pointed out, or Wuthering Heights). It may be that Erdnase was naturally good at expressing himself by writing, and had only one thing that was important enough to him to make the effort to write and publish a book.

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**Ian Kendall wrote:** I would say that writing technical prose well is harder than fiction.

I would say that it depends on the writer, on the subject, and on how much interest the writer has in the subject.

I write technical stuff at work all the time, and I think I'm pretty good at it. The few times I've tried to write fiction, I end up abandoning it. (Ian's a pretty good writer, from the articles I've read -- does he think himself to be a better fiction writer?)

Some people may be better at fiction than prose. Some folks can't write their way out of a paper bag, and some folks write both fiction and nonfiction well.

I don't necessarily buy that the existence of the self-published EATCT indicates that he had experience in publishing. McKinney would have been able to hold his hand (or any other paying customer's) through that process.

It has also been said that the style of writing of EATCT indicates that Erdnase was well-educated. I don't think it proves anything about him having been to college, though; there are numerous examples in the 19th century of people who wrote well
Writing well may correlate more with how much you read, rather than how much school you've had.

**Ian Kendall** | 10/22/14 06:26 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Perhaps I should expand; writing technical prose and writing fiction are very different beasts. However, I think it is easier to be good at fiction out of the gate than it is to be good at prose. For the most part, writers will have written before; if they are educated then there is a good chance that they have written essays or stories in school. Jo Rowling had been writing short stories since she was a child, but her first novel turned out quite well.

I was lucky in that my English teacher at school made us write instructions for tying a tie and shoe laces; that taught me at an early age the importance of clarity in writing. When I worked in IT in the banks I wrote a ton of documentation on systems, and I have several teaching qualifications. This meant that when I started writing for magazines, I had a head start. If you have a look at some of the ebooks that have been released by first timers, you will see how bad it can be.

Now, it could be argued that Erdnase hadn’t written anything substantial since school, but given the period, I find this unlikely. Also, it's unlikely that he would have written anything similar in school - there are few opportunities to practice that style. I believe that painting a target around a few outstanding first novels is a bad move.

**Jason England** | 10/22/14 06:53 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Ian,

I'm not painting any targets! I don't have a claim one way or another here. I'm perfectly willing to admit that Erdnase may have written before and on a serious level. I just don't see hard evidence for it, so I'm willing to allow for the possibility that he didn't. I merely argue for the "maybe he didn't" side because so few others seem to be willing to do so.

Since his previous writing is only a supposition on our part, I think it's a big mistake to build into your "profile" of the author that he MUST have been a writer/publisher ala David Alexander.

That type of dogmatic thinking might cause you to discard the right guy someday because he didn't fit your profile.

Jason
Richard Kaufman | 10/22/14 07:39 PM | link | filter

Jason, what do you think about the way that W.E. Sanders' name is spelled out vertically by shifting one of the lines in the triangular block of text on the title page?

MManchester | 10/22/14 08:14 PM | link | filter

I wasn't aware that authorship was still being debated. This is starting to feel like the magic equivalent of denying climate change or claiming that the moon landing was fake. I'm certainly not an expert, but with an abundance of remarkable research as detailed in the Genii articles, if that's not sufficient evidence then what will be? Ignoring all that, how can the title page be ignored. As Richard so succinctly stated earlier in this thread:

> what are the odds that the letters WESANDERS would appear in perfect order from top to bottom merely by shifting some of the lines from side to side? It would seem that the odds are very great AGAINST it happening, likely to have been done purposefully.

Jason England | 10/22/14 08:56 PM | link | filter

Richard,

I think it's an absolutely fascinating coincidence. The problem with it and all of the other "Bible code-type" discoveries lying latent in any body of text, is that you decide their relevance after you find them.

You might've also accepted "Sanders" (minus the W. E.), or "W. Sanders." or "srednas ew" running up from the bottom, or "Montana", or "Senators son" or "Wilber" or any of a hundred other pseudo-interesting combinations. The right question isn't "What are the odds we'll find W.E. Sanders running vertically in a given body of text, the proper question is "What are the odds we'll find something eerily coincidental in a given body of text?" The answer to the second question is "highly likely." That's why it appears
we'll find something "Sanders-ish" may be as high as 1 in 10 or 1 in 8. Nothing to get too excited over in my opinion.

These things are only interesting when you predict them ahead of time and then find them exactly as you predict them.

With regard to the specifics of W.E. Sanders, I'd also like to point out that we as a community might've accepted any of a dozen different "line shifts" to arrive at that particular spelling. Apart from the W, all of the other letters are pretty much in the top 10 most frequently used letters in the English language. So what you're really asking is, what are the odds that there is a W in the first line, an E in the second line, an S in the third line, and so on.

I think you'll find that if you crunch those numbers only the W is a "tough" letter to get to. Everything else would be there no matter what you were writing about. After that W falls by pure luck, the rest of the letters are damn near a shoe-in.

Jason

Richard Kaufman | 10/22/14 09:17 PM | link | filter

I don't know. Finding the guy's name perfectly spelled out seems to be possibly more than a coincidence. Has anyone played around with moving the lines and trying to find any of the other "Sanders-ish" things Jason has cited as possible points of false interest?

Are there any other names that are spelled out by sliding a line in the triangle right or left?

Are there any other proper nouns or geographical locations that are spelled out by sliding a line in the triangle to the right or left?

If the answer is no to all of these questions, then I would say that we have to consider the fact that "W E Sanders" is spelled out properly to be of great significance.

Leonard Hevia | 10/22/14 11:24 PM | link | filter

*Jason England wrote:* Marty,

What it boils down to is that we only have two options. Either Sanders is not Erdnase or David Alexander's complex anagram theory (and subsequent location of Sanders) is the single greatest piece of insight and amateur detective work in the history of mankind. I'm voting for the
David Alexander was a Renaissance man. He was a professional magician, silhouette artist, author, and a *private detective*. Alexander's research on the identity of Erdnase was approached from the perspective of a professional detective. Alexander's work was not armchair study by an amateur. Also, there is no need to speak in absolutes here about Alexander's work being possibly "the single greatest piece of insight and amateur detective work in the history of mankind." But it *is* well thought out and the anagram theory is not really complex.

W.E. Sanders is an anagram for S.W. Erdnase. Alexander discovered that Sanders liked to write anagrams of his name in his school notebooks. It is therefore not unreasonable to believe that Sanders created the name S.W. Erdnase as an anagram of his own. Alexander also reasoned that S.W. Erdnase spelled backwards--E.S. Andrews--was just too easy a trail to follow.

The backward spelling of your true name is just too obvious if you were trying to hide under a pseudonym. If you don't believe this, write down your own name backwards on a piece of paper and ask a ten year old child that is acquainted with you to guess the identity of that strange name. The name E.S. Andrews is a red herring to throw would be sleuths off the trail. I wholeheartedly believe that anyone tracking down the true identity of Erdnase with E. S. Andrews as their compass is wasting their time.

**Jason England**: 10/22/14 11:53 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Leonard,

I didn't mean Alexander's theory was complex (preposterous is the word I'd use). What I meant was that W.E. Sanders is a "complex anagram" as opposed to a simple anagram (backwards).

You don't just get to make that leap without evidence. Remind me again what David Alexander's evidence was that E.S. Andrews was the wrong anagram? From what I can tell David just leapt to that conclusion after striking out on finding anyone named E.S. Andrews. If that supposition is wrong, then EVERYTHING that comes after it is wrong too, no matter how many small pieces of seemingly corroborating evidence turn up in the mean time.

Because it's not an evidence-based claim, I feel it's too much of a shot in the dark. If something drove David Alexander to that conclusion (like finding an old document that cast doubt on Andrews being the right name) then I'd like the theory a lot more.

And I don't doubt David Alexander's skill as a detective. I think finding Sanders was great detective work - but great detective work proceeding from a false premise. (That Andrews isn't the correct name.)
On anonymity: I'm not sure why everyone thinks that Erdnase wanted strong anonymity. If you want strong anonymity you use a completely fake name or publish anonymously just like many of the others that published gambling expose works in those days. I think Erdnase was looking for weak anonymity and spelled his name backwards. That would throw off the idly curious (as it did everyone in magic for a few decades) but would allow him to "claim" the book at any point if he wished.

Now if only we could find an E.S. Andrews that was definitely living in Chicago at the end of 1901 - beginning of 1902 that was approximately the right age. Oh wait....

Jason

Richard Kaufman wrote: I don't know. Finding the guy's name perfectly spelled out seems to be possibly more than a coincidence. Has anyone played around with moving the lines and trying to find any of the other "Sanders-ish" things Jason has cited as possible points of false interest?

Are there any other names that are spelled out by sliding a line in the triangle right or left?

Are there any other proper nouns or geographical locations that are spelled out by sliding a line in the triangle to the right or left?

If the answer is no to all of these questions, then I would say that we have to consider the fact that "W E Sanders" is spelled out properly to be of great significance.

But Richard, it ISN'T perfectly spelled out. You have to slide the lines around! I'm assuming that if the first letter of every word had spelled out some pseudo-significant word we would all be fawning over that "discovery" as well. What about an obvious extended letter sequence? Every third letter spells out "Wilbur wrote it!" or some such nonsense. The point is, once you start allowing for ANY manipulation of the letters the branching possibilities become very big very quickly. What might've been a 100,000:1 shot if stated ahead of time and then located suddenly becomes a 10:1 shot when you allow for manipulation and don't state the target word(s) ahead of time.

It's the Bible-code meets Dr. Matrix once you start allowing for manipulation of the letters/lines/words.

And it's mathematically quite boring.
Although I can’t be bothered to format it so that you can read it, taking one letter from each line of the introduction you can find: "The name is ES Andrews. It has been staring us in the face. Sanders is not the authors name on the title page. Why are they not able to see this RK?"

Is this significant? Absolutely not.

Would it be significant if I had claimed it would be there before I went looking for it? You bet it would!

The chances of finding that exact set of phrases after predicting them ahead of time are staggeringly small. The chances of manipulating the lines of the introduction to "spell" out something that seems significant is not only easy, but it’s practically guaranteed if you work at it long enough.

Took me less than an hour and it's completely meaningless. As is every other "coincidence" unless you specify them ahead of time.

For the "W E Sanders in the pyramid anagram theory" to make sense, you’ve got to believe that the author hired Smith not because of his artistic skill, but because he had "S" in his name.

That statement presumes that the "pyramid anagram" was conceived before and not after the fact that it could be created (an act of opportunism on behalf of its creator).

Here's another way of finding the same phrase. Somehow this isn't quite as impressive. But it HAS to be meaningful right?! I mean what are the odds that there

Embracing the whole calendar of slights that are employed by the gambler and conjurer, describing with detail and illustration every known expedient, manoeuvre and stratagem of the expert card handler, with over one hundred drawings from life by M. D. Smith

Jason

PS: It looks like there's about 200 different ways to slide those lines around and still spell WESANDERS in a vertical column. I bet it took forever for Wilbur to work that out. You guys have convinced me - it's him.

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**Bill Mullins** | 10/23/14 02:22 AM | link | filter

*Dustin Stinett wrote:* That statement presumes that the "pyramid anagram" was conceived before and not after the fact that it could be created (an act of opportunism on behalf of its creator).

Dustin
(just a lowly member of the jury)

But if it was created after, then it is as Jason says -- post-hoc Bible Code manipulation, and is meaningless. The only way it can be considered a "clue" of some sort is if it was planned.

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**Dustin Stinett** | 10/23/14 03:11 AM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:* The only way it can be considered a "clue" of some sort is if it was planned.

The ONLY way? You are saying that it is absolutely impossible that once he was done with the manuscript of his book, that some guy named Sanders—who liked creating word puzzles with his name—could not possibly see an opportunity for creating this one before the layout was done? That he could only have come up with the idea beforehand so he had to pick an illustrator with the name Smith to create such a
That makes less sense to me than the whole pyramid anagram deal.

You need to do better than that to convince this jurist to completely dismiss the anagram.

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 10/23/14 08:20 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

> ? some time ago I sent our host an image of the shifted lines where it spelled out "ed marlo".

it keeps folks amused - carry on.

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**Roger M.** | 10/23/14 10:06 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Getting wedded to a single candidate and not letting him go despite there being not a shred of hard evidence to support him is somewhat counterproductive.

It stalled the Gardner/Whalley/Busby crew far too early, ending a search for a team that definitely had the skill set to do a lot more than they did.

Because this thread is getting so long, we often tend to gloss over major discoveries past.

It's important to remember that there are some very credible folks involved in this search who have put forth some very convincing evidence for E.S. Andrews, and who don’t for a second believe that W.E. Sanders is in the running.

These counterpoints are important to remember in all Erdnase related discussion, as they offer perspective that is all to easily lost when one weds themselves to a specific candidate too early in the search.

Having learned that making definitive statements regarding the search for Erdnase is never a great idea sans hard evidence makes it far easier to see that W.E. Sanders is actually no further along as a candidate than he was when David first noted him years ago.

Sanders has become part of the story now, but that doesn’t make him Erdnase.

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**Dustin Stinett** | 10/23/14 10:41 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Uh oh ... there's something weird happening ... I agree with Roger!

Bill Kalush once told me that he believes that one day a letter will come to light that finally settles this whole thing. That it will have one simple, innocent sentence in it
I'm beginning to wish that day would hurry up and get here.

Roger M. | 10/23/14 03:12 PM | link | filter

Geez Dustin, now you've got me worried, are you feeling light headed or dizzy at all?

Seriously though, I do think circumstantial evidence and hard evidence need to have the space between them maintained throughout our ongoing discussion. One is most definitely not like the other, and being open to new evidence is probably more important than buying into any one candidate such that one is ready to make a definitive pronouncement as to who Mr. Erdnase actually was.

Things like the "sliding sentence" excercise are definitely interesting (perhaps even enthralling, it certainly caught my attention) ... but it may be a stretch to call a sliding sentence anagram even circumstantial evidence, let alone hard evidence.

Brad Jeffers | 10/23/14 03:44 PM | link | filter

Leonard Hevia wrote: Alexander discovered that Sanders liked to write anagrams of his name in his school notebooks. It is therefore not unreasonable to believe that Sanders created the name S.W. Erdnase as an anagram of his own.

If I were named W.E. Sanders and had been working on anagrams of my name for several years, I think the best I could come up with would be E.S. Andrews. It’s a perfectly legitimate name and far superior to the awkward S.W. Erdnase.

Jason England wrote: I think Erdnase was looking for weak anonymity and spelled his name backwards.

I agree.

Bill Mullins | 10/23/14 04:18 PM | link | filter

Dustin Stinett wrote: The ONLY way? You are saying that it is absolutely impossible that once he was done with the manuscript of his book, that some guy named Sanders—who liked creating word puzzles with his name—could not possibly see an opportunity for creating this one before the layout was done? That he could only have come up with the idea beforehand so he had to pick an illustrator with the name Smith to create
I suppose you’re right, that it could be something he composed after the ms. was complete. But it’s much more likely that it is only a coincidence.

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**Bill Mullins** 10/23/14 04:22 PM | link | filter

*Brad Jeffers wrote:* If I were named W.E. Sanders and had been working on anagrams of my name for several years, I think the best I could come up with would be E.S. Andrews. It’s a perfectly legitimate name and far superior to the awkward S.W. Erdnase.

If Sanders hadn’t been a mining engineer, this would be true. However, Erdnase = ”earth nose” in German, so the pseudonym is uniquely appropriate to Sanders. He had spent the previous years sniffing out ore throughout the Pacific NW and elsewhere.

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**Bill Mullins** 10/23/14 04:46 PM | link | filter

*Roger M. wrote:* W.E. Sanders is actually no further along as a candidate than he was when David first noted him years ago.

While I don’t consider Sanders to be a ”slam dunk” for Erdnase, I’ve got to give Marty credit for how much he has strengthened his candidacy.

1. The ”Mutus Nomen” evidence shows he was interested in magic.
2. His gambling debts show he was a ”sporting man”, further supported by the purchase of multiple decks of cards.
3. Marty developed a time line that allows for his being in Chicago in the winter of 1901-02, when the book was published (although I think he spent more time developing the Snow Creek mine in Idaho that winter than Marty seems to).

To be sure, these are all only coincidences, but that’s all we have for MF Andrews, or E.S. Andrews, or Edwin Sumner Andrews.

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**Jason England** 10/23/14 04:50 PM | link | filter

The whole ”Erdnase” = ”Earth Nose” in German is one of the dumbest things I’ve ever heard.

It might be interesting if ”Earth Nose” meant something in German (or English for that matter), but it’s not like mining engineers in German-speaking countries are actually called ”Earth Noses” or any such nonsense.

We’re back in Dr. Matrix land again.
PS: For those who don’t know the Dr. Matrix reference, he was one of Martin Gardner’s alter egos and was constantly pointing out fascinating coincidences within numbers, bodies of text and so on.

Bob Coyne | 10/23/14 07:19 PM | link | filter

Brad Jeffers wrote: If I were named W.E. Sanders and had been working on anagrams of my name for several years, I think the best I could come up with would be E.S. Andrews. It’s a perfectly legitimate name and far superior to the awkward S.W. Erdnase.

Not necessarily. Part of the purpose of the pseudonym could well be to sound like a pseudonym…to let people know there’s a secret behind it and to invoke an air of mystery…very apropos for a book on card sharping and magic. If the book was published as E.S. Andrews, it would just sound like a regular (“legitimate”) name and be frankly less interesting. The name "Erdnase" definitely stuck in my mind when I first read it and fit well with the careful/cloaked tone of writing in the book itself.

The fact that "Erdnase" is foreign sounding and has meaning (in German) makes it an even more intriguing pseudonym. So given Sanders involvement with anagrams and the fact that he was a mining engineer and knew German, I can’t think of a better pseudonym than SW Erdnase. The misdirection and red herring with ES Andrews just makes it better. He must have been very happy with that.

Bill Mullins wrote:

Roger M. wrote: W.E. Sanders is actually no further along as a candidate than he was when David first noted him years ago.

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The Dalrymple connection was another new significant discovery made by Marty.
Dustin Stinett | 10/23/14 09:04 PM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:* 1. The "Mutus Nomen" evidence shows he was interested in magic.
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3. Marty developed a time line that allows for his being in Chicago in the winter of 1901-02, when the book was published (although I think he spent more time developing the Snow Creek mine in Idaho that winter than Marty seems to).

This is what I have always found compelling. This and the fact that he was a writer. Sorry Jason, but as a writer, I can tell you that writing is not easy and a "first time out" hit is rarely—if ever—the "first time": there's been a LOT of practice that is either unseen and/or ignored. And THE hardest thing I find to write: trick and sleight of hand instruction.

I also like the possible Del Adelphia connection. I wonder if someone is trying to ferret out his letters and other effects (effects as in "stuff” not magic) to see if there is more there. Who knows; maybe Kalush's letter is there.

Keep digging guys; I think that you have a long way to go.

Leonard Hevia | 10/23/14 10:11 PM | link | filter

*Bob Coyne wrote:*

*Brad Jeffers wrote:* If I were named W.E. Sanders and had been working on anagrams of my name for several years, I think the best I could come up with would be E.S. Andrews. It's a perfectly legitimate name and far superior to the awkward S.W. Erdnase.

Not necessarily. Part of the purpose of the pseudonym could well be to sound like a pseudonym...to let people know there's a secret behind it and to invoke an air of mystery...very apropos for a book on card sharping and magic. If the book was published as E.S. Andrews, it would just sound like a regular ("legitimate") name and be frankly less interesting. The name "Erdnase" definitely stuck in my mind when I first read it and fit well with the careful/cloaked tone of writing in the book itself.

The fact that "Erdnase" is foreign sounding and has meaning (in German) makes it an even more intriguing pseudonym. So given Sanders involvement with anagrams and the fact that he was a mining engineer with a German background, I think it's a fit.
must have been very happy with that.

Thank you Bob! I was going to respond to Brad Jeffers but you articulated exactly what I was thinking. Jason believes that Alexander's theory is preposterous, but a close reading of David's article in *Genii* will reveal that it is far from it. By his own admission, David spent two years searching for an E.S. Andrews that fit his loose criteria and found it unproductive.

I also found David's thoughts on "The S.W.E. Shift" fascinating. It is an interesting coincidence that W. E. Sanders' initials are exactly the same as this shift. Admittedly, the letter "S" has been shifted to the top, but then this is the title of a...shift.

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**lybrary** 10/23/14 10:58 PM | link | filter

I don't know if this has been mentioned in this thread before, but the term 'Erdnase' or the plural of it 'Erdnasen' is a term that has been used in German literature. See for example [http://books.google.com/books?id=mM6CAA ... en&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=mM6CAA ... en&f=false)

And it basically means hill or ground wave or some other elevated feature of the ground.

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**Bill Mullins** 10/23/14 11:20 PM | link | filter

*Bob Coyne wrote:* The Dalrymple connection was another new significant discovery made by Marty.

I debated mentioning the Sanders/Dalrymple issue, but ended up not doing so because I don't think Marty has demonstrated it to the same extent he's done with some of the other pieces of evidence.

He's developed two links:

The first is an illustration in *Puck* magazine by Dalrymple, which purports to picture Wilbur Fisk Sanders (WE's father). Note that an illustration doesn't show familial relationship, which is what Erdnase told Smith existed. Also, as I have [said elsewhere](http://books.google.com/books?id=mM6CAA ... en&f=false), I think the person that Marty says is WFS is not him, but rather a grizzled miner character meant to personify Montana.

The second is standard genealogical research. Ben Sanders [told](http://books.google.com/books?id=mM6CAA ... en&f=false) Marty "On 18 Feb 1790, Elizabeth Dalrymple, of Stair, Cumberland, England married Sir Myles Sandys of Edinburgh, Midlothian, Scotland."

and from that marriage, Marty and Ben posit that there was a familial relationship between Dalrymple the cartoonist and W. E. Sanders. (Note that this detail doesn't
If they families did connect at some point, I suspect it was well before 1790. On Ancestry.com is a family tree for the Montana Sanders family (maintained by Benjamin E. Sanders – is it he who Marty quotes above?) that shows that WE’s and WF’s Sanders ancestors lived in America since well before 1790. WE’s GGGGGrandfather, Tobias Saunders, lived and died in Rhode Island but was born in 1629 in Buckinghamshire, England (not Midlothian, Scotland). So if the relationship is in this line, Dalrymple and WE Sanders must be very, very distant cousins.

Neither of these links seems sufficiently strong to me to confirm Erdnase's statement to Smith that he and Dalrymple were related.

---

**Tom Sawyer** | 10/24/14 04:21 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

Well, this has been a particularly interesting group of recent posts!

The series does "round out" better several of the arguments that have been raised in the past.

Actually, though, to me it is more notable for the insights it provides into the different ways different people think and reason, and into the various things that various people think are important (or unimportant). It is striking that such a variety of opposing conclusions have been drawn from basically the same set of known facts.

Also, it is interesting to see the differing personalities of participants, to the degree that those personalities are reflected in the posts.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Leonard Hevia** | 10/25/14 12:24 AM | link | filter

Glad to have been entertaining Tom! Remember that scene in *Gladiator* when Russell Crowe says "Are you not entertained?!!"

Today's Tom Sawyer
He gets high on you
And the space he invades
He gets by on you
Oh, and by the way, I thought Chris Wasshuber's comment above about "Erdnasen" was quite edifying.

I do not remember seeing that pointed out by anyone else.

I believe that the focus heretofore has mainly been on "Erdnase," not "Erdnasen," though the existence of the latter as a bona fide word lends credence to Erdnase as a word.

--Tom Sawyer

Tom, further to the plural form "Erdnasen" you will find that it has been in use not just to describe hills and mountains, but also to describe animals (dogs, pigs, ...) and children that do a lot of digging in the ground. With animals it is easy to understand, because their noses (German "Nasen") literally get full of dirt/soil (German "Erde"), hence "Erdnasen". But it is also used for children that constantly have their face/nose close to the ground and dig and play around with soil.

While I have not yet found usage of "Erdnasen" for adults and in particular miners or other professions, the gap of proof has been considerably closed by the existing usage we have established so far.

Hurt McDermott and myself thought that this also strengthened the case for August Roterberg since Roter-Berg literally means in German 'Red Mountain or Red Hill' - so two ways of describing the same thing: 'Berg' and 'Erdnasen'. Roterberg has been put forward as Erdnase before for many good reasons but it seems there is no current champion for him. I think that the Erdnasen term usage to describe hills and mountains does strengthen the Roterberg case.

Richard Kaufman wrote: I don't know. Finding the guy's name perfectly spelled out seems to be possibly more than a coincidence. Has anyone played around with moving the lines and trying to find any of the other "Sanders-ish" things Jason has cited as possible points of false interest?

Are there any other names that are spelled out by sliding a line in the triangle right or left?

Are there any other proper nouns or geographical locations that are
If the answer is no to all of these questions, then I would say that we have to consider the fact that "W E Sanders" is spelled out properly to be of great significance.

Drawing targets around the holes, it is possible to arrange the “pyramid” text in a way that reads E S Andrews.

Since E and S seem to be the author’s given names initials, they are found in the same line, and then if we skip a line to show a separation between them and his family name, we can arrange the remaining seven lines to read Andrews. (There are other ways to arrange the lines to obtain the same result.)

Embracing the whole calendar of Slight that are employed by the gambler and conjurer, describing with detail and illustration every know N expedient, manoeuvre and stratagem of the expert card handler, with over one hundred dra W ings from life by M. D. Smith

I’ve e-mailed Prof Richard Wiseman hoping that he might offer his opinion as a psychologist about the debate regarding the pyramid and the hidden name.

I have been unable to spell another name or word vertically as has been accomplished with WESANDERS. Luis’ suggestion requires skipping a line which I think is an inherent flaw.

However, several lines contain multiple letters to spell WESANDERS. If it was indeed intended as a clue about his identity, lacking any other research that has been compiled, how would someone use the pyramid to deduce the name?

But if W.E. Sanders was the author, as many believe, is it not an amazing coincidence that his name can be spelled vertically at all.

It would have been much stronger if the first letter of each word in one sentence spelled the name, or the first letter of each line. Shifting the lines to place the letters in a column does impose an order. It is much less impressive when the letters are merely...
EMBRACING THE WHOLE CALENDAR OF SLIGHTS THAT ARE EMPLOYED BY THE GAMBLER AND CONJURER, DESCRIBING WITH DETAIL AND ILLUSTRATION EVERY KNOWN EXPEDIENT, MANOEUVRE AND STRATEGEM OF THE EXPERT CARD HANDLER, WITH OVER ONE HUNDRED DRAWINGS FROM LIFE
BY M. D. SMITH

Regardless of this debate, I am still convinced that W.E. Sanders is the author based on the research that has been published. Hopefully more information about his life will be found to augment this.

lybrary | 10/26/14 10:51 PM | link | filter

Given the letter frequencies in English, the letters of the name, and the number of letters in each line I calculate an almost 10% probability that one can spell WESANDERS. That is just way too high a probability that one could put any significance on it, in my opinion.

Bill Mullins | 10/27/14 12:16 AM | link | filter

Buried inside the name "S. W. Erdnase" is the name "Ed Asner". Lou Grant fans take note.

Dustin Stinett | 10/27/14 01:09 AM | link | filter

Bill, you've got spunk.

I hate spunk.

Tom Sawyer | 10/27/14 04:29 AM | link | filter

Hi All,

In view of the first two paragraphs of Chris Wasshuber's follow-up post (above) about the word "Erdnasen" (October 25), the whole “Earth-nose” or “Earth-promontory” idea
I suppose it will take some time for all that to become further developed and further analyzed. However, it appears to me that the clearer it is that “Erdnase” is a “legitimate” word, the less power the whole “name reversal” argument becomes. The situation instead becomes more of a toss-up between the following two things:

1. A pen name based on a reversal of the author’s name into S.W. Erdnase (giving the name E.S. Andrews as the author’s “real” name).

2. A pen name based on a German word, “Erdnase.” (The author’s real name might be completely unrelated, like “John Smith.” Or an anagram could also be involved.)

Of course, other possibilities exist (but I still don’t think anyone is claiming that Erdnase is a real name).

--Tom Sawyer

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**Roger M.** | 10/28/14 11:42 AM | link | filter

I think attaching importance of any kind to the word "Erdnasen" is even more patently silly than attempting to legitimize "Erdnase" as a defined word.

The entire "Earthnose" pursuit, including all of its derivatives is an utterly pointless detour.

S.W. Erdnase is E.S. Andrews in reverse....there you go!

---

**Tom Sawyer** | 10/28/14 01:57 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

When I wrote *S.W. Erdnase: Another View* back in 1991, my attitude on this specific issue was basically as follows: S.W. Erdnase’s real name was probably Andrews, but it didn’t have to be "E.S. Andrews." I think I got drawn into that last part by arguments that had been made relating to people named Andrews, but with different first and middle initials.

But I was not locked into that view.

In time -- relatively recently, like probably during the past three or four years -- I began to lean more toward the straightforward analysis stated by Roger in the final sentence of his post immediately above. I figured that the author’s real name was probably (not certainly) E.S. Andrews.
"normal" German word -- even though it had that flavor. Of course, the name all along still seemed to say "earth promontory," and no one has really explained that away.

Based largely on what Chris Wasshuber has said recently on this thread, and also on the fact that I am unaware of anyone claiming that "Erdnase" for some reason is not a "legitimate" word (even if it is used only rarely), I have changed my view on the word.

This, in turn, has to my mind significantly weakened the straight name-reversal theory.

I go into this in great detail in a post I made on my S.W. Erdnase blog yesterday.

--Tom Sawyer

MManchester | 10/28/14 02:54 PM | link | filter

The discussion of Erdnase as a German word is fascinating and I find name reversal argument too easy. I groan every time I see a character named Alucard in a vampire story.

This thread is enormous and it's been a while since I read the Genii article expounding on the W.E. Sanders research. Have there been any suggestions as to what the SW in the pseudonym would represent, if anything. Or are they just leftover letters. I thought it could refer to location, as in southwest, but that's just a vague idea.

lybrary | 10/28/14 04:50 PM | link | filter

I thought 'Alucard' is a playing card made from aluminum

Pete McCabe | 10/28/14 05:41 PM | link | filter

This pdf contains the word "erdnase" in a discussion that is clearly not about magic, but about nature and other things that make it more likely it refers to earth. Google does not translate "Erdnase," though.

http://www.spielgruppe.ch/cm_data/fachtagung_programm__erdnasen_und_mooshaende.pdf

I found this in a few minutes but it does seem to me as if the basic question of whether erdnase "means" anything to a German speaker should be fairly easy to establish.
That .pdf is interesting.

Above, Chris Wasshuber brings up the "Erdnasen" connection, and in the .pdf, the footer contains the following text (bolding and colored font by me):

KURSLEITUNG: Andrea Schneider (Waldzauber) & Daniel Mülli (Rucksackschule), mit zahlreichen "Waldzauber" in the .pdf, and Chris's last name is "Wasshuber" ... and with that, I rest my case!! Chris Wasshuber is obviously ... well, Chris Wasshuber.
... I guess I don't have a case to rest after all

Myside or confirmation bias will pretty much let you find anything you want to find if you go into the process looking for proof of something that you already either believe, or strongly support.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 10/29/14 05:23 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

It is definitely useful to be familiar with the term "confirmation bias," if one is going to talk about possible weaknesses in the things people say about "who Erdnase really was."

On the other hand, it appears to me that the mere fact that arguments or facts resulted from a confirmation bias does not *necessarily* impair the arguments or facts.

Basically, in the case of Erdnase, the facts gathered as a result of a confirmation bias (as well as arguments derived from those facts) may well be weaker than other facts and arguments -- or they might not be.

Thus -- again, in the context of Erdnase discussions -- one is simply left with determining how good (or poor) an argument or facts are, regardless of whether or not the person locating the facts (or making the argument) was significantly influenced by a confirmation bias. (Wikipedia has what appears to be an excellent article on confirmation bias, for those who may disagree with what I just said.)

--Tom Sawyer

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**Tom Sawyer** | 11/08/14 02:32 AM | link | filter

Hi All,
Book Club, in Las Vegas. I looked at their website, and it appears as though the version they are now selling is a Dover version.

Back in the olden days, like the early 1970s, I would occasionally visit the Gambler’s Book Shop in Las Vegas, typically with other members of my family. I don’t remember too many details, but on one of those visits, John Luckman gave me the copy of *The Expert at the Card Table* that the GBC was using (or had used) to produce a GBC version of the book. The book he gave me was basically a copy with the spine chopped off. I have discussed that elsewhere in some detail.

Well, he probably gave it to me -- but if he sold it to me, it was at some very nominal price, like a dollar.

The idea for this post actually stemmed from my thinking about a little discovery I made at the Gambler's Book Shop. It had to do with the small blind-stamped picture on the back cover of early London editions of *Modern Magic*.

If you have studied that stamping, you know that it shows playing cards, dice, counters, and what I assume is a dice-shaker -- not what one would necessarily expect to find on the cover of a magic book. Well, at the Gambler's Book Shop I saw a completely different book with that same blind-stamped image on the back. It was probably a Hoyle published by Routledge before *Modern Magic*.

--Tom Sawyer

Marty Demarest | 11/10/14 01:48 PM | link | filter

Jason, I’m glad you took the opportunity to continue your discussion here. I know that the Genii Forum only pays a fraction of what you make at The Magic Café, but at least it stays open later, eh?

It’s interesting to have read both your and Richard Hatch's thoughts regarding Erdnase's engagement with magic. I think we're looking at the term "magician" in slightly different context, but I suspect we are all in general agreement in the nature of our speculations. Erdnase was the kind of nerd who would travel around with six decks of cards in his personal belongings, right?

We also agree about David Alexander and Richard Kyle's work. I have my own doubts, which is why I investigated their work thoroughly before devoting much time to examining Sanders. But while you and I probably share some questions and caveats, we disagree about the basic facts. David Alexander was not an amateur detective, he was a respected professional. He did not fabricate or insert evidence into the case they
I'm grateful that you bought four copies of the Winter, 2013 *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*. Thank you. But please be sure to also pick up a copy of David Alexander's original article in *Genii*, January, 2000. (It was also reprinted with my article in the September, 2011 *Genii*.) In that text, Alexander makes clear the timeline that he and Richard Kyle followed, the standards they used and the method they followed. Their investigation was not arbitrary and their conclusions were not random. They weren’t just spouting their own opinions and they had evidence behind their claims.

If you are like me and want to investigate a little further (it is, after all, quite a deductive leap they make!) you can track down the (exceedingly collectible) booklet *The S. W. Erdnase Report*, which recounts Kyle and Alexander's process with the aid of contemporary notes and letters. Or you could contact Richard Kyle himself—he’s quite clear about the events, and has retained a lot of evidence from that period. Penny Alexander has also shared her recollections, and many of Alexander's friends have related details about his long investigation into Erdnase—including his rigorous search for an "Andrews."

When considering the plausibility of Alexander and Kyle's hypothesis, I found it useful to learn how word games and anagrams were commonly played in America at the end of the 19th Century. Periodicals such as *The Youth's Companion*, and books such as *Magic No Mystery* and *Cassell's Book of Indoor Amusements* are, I think, representative references. I’ve also looked into the authorial use of pseudonyms. See Carmela Ciuraru’s book-length *Nom de Plume* for a good overview of the phenomenon. And there are numerous examples of both pseudonyms and word games in all kinds of literature circa 1900.

I don’t say all this to baffle you with facts. These are a few examples of investigations I’ve done. I have compared my subjective skepticism with objective answers. I consider it good reasoning, and I assume you’ve been at least as diligent.

I have not found any evidence that Alexander fabricated evidence or proceeded according to any random or personal whim. What evidence do you have?

Meanwhile, I also wonder: What evidence necessarily links the name "Andrews" with *The Expert*? I think that insisting Erdnase's name must be "Andrews" is exactly like painting a target around a bullet hole. Aside from reading the author's name backward, what evidence links the name "Andrews" with the publication of the book? And if you do insist on reading the author's name backward, what evidence suggests that it is the only thing you should read backward? Why should anything be read backward at all? Why overlook the fact that the name "Erdnase" makes linguistic sense to a large portion of the world's population? (My grandmother, whose native language was German, thought Erdnase's name was a nickname, like "Jimmy Half..."
Devotion to the name "Andrews" has led to some of the most egregious examples of confirmation bias in the whole Erdnase investigation. Martin Gardner bent himself (and the truth) trying to justify "Andrews." He made a baseless claim to the Library of Congress, assuring them that he had evidence that the book was written by a "James Andrews." He also clearly demonstrated plenty of confirmation bias when, after Marshall D. Smith remembered Erdnase’s real name as "something with a W," Gardner leapt in with "Andrews?!" I’m not saying Gardner’s Erdnase work is all bad, but some of it gets pretty close to painting targets. And how about David Ben’s self-citing, after-the-investigation "profile" of Erdnase? I have no reason to believe that it wasn’t tailored to suit Richard Hatch’s research into E. S. Andrews.

I think David Alexander and Richard Kyle tried explicitly to eliminate that sort of bias from their work, and I think they did a pretty good job of it.

Where we’ll probably never agree is on The Expert’s status as a work of literature. Jason, if you can easily write an engine repair manual that will stay in print for more than a century, and which will inspire people with no interest or special knowledge in engines to take up engine repair as a hobby and a career, and even seek to understand Jason England the man and mechanic, to quote your book, to sell Jason England T-shirts and limited-edition Jason England wrenches--then I say: Why are you waiting? I assume it’s at least as good a gig as being an instant download superstar.

Erdnase has attained a degree of literary success that few authors will ever attain. And I’m not just talking about more than 100 years in print and trophy prices for first editions. Erdnase wrote something much more sophisticated than a mere "how-to" book. Instead, he gives card manipulation the literary treatment of artistry. (Contrast the index entries for "Mechanics" and "Art" in the edition I just edited. How’s that for embedding a shameless plug?) Erdnase’s legacy goes far beyond "the moves," which, frankly, seem to be in eclipse even among Erdnase "experts." Erdnase’s success transcends the technical qualities of his educated prose and his adroitness with tricky literary qualities such as voice and perspective. Even more impressive than all that, is that Erdnase created a HE to talk about. The author of The Expert not only wrote a great book, but he created the singular and indelible character: S.W. Erdnase.

Fortunately, we don’t need to haul out our respective levels of experience and education in order to evaluate The Expert’s status as a work of literature. Generations of readers have judged the book for us. I’ve edited two editions for the general public, and I can assure you, readers find Erdnase’s voice, topic, style, and the mystery of the book to be fascinating. They don’t consider it to be the equivalent of an engine repair manual.

Not all writing is art, but every bit of writing is craft. And like card artists, verbal
But unlike card manipulation, writing leaves a trace—the writing itself. And while writing—the physical object—can be destroyed, some record almost always remains: snippets of compositions in notebooks, sightings in the company of papers and manuscripts, schedules that accommodate plenty of compositional time, a literary education and interests, habits of curious observation and note taking, abandoned poems and stories... I assure you that if you were to remove all evidence of the great first novels you named, you would still find evidence that their authors were professional writers.

I peg Erdnase as being someone who was a writer, a publisher, and had a reason to disguise his name. Everything else we say about him is pure speculation. Every conclusion we draw about how Erdnase handled cards, how much Erdnase cheated, to what extent Erdnase performed magic—it’s all guessing. The only primary evidence we have is a book.

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**Jonathan Townsend | 11/10/14 02:26 PM | link | filter**

Is there a wiki for the erdnase text?

For example, is he the "reformed gambler"?

Here's one for a book by Eco as an example: [http://eco.ids-mannheim.de/wiki/Hokhmah](http://eco.ids-mannheim.de/wiki/Hokhmah)

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**Richard Hatch | 11/10/14 09:24 PM | link | filter**

Marty, great post!
Can you provide more details about *The S. W. Erdnase Report*? I'm sadly not familiar with it and would hope to remedy that!

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**JHostler | 11/10/14 10:18 PM | link | filter**

In the spirit of Marlo, Randi, and Ockham (for very different reasons), the time seems right to introduce a competing, radically different, and not nearly as interesting Erdnase theory.

Assumption 1: Your typical gambler would neither know nor need to know 90% of EATCT's contents to obtain a sufficient gaming advantage.

Assumption 2: The proximity of copyright dates for EATCT (2/17/1902) and Drake's Roterberg reprint entitled "Card Tricks, How to Do Them..." (2/15/1902) is no
Assumption 3: The length and intensity of Erdnase research to date - largely inconclusive research - *means something* in terms of what hasn't been found.

Assumption 4: The author's numerous references to "we" *mean something*.

My takeaway: There was no Erdnase, or Andrews, or any single author. The book was a house job perpetrated by Drake, compiled from a number of sources - including (but not limited to) Roterberg. The TINE theory.

Commence the tomato hurling!

MManchester | 11/10/14 10:36 PM | link | filter

Assumption 4: The author's reference(s) to "we" mean something.

Do you think that we could refer to a single author and the illustrator?

JHostler | 11/10/14 10:48 PM | link | filter

*MManchester wrote:*

Assumption 4: The author's reference(s) to "we" mean something.

Do you think that we could refer to a single author and the illustrator?

No - not in context. To wit:

*Works on conjuring invariably devote much space to the consideration of card tricks, and many have been written exclusively for that purpose, yet we have been unable to find* in the whole category more than an incidental reference to any card table artifice; and in no instance are the principal feats even mentioned.

*We modestly claim originality* for the particular manner of accomplishing many of the manoeuvres described...

Etc. etc. etc. The "we" here is more of an equal (or group of collaborators), not a hired gun illustrator. Of course, the word "we" could simply have been a stylized version of "I..." but that would leave me with only three bases for TINE.
I like the theory. No tomatoes from me. I think looking more carefully at Roterberg’s involvement, be it directly or indirectly, is warranted.

**Richard Kaufman** | 11/11/14 12:23 AM | link | filter

I believe that Roterberg’s involvement has already been postulated by some folks, and also dismissed for various reasons.

**lybrary** | 11/11/14 12:45 AM | link | filter

For me reading Erdnase reminds me of somebody who grew up speaking German and then later switching to English. The primary reason for this is that Erdnase likes to use noun constructs which are very typical German. This is not something one would use if you learned German as a second language in my opinion. Therefore Erdnase was in my opinion an immigrant from Germany. This makes Roterberg the primary suspect. Many of the facts that we try to line up with Erdnase, placing him in Chicago at the right time for example, or putting a deck of cards in his hands, etc. are trivially true for Roterberg. Why he has been so easily dismissed by the larger Erdnase research community is beyond me. If it wasn’t Roterberg himself maybe it was somebody he knew, a fellow immigrant from Germany who saw how Roterberg earned a nice amount with New Era Card Tricks, and tried to replicate his success with his own book. Roterberg perhaps was only helping that person.

**Roger M.** | 11/11/14 02:17 AM | link | filter

Tossing specific names into the ring with *absolutely no evidence* to support them seems completely counterproductive.

Once you remove the need to actually provide evidence in support of a specific candidate, and further to make that evidence *of some substance*, the search deteriorates into a pointless joke.

**JHostler** | 11/11/14 08:09 AM | link | filter

*Roger M. wrote:* Tossing specific names into the ring with *absolutely no evidence* to support them seems completely counterproductive.

Once you remove the need to actually provide evidence in support of a specific candidate, and further to make that evidence *of some substance*, the search deteriorates into a pointless joke.
likely a group effort, and that Roterberg may have participated - the evidence (YES!) being that both his and "Erdnase's" books were submitted for copyright within two days of each other... and, coincidentally (?), Roterberg’s book was published by Drake.

If you feel the need to join the "Earth Nose" crowd, or compelled to assume the existence of only one primary author, more power to you. The hunt is fabulously entertaining. All things considered, the proximity of those two copyright dates - which I don’t recall anyone ever mentioning - provides a more robust clue than many of the endlessly rehashed word games and flimsy "psychological profiles" we continue to produce.

Perhaps someone in the know can advise me on exactly how Roterberg has been ruled out. At this point, I'm not sure we could rule out Maurice Ravel. (Look hard enough and you'll find "BOLERO" in the text.)

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**Carlo Morpurgo** | 11/11/14 08:37 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I was never a big supporter myself of the pyramid thing, as a mean of proving Erdnase's identity. It was a curiosity for me. However, I recall that the idea was to slide the lines so that they remain within the text frame. It's a lot harder to come up with stuff with that restriction.

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 11/11/14 08:57 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*JHostler wrote:* In the spirit of [...] Occam [...]a not nearly as interesting Erdnase theory. [was posited on this thread some time ago that the ] book was a house job perpetrated by Drake, compiled from a number of sources

There's something about holding a mirror up to nature as it were... for some who want to find an author in their reflections. Perhaps the scene is still lit by some afterglow of Vernon's approval?

Any thoughts on the reformed gambler?

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**lybrary** | 11/11/14 10:44 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Carlo Morpurgo wrote:* I was never a big supporter myself of the pyramid thing, as a mean of proving Erdnase's identity. It was a curiosity for me. However, I recall that the idea was to slide the lines so that they remain within the text frame. It's a lot harder to come up with stuff with that restriction.
and therefore pure fantasy.

**Bill Mullins** | 11/11/14 11:11 AM | link | filter

_Jonathan Townsend wrote:_ Any thoughts on the reformed gambler?

Which one? J. H. Green was dead. Kid Royal had been active in Chicago in the 1890s and wrote a pitchbook that covered some of the same ground as _Expert_. There was John Philip Quinn, and Steve Holcomb out of Louisville. Harry Brolaski wrote an expose book called _Easy Money_ in 1911. Kid Canfield got started about 10 years after _Expert._

**Carlo Morpurgo** | 11/11/14 11:23 AM | link | filter

_librar y wrote:

_Carlo Morpurgo wrote:_ I was never a big supporter myself of the pyramid thing, as a mean of proving Erdnase's identity. It was a curiosity for me. However, I recall that the idea was to slide the lines so that they remain within the text frame. It's a lot harder to come up with stuff with that restriction.

And why that particular restriction? I find these combinatorial "Dr. Matrix" games completely pointless. This is on a 3rd or 4th level removed from any actual evidence and therefore pure fantasy.

I was trying to come up with a reasonable restriction, assuming that the author indeed wanted to leave such a clue (which I am not claiming nor supporting). For example, a restriction due to physical constraints, where the letters were placed before being printed. I am not sure how that process worked exactly, but I am guessing there was a set rectangular frame. (like this one maybe? [http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_GPQlpwames8/T...C_0082.JPG](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_GPQlpwames8/T...C_0082.JPG))

Out of curiosity, would you still claim no evidence if WESANDERS were spelled using the first letters of each line?

**Jonathan Townsend** | 11/11/14 11:41 AM | link | filter

_Bill Mullins wrote:

_Jonathan Townsend wrote:_ Any thoughts on the reformed gambler?

Which one? J. H. Green was dead. Kid Royal had been active in Chicago in
Harry Brolaski wrote an expose book called *Easy Money* in 1911. Kid
Canfield got started about 10 years after *Expert*.

It's the line about reformed(?) gamblers that drew my attention. What/Who was around at the time?

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**lybrary** | 11/11/14 01:08 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Carlo Morpurgo wrote:* Out of curiosity, would you still claim no evidence if WESANDERS were spelled using the first letters of each line?

It would certainly be a lot stronger. However, the real problem starts much earlier. What evidence is there that the name is an anagram or a simple backwards spelling? The only evidence I am aware of is hearsay. That's all. So all the work that has been done on anagrammatical theories, be it the simple backward spelling, or the complex anagram, dangles on an extremely thin thread without any solid evidence.

I personally am not at all a believer in the anagram theory. The fact that the author wanted to hide his real name is nothing unusual nor hard to believe. Many authors choose to do that, and with a subject like gambling it is even more natural. But what evidence is there that the author used an anagram?

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 11/11/14 01:35 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Lewis Carroll is an anagram for Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, just like Robert Galbraith is an anagram for J. K. Rowling.

A casual observation that "andrews" kinda looks like a name when reversed becomes misdirection.

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**Carlo Morpurgo** | 11/11/14 03:16 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*lybrary wrote:*

*Carlo Morpurgo wrote:* Out of curiosity, would you still claim no evidence if WESANDERS were spelled using the first letters of each line?

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I personally am not at all a believer in the anagram theory. The fact that the author wanted to hide his real name is nothing unusual nor hard to believe. Many authors choose to do that, and with a subject like gambling it is even more natural. But what evidence is there that the author used an anagram?

There's absolutely nothing wrong in making assumptions when solving a case, and see where those assumptions lead - in fact I think it's a very effective procedure. If you only make a move after you see a hard piece of evidence you may be immobile forever. Especially in a case like this one, where hard evidence for anything at all is pretty hard to get.

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 11/11/14 05:03 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Carlo Morpurgo wrote:* There's absolutely nothing wrong in making assumptions when solving a case, and see where those assumptions lead ...

There is a text. It came from the Chicago area around 1900-1901. Not sure what the case is supposed to be beyond a Thematic Apperception Test. Any photos of the publishers around?

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**Brad Jeffer** | 11/11/14 06:50 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*JHostler wrote:* I simply suggested that the book was likely a group effort, and that Roterberg may have participated - the evidence (YES!) being that both his and "Erdnase’s" books were submitted for copyright within two days of each other... and, coincidentally (?), Roterberg’s book was published by Drake.

All things considered, the proximity of those two copyright dates - which I don’t recall anyone ever mentioning - provides a more robust clue than many of the endlessly rehashed word games

An interesting observation.

But why the two days?

That is to say, if you have two books to submit for copyright, why not submit them on the same day? Why submit one on Saturday and then wait until Monday to submit the other one?
Jonathan Townsend wrote: Lewis Carroll is an anagram for Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, just like Robert Galbraith is an anagram for J. K. Rowling.

Those are pseudonyms, not anagrams.
Marty Demarest | 11/11/14 07:51 PM | link | filter

Dick, the *S. W. Erdnase Report* came from a small printing, and Richard Kyle loaned me a copy to use in my research. To my knowledge, there are a few copies floating around the world.

It was written and compiled by Elyk D. Rahcir---a very mysterious author. I haven’t been able to learn anything about him. Anyone who can crack the code of his identity should tackle the Erdnase mystery...

I used it for details in my *Genii* and *Montana* articles. It contains a nice chronological summary of the collaboration and research between Alexander and Kyle, much of it drawn from notes taken during their meetings.


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Lybrary | 11/11/14 08:17 PM | link | filter

*Carlo Morpurgo wrote:* There’s absolutely nothing wrong in making assumptions when solving a case, and see where those assumptions lead - in fact I think it's a very effective procedure. If you only make a move after you see a hard piece of evidence you may be immobile forever. Especially in a case like this one, where hard evidence for anything at all is pretty hard to get.

Correct, there is nothing wrong with assumptions, but when you stack one assumption on top of another one, and on top of that yet another one then you arrive in Lala land. It is not particularly productive. It adds more noise than signal. On that basis one could derive all kind of nonsense 'evidence'.

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Jonathan Townsend | 11/11/14 08:43 PM | link | filter

Chris, it would be more effective if you summarized the assumptions being made and criticized those directly.

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Lybrary | 11/11/14 08:59 PM | link | filter

Assumptions:

1) SW Erdnase is a name derived by spelling the real name backwards.
2) Expanding 1) to a complex anagram.
Really?! And that is what some consider the leading theory. In my humble opinion this is pure nonsense.

**Carlo Morpurgo** | 11/11/14 09:27 PM | link | filter

*lybrary wrote:*

_Carlo Morpurgo wrote:_ There’s absolutely nothing wrong in making assumptions when solving a case, and see where those assumptions lead - in fact I think it’s a very effective procedure. If you only make a move after you see a hard piece of evidence you may be immobile forever. Especially in a case like this one, where hard evidence for anything at all is pretty hard to get.

Correct, there is nothing wrong with assumptions, but when you stack one assumption on top of another one, and on top of that yet another one then you arrive in Lala land. It is not particularly productive. It adds more noise than signal. On that basis one could derive all kind of nonsense 'evidence'.

If you are doing it like a Lala-lander you will most likely arrive there, i.e. where you started from. What if you make a reasonable assumption that it’s E.S Andrews, say, you do an intelligent search on all such guys back then, filter them out and then stumble on a handwritten copy of the book (or some other hard evidence)? After all an effort HAS been made in this direction, admitedly with no luck, but that is not the point...(what IF). This is how difficult cases are solved.

**Carlo Morpurgo** | 11/11/14 09:35 PM | link | filter

*lybrary wrote: Assumptions:*

1) SW Erdnase is a name derived by spelling the real name backwards.
2) Expanding 1) to a complex anagram.
3) Assuming that the author also hid his name in the front matter somehow
4) Finding that name by a particular rule of how lines of text can be moved around.

Really?! And that is what some consider the leading theory. In my humble opinion this is pure nonsense.

Each theory involving anagrams and such has a lot more going on than what you are posting here. Do your homework and read the articles. Just to be clear one more time, I
By the way, you wrote

"Hurt McDermott and myself thought that this also strengthened the case for August Roterberg since Roter-Berg literally means in German "Red Mountain or Red Hill" - so two ways of describing the same thing: 'Berg' and 'Erdnasen'. Roterberg has been put forward as Erdnase before for many good reasons but it seems there is no current champion for him. I think that the Erdnasen term usage to describe hills and mountains does strengthen the Roterberg case."

How is that ANY better than the anagram idea? Seems pure fantasy to me! Where's the evidence?

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**Bill Mullins | 11/11/14 10:25 PM | link | filter**

Chris -- Assumption 1 and assumptions 3/4 don't lead to the same name (1 -> E. S. Andrews, 3/4 -> W. E. Sanders).

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**JHostler | 11/11/14 10:39 PM | link | filter**

Roger M. -

Your entire Erdnase "worldview" - like that of many others - is based on an unproven assumption: that there was but a single primary author. And how can you be 100% certain that Roterberg played absolutely no role when there's so little to be certain about across the board?

Jon Townsend -

The correct spelling is, indeed, Ockham as I was referring to William himself.

While I appreciate the research conducted by our esteemed scholars thus far, none of it has led to a truly compelling candidate... one that just screams "it's me." In fact, much of this research has been plagued with good intentions, conjecture and wishful thinking... and I simply refuse to value candidates based on the number of words written about them. Groupthink, anyone?

Consider the technology driving office administration in 1902. Is it within the realm of possibility that two copyright applications received on the same day might be processed and/or dated two days apart? What are the odds that two magic-related publications from Chicago, under these circumstances (i.e., having the same ultimate
Again, I'm not proposing Roterberg as "the author." I believe this was a group effort.

**Bill Mullins wrote:** Chris -- Assumption 1 and assumptions 3/4 don't lead to the same name (1 -> E. S. Andrews, 3/4 -> W. E. Sanders).

Bill you are correct, but I am showing the line of argumentation how one assumption was added on top of another. Originally it was one assumption, the name is spelled backwards. That by itself is a huge leap of faith but by itself a fair assumption to make and to explore. But when that didn't reveal a promising enough candidate another assumption is added - well let's expand this to a complex anagram rather than a simple backwards spelling. And now to justify this arbitrary business we are searching for names that are hidden in text with further arbitrary assumptions. To justify these arbitrary assumptions we find additional boundary conditions that have to be met, etc.

If we consider this entertainment then I have no problem with it. It is all fun. But if anybody tries to argue that this has anything to do with good research then I have to respectfully disagree.

**Roger M. wrote:** JHostler wrote: Roger M. -

Your entire Erdnase "worldview" - like that of many others - is based on an unproven assumption: that there was but a single primary author.

M.D. Smith has informed us that he sat down in a Chicago hotel room with the sole author, S.W. Erdnase and drew a few pictures of his hands. There were no photos taken that day, and there was no other guests in the room to back up the story, but that Smith was drawing pictures of the hands of the author of the book that cold day is one of the few facts we have in the Erdnase story.

This in and of itself is 1000% more convincing than an opinion *sans one whit of evidence* that there was more than one author.

Perhaps there was more than one author, perhaps there were five authors ... but the evidence to date (noted above) indicates there was one author.

If you've got solid evidence to counter this existing (and longstanding) evidence, bring it forward. If all you've got is a "feeling", that and 5 bucks will get you a cup of strong coffee.
Roger M. wrote:

JHostler wrote: Roger M. -

Your entire Erdnase "worldview" - like that of many others - is based on an unproven assumption: that there was but a single primary author.

M.D. Smith has informed us that he sat down in a Chicago hotel room with the sole author, S.W. Erdnase and drew a few pictures of his hands. There were no photos taken that day, and there was no other guests in the room to back up the story, but that Smith was drawing pictures of the hands of the author of the book that cold day is one of the few facts we have in the Erdnase story.

This in and of itself is 1000% more convincing than an opinion sans one whit of evidence that there was more than one author.

Perhaps there was more than one author, perhaps there were five authors ... but the evidence to date (noted above) indicates there was one author.

If you’ve got solid evidence to counter this existing (and longstanding) evidence, bring it forward.
If all you’ve got is a "feeling", that and 5 bucks will get you a cup of strong coffee.

How did Smith know he was dealing with the "sole author?" Or are you simply assuming this belief because only one person met with him?

Your characterization of the multiple author theory as lacking "one whit of evidence" is absurd and betrays your bias. The numerous references to "we..." the apparent tacking-on of a magic section... the fact that no single candidate seems to fit the bill... similarities in the the style and content of EATCT's "Preface" versus those of other Drake publications (when Drake purportedly played no role in the book's development). The fact that this path has been virtually ignored in favor of wishful anagrams, flawed German translations of "erdnase," and wild speculation makes it no less valid.

Bob Coyne | 11/12/14 10:43 AM | link | filter

JHostler wrote: ... similarities in the the style and content of EATCT's
This is interesting and something I don’t remember seeing. Do you have any examples of these other Drake prefaces that are similar and make you think they were written by the same person as the Erdnase preface?

I have put my thinking on the Roterberg involvement in writing. It is a work in progress. My Erdnase profile is as follows:

I believe that Erdnase was a magician friend, colleague or customer of Roterberg - a fellow immigrant from Germany - who saw Roterberg’s success with his magic books and who wanted to copy this success for his own benefit. Being a gambler who used his sleight-of-hand to gain an advantage in gambling he did not want to use his real name and thus he wrote it under the pseudonym S.W. Erdnase, his childhood nickname. Roterberg showed him the ropes, potentially helped with the writing/editing, and connected him with the publisher Drake or perhaps even did all the administrative work for Erdnase.

The details of my thinking can be found here [http://www.lybrary.com/the-hunt-for-erd...-a-27.html](http://www.lybrary.com/the-hunt-for-erd...-a-27.html)

I am looking for anybody who would like to help to research August Roterberg in more detail. I believe that the key to finding Erdnase is Roterberg.

In favor of a single author:

1. Smith met one man as the author.

2. Drake’s statements to Sprong that Andrews was "the" author.

3. Statement by Del Adelphia that he met Erdnase, and it was only one guy.

4. If Erdnase had been more than one guy, it would have been less likely that his identity would still be unknown at this date ("one can keep a secret, two can’t").

5. The use of "we" is obviously the **editorial we** (although some grammarians might say it is improperly used). I don’t see anywhere where "we" is used that the context requires that it mean more than one person.
of the most well-known quotes from the book: "if it sells it will accomplish the primary motive of the author, as he needs the money." See also "the writer [singular] uses no sophistry" and "The writer has expended much time and care . . .".

7. Neither the copyright application nor the attribution of the author on the title page refer to more than one author.

8. While reference is made to partners, allies, collusion, etc., the book is written primarily for the lone player. The methods taught are for the single advantage player, rather than for partners (for example, the "spread" isn't included in the book). Erdnase preferred to work alone at the table -- why assume he wanted partners in writing?

9. The author claims originality with respect to several sleights, a statement which makes much more sense if the author were one person rather than several. The sleights in question aren't performed by a group, but by a single player or performer.

To me, the evidence leans to a single-author theory.

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Roger M. | 11/12/14 10:53 AM | link | filter

Noted JHostler, it's a "feeling" you've got, and it's as valid as anybody else's opinion as to authorship.

In support of my statement though, I'll highlight an actual fact regarding when Smith met Erdnase in the cold hotel room.
Smith felt he was meeting with the author of the book because that's how Erdnase presented himself, and did the business at hand with Smith ... as the author of the book.

So as not to make that statement in a vacuum, Smith said this of Erdnase:

"The man I met, I'm sure was the real article. He was good, he was honest with me. By that I do not mean the money, I have in mind the way he talked to me. He put more cards on the table than was necessary. He withheld nothing. I liked his ways. He sold himself to me".

Bill Mullins | 11/12/14 11:05 AM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: I am looking for anybody who would like to help to research August Roterberg in more detail. I believe that the key to finding Erdnase is Roterberg.

Chris -- your Roterberg CD includes an essay on Roterberg by Richard Hatch. Is it the
And relative to your proposal:
In Roterberg’s catalog No. 8 (ca. 1915), he claims credit for a number of piecees of apparatus (Roterberg’s Wonderful Quadruple Changing Card, Roterberg’s Multum in Parvo, Roterberg’s New Diminishing Card, etc.). Why wouldn’t he, then, claim credit for Expert?

**lybrary** | 11/12/14 11:18 AM | link | filter

Bill, as I wrote, I think Roterberg is most likely not the author, but a colleague, friend or customer of Roterberg is in my opinion Erdnase. Naturally, Roterberg wouldn’t claim authorship for it, even if he was involved on some level.

I would assume the essay is the same, but perhaps Richard Hatch can comment on this himself.

**Roger M.** | 11/12/14 11:25 AM | link | filter

I believe that any profile of "Erdnase" **must** include his occupation.

His occupation is important as it provides the framework for how Erdnase managed to put in the 10 or 20 thousand hours of practice to not only develop the sleights in the book, but also to become proficient enough at them that he could execute them, which we know he did for Smith.

It would seem that pursuing a candidate who worked at a desk alongside 20 other office workers for 40 hours a week for a decade, might not be as solid a lead as a man who spent that decade or more sitting in the caboose of a train, by himself, deck of cards in hand.

Chris, what does your profile do for a living, such that he would have the immense amount of time required to develop the sleights, perfect the sleights, and then write the book? Also Chris, some luminaries are on the record commenting that the book is obviously unedited, where do you see a second writers hand helping with the editing?

As much as I love the book, I do feel it is a poorly edited mish-mash of otherwise amazing information, and containing far too many errors, and too much complex "inside" word play to have seen the hand of an experienced editor.

**lybrary** | 11/12/14 11:34 AM | link | filter

My profile above was not written in the correct priority order. First and foremost I
nickname. This is a new and different explanation of the name and opens up a new line of inquiry. My supporting facts for this are

- the word Erdnase(n) has been in use in German literature before EATCT was published
- plenty of evidence that Erdnase is being used as nickname for kids and pets in Germany
- linguistic analysis of EATCT reveals noun phrases which are common in German

On top of this I propose that Erdnase and Roterberg knew each other. This is a weaker assumption but nevertheless quite plausible. Exactly what kind of relationship that might have been - friend, colleague, customer - I don't know.

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**Roger M. | 11/12/14 11:42 AM | link | filter**

Chris, you note "plenty of evidence" for Erdnase as a nickname.

If you would, what (or where) is that evidence?

I recall Hurt posting on a few forums related to fairy tales, and specifically European fairy tales - asking about the use of the name "Erdnase" in German fairy tales. Most of those posts were (and still are) unanswered by others.

Is there some other source for the information related to Erdnase as a common nickname for kids and/or pets?

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**Lybrary | 11/12/14 11:46 AM | link | filter**

Roger, my best guess at Erdnase's occupation is jobless. I picture him as a relatively poor German immigrant who came to the US with big dreams but they didn't quite pan out the way he imagined. So he spends most of his time practicing card sleights and scrapes out a living gambling with his sleight-of-hand advantage. Now he sees Roterberg doing quite well as author of magic books and card magic books. Erdnase being an expert with cards decides to write his own book modeled on Roterberg's.

His friendship with Roterberg is not essential. Maybe he didn't know Roterberg, just his books, and learned from them how to write a book and get it published.

So my Roterberg association argument is only one possible line to pursue, but not essential. I personally think it is likely that he knew Roterberg, had contact with him on some level, but it is not essential. How much involvement Roterberg had is also open to further analysis. Maybe Roterberg was kind of the editor, or maybe Roterberg
It is work in progress.

Roger M. wrote: Chris, you note "plenty of evidence" for Erdnase as a nickname.

If you would, what (or where) is that evidence?

Google Erdnasen and you will find lots of evidence from people using the term as usernames, to how they call their pets and kids.

For example see here http://www.spielgruppe.ch/cm_data/Facht...ha_nde.pdf

This children group calls itself "Erdnasen und Mooshaende" which means earth-noses and moss-hands. This is a group that goes out in the forest and discovers nature.

Or here somebody calls their dog Erdnase http://jiapey.blogspot.com/2010/11/erdn...ation.html and they even show you a photo of why they call him that.

Or here 'Erdnasen Geschichten' - stories of Erdnase http://www.fotocommunity.de/pc/pc/display/12279399

Or here horses being called Erdnasen http://monespelznasen.wordpress.com/201.../erdnasen/

Or here somebody calls his novel "Die Erdnasen" http://www.wolfram-eicke.de/werke/notizen.html

Need more?

Bill Mullins | 11/12/14 12:41 PM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote: I recall Hurt posting on a few forums related to fairy tales, and specifically European fairy tales - asking about the use of the name "Erdnase" in German fairy tales.
I am now officially calling my theory "The Nickname Theory and the Connection to August Roterberg" [http://www.lybrary.com/the-hunt-for-erd ... -a-27.html]

Bill Mullins  | 11/12/14 01:05 PM  | link  | filter

Chris -- You say "The author of The Expert at the Card Table uses noun phrases which are extremely common in German. As a native German speaker I would go so far as to say that these noun phrases are quintessential German. I am therefore convinced that the author's first language was German."

Roterberg was a native German speaker -- do you see similar stylistic quirks in his writings? How about in the writings of Ted Lesley, Denis Behr, Roberto Giobbi, or other native German speakers? I believe Houdini grew up in a German-speaking home -- what about him?

Lybrary  | 11/12/14 01:17 PM  | link  | filter

Bill, if you read Hurt's book you will find his linguistic analysis of Roterberg. Hurt's conclusion is that Roterberg was not Erdnase based on the linguistics. But he also notes the noun phrases. I myself have not made a detailed comparison with other authors. I don't think I am the right person for this. But being bilingual I am sharing my own observations and my hunch that the author had German roots.

For example, my wife who is a language maven - she speaks several languages fluently and is particularly good with English - constantly complains about my noun-phrases and that my sentences, particularly if I write something formal, use way too many nouns when one could use verbs much more elegantly. In some way, I see Erdnase suffering a similar habit albeit less drastically than my own. At the very least I see him using more noun-phrases than I would expect from a native English speaker. This is me the engineer talking. I am not a linguistic beyond being bilingual.

Roger M.  | 11/12/14 01:21 PM  | link  | filter

Chris, it would seem difficult to be jobless for the length of time it would take to develop the sleights in the book, to perfect them with practice, and then to self-publish a book describing them in explicit detail.

As I noted earlier, this process Erdnase undertook would take years, if not a full decade.
One would seem to require a source of income for food and lodging, let alone the money required to get the book to market. The late 1800’s were somewhat merciless on the have-nots, with few social safety nets. 

I would posit (for a multitude of reasons) that Erdnase had a job, and that it is highly likely he performed that job on a train. 

For those who have made the journey through the book with deck of cards in-hand, working on each sleight to perfection along the way ... the decade or more Erdnase would have required to go from concept to completion noted above is simply a given.

Roger, so you don’t think that somebody can scrape out a living gambling with a sleight of hand advantage back then? 

Most of the sleight of hand magicians learn is in their teens, if they got bitten by the magic bug early enough. I myself got into magic relatively late in my early twenties. But I learned most of the sleight of hand I do today while being a student. I therefore would assume that most of Erdnase’s sleight of hand was learned during his teens while he possibly was still in Germany attending school or doing other things while being supported by somebody. Then he comes to the US, probably tries out different odd jobs, and continues to practice his card skills. Eventually he starts to earn some money gambling. But he could have done any number of odd jobs to survive, all of which could have left him enough time to practice with his cards.

Even if you have an 8-hour job you could fit in an additional 4 hours practicing every day, particularly if you are dedicated and single. On the weekend you can do even more. This would allow you to practice 1500 hours a year. I say plenty of time regardless of what job he did - particularly for a hard working German

is 'an author' necessarily the same as 'the writer' ?

if 'he' needs the money why the reference to 'we'? I realize 'we' is a stylistic convention and do not think that it points to multiple authors BUT is the difference in usage in the preface significant? Did 'erdnase' write the preface? if so, why not 'I' need the money OR maintain the 'we' convention used throughout the text?

do similar Drake prefaces suggest that perhaps this one section was not penned by
Did smith comment on the language of the man he met? I know that if I found an extraordinary person with extraordinary gifts who had the making of a book but not the ability to realize it, I might step in as 'the writer'. but I would still feel he was 'the author'. he I would send to the illustrator.

just observations of someone reading the ideas of the experts and seeing lines that are present in these posts albeit not necessarily backed up with the objective historical data.

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**MManchester** 11/12/14 03:18 PM | link | filter

*Brad Jeffers wrote*: But why the two days? That is to say, if you have two books to submit for copyright, why not submit them on the same day? Why submit one on Saturday and then wait until Monday to submit the other one?

The Internet has made it possible to submit an application and make payment to the Copyright Office online. Having personally copyrighted material prior to this advance, I remember having to fill out the necessary paperwork by hand, get a money order and package everything for delivery. This was in the mid-90s. I can only imagine how laborious it might have been at the beginning of the century.

I can only surmise that he worked on the first application and submitted it. Then spent the remainder of the weekend finalizing the second. It depends on his method of working. Some might complete both first, others might like to finish one then another to focus on the details.

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The PBS program American Experience describes itself as TV's most-watched history series. Admittedly the subject matter may be very esoteric but it's a fascinating
suggested on this forum in recent months.

It would be great if someone would approach a network with a proposal for a program about the search for Erdnase. It's not without precedent as both Steve Cohen and Penn and Teller have had magic history series.

CARC seems like the most likely candidate. PBS may dismiss it as too lightweight, although they have had profiles of individuals in the past (Annie Oakley) and less sombre subjects (Tupperware). The enduring appeal and importance of EATCT to card magic as an art form are arguments in its favor.

Of course, the History Channel is also an option and they seem more willing to accept something of this nature. Though they may require a completed film to be submitted rather than providing funding and resources for its production. If so, Kickstarter anyone?

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**Marty Demarest** 11/12/14 04:17 PM | link | filter

I think the use of the name "S. W. Erdnase" seems very contrived, and deserves examination on all fronts. There's the backward reading, the German connotation and the word-game approach.

I think it certainly could be an anagram. And the German wordplay even suggests it. From W. H. Cremer, ed., *Magic No Mystery*, (London, 1876), p. 235, "Tricks with Words":

"No one knows who first mangled a name so as to make an anagram, and probably nobody wishes to know. Like most other things on earth, either very good ones or atrociously bad ones are amusing and delightful.

"Simply defined, the art of anagram-making lies in using the letters of one word to make, by altered placing, such another word as will have increased force by relation to the former. When we find in 'Horatio Nelson' the motto 'Honor est a Niko!' we have something excellently apt, and a credit to the maker. For greater facility, the letters I and j are interchangeable, and, in humorous trials or on great pressure, liberties in the way of phonetic or other misspelling and leaving out of letters may be perpetrated.

"We subjoin some which will serve as models for those caring to seek out the innuendoes concealed in the name of a friend or foe.

"John bunyan: Nu hony in a B
Maria Steuarda: Scotorum regina"
In 1880, Henry Jones (writing under the pseudonym "Cavendish" published the book *Card Essays, Clay’s Decisions and Card-Table Talk*. The Mar 2 1880 issue of The Bookseller (a trade journal) quoted a review from the London newspaper, *The Globe* that called Cavendish "an expert at the card-table".

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**Roger M.** | 11/12/14 05:10 PM | link | filter

...lybrary wrote: Roger, so you don’t think that somebody can scrape out a living gambling with a sleight of hand advantage back then?

Chris, I do indeed think a cheater could scrape out a living cheating, certainly lots of them did just that.  
BUT, my expertise is in hustling/cheating as opposed to magic, and my experience to date (backed up by a generous amount of historical documentation) is that a guy like Mr. Erdnase would very quickly burn games out in his neighborhood, city, and even state.  
This was true of cheaters across America. They had to move around in order to ply their trade.

Our Mr. Devol details this transient nature extremely well in his "40 Years A Gambler on the Mississippi".

Erdnase (IMO) wasn’t a professional cheater or a professional magician, but could move back and forth seamlessly between the two fields while working a regular job.

I think he cheated to a degree while playing cards, certainly enough that he had to maintain an ongoing search for new chumps, new territory, and new games.  
I also think he may have inspired interest from potential marks by showing them a few card tricks to get them interested in talking about cards and card games.

I think EATCT and David Ben and Richard Hatch’s work reflects the above thinking extremely well.

The hustlers domain was first the steamboat, and later the train.  
Mr. Erdnase was born too late for the steamboat, and I believe he spent a great deal of time on the train as the hustlers venue of choice in the late 1800’s.  
BUT again, I don’t believe Mr. Erdnase was a professional hustler (as noted above), but rather a clever fellow who discovered that his skills with a deck of cards might be put to good use on the trains he regularly worked and traveled on.

A long answer to your question Chris, but shortened up the answer would be "yes, professional cheaters could have scraped by hustling cards...but I don’t believe Erdnase was a..."
Just a quick thought on all the speculation concerning how much time it would have taken "Erdnase" (if there was such a fellow) to master the material contained in EATCT:

What evidence suggests "he" had mastered it all?

First, a successful cheat would never require so many "tools." Second, for this stuff to pass muster at an actual table - one likely populated with less-than-gentle men - a gargantuan amount of work would be required. Diminishing returns and all...

This is one of several reasons I don't believe the material was sourced from a single individual.

John, I think this is a very good point. Being able to demonstrate a move for an illustrator and actually using a move under fire are two entirely different things.

I find the occupational argument very weak in general. I think there are many occupations that would allow a passionate and hard working fellow acquire enough expertise to cheat on the side and develop enough expertise to write and demo the material for an illustrator.

I think there is also a bit of glorification of Erdnase going on. Yes, he clearly was skilled with cards and he wrote a great book, but how good he really was as a gambler or magician isn't entirely clear and for how long he maintained his skills is also not known.

Erdnase claimed to have copyrighted his book in England. I don't think anyone has been able to confirm that he did (it's an open question, since the relevant records were destroyed in WWII). If you want to know what the procedure was ca. 1902, look at this.
My takeaway: There was no Erdnase, or Andrews, or any single author. The book was a house job perpetrated by Drake, compiled from a number of sources - including (but not limited to) Roterberg. The TINE theory.

Some thoughts (and please don't take this as "tomato hurling")

If it was a "house job" by Drake, why did they not publish it as a Drake imprint? Why did they apply for copyright in the name of "Erdnase"? (And were such statements made under penalty of perjury?)
Is there any known connection between Drake and McKinney at this point, other than geographic proximity? Did Drake use McKinney as a printer for any of their other books?
Is there any known connection between Drake and Smith?

And why do you say that Roterberg’s book was copyrighted in Feb 1902? The Catalogue of Copyrights from the Library of Congress includes Erdnase here, but has no entry for Roterberg (if it did, it would be here between Rostetter and Roth.)

No hurling taken.

You can find the copyright info for Drake's reissue of Roterberg's book here: https://archive.org/stream/catalogoftit ... r_djvu.txt
As to why Drake would initiate or support the "side publication" of a book on cheating: I have no idea. (Actually, I do... several... but it’s speculation of the variety that’s fueled dozens of other theories.)


Thanks for the link. So whoever published/copyrighted Erdnase submitted printed copies in a timely manner (they arrived the following month), but Drake waited four years after submission of copyright application to send in the required two copies of the Roterberg book.

This is interesting and something I don’t remember seeing. Do you have any examples of these other Drake prefaces that are similar and make you think they were written by the same person as the Erdnase preface?

Note how all begin with a sentence explaining the reason for the book’s existence. No slam dunk, but interesting:

http://books.google.com/books?id=_7wyAQ... se&f=false

https://archive.org/stream/artofcaricat ... 9/mode/2up

https://archive.org/stream/20thcenturyt ... 9/mode/2up

John, I think this is a very good point. Being able to demonstrate a move for an illustrator and actually using a move under fire are two entirely different things.
Roger M. wrote:

lybrary wrote: John, I think this is a very good point. Being able to demonstrate a move for an illustrator and actually using a move under fire are two entirely different things.

He invented most of the moves Chris (and John) ... think about that for a second.

Not necessarily. He just published them. But let’s say he did invent them... how much virtually unperformable magic has been published over the last 100 years? A TON. The fact that something makes print has absolutely no bearing on the author’s skill or ability to execute.

Roger M. | 11/12/14 08:16 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: I think there is also a bit of glorification of Erdnase going on.

There’s no "glorification" going on, simply an acknowledgement a genius who created from scratch many card sleights previously unseen, and one who has elevated all card sleights to a height never seen prior to the publication of his book.

Roger M. | 11/12/14 08:17 PM | link | filter

JHostler wrote:

Roger M. wrote:

lybrary wrote: John, I think this is a very good point. Being able to demonstrate a move for an illustrator and actually using a move under fire are two entirely different things.

He invented most of the moves Chris (and John) ... think about that for a second.

Not necessarily. He just published them. But let’s say he did invent them... how much virtually unperformable magic has been published over the last 100 years? A TON. The fact that something makes print has absolutely no bearing on the author’s skill.
Let's leave it at that - OK?

**Pete McCabe** | 11/12/14 09:14 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*JHostler wrote:* Note how all begin with a sentence explaining the reason for the book's existence. No slam dunk, but interesting:

http://books.google.com/books?id=_7wyAQ ... se&f=false

https://archive.org/stream/artofcaricat ... 9/mode/2up

https://archive.org/stream/20thcenturyt ... 9/mode/2up

Fascinating. A quick question: in the Smith book, the Preface has Smith's name at the bottom, and is clearly written by the author to the reader. But neither Expert nor the Holford book have the author's name, and they are not written as personal communications. They read like advertisements. They sound like they were written by the publisher.

I have no knowledge of the practices of the day; was it common for prefaces to be written by the publisher? What do the Erdnasen who know much more about this subject than I do think? Who wrote the preface of Expert?

**Brad Jeffers** | 11/12/14 11:17 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*lybrary wrote:* Being able to demonstrate a move for an illustrator and actually using a move under fire are two entirely different things.

How true.

The Complete Illustrated Book of Card Magic has 378 photographic illustrations of, "the author's hands demonstrating the sleights for this book".

I don't for a second believe that Walter Gibson was capable of flawless execution of all the sleights and maneuvers in that encyclopedic work.

*lybrary wrote:* I think there is also a bit of glorification of Erdnase going on.

The glorification is for the book, not for the man.
All we know for sure is that he was the author of the most influential book of it’s kind. A book that has indeed been glorified, and rightly so.

Erdnase the man, anonymously basks in that glory.

Deservedly so!

Hi All,

Regarding the "similar prefaces" hypothesis discussed above, it might be noted that "our" Frederick J. Drake passed away in 1912. That date is clear from The Publishers’ Weekly.

--Tom Sawyer

Coincidences can really be weird. The January 1965 issue of Genii is the month and year of my birth. Leo Behnke is on the cover with the name "Leo" on the bottom of the front. My month and birth year issue of Genii has my name on the cover! You bet I already put in an order for it!

But as David Alexander wrote in his Erdnase article: "At some point the idea of endless coincidences becomes unreasonable and the evidence, even though circumstantial, becomes overwhelming."

Hi All,

The following ties in with some of the discussion above.

At least in the early days, a lot of Drake's books dealt with “performance-related” subjects, including magic, card-sharping, hypnotism, fortune-telling, and recitations. This applies at least to the period 1905 and before.

If you look at a certain “Index to Second Quarter, 1902” you can see some relevant information. Here is a link:
A quick glance at that index (under Drake) and related information in the larger volume show that Drake submitted over a dozen works for copyright during the first half of the year 1902, including two magic books (not including the Roterberg book).

--Tom Sawyer

Hi All,

I've been thinking about S.W. Erdnase, and the whole authorship controversy.

I was thinking of writing a very brief assessment of the present status of “the Erdnase investigation,” with emphasis on the recent discussion on this thread -- as an introductory segment to this post. I started writing it, but I found myself hedging and qualifying my comments, in part so that I would not cause pointless arguments here. I do recognize that a certain amount of subjectivity is involved, but then again there are some things that tend to transcend subjectivity, becoming . . . objective! To me, anyway,

It does appear to me that different people have different capabilities when it comes to looking at evidence, and it also appears that certain people may not be too concerned about making their arguments in a fashion that is palatable to all those who might disagree. It would be nice for everyone to be able to say, in all cases, “Well, I don’t agree with him (or her), but he (or she) made a good argument for his (or her) position.”

Anyway, I wanted to say a few words in this post about the name of the author as stated on the title page of The Expert at the Card Table. In spite of the attention that has been given to the name, I doubt that it has been analyzed fully.

Boiled down, one can say that the author’s real name is either (a) Andrews, or (b) not Andrews. For a long time, it seemed to me that there was a good chance that author’s name was Andrews, but not necessarily E.S. Andrews. Later, it seemed to me that good arguments could be made that his name -- if Andrews -- was probably E.S. Andrews.

I still developing my views on the subject, but now I am not so sure that I like the argument much that his name was Andrews at all. I was never very sure on that, but now I may be leaning more against that.
also has to do with further thinking that I have done regarding the title page.

It strikes me that there are actually two notable letter-sequences in the context of the author’s name as found on the title page. I have gone into this somewhat on my S.W. Erdnase blog, but below I am explaining it differently. The two key letter-sequences (or letter segments) are as follows:

ERDNASE (which is the surname of the author as stated on the title page)

SWERDNA (which, when reversed, is a frequently suggested surname for the author)

Both of the sequences stated above are present on the title page of the first edition of *The Expert at the Card Table*. Both make some sense.

But it appears to me that the sense made by the second one (SWERDNA) is weaker than the sense made by the first one (ERDNASE). This weakness is a result of the fact that SWERDNA does not appear on the title page as a discrete unit. ERDNASE, on the other hand, does appear, separate and alone, with nothing added and nothing subtracted.

To arrive at SWERDNA, you need to take ERDNASE, then add SW to the beginning, then subtract SE from the end.

If you allow yourself (1) to compress all of the letters in the name into one “word,” and (2) to consider a segment of that word -- then it seems to me that the case for the reversal becomes weaker.

The question here is, “How do you know what to reverse?” And the perhaps somewhat lame answer is, “Well, I add letters to the strange word ERDNASE, until I find something I can reverse! And if necessary, I will subtract letters as well!”

The ERDNASE sequence, on the other hand, is just “there.” It does not need to be modified, and it has meaning (see Chris Wasshuber’s comments in earlier posts).

--Tom Sawyer

Luis | 11/23/14 03:38 AM | link | filter

A considerable weight has been given to M.D. Smith words, but has anybody thought of him as the real author not just the illustrator? Has anybody investigated his familiarity with a deck pf cards? Do we have examples of his writing? Could he be Erdnase with his real identity hidden in plain sight?
While anything remains a possibility, M.D. Smith was (and is) a well known artist with a solid catalog of work. His life, and his history are not mysteries, are well established, and are easily referenced. Recall that Gardner actually found the then 70 year old Smith using only the Chicago telephone book.

Perhaps most importantly, at the 1947 SAM Convention, Smith met with and spoke with Dai Vernon and Fawcett Ross, amongst other magicians also attending. *If ever there was a possibility* of discovering that M.D. Smith had "mad" card skills, one might safely presume that Vernon would have been the first one to note such skill. Smith signed EATCT editions, spoke with Vernon et al, and presumably was surrounded with card magic for the duration of his SAM attendance - an opportunity for the discovery that Smith was Erdnase if ever there was one! But no such suggestion was ever made by anybody associated with the event.

In 1923, Smith left the world of commercial and editorial art, and lived the remainder of his life as a fine artist.

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**Marty Demarest** | 11/26/14 05:46 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Tom, your recent post about the name "Andrews" and the various strands of letters is very interesting, and--as your work often does--evinces thinking that gets off familiar paths without straining to reach a particular conclusion. I think the simple name "Erdnase" deserves more examination. The author clearly uses that single word to designate himself, and its emphasis makes it an arguable stand-in for the author. (Should we be looking for an E.S. Andre?) On the other hand, the S.W.E. Shift suggests that both of the initials are also important when considering the author's naming of himself. It's intriguing to consider.

Personally, I love the clue of "E.S. Andrews." It looks like a solid lead. It's a fact that S.W. Erdnase, reversed, is E.S. Andrews. The first suspect on my list of candidates is E.S. Andrews, and I've followed Dick Hatch's research with great interest. I've also conducted my own investigation into Edwin Sumner Andrews. But I think that Dick's work is excellent. And while I might interpret some of the evidence a bit differently, I've found no reason not to rely on his findings.

"E.S. Andrews" is an outstanding candidate. The name is an armchair detective's dream. The answer is handed to us. "E.S. Andrews" = bull's eye. And that's the problem.

If E.S. Andrews is indeed Erdnase's real name, then he should be increasingly easy to find. If it is a real name, I think it's safe to presume that Mr. Andrews used his name
That's why I consider it important to analyze the book, and to ask questions such as "Did Erdnase ever really cheat?" "What games did he play?" "Which languages does he use for effect?" "How much of a magician was Erdnase?" "How much of a writer was Erdnase?"

Unfortunately, every single candidate named "Andrews" that I have investigated reveals very little "Erdnasian" evidence. Milton Franklin Andrews yields evidence that fits Erdnase in some respect, but also yields plenty of contraindicatory evidence. As far as I can see with Edwin Sumner Andrews, only his name and location relate to Erdnase. (He did play cards, but not necessarily faro and casino.)

Because he used the name "S.W. Erdnase," I'm quite willing to believe that the author of The Expert was "E.S. Andrews." The clue makes the name a compelling theory. But the evidence it yields doesn't support it.

On the other hand, David Alexander and Richard Kyle provided evidence for another name—perhaps even questionable evidence. I could dismiss it as being so much wordplay (assuming that wordplay is irrelevant when considering a book). And I could decide (for some reason) that the author's name is unlikely to be an anagram. But I prefer to subject Alexander and Kyle's theory to the same empirical scrutiny that I give the name "E.S. Andrews."

The evidence for Sanders is at least as compelling as the clue for Andrews. With W.E. Sanders, we see decades of multifaceted engagement with cards and "sporting" men, proof of his writing and publishing skill, and a solid reason for disguising his name. He matches the physical description we have, and coincides with Erdnase in time, place and circumstance.

Given that it's been 90 years since Frederick J. Drake (talking with John C. Sprong) and Leo Rullman (writing in The Sphinx) pointed out the reversal of Erdnase's name, and decades of research have been conducted looking for the Andrews who wrote the book, I would expect the best Andrews candidate to have at least as much evidence--ideally more, and harder--than Sanders. But it's not there. Sanders shows more in common with Erdnase than Andrews. That doesn't make Sanders Erdnase, but it makes him more likely than a century's worth of Andrews.

If a name drawn randomly from a phone book (to repurpose Jason's remarkable analogy) yields more evidence than the name we were handed as a clue, maybe we need to ask ourselves if we're following a false clue.
brothers and I’m wondering what they can bring to the table.

Perhaps one or both of them commented in a letter about their no good gambling brother Wilbur. If W.E. was Erdnase and managed to hide this from his parents, he might not have been able to do so with his siblings.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 12/01/14 01:39 PM | link | filter

Marty, thanks for the kind words in the post right above Leonard’s. Much appreciated. You raise some excellent points about methodologies that have been applied so far.

Without commenting on W.E. Sanders, it is easy for me to agree that (potentially) the evidence that a person is Erdnase can readily trump the “evidence” that might be found in someone’s name. As has probably been noted elsewhere by others, all of the anagrams of “S.W. Erdnase” are basically ways of initially limiting the field. It’s just one way, though, and it is not a flawless way. (The author’s real name might be the very common one of John Smith, or it might be an unusual one like Tom Sawyer.)

Alexander’s (and Kyle’s) methodology -- in its basic form -- was quite good, but his reasons for ultimately eliminating the name “E.S. Andrews” from consideration -- at least in retrospect -- were not as conclusive as he apparently believed at the time. Even though it was a good basic method, it was not necessarily a route to the correct real name.

In reply to some of Jason’s discussion above, it seems to me that any of the anagrams of the author’s name as shown on the title page (S.W. Erdnase) would be a better starting point than a randomly selected name. If one wants to use a name as a starting point in an investigation of the authorship, the best one is E.S. Andrews, and then there are others of varying degrees of strength, such as S.E. Andrews, or Andre Wess, or E.W. Sanders, or W.E. Sanders, or Wes Anders.

But, of course, one does not need to start with a name at all.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Tom Sawyer** | 12/02/14 04:12 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

One of the things Marty Demarest mentions (a number of posts back) is his skepticism over the existence of “any direct, personal connection” between Frederick J. Drake & Co. and S.W. Erdnase.
Of course, any demonstrable connection between Drake and Erdnase is going to be of interest, for several reasons. For one thing, it’s nice to be able to put together Erdnase’s story, and Drake may be an important part of that. Also, information on that topic can help one construct an accurate publishing history of the book, and such information even might help establish the identity of S.W. Erdnase.

_The Man Who Was Erdnase_ talks about Drake obtaining the plates from Erdnase. I do not know where that information came from, and I suppose that it is an educated guess.

The most definite information I can think of relating to a connection between Drake and Erdnase is quoted by Jim Maloney in this thread on November 27, 2006. Jim quotes Leo Rullman, from the February 1929 issue of _The Sphinx_. Without getting into detail, the material quoted does not seem very concrete, and it is difficult to know exactly what Rullman based his statements on.

Immediately, someone (I think I know who, but I do not want to guess on that) pounced on Rullman’s account, while still allowing that Drake wound up in possession of the plates.

A fact that has been noted by several people is that Frederick J. Drake passed away in 1912. According to _The Publishers' Weekly_, a son, Stafford W. Drake became the manager of the company in 1930.

--Tom Sawyer

Bill Mullins | 12/02/14 05:31 PM | link | filter

I don’t think it is too presumptuous to think that sometime between 1902, when Erdnase copyrighted his own book, and 1905, when Drake started selling the "second” editions, that the two met to make some business arrangement. There is no proof of a meeting, and it could be that Drake simply started selling bootleg copies, but I doubt it.

Tom Sawyer | 12/02/14 07:25 PM | link | filter

Bill,

I see such a meeting as something that "may” have happened. If a meeting between Drake and Erdnase took place, it could easily have taken place (as you indicate) at any time during 1902, 1903, 1904, or 1905. If I had to guess, I might prefer something like 1903.
printings, was based on an agreement between Drake and someone, but Erdnase’s activities during the period 1902-1905 seem quite mysterious, and perhaps somewhat exempt from what would be normal speculations that might otherwise be fairly powerful.

For all we know, Erdnase may have allowed McKinney to have the plates (and copies of the first edition) in payment (or partial payment) for the printing. It has long seemed to me that Erdnase may have moved from the area, or otherwise disappeared, and perhaps washed his hands of the whole project.

It seems quite possible that Erdnase may have transferred the copyright to McKinney. If that is the case, then Drake might have made an arrangement with McKinney.

One of the persistent sub-mysteries in the whole Erdnase case is why the copyright apparently was not renewed. As someone pointed out earlier in this thread, one would think that Drake would have renewed the copyright, if Drake had purchased the copyright.

--Tom Sawyer

Richard Kaufman | 12/02/14 08:24 PM | link | filter

Marty Demerest posited that the copyright was not renewed because W.E. Sanders had died.

Roger M. | 12/03/14 03:25 AM | link | filter

If given the two scenarios, one of Erdnase dying and not renewing his copyright, and the other of him losing interest in the book and either selling it or just walking away from it ... I think many Erdnase history buffs would posit that he died while still holding the copyright. However, Hurt Mcdermott wondered if perhaps Erdnase had a verbal copyright sale agreement with F. Drake, one that effectively died when Drake died due to the inability of his heirs to prove the verbal agreement existed.

An interesting aside (at least to me) related to the failure to renew copyright is that Erdnase, while holding the copyright, may have left the United States and not ever come back.

Even though the Gardner/Whalley/Busby crew didn’t address the death of Erdnase (one of the many fatal flaws in their book that presumes the death of Milton was also the death of Erdnase) they did tuck away an often overlooked footnote on page 391 of TMWWWE where they note that "Oddly, first editions of The Expert seem to be more common in
Because their logic on these specifics is dependent on Milton giving books to Roterberg, who then sends them to his dealer, **Hamley's** in Britain, if you reject Milton (as many did after reading Tom Sawyers book), then you may also feel compelled to re-evaluate how so many first editions of EATCT got to Britain in the first place?

Perhaps they were carried there by the author, who could have (sooner or later) also died there.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 12/03/14 05:14 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Roger, thanks for giving credit to my book of long ago.

You make some interesting observations regarding Erdnase and Drake.

I remember that comment in *The Man Who Was Erdnase* regarding the number of copies of the first edition in Britain. I’m not sure what they meant by “Britain,” and I suppose they could have said England, or even London!

Anyway, it seems that even if one accepts the Milton Franklin Andrews hypothesis, the reasons for an abundance of copies in England still deserve a rethinking. Your theory about Erdnase possibly moving to England, I do not think I have heard before -- at least in connection with copies of the book being found there.

I would think that, at least in the early days, the market for the book would have been much greater in the US than in England, which would make it doubly interesting that there were a lot of copies of the first edition there.

On the other hand, it isn’t really clear how many copies of the first edition made it over there. The statement in *The Man Who Was Erdnase* may have been based on a relatively small quantity of data.

You mentioned Hurt McDermott, and I gather that this was an area of particular interest for him, because his discussion in *Artifice, Ruse & Erdnase* is probably the most extended discussion I have seen relating to Drake’s possible early roles. He makes quite a few bright observations regarding the Erdnase-Drake issues, though my opinions differ from his in a number of respects.

If there was an agreement between Drake and Erdnase (or McKinney), I would think that it would have been in writing. On the other hand, I doubt that such records would exist today, though Hurt seemed to attach significance to the apparent absence of records relating to any transfer.
Roger M. | 12/03/14 11:31 AM | link | filter

Tom, your book profoundly influenced me, and was the igniter of what has become a most enjoyable personal interest in Erdnase, and who he might have been.

Although death by misadventure can happen anywhere in the world, I've often wondered if Erdnase might not have met his abroad, perhaps after a lengthy period of travel. For example, WW1 took many American lives, and such a death would have been sudden, with no opportunity to make arrangements for such minor concerns (under the circumstances) as a copyright.

Erdnase effectively evaporates sometime after he transfers the plates out of his possession. Taking into account the fact that his efforts to "hide" were somewhat compromised by the fact that he clearly choose to indicate M.D. Smith on the cover of the book as the illustrator, seems to imply that he really wasn’t trying too hard with efforts to remain completely anonymous.

Perhaps the reason he so effectively disappeared from the scene was that he not only left the United States, but then had the misfortune to die abroad?

Such an occurrence would tend to support the rather complete disappearance of our Mr. Erdnase.

My thoughts above, in the complete absence of supporting evidence, are really just talking points.

Jonathan Townsend | 12/03/14 12:24 PM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote: ... first editions of The Expert seem to be more common in Britain than in the U.S."[i]...

Where and how is this claim substantiated?

What other books on card sleights were in common use in England around 1900?

Bill Mullins | 12/03/14 02:40 PM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote: Erdnase effectively evaporates sometime after he transfers the plates out of his possession. Taking into account the fact that his efforts to "hide" were somewhat compromised by the fact that he clearly choose to
imply that he really wasn't trying *too hard* with efforts to remain completely anonymous.

1. It was probably McKinney, not Erdnase, who transferred the plates. But like I said above, it was most likely with Erdnase’s direction, or with his blessing.

2. As to whether he was trying hard or not to be anonymous. I’ve speculated before that he wasn’t really trying at all to be anonymous -- it’s just an accident of history that his identity was not overtly made public when he was alive, and we assume today that he wanted to be anonymous. The only evidence that supports secrecy on his part is that he used a pseudonym, but other authors who have done so weren’t necessarily trying to stay hidden. The identities of Mark Twain and Professor Hoffmann were openly known during their lifetimes. They were prominent enough that their identities became widely known and were recorded by history, and we know who they were. Erdnase, on the other hand, wrote what at the time was a minor, obscure book that targeted a niche market. His "fan base" wasn’t large enough for literary critics to want to interview him, or for reviews to appear in the popular press, and so he never got his fifteen minutes of fame.

It may have been that if you asked the right person in the Chicago magic community around 1905 -- Roterberg or Hilliar -- or maybe someone associated with the book -- Smith, McKinney, Drake -- they would have said, "yeah, Erdnase is living out by Lincoln Park. His name is Eddie Johnson. You take the #3 streetcar and . . . ".

Go through a year of The Sphinx around that time. There are a lot of names of people associated with magic, and we don't know very much about most of them. That doesn't mean they were hiding, just that we don't know.

3. One reason that there are no records associated with the copyrights after the initial application is that maybe they weren’t worth enough for anyone to go to the trouble of renewing them. If the printing plates had more value than the copyright, then Drake (and successively Frost) wouldn’t have needed to renew the copyright in 1930 to keep exclusivity. And in fact it wasn’t until 1942, when Powner/Fleming and Mickey MacDougall came out with competing editions, that ownership of a renewed copyright would have been useful. Given that Frost had sales sufficient to keep the book in print even though others were also publishing editions shows that copyright exclusivity may have been something they didn’t need in order to make money printing and selling the book.

Roger M. | 12/03/14 03:07 PM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote:
Where and how is this claim substantiated?

They didn’t offer their evidence as part of the footnote.

With the authors all passed on now, it’s likely that unless somebody comes up with their working notes for TMWWE, we’ll never know from whence that footnote came.

One thing though, as a brilliant and impeccable researcher, Barton Whaley rarely made statements without supporting documentation or information. We just don’t know what documentation or information it was that that supported this particular footnote.

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Roger M. wrote:

Jonathan Townsend wrote:

Roger M. wrote: ... first editions of The Expert seem to be more common in Britain than in the U.S."

With the authors are all passed now, it's likely that unless somebody comes up with their working notes for TMWWE, we'll never know from whence that footnote came.

Looking through previous posts in regards to the passing of Barton Whaley, it appears that Geno Munari had a personal friendship with Mr. Whaley. I wonder if he has access to the notes?

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I am not an expert on the pre WWI printing technology, but I would assume that back then owning the plates was equivalent with controlling the copyrights because only the one with the plates can realistically reprint. Therefore I think that Erdnase transferred the copyrights with the plates.

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Roger M. | 12/03/14 05:02 PM | link | filter
1) in writing  
2) verbally  
3) implicitly, demonstrated by handing over the plates

The fourth option of course is that *no copyright was ever transferred*, either verbally, in writing, or by implication.

Any one of the above four options could easily be the correct answer, and without a doubt, one of them factually reflects what actually took place!

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 12/03/14 07:25 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Roger M. wrote:*

*Jonathan Townsend wrote:*

*Roger M. wrote: ... first editions of The Expert seem to be more common in Britain than in the U.S.*/i]...

Where and how is this claim substantiated?

They didn’t offer their evidence as part of the footnote....

Would anyone over in Britain care to comment on number of copies of the book available at the time?

I’d like to believe our community can do better than Borges' research on Uqbar with its references and footnotes.

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**Bill Mullins** | 12/03/14 09:54 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Jonathan Townsend wrote:*

Would anyone over in Britain care to comment on number of copies of the book available at the time?

That is probably an unanswerable question. It’s not like there some master list of copies of Erdnase in Great Britain ca. 1991.

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 12/03/14 10:58 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Bill Mullins wrote:*
Would anyone over in Britain care to comment on number of copies of the book available at the time?

That is probably an unanswerable question. It's not like there some master list of copies of Erdnase in Great Britain ca. 1991.

I'd like to stick with positive/evidence based history. I suspect there are publishers in Britain who carried the book, libraries which have copies... and some rough measure of the books presence could be estimated. It might be as simple as doing a few samples off ebay here and there for copies dating to 1905 or before. This can't be the first time anyone's asked to estimate how widely and how deeply a book as spread.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 12/04/14 02:29 AM | link | filter

Hi All,

I'm glad Jonathan has been fairly persistent on this topic, because I find that whole question quite interesting -- and of course it is always possible that information on the distribution of *The Expert at the Card Table* will have some significance in determining who Erdnase was. I'll make a few comments below, but these are just informal observations, which to some people may seem obvious.

When Jonathan said “at the time,” I think he meant back in the 1902-1905 period. Obviously, the footnote in the Whaley book referred to 1991 or so, but that specific period would mainly be of interest if you wanted to find out the degree of support for Whaley’s footnote. I suspect Whaley was largely relying on discussions with Jeff Busby.

Some may remember that T.A. Waters wrote a scathing review of *The Man Who Was Erdnase* for *Genii* magazine soon after the book came out, and Waters was highly critical of (among other things) the way footnotes were used in the book. I didn’t necessarily agree completely with Waters’s review, and actually I wrote an analysis of the review, which I published as *Further Thoughts in S.W. Erdnase* (which was pretty much reprinted in the enlarged edition of *S.W. Erdnase: Another View*, in 1996).

Now, I think no one has commented on the following aspect of the relative quantities of the first edition in (say) Britain and America. Specifically, there is normally a great deal of inertia in the supplies of books in various countries. If you collect books that were published in England a century ago -- they tend to be found, well, in England. I collect card-game booklets published by Charles Goodall & Son, nearly all of which were published in London or Birmingham, and I would guess that 80 percent of those I have acquired were located in England -- and we are talking about booklets published largely 100 years ago, or more.
So, what does this have to do with Erdnase? Well, obviously some quantity of the first edition made it over to England, so that is more or less one of the initial conditions. The question is, has the ratio of copies in England to copies in the US changed much in the ensuing century or more. My guess is that the answer there is “no.”

So, if you determined roughly how many first-edition copies are now in England, and compared that to the number of first-edition copies now in the United States, that would probably be a decent proxy for the relative quantities that existed in (say) the 1902-1903 era.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Bill Mullins** | 12/04/14 05:44 PM | link | filter

Tom Sawyer wrote: Some may remember that T.A. Waters wrote a scathing review of *The Man Who Was Erdnase* for *Genii* magazine soon after the book came out, and Waters was highly critical of (among other things) the way footnotes were used in the book.

For anyone who has AskAlexander access, [here](#) is T.A.'s review of *TMWWE*. (Sep 1991, p. 770)

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**Bill Mullins** | 12/04/14 06:24 PM | link | filter

Richard Hatch or John Bodine or Jason England could probably provide a better list than this, but here are some sales of first edition copies that I know of in the past decade or so. It is not particularly comprehensive.

**U.S.**
- Haversat: 11/2014
- Ebay: (copy brokered by R. Hatch a couple years ago); (Richard Kaufman’s copy from maybe a decade ago)
- Martinka: 5/2008

**U.K.**
- Bloomsbury: 3/2007
the seller was in the UK or US, but it obviously had been in the UK at one point.

Obviously some of the copies auctioned in the U.S. could have been consigned from U.K. owners.

Tom Sawyer | 12/05/14 03:53 AM | link | filter

Bill, thanks for posting that information on copies of the first edition.

There is a "first edition count" on the Everything Erdnase site which mentions 16 copies, mostly in the United States.

On December 20, 2006, Richard Hatch (I believe it was him) mentioned that he knew of about 80 copies of the first edition. That's a pretty large number of copies -- for someone to know the whereabouts of.

I have no idea of what the locations of those books were.

Oh, and by the way, I believe that if anyone gathers the available information, I think the number of copies in Britain will be found to be quite a small number when compared to those in the United States.

I hate to vivisect what Bart said, but it seems unclear what he meant by "more common." I suspect that he meant something along these lines:

a. Copies have emerged into the daylight more often (in recent memory) in Britain, but this does not mean much about the actual numbers of copies in existence.

b. In the alternative, regardless of how many have emerged, there are more books in Britain (probably more like England) on a per capita basis.

As I said, it is almost beyond my imagination, to think that there might be more copies in England than in the United States -- now or at any previous time.

And by the way, when I started being interested in magic literature (around the mid-1960s), and continuing maybe through the 1991 year that The Man Who Was Erdnase was released, I don't think I ever saw any copies of the first edition of The Expert at the Card Table for sale from the usual sellers, such as Heyl, Jenness, Vander Linden, Kohrs, or Carrandi, at least in the catalogs I saw. Of course, I was not particularly looking for the book.

I know Stephen Patrick offered a "1905" Drake copy, which I bought from him,
directed at magic collectors.

I assume that a copy of the first edition was sold during the course of the Findlay auctions.

Anyway, if one kind of asked around among collectors in 1991, one might find quite a few collectors in England with copies of the first edition -- because England has always had a relatively large number of serious, knowledgeable collectors with extensive book collections. During the short term (say a ten-year period), you might have found more copies coming up for sale in England than in the United States, though I guess in recent years the number of sales in the US has far exceeded those in England (see Bill Mullins’s post immediately above).

--Tom Sawyer

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**Tom Sawyer** | 12/10/14 07:02 AM | [link] | [filter]

Hi All,

I've been thinking about the Dalrymple-Erdnase connection that M.D. Smith mentioned. To me it isn’t completely clear what Erdnase told Smith. I assume that the most complete version is found in *The Gardner-Smith Correspondence*, but I think that does not add much (on that topic) to what was said in (for example) Whaley-Gardner-Busby and in McDermott.

Even if you are looking only for ancestors, there is still a lot of branching within a few generations. On the other hand, if you are looking at people related by marriage, the branching can quickly become extremely complicated.

If you look at two complex family trees, I would think at some point they are going to overlap.

Presumably the probabilities of a relationship depend on many factors, including name, date, and location.

In short, I am not sure how much weight can be given to remote connections.

After writing the above, I found an amusing post by Brad Templeton called “Everybody is Your 16th Cousin.” The math is largely beyond me, but the final paragraph of his post seems to confirm my main point. Here is a link:

[http://ideas.4brad.com/everybody-your-16th-cousin](http://ideas.4brad.com/everybody-your-16th-cousin)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brad_Templeton

--Tom Sawyer

**Bill Mullins** | 12/10/14 01:51 PM | link | filter

The "facts" behind the Erdnase-Dalrymple connection are sparse, at best. They all come from Gardner’s interview with Smith in 1946 (which was at least 42 years after Smith and Erdnase met). Gardner's undated notes in The Gardner-Smith Correspondence say "[Erdnase] mentioned to Smith that he was related to Dalrymple, a well known cartoonist of the day, who worked for *Puck*, a democratic weekly magazine published in N. Y." Gardner followed up on this via letter to Smith which asked for more details, but if Smith ever recalled anything further on the subject, it isn't recorded.

The statement is repeated in Gardner's essay "The Mystery of Erdnase" in Ortiz's *Annotated Erdnase*, without further details. In *The Man Who Was Erdnase*, it is suggested without justification (by Busby? Whaley?) that Erdnase was lying when he said this. (I wonder what Gardner thought of this passage.)

The statement shows up elsewhere, in essentially every article that discusses the identity question in depth. But they all are reporting a single statement from Gardner's interview notes of Smith.

**Tom Sawyer** | 12/10/14 11:26 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

As Bill notes above, the answers to the questions of who wrote what, and who is responsible for what, in *The Man Who Was Erdnase*, can be a bit unclear.

The key passage in the book (relating to authorship) may be the bottom of page viii and the top of page ix. But it leaves one scratching his or her head.

Whaley says that "most of the essential documentation" . . . "was simply given me" by Gardner and Busby. Thus Whaley kind of "plays down" his role. In keeping with that, he says the book "is really their book," which is unclear, in part because it is not always clear whether a conclusion is Whaley's or Gardner's or Busby's (or some combination)--regardless of who actually composed various parts of the book.

Whaley also indicates that Busby wrote "six technical, biographical, and bibliographical chapters."
He also wrote an introduction to (apparently) chapters 16 and 17. That introduction appears on pages 328-329.

He also wrote an "Afterword," which appeared on page 366.

Based on the foregoing, I imagine that chapters 9, 10, 11, 16, and 17 constitute five of the six chapters that Busby wrote.

Martin Gardner wrote a "Foreword," which appeared on page vii. There he refers to "Bart Whaley, encouraged and assisted by Jeff Busby"--regarding the gathering of information. I think Gardner was being gracious, but that almost suggests that Gardner's role was a slight one, which I do not think was the case.

There is also an apparent error in this sentence by Whaley, starting on page viii: "Thus my main contribution--aside from the two given me by two of them, Martin Gardner and Jeff Busby." Needless to say, that does not clarify matters.

It would not surprise me if there are other statements related to "who wrote what," here and there in the book.

Anyway, based on the foregoing, it seems possible that Busby may have written something like (very roughly speaking) 40 percent of the book.

--Tom Sawyer

Can somebody summarize the information about the printing plates of EATCT? How often have the plates been transferred and to whom? How many print runs have been printed from these plates and how many books for each print run or estimates for these numbers. What is the source of this information? Does anybody have a photo or high resolution scan of any page of the first edition? With high resolution I mean at least 1200dpi. Do we know the printing machines used by McKinney?

Hi All,

The following observations do not address every point mentioned by Chris.
It has always seemed to me that the discussions of Drake receiving the McKinney plates are based on assumptions. I don't think there is any real proof that Drake ever came into possession of the McKinney plates.

I do think the first edition of *The Expert at the Card Table* was probably printed with plates. However, as far as I know, no one really knows what happened to those plates.

The first Drake edition was apparently printed two or three years after the first edition. Drake could have made his own plates from a copy of the first edition, and he would not have needed to reset any type.

As to McKinney's printing equipment, the May 1901 issue of *The American Printer* (from the Hathi Trust Digital Library) carries an illuminating two-page advertisement for The Miehle Printing Press and Mfg. Co.

In short, the advertisement indicates that McKinney had three Miehle presses. The advertisement shows that Miehle offered at least four different presses, with a grand total of 24 different sizes. The smallest mentioned was 25 by 30, and the largest was 48 by 65. I would think McKinney had other presses as well.

--Tom Sawyer

**lybrary** | 12/15/14 08:33 AM | [link](#) | filter

Tom, thanks for the info. If Drake made his own plates by essentially copying the book photographically on zinc plates, as was usually the process used for illustrations, then I would assume this could be identified by a careful comparison of a printed copy of each print run. That is part of the reason I would like to get a photo or a high resolution scan of the first edition.

I can also say that moving print plates, which at that time were made from lead is logistically almost impossible, because they are very heavy, need two or more people to carry one plate. Printers use special mechanical tables to lift print plates into printing machines. Moving them from one printing house to another is a logistical nightmare. It is therefore more likely that Drake made new plates. But this I think could be determined by careful study of print copies as mentioned above.

**Bill Mullins** | 12/15/14 01:37 PM | [link](#) | filter

Chris -- you are probably aware of these, but there is a good scan of Houdini's copy of the 1st Drake HB edition [here](#).
and 1932 (from inscription on an inner leaf).

The 1984 edition of Vernon's *Revelations* has a scan of a first edition, but it shouldn't be used for comparison because it was retouched to clean up blemishes. Likewise the Centennial Edition hardback was retouched.

I've seen it written several times that Mickey MacDougal's *Card Mastery* includes a facsimile first edition of Erdnase. But if you look at it, it is clear that the title page reproduced comes from a Drake edition.

The 1940s Fleming Hardbound edition has larger pages than the original but was photographically reproduced "from an early copy of the first edition, and thus avoids many defects (such as broken type-faces) which have marred recent printings of the book." (quote from Paul Fleming book reviews)

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**Brad Jeffers** | 12/15/14 04:10 PM | [link]  | [filter]

*lybrary wrote:* I can also say that moving print plates, which at that time were made from lead is logistically almost impossible, because they are very heavy, need two or more people to carry one plate. Moving them from one printing house to another is a logistical nightmare.

Two or more people to carry one plate!? I don't think so. Individual lead plates for a book the size of EATCT would resemble **THES**, and probably weigh about 2 pounds each.

The entire set of plates for the book might weigh in at about 400 pounds, but moving them from one house to another would not be difficult at all. Certainly not a logistical nightmare.

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**Roger M.** | 12/15/14 04:59 PM | [link]  | [filter]

*lybrary wrote:* I can also say that moving print plates, which at that time were made from lead is logistically almost impossible......

Good grief Chris, this isn't at all accurate.

This kind of guessing, presented as "fact" (*"I can also say"*) doesn't help anybody.

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**lybrary** | 12/16/14 04:28 AM | [link]  | [filter]
you typeset a page? Printed a book?

According to this expert it is highly unlikely that each page was printed separately. Most likely one plate held multiple pages, likely 8 or 16. Therefore print plates are big and heavy. Moving such plates is a nightmare. Is it impossible? No. Is it unlikely? Yes. It is much more likely that Drake made his own new plates. Unless we have any further information it is of course all speculation, but I rather go with the opinion of a print technology expert than some of the uninformed remarks offered here.

Hi All,

Well, I would like to make a few more comments in this post, relating to the matters recently discussed. I wrote almost all of this post before seeing Chris’s latest post, but I thought I would go ahead and post it anyway, because it sort of fleshes things out a little.

I formerly owned a hand-press, and set a certain amount of type by hand, arduously, and printed a few miniature magic-related booklets -- but honestly I'm not sure that helped much in discussing these issues.

I am not trying to support or oppose any of the recent comments -- just stating a few things. One of the problems is that printing methods have evolved over time, and have always been subject to variation, and it is difficult to make statements that are true in all places at all times.

Back in that era (the turn of the century, circa 1900), a printing forme with set type, for printing without electrotype or other plates, could be extremely heavy. An article by Vernon Possnett in *The British Printer* for January-February 1901 alludes to formes that would be difficult for two men to lift, and makes suggestions as to the preferred method for removing the form from the table.

Based on estimates discussed below, I could see that such a forme (with say 16 pages of type) for *The Expert at the Card Table* might easily weigh around 200 pounds, especially when one includes the chase and probably other hardware.

And if then there would be maybe a dozen of these, with a total weight of perhaps well over a ton. My impression is that those are not the kind of thing that you would want to move any noticeable distance.

But under usual printing terminology, it would not be best to refer to those formes as...
So, that’s if *The Expert at the Card Table* were printed directly from set type, which (or so it seems) nobody thinks it was. Instead, the consensus appears to be that it was printed from plates, presumably stereotype plates or electrotype plates.

The main reason I think the book was printed from plates is that some of the damage to the type that is evident in early printings appears to me to be consistent with damage to molds created during the platemaking process. John Bodine sent me images of the backs of the title pages on several copies of the first edition, and they all exhibited the same damage.

A book that is often cited regarding nineteenth-century printing methods is *The Harper Establishment*, by Jacob Abbott (1855), a reprint of which is on the Hathi Trust site. Some factors:

Abbott intimates that a plate weighed roughly one-fifth the weight of the set type, and that plates might be about $3/16$ of an inch thick. That thickness is about one-fifth the height of type, so that estimate makes sense.

According to what Abbott says, the norm for Harper was one plate per page.

Set type would be about 0.9186 inches in height.

Lead weighs about 708 pounds per cubic foot. Type metal (an alloy of lead and other metals) would be somewhat less.

After spending quite a bit of time working with numbers, my estimate of the weight of a plate plus corresponding wood block in the case of *The Expert at the Card Table* is something like 2.2 pounds, actually probably somewhat less. That is in very close agreement with the estimate that Brad gives above. This assumes one page per plate. There are lots of variables, though.

Still, even if you figure a total of 400 pounds, and 205 or so plates -- that’s pretty heavy and would take up a moderate amount of space, unless, for example, as in cases mentioned by Abbott, the plates were removed from the blocks for storage.

But -- given the McKinney bankruptcy, and S.W. Erdnase’s possible disappearance soon after the book was printed, and the fact that it was years before Drake printed his own first printing, it seems simpler to assume that the plates, if any existed, were separated from the blocks and melted down, or disposed of in some way. This is somewhat related to the weight of the plates, but it doesn’t matter much whether we are talking a ton, or 400 pounds.

On the other hand, it still seems quite possible to me that the first edition was not...
type standing seems remote, since the absence of plates could well have been predicated on the assumption that future printings would not be needed.

Assuming one plate per page, with a type-height of 0.9186 inches, the blocks would make a conceptual stack nearly 16 feet tall—or eight stacks two feet tall.

Eight stacks, two feet tall, weighing a total of 400 pounds . . . definitely not impossible to move, but, I would think, extremely inconvenient.

I just quickly looked at a 1946 Powner copy of the book. It is very hard to tell, but it looks as though there are six gatherings, which would mean an average of a little more than 34 pages per gathering. That borders on impossible (for reasons that are a little beyond the scope of this post), so let’s assume 32 pages per signature. That would mean 16 pages per forme. Based on Abbott, the usual practice would be to lock the 16 (or however many) blocks into place in the forme (or perhaps more precisely, into the chase, creating the forme). Then they could be released therefrom after printing.

Again, I’m not trying to argue with anyone -- just stating a few of my perceptions.

--Tom Sawyer

Bill Mullins | 12/16/14 10:01 AM | link | filter

Tom Sawyer wrote: But -- given the McKinney bankruptcy, and S.W. Erdnase’s possible disappearance soon after the book was printed, and the fact that it was years before Drake printed his own first printing, it seems simpler to assume that the plates, if any existed, were separated from the blocks and melted down, or disposed of in some way.

McKinney went bankrupt around Dec 1902/Jan 1903. Drake was advertising 1st edition copies in 1903.

One explanation is that as part of the original printing business arrangements, Erdnase transferred copyright to McKinney (remember, McKinney did the paperwork for the copyright). When McKinney went bankrupt, Drake acquired remaining 1st edition stock, copyright, and plates, perhaps purchased at a bankruptcy auction. It took a couple of years for the existing stock to sell out, and Drake issued their own editions starting in 1905. When the copyright expired Drake didn’t renew, but didn’t really need to since they owned the plates and thus had a de facto exclusivity on the book. It wasn’t until 1942 when both Fleming/Powner and Mickey MacDougall decided the market would bear new improved editions that owning a renewed copyright would have been any use to Drake.
lybrary wrote: Unless we have any further information It is of course all speculation,...

Excellent point.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 12/16/14 02:35 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Bill,

Well, obviously Drake may have acquired first-edition copies via the bankruptcy.

But the main relevant thing we "know" is that Drake was selling copies of the first edition sooner or later. We don’t really know how or exactly when he obtained those copies.

Once the printing of the book was completed (no later than sometime in March 1902), there would be almost no reason for McKinney to keep the plates around. The best reason for that would be that he agreed to keep them until Erdnase figured out whether the book was selling well -- to allow an easy reprint. I think everyone agrees that it was not a particularly great seller at the time, at least at the $2.00 price stated on the first-edition title page.

I don’t think McKinney would have wanted to keep the set type. He might not mind too much about hanging on to the plates (if there were plates) for a while, but I suspect that to him the plates were valueless, so it is not as though there are good arguments (that I know of) that McKinney kept the plates as collateral, or as partial payment for the printing job.

The more I think about it, the more I wonder whether plates were even used for the first edition.

I realize that it has been said that McKinney sold copies of the book, but the evidence of that (based on a notation in a copy at the Library of Congress, as discussed or mentioned many times in this thread), seems kinda thin to me, and the exact meaning of the notation seems unclear to me. Either way, I don’t think that has much impact on what I am saying above.

Boiled down, there is a lot of hoop-jumping that needs to be done before one can say persuasively that Drake probably came into the possession of the plates. We don’t know that happened, and there does not appear to be much reason to believe that it happened.

Of course, it is always possible that Erdnase himself arranged for the plates to be
Was Erdnase. (And yes, it appears that Chapter 4 was another chapter written by Jeff - see page 52 of the book.) I'm not discussing that statement in this post, but that thesis has its own problems.

--Tom Sawyer

Richard Kaufman | 12/16/14 04:07 PM | link | filter

The only thing I can add to this discussion of the printing plates, is that when I licensed the right to reprint Greater Magic from the Jones family, one of Carl Jones's sons (either Winton or Waring) told me about the day they carried all the lead printing plates from Greater Magic out to the curb for the garbage man to haul away.

He said the plates were enormously heavy and took up a great deal of space (which is why they were pitching them). Now, Greater Magic was over 1,000 pages, a much larger book than Expert at the Card Table.

Lybrary | 12/16/14 05:44 PM | link | filter

More comments from the print expert who I am consulting with, which echoes some of what has been mentioned above. Regardless of if you agree with print plates being heavy or not, they took up storage space. Typically printers did not keep them around unless there was a very good possibility for a reprint. It is not economical to keep the plates of hundreds of books. I think it highly unlikely that McKinney would keep the plates, if he made plates at all, for a self-published book of a first time author.

I personally think the most likely scenario is that Drake acquired unsold but already printed copies and not the plates. Perhaps these copies where not yet bound, just printed sheets. Later when Drake sold out he produced his own plates via a photographic process from a print copy. Preliminary analysis of two different Drake copies suggest this. At this point I don't want to go into the details of why the expert I have brought in to look at this believes this is the case. We would like to confirm this with better scans, photos, or ideally originals. But from the digital versions available to us the tell tale signs are there.

Jonathan Townsend | 12/16/14 07:46 PM | link | filter

The idea of having printed yet unbound pages used later on is intriguing. Are we at a point where it can be explored?

Is there a catalog of page/line/item defect (inking, damaged letter/line...) for the book so folks can explore what changes over the years/editions? What's the variance of
Jon, the idea expressed in your second paragraph is a good idea, but I don't think anyone has attempted it. And I doubt whether it will ever happen, for many reasons, including the scarcity of a lot of the printings, their fragility, and the time-consuming nature of the task.

Maybe the enquiry could be limited to certain specified pages in a "control volume" -- perhaps the digitized early edition on the Library of Congress site referred to by Bill Mullins above. Maybe the focus could be on a half-dozen pages that are replete with damage to the type, and a half dozen that seem free of problems. People might be willing to describe those pages in copies they own, vis-à-vis the copy on the Library of Congress site.

--Tom Sawyer

It used to be typical for printers to run a lot of pages because it was much cheaper to print larger runs than going back later to reprint, however they only bound a portion of the printing.

Even when I started publishing back in the 1970s, Lou Tannen's was still publishing in this manner, by binding only a portion of the printed books. Later, if demand was great enough, they would bind more.

Hi All,

If Drake received unbound copies, I wonder what he is supposed to have done with them. I suppose the implication of this is that he bound the copies in a "Drake" binding. If he did that, then I suppose it would be reasonable to assume that he removed the title pages and replaced them with new ones. Collectors call such replacement title pages "cancels."

I don't suppose you see cancels too often in magic books, but I do have at least one book translated by Professor Hoffmann in which the title page is a cancel.

I suppose, too, that Drake would have trimmed the books so that they would become the typical smaller size of the Drake editions of *The Expert at the Card Table*. 
though that doesn't necessarily prove anything, since there might have been only a small number.

Personally, though, I doubt that Drake did this. I equally doubt that Drake bound copies with the original title page, in the original format.

He could have sent them back to the original binder, but you would not necessarily be able to distinguish them from the original bound copies.

All in all, I think this is the type of thing you would want more solid proof of -- otherwise for most purposes you would probably assume that Drake just received regular copies (under somewhat unknown circumstances).

Needless to say, if such a copy ever turns up in okay condition -- it would be a highly desirable item.

Those interested in cancels will find a lot of posts dealing with the topic on David Levy's blog about Edmond Hoyle. It's not magic, but it's somewhat related, I suppose.

Here is a link to David's posts that deal with cancels: http://edmondhoyle.blogspot.com/search?q=cancel

--Tom Sawyer

Hi All,

In an earlier post, I used "32 pages" as the semi-conjectural number of pages in a typical signature or gathering in a certain Powner edition of The Expert at the Card Table.

I just checked my "1905" Drake printing. The first signature is 32 pages, and it includes a blank leaf at the front, and then pages 1 through 30 of the text. (Not all of those pages are numbered. For instance, the title page is not numbered.) But anyway, I can see the thread between page 14 and page 15, so that fits.

Not all the signatures in the book are that length, but it looks as though most of them are.

--Tom Sawyer
I just posted this question as a comment on Tom’s blog, but I’ll ask here as well.

The true 1st edition is larger than the 1st Drake HB edition -- each page is nearly an inch taller and an inch wider.

Is that consistent with the Drake editions being printed from the same plates as the 1st edition?

lybrary | 12/21/14 04:46 AM | link | filter

Bill, that is a very interesting observation. I am assuming that the size difference is only in the margins. Meaning the white borders are larger but the text blocks have identical size. Can you confirm this?

It does suggest that Drake did not simply acquire already bound books. Either he acquired loose printed sheets that he had to bind and trim himself and thus the difference in size, because he trimmed off more than McKinney. Or he did his own printing either with the original McKinney plates, which I find unlikely, or his own new plates. But looking at the timeline, I think it is much more likely that Drake acquired loose printed sheets which he bound and trimmed himself.

hugmagic | 12/21/14 12:10 PM | link | filter

I will add to the thought that I doubt if it was the original plates that were used. When I was in college, I took some graphic courses. It was near the near the end of the era of lead set type. We had a linotype machine which set the type for longer pieces of work, like newspapers, magazines, or books. We also had a ludlow (sp) machine that set headlines and small works of printed type. When we had set the type, it was locked in a chase and used to print what ever we need on a planeten or letterpress printing press. Then the type was taken out out and remelted to be reused. This was important as the machines used molds to make a fresh set of type so it was crisp for the next job. Very, very seldom was type stored for later use. It would have very expensive to have all the chases (to hold the type) and space and weight of all the lead. Carl Jones probably thought at the point he saved his type, it would be cheaper than resetting such a large work. As for the scrapping of the lead, lead was so cheap then it was very seldom recycled. So it very understandable that they just scrapped it all.

As a side note when I worked in the newspaper business, we used to take some of lead pigs that were laying around and put them in our cars to add weight to drive in the snow. It was great lead with animony in it. I used it for many years in my business to make lead poured darts and such.

Richard
lybrary wrote: Bill, that is a very interesting observation. I am assuming that the size difference is only in the margins. Meaning the white borders are larger but the text blocks have identical size. Can you confirm this?

I cannot. I hope that someone who owns both a true first and a Drake HB can make the comparison. The question I think is most relevant to the issue is "Do the blocks of text on any given page measure the same height and width on both a true 1st and a Drake HB?" If they don't, that is pretty compelling evidence that Drake didn’t use McKinney's plates.

It does suggest that Drake did not simply acquire already bound books.

??? We know that Drake did acquire already bound books; he was selling 1st editions in 1903.

John Bodine | 12/22/14 12:09 AM | link | filter

The blocks of text match in a first edition and the 4 different 1905 Drake copies I have.

Block: 3.5" x 5.75"

I don't have a good set of calipers so the next numbers are approximate, all measurements taken from page 31 and include the section text.

First edition
Top margin: .75"
Bottom: 1.25"
Inside: .75"
Outside: 1"
Paper size: 5.25" x 7.75" (or just slightly shorter)

Drake, 1905 HB, Allied printing bug, eagle with shield on title page
Top margin: >0.375"
Bottom: <0.5"
Inside: <0.5"
Outside: 0.5"
Paper size: 4.375" x 6.625"

Bill Mullins | 12/22/14 12:17 AM | link | filter

Thanks very much, John, for real data. I was hoping you or Jason England or someone else with access to the appropriate copies would step in here.
photocopy of a 1st edition equivalent page, to look for discrepancies?

Since the inner ("gutter") margins differ on 1st and 1905 Drake editions, I think we can assume that if Drake did pick up plates from McKinney, they were single-page plates, and not full 4x4 page plates that would be used to print the sheets that are folded and trimmed to make signatures. (As Tom Sawyer is currently posting on his blog.)

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**lybrary** | 12/22/14 04:25 AM | link | filter

Bill, I think Tom and myself are arguing that Drake made his own new plates. At least that is what I believe is the most likely scenario.

John, as Bill suggested, a copy of the same page from different editions would be highly interesting. However better than a paper copy would be a high resolution scan or photo, because it is much easier to compare and overlay digital images than paper copies.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 12/22/14 05:22 AM | link | filter

Chris, as you indicated, I think it is likely that Drake made his own plates and never received any plates from McKinney or Erdnase.

Additionally, I think it is fairly well established that Drake did acquire, and sell, copies of the first edition that were printed by McKinney.

As far as I know, the evidence of Drake selling copies of the first edition consists of advertisements for the book showing a (somewhat primitive) image of the cover of the first edition. I have seen a date of 1903 mentioned by a number of people in this connection, but I do not know where that date came from.

I think it is unknown how Drake obtained the first-edition copies, and from whom, and at what price, and exactly when.

--Tom Sawyer

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**John Bodine** | 12/22/14 05:50 PM | link | filter

I don't think I've ever seen anyone identify the font used in the first edition, perhaps identifying the font could help us understand what type of printing process was originally used.

I'm also not familiar with the printing processes at the time but in looking at the drake
I don't know enough about the process in 1905 to duplicate text from a printed piece of paper and reproduce it with near perfection.

It should be noted that the title page on the first drake versions included the addition of the Drake mark, first a coat of arms and later an eagle behind a shield. There was also a printing bug on the 1905 versions, the printing bug changes with time and eventually is removed.

I don't have a scanner and using my phone doesn't produce identical pictures, if anyone has a suggestion for ways I can scan a page without opening the book fully (they are fragile) I'd be happy to try to capture some pages and share.

John Bodine

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lybrary | 12/22/14 06:35 PM | link | filter

John, the easiest way to digitize a page or a few pages without a dedicated scanner and not damage the book is the following. Put the book on a table. Open it only 90 degrees so that one page is parallel to the table and the adjacent page is vertical. Either you have a second person helping you or you create a little rig that keeps the book open that way. Then take a digital camera and make a photo of the page that is parallel to the table. A tripod or some other way to keep the camera steady and parallel to the table is helpful. Good lighting conditions are important, too.

Here is a quick description how facsimile reprints were usually done back then. It is the same process that was used to create plates for the illustrations. The first step is to make a photo of the illustration, or entire printed page for that matter. This photo was then transferred to a polished zinc plate using an exposure and etching process. So essentially the zinc plate was covered in a photosensitive coating. Using the photo the coating was exposed, then developed and then etched. The end result was that everything that was black in the illustration or printed page was not etched and thus sticking out from the zinc plate. One could then use these zinc plates to print. That is why the Drake reprints look very similar to the first edition. It is a photographic replication process that captures pretty much all of the fine details. To an untrained eye there is very little difference to see. However, an expert could see systematic differences, and that is what I am trying to facilitate. I have access to a recognized print technology expert, perhaps one of a handful of top experts in the world who could shed some light on these questions.

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Bill Mullins | 12/22/14 07:01 PM | link | filter

The typeface used in 1st editions looks very much like Bookman Old Style. I think
simply having not identified the right foundry. For example, the numerals in EATCT don’t look like contemporary Bookman Old Style examples I’ve seen. (of course, it may be that the original typesetter used a different typeface for the numbers). The typeface goes back to the mid-1800s and was common enough by 1902 that any printer would have had access to it. I don’t think its use would point to any particular printing or plate-making process.

Photographic technology in 1902 was sufficiently advanced that I think a plate could have been generated by photographing pages from the original, and using a photo chemical process to etch a new plate. But if that were done, it wouldn't surprise me if the size were slightly off -- I don't know how much trouble it would have been to match the size exactly, as John describes.

The way that research libraries scan fragile books is with a dedicated book scanner, in which the pages and spine aren’t stressed. Any reasonably sized university library should have one. If you contact the digital collections department of the closest one to you and explain what you want, they might be willing to scan a few example pages from different editions so you could compare them.

[note: Chris posted while I was writing this, sorry if we duplicate]

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**Peter B** | 12/23/14 03:21 PM | link | filter

Hi

On a slightly different tack, does anyone know if Dai Vernon (who was arguably the premier student of Erdnase) ever expressed an opinion as to the real identity of the EATCT? After all, Vernon was no slouch in searching out other card manipulators.

Regards

Peter

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**Roger M.** | 12/23/14 04:15 PM | link | filter

Vernon on Erdnase:

"I can't tell you who he is, but I can tell you who he isn't"

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**Marty Demarest** | 12/24/14 06:46 PM | link | filter

Peter, that is a great question, and directly in keeping with the thinking David Ben
notes that an intimate knowledge of Erdnase's moves might provide insight into the man who created them. Unfortunately, after making that useful observation, David Ben begins with "I" and doesn't venture beyond that perspective.

However, I’ve discussed Vernon’s thoughts with quite a few magicians who met Vernon and talked Erdnase with him. Although many of those conversations are private (not to mention possible material for future work), I can summarize my findings:

Vernon thought:
--Erdnase was a card cheat.
--Erdnase was well educated.
--Erdnase was socially sophisticated.

I've also heard that Vernon thought other, even contradictory, things--those are just the emergent trends I've noted. But it would be fascinating to hear details from anyone who personally discussed Erdnase's identity with Vernon.

Tom Sawyer | 12/29/14 01:58 AM | link | filter

Dai Vernon discusses *The Expert at the Card Table* at some length in his column in the August 1970 issue of *Genii*, but to me that column makes it pretty clear that he did not have much idea of who the author might have been. It is not as though he had narrowed it down to two or three people, or anything along those lines.

Roger M.’s quotation from Vernon was also quoted by David Ben in the article that Marty mentions, but I’m not sure where that quotation originated.

Tom Sawyer | 12/31/14 07:41 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

By the way, the topic of Dai Vernon and the extent of his role in the search for Erdnase has been discussed elsewhere in this thread. David Alexander expressed his view that Vernon took little, if any, active part in investigating Erdnase's identity (though at the time he said that, he apparently was not thinking about Vernon's column in the August 1970 *Genii*). Richard Hatch and Bill Mullins also addressed Vernon's role in some detail.

From what has been said on this thread, it looks as though 1933 or thereabouts may be the main time Vernon might have contacted Drake. Frederick J. Drake died in 1912, so it seems likely that the "Mr. Drake" (Vernon's term in his column) whom Vernon
Yet Vernon in his column indicated that he contacted "the old man," while Stafford would have been a couple of years or so younger than Vernon.

--Tom Sawyer

Marty Demarest | 01/02/15 11:05 AM | link | filter

The past few months of comments on this forum have gone in a fascinating direction--and it's great to see some new voices becoming active. I'm only now catching up. It is heartening to see attention being paid to questions inherent in the printing of The Expert, since that is our primary source of evidence.

--Chris makes a good common-sense case for why it is unlikely that formes of set type were used or preserved. However, I'm inclined disagree with him. I've walked through sub-basements and old barns that have stacks of formes dating ca. 1900. Many of them have been preserved, for various reason (legal wrangles and simple inertia being chief among them). There is not only a chance that The Expert was produced with set type, but that the formes used in that process were preserved, and maybe even survive somewhere today.

--I do, however, think that Chris's reasoning is sound. At some point--perhaps during the first edition--it is very likely that The Expert was transferred to another form of printing. One clue to that timeline might be to look at changes to the text, such as the letter 'y' on page 111, line 1 (first edition, Chs&Wdr edition). That seems to be a modification added via a different printing process. John Bodine or Jason England might be able to help us learn when that change first appeared, and it will at least give us a last-possible date for the use of (the possibly original) physical plates or formes.

--In general, however, I agree with Tom and Chris about the book likely being printed with plates instead of set type. Damage suggests that plates were made for the first printing. See page 29 (first edition, Chs&Wdr edition), where damage crosses over from line to line in the text, which is consistent with plates, but would be unlikely with set type.

--I think the typeface used was from the Caslon family.

--The spacing of various lines suggests that the text was not set by linotype. Note the differences in spacing before and after parentheses on pages 191-193 (first edition Chs&Wdr edition) and the rest of the book. While these differences can be explained by adjustments to the linotype machine, it is much more likely that they were adjusted by hand, with the typesetter making changes as needed. (See particularly the bottom
--Chris's thinking that the physical plates were, in effect, proof of copyright, is not a bad hypothesis. (I happen to agree with it--especially considering that the registration of copyright with the Library of Congress was arguably fraudulent.) However, it is important to note that we have no evidence of the copyright being formally transferred in any way. And if the copyright was indeed legally transferred (say, to Drake), it didn’t seem to prompt the owner to either renew the copyright of *The Expert* or stop theft of the text, which was already being plagiarized by 1905 in Ritter’s *treatise*.

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**Bill Mullins** | 01/03/15 12:16 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Marty Demarest* wrote: The past few months of comments on this forum have gone in a fascinating direction--and it’s great to see some new voices becoming active.

Concur.

This thread has cycles, with periods of fascinating posts and periods of not much going on (and occasionally, but not often, periods of posts that don’t add much). I’ve become friends with some pretty smart people through participating in this thread. I’ve had people walk up at magic events and see my name tag and say they know me from the Erdnase thread on the Genii Forum, and that’s nice.

3000 posts, and 1.3 million views, and this conversation hasn’t petered out yet. New people still jump in, and they often have something interesting to add. It’s always good to click the “Today’s Active Topics” link at the top of the page, and see that ERDNASE has a new post.

One clue to that timeline might be to look at changes to the text, such as the letter ‘y’ on page 111, line 1 (first edition, Chs&Wdr edition).

The y in "company" is pretty clean in early editions (Houdini’s 1905 scanned copy at the Library of Congress) but by the time of the late Powner editions it is deformed. Others have noted evolving changes in the heart-shaped blob on the back of the hand in Fig. 69.

--In general, however, I agree with Tom and Chris about the book likely being printed with plates instead of set type. Damage suggests that plates were made for the first printing. See page 29 (first edition, Chs&Wdr edition), where damage crosses over from line to line in the text, which is consistent with plates, but would be unlikely with set type.

By saying "first edition, Chs&Wdr edition", are you suggesting that we compare the two? I don’t have a 1st, but in all the early editions I’ve seen p. 29 has some damage, and you’ve obviously cleaned it up (or re-typeset it) for the C&W. Also, re p. 90, was
clamped into a forme, it wouldn't necessarily be inconsistent with pages built up character by character, would it?

--I think the typeface used was from the Caslon family.

My comment on Bookman Old Style was based on maybe a couple of hour's worth of looking a few years ago, but Caslon certainly looks possible as well. Now I'll need to do some detailed digging into type specimens and compare.

And if the copyright was indeed legally transferred (say, to Drake), it didn't seem to prompt the owner to either renew the copyright of The Expert or stop theft of the text, which was already being plagiarized by 1905 in Ritter's treatise.

Like much appropriation in magic today, dealing with Ritter's theft may have been more trouble than it was worth. Combined Treatise likely had a print run smaller than Expert's 1st edition (at least, fewer copies seem to have survived). And while Erdnase seemed to be aware of the other contemporary relevant literature, by the time Ritter's book was released in 1905, it would have been Drake's problem to solve, and I doubt that he (or his staff) would have been so likely to have acquired a copy of Combined Treatise and discover the plagiarism. They may have never known it happened.

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Marty Demarest | 01/03/15 01:46 PM | link | filter

By saying "first edition, Chs&Wdr edition", are you suggesting that we compare the two? I don't have a 1st, but in all the early editions I've seen p. 29 has some damage, and you've obviously cleaned it up (or re-typeset it) for the C&W. Also, re: p. 29, yes the damage is consistent with plates, but depending how tightly individual letters are clamped into a forme, it wouldn't necessarily be inconsistent with pages built up character by character, would it?

Bill, quite right, my mistake re. p. 29 in the Chs&Wdr edition. We cleaned it up.

As for the damage in the first edition, I suspect you are technically correct in that it might be possible for the damage to have transferred across various pieces of type--especially if that damage occurred during printing instead of typesetting. But I have had that page examined by two specialists at the International Printing Museum, and they both felt certain that the damage was caused by a plate damaged in the manufacture process. Other pages exhibit similar problems--things that look like air bubbles or "spatter" artifacts that are much more consistent with plate damage than
I suppose that susceptibility to damage depends to a large extent on the materials involved. For example, it's my understanding that electrotype molds would be softer than stereotype molds, since the latter involve the casting of molten metal, and the former do not. Also, one might expect foundry type to be harder than machine-set type. These are just generalizations, to which there are probably exceptions, but I think those may be okay rules of thumb. This line of reasoning seems to support the "plate" idea that Marty has just stated.

--Tom Sawyer

Hi All,

In a different thread, Bill Mullins made mention of an eBay auction relating to a blue-cloth version of The Expert at the Card Table, with "Expert at the Card Table" stamped in black (in script) on the front cover, published by Drake.

The final price was $488. There were 7 bidders and a total of 17 bids. If I am reading the results correctly, the top three bidders were new to the auction during the final two minutes of the auction. The three placed a total of 6 bids during that period, and the bid amounts went from $260 to the $488 during that period.

In this post, I thought I might state a few reflections regarding that book.

A friend alerted me to that auction long before it ended. (I am not super-obsessive about checking eBay for Erdnase-related items.)

I thought it was an pretty nice item. Nonetheless, I was not interested in bidding on it. Among those reasons were the fact that I believed it was not dated 1905 (or at all, for that matter) on the title page. I believe the listing made no mention of any title-page date, but instead focussed on the copyright date of 1902.

Additionally, the verso of the title page said "Congress," and not "Canada," so that printing was obviously no earlier than the date of that change, and for all I know it could have been substantially later.

I don't think the eBay listing mentioned anything about the number of pages or the addresses of advertisements.
Nonetheless, the book listed is a fairly unusual item. I suspect that the book might have gone for more if it had been dated 1905 on the title page. That would at least make it extremely early for a Drake printing. Advertising addresses could probably tell one even more, but I actually doubt whether many collectors would concern themselves with that if the 1905 date were present. (There were a number of different Drake printings with the 1905 date. This can be verified by information on the Everything Erdnase website, where at least two different Drake addresses are shown for 1905 Drake printings.)

--Tom Sawyer

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**Rick Ruhl** | 01/08/15 08:06 PM | link | filter

Tom

Could it have been one of these two?

1905 Drake HB, Blue Pictorial Cloth
~1918 Drake HB, embossed blue cloth

Maybe 1918?

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**John Bodine** | 01/08/15 08:07 PM | link | filter

The variant that just sold on eBay was in all likelihood c1918 with 178 pages.

There were a number of HB variants with the script title, some dated 1905 with 205 pages and others later with 178 pages.

I know of the following:
1905 - embossed plum cloth
1905 - embossed red cloth (may be the same as plum, I've never seen to verify the difference)
1905 - embossed green cloth

c1918 - embossed light blue cloth
c1918 - embossed periwinkle blue cloth

In addition to the numerous cloth covers with an embossed script title, there were many versions of the pictorial cover but I have only ever seen these with a 1905 date. Light green pictorial (2 different versions, ads change but address is still 211-213 East
Blue pictorial
Light tan pictorial
Dark green pictorial

John Bodine

**John Bodine** | 01/08/15 08:10 PM | link | filter

Rick, it is probably the c1918 with periwinkle blue boards. The light blue is certainly a different shade but it’s hard to tell just looking at an uploaded picture.

I’ll let you know.

**Tom Sawyer** | 01/09/15 03:34 AM | link | filter

Hi All,

Another great post by John that is relevant here is this one: Link.

On Google Books is a Drake copy of *The Expert at the Card Table* with an address of 179 N. Michigan Avenue on the back cover, 178 pages. The book indicates that it was a "Punctuality Prize" awarded in 1932. Drake used that address from 1927 or 1928 (according to fragmentary but repeated information I have seen on Google Books) and used that address until at least early 1938 (based on an advertisement in the June 1938 issue of *Popular Mechanics*, also findable on Google Books). That copy says "Congress" on the verso of the title page.

Exactly (or even approximately) when the change from "Canada" to "Congress" took place, I don’t personally know (though from the copy mentioned, it was obviously 1932 or earlier). Also, off hand I do not know how one would closely date a black-script copy that has no date on the title page and no advertisements and no street address--but I’m not sure if any copies fit that description, though I expect that some do.

--Tom Sawyer

**Brad Jeffers** | 01/09/15 04:41 PM | link | filter

John Bodine wrote: The variant that just sold on eBay was in all likelihood c1918 with 178 pages.

I contacted the seller to ask the number of pages, unfortunately they had already shipped the book and could not give me an answer.
They were hoping to get $10 for it!

**John Bodine** | 01/09/15 05:01 PM | link | filter

I am only aware of 2 different black script variants, both blue. The black script I know of have 178 pages and no advertisements and don't include any date at the front of the book. The estimate of the printing year is based on when Drake dropped down to 178 pages and the first 178 page versions were dated based on the address or advertisements (Dick Hatch provided that approximate year)

I've included below a link to a picture of the 2 I refer to.

[http://www.pinterest.com/pin/130182245454930365/?od=03foZy8j6n4Meod7fKTUqO%2BvNQJsomJ5SwL5VefyWTk7RETuphEOR%2FyCfU96keQW3Bzz8ci8tRJo%0AHHxocHwto5pooNsQYiYnrWYg5EHoLS69WMtp7cvgOlvSE7Uogc9lt5OtLXWRE%2FMtQ4GCzxxplNIm%0A6%2Fp%2FmrcmCNH2dajnYob8qyXLyVTkw3aPdcz9b3q%2FHgN8wezpM9brp28CjefFoA%3D%3D%0Auser_id=am09obj5ib2RpbmVAZ2FoZW5ldC5jb20%3D%0A&conversation=4745564955823870857&invite_code=6dc6868467e41ca5b417ce0e78e0e45&utm_campaign=msgpin&e_t=ea5c077eeae14c25962b740dad8e8301&utm_content=130182245454930365&utm_source=3t&e_t_s=cta&utm_medium=2000](http://www.pinterest.com/pin/130182245454930365/?od=03foZy8j6n4Meod7fKTUqO%2BvNQJsomJ5SwL5VefyWTk7RETuphEOR%2FyCfU96keQW3Bzz8ci8tRJo%0AHHxocHwto5pooNsQYiYnrWYg5EHoLS69WMtp7cvgOlvSE7Uogc9lt5OtLXWRE%2FMtQ4GCzxxplNIm%0A6%2Fp%2FmrcmCNH2dajnYob8qyXLyVTkw3aPdcz9b3q%2FHgN8wezpM9brp28CjefFoA%3D%3D%0Auser_id=am09obj5ib2RpbmVAZ2FoZW5ldC5jb20%3D%0A&conversation=4745564955823870857&invite_code=6dc6868467e41ca5b417ce0e78e0e45&utm_campaign=msgpin&e_t=ea5c077eeae14c25962b740dad8e8301&utm_content=130182245454930365&utm_source=3t&e_t_s=cta&utm_medium=2000)

The 1905 variants that are very similar have a gilt script title and the full 205 pages.

Edited: my 1905 Drake pb (yellow cover) has 7 signatures, dropping to 178 pages would require resetting the length and number of signatures and apparently wasn't as simple as dropping a signature.

Signature page counts, includes blank page and advertising pages.

1-32
33-65
65-96
97-128
129-160
161-192
193-224

@Brad - it almost certainly has 178 pages.

**Tom Sawyer** | 01/09/15 07:19 PM | link | filter
I can definitely say that the first signature ends with page 30, but it has 32 pages, because the first leaf in the book is blank.

I can also say definitely that the last signature has 16 pages.

I think it is quite likely that the book has 6 signatures of 32 pages, and 2 signatures of 16 pages.

The arithmetic seems to work out, unless I have made a mistake in my calculations. Six times 32 is 192. Two times 16 is 32. Add 192 and 32, and the sum is 224. That’s the total number of pages in the book, including the 2 blank pages at the very front and the 17 pages of advertising in the back.

Those who have tried to count the signatures in old, fragile books know how difficult it can be to do so without wrecking the book. That’s why I have only stated specifics on two signatures, the first and the last.

--Tom Sawyer

Bill Mullins | 01/10/15 11:19 AM | link | filter

Tom -- have you deleted some posts from your Erdnase blog? I remember some discussion of page sizes that I can't find any more.

Tom Sawyer | 01/10/15 05:14 PM | link | filter

Hi Bill,

Somebody noticed! But seriously, yes, I very recently took down a lot of posts. Later today I expect to go through some of them and maybe put some back up. (But even now there are still more than 40 posts up.)

--Tom

Tom Sawyer | 01/11/15 07:31 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

Most of you probably remember the "Erdnase 216" pack that was issued by the Conjuring Arts Research Center. They mentioned a theory that this back-design may have been the design portrayed in The Expert at the Card Table. Of course, this is
available for purchase from CARC (with two different colors of back available).

In this connection, I wanted to mention a purchase that I just made on eBay. The listing was for a Bezique set issued by Charles Goodall & Son, and the listing shows part of a back-design that is extremely similar to that of the Erdnase 216 pack. The cards appear to be square-cornered cards with the faces printed in red and black.

Here is a link to the listing: Link.

If you are interested in the subject of Goodall Bezique sets or Goodall card-game booklets, you might want to look at my blog on Goodall card-game booklets. The most recent post there is from July, but in all there are now 300 posts on that blog, and a lot of those posts talk about Bezique.

--Tom Sawyer

John Bodine

01/17/15 08:59 PM

I can confirm that the blue hb with black script title that recently sold on eBay was indeed 178 pages, no other interesting provenance or markings, no ads in back or address listed.

John Bodine

KenHerrick

03/03/15 06:02 PM

Greetings from a newbie-

Seeking some procrastination this morning, I did a Web search for "Eardnase Sanders" and reached this blog. (It took me 5 min. or so of additional Web search to find the registration-question’s answer, evidence that I’m no gambler or even interested in games at all.) However, Wilbur Edgerton Sanders was my grandmother’s second husband, married to her when he died, on August 6, 1935, in Berkeley, CA USA. I was about 7 at the time and met him only once shortly before that when, apparently, he was brought to our home there to be introduced to his step-grandchildren before his death. In my recollection (and I surely would have remembered it), there was no hint in our family of any connection to gambling. Wilbur was a Christian Scientist, no doubt having been converted to that religion by my grandmother more or less at the time of their marriage. That’s a good reason for having concealed any such connection.

Wilbur’s estate, willed to my grandmother, was very modest, and the documentation I have copies of makes no mention of papers. However, I do have a certified copy of
The only other thing remotely of interest that I have is a jpeg image of a short typed poem written by Wilbur. It's called The One Hundredth Psalm, is wholly religious, and I can't see that it would contain any "code" relating to The Expert.

I'm familiar with the pieces on Eardnase in Genii of Jan 2000 and Sept 2011. It's sad, how Alexander died. I'd spoken with him by phone several times while he was doing his investigation.

Sorry I haven't got more...

Sincerely,

Ken Herrick
Oakland, CA

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**Bill Mullins** | 03/03/15 06:57 PM | [link] | [filter]

Welcome Ken.

If you've seen the 2011 Genii article on Erdnase, you know that Marty Demarest has taken up David Alexander's research and gone much farther with it. Several of us were fortunate to hear Marty share his research in person at Wilbur's former home (now a bed-and-breakfast) in Helena in 2011, at a small meeting of like-minded enthusiasts.

To the best of my knowledge, there is no handwriting sample that can conclusively be said to be directly from Erdnase.

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**Andrew Pinard** | 03/04/15 11:50 AM | [link] | [filter]

Bill Mullins might find this of interest:

https://www.myfonts.com/WhatTheFont/results?ch%5B0%5D=C&ch%5B1%5D=A&ch%5B2%5D=R&ch%5B3%5D=D&ch%5B4%5D=T&ch%5B5%5D=A&ch%5B6%5D=B&ch%5B7%5D=L&ch%5B8%5D=E&ch%5B9%5D=A&ch%5B10%5D=R&ch%5B11%5D=T&ch%5B12%5D=L&ch%5B13%5D=F&ch%5B14%5D=D&ch%5B15%5D=C&ch%5B16%5D=E&ch%5B17%5D=&wtfserver=wtf_e_41&id=00082be354d4d8730006d8cf00000612&glyphcount=18&imageid=0&x=85&y=26

Working on some other type samples to see if we can get closer than Caslon. Here is a side by side of a scan from a reproduction of Erdnase (specifically the one in MacDougall's Card Mastery) and a typesetting in Caslon with the line endings set to
Andrew, unfortunately the "What the Font" link you provided doesn't work. Can you summarize your results? Thanks for digging into this deeper!

We used a modern Caslon for the Charles & Wonder edition as well. (And just for the record in your example: No "Th" ligature. Additional space between sentences. Thin (French) space before semicolons.)

And it's good to see Ken posting here. I was in contact with him for a while, but lost touch. Ken, I'll try your email again.

As Ken indicates, Wilbur Edgerton Sanders had a religious conversion after his marriage to a Christian Scientist. Before his marriage he gambled, drank and wasn't particularly religious. In one of the few glimpses his papers give us into his early personal life, he was a bit of a hypochondriac and consulted doctors regularly. After his marriage, that all changed, including his refusal to seek medical treatment for injuries and an apparent rejection of his old, "sporting life" friends. It was a dramatic, personal shift in his life.
Darned OpenFace automatically inserts the ligatures (I forgot to turn that option off). I ran the "What the Font" app on the title on page 13 (CARD TABLE ARTIFICE.) and it returned five recommendations, the closest was Millesime which is based on an old French-style typeface. Here is a link to samples of the font which can be purchased (the free version no longer exists):

https://typekit.com/fonts/millesime

Click on the "type tester" tab to plug in your own text for preview. It is not an exact match, although the main distinguishing characteristic (the truncated "R" foot) is there. The "C" is different in width and roundness...

There are at least six distinct typefaces used in Erdnase: the text, the figure numbers, the copyright under the figures (which appears to be the same as the copyright page), the section titles (including frontmatter titles), the run-in heads on pages 25-28 and a bold font that is only used on page 189. There is a possibility that the italic font used for headings and run-in heads does not belong to the same family as the text.

I am somewhat handicapped as the oldest facsimile version I have is the MacDougall reproduction (and therefore may not be of the earliest edition), but I have in my library a number of other Erdnase-related titles including: Revelation, Revelations, The Annotated Erdnase, the Coles reproduction (1980; which lacks the original title page), the Dover (1995) and CARC (2007; mini-bible) editions, both of which have been re-typeset, the previously mentioned MacDougall (1944, Circle Magic Shop), and the informational/analysis texts including the Whaley/Gardner/Busby title The Man Who Was Erdnase, Hurt McDermott's Artifice, Ruse & Erdnase, and Erdnase Unmasked.

I hope over the next couple of weeks to identify each of the typefaces, if only for Bill's enjoyment...

In the meantime, if you want to use the image I scanned to run your own "What the

CARD TABLE ARTIFICE.

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**Bill Mullins** | 03/04/15 04:14 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

**Andrew Pinard wrote:** I hope over the next couple of weeks to identify each of the typefaces, if only for Bill's enjoyment...
Remember that there is a high-resolution scan of the first Drake HB edition online at the Library of Congress. I think most people assume that it is the same typography as the 1st edition -- everyone says that the "plates" were transferred. (I'd love to have a high-resolution scan of even a few pages from a 1st edition, for a comparison.)

The text in Revelations (the first one) is supposed to be a scan of a 1st, but I believe it was cleaned up a little. And the text in the 1940s Fleming edition was supposedly shot from a 1st edition, at least according to what the contemporaneous Fleming Book Reviews say.

Richard Evans | 03/04/15 04:20 PM | link | filter

KenHerrick wrote: Greetings from a newbie- Wilbur's estate, willed to my grandmother, was very modest, and the documentation I have copies of makes no mention of papers. However, I do have a certified copy of Wilbur's holographic will dated Feb. 18, 1924. If there exists any hand-writing that can be directly connected to "The Expert", perhaps a comparison could be made.

The copyright application for TEATCT is hand-written. I'm not sure whether it's been established if this was completed by the author or the publisher (has anyone ever checked against any other book published by McKinney?). However, if Wilbur Sanders' handwriting and that of the copyright application were similar, then that would certainly be of significance.

Richard

Brad Jeffers | 03/04/15 06:48 PM | link | filter

KenHerrick wrote: However, I do have a certified copy of Wilbur's holographic will

It would be great if you would post a copy of this here.

Richard Evans wrote: The copyright application for TEATCT is hand-written

Is there a copy of this available online?

KenHerrick | 03/04/15 07:20 PM | link | filter

Re: Wilbur Sanders' Will. Perhaps someone might be able to turn up some
would be enough to cinch the argument positively. I attach herewith a jpeg copy.

Well, oops... "attachment quota has been reached." I'll post it to my Dropbox Public folder and then post the link to that here.

Ken Herrick

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**KenHerrick** | 03/04/15 07:30 PM | link | filter

OK, here's the link to Wilbur Sanders' holographed Will: [https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/287...S-will.jpg](https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/287...S-will.jpg)

KCH

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**KenHerrick** | 03/04/15 07:33 PM | link | filter

Well, that didn't seem to come out right. Try this:

[https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/287...S-will.jpg](https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/287...S-will.jpg)

Looks better...

KCH

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**KenHerrick** | 03/04/15 07:36 PM | link | filter

What's going on?? Still not right, on my screen. Again, this time with some spaces that you should take out, to form the full link. 3 spaces in each of 2 locations.


KcH

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**KenHerrick** | 03/04/15 07:38 PM | link | filter

Take out the space before usercontent and before Erdnase.

KCH

Why is this so much trouble??
Richard Evans wrote: The copyright application for TEATCT is hand-written. I'm not sure whether it's been established if this was completed by the author or the publisher (has anyone ever checked against any other book published by McKinney?). However, if Wilbur Sanders' handwriting and that of the copyright application were similar, then that would certainly be of significance.

Richard

A couple of small comments on the above. The copyright application is mostly a printed form, but does have spaces filled in by hand. I assume that the author likely filled it out, even though his address is given in care of McKinney. I would not describe McKinney as the "publisher", though we presume his firm did the printing and binding, because of their connection to the author in the copyright application and the fact that they were a source of copies of the book. The title page clearly states "Published by the Author" so the mysterious Erdnase himself would be the "publisher". I am not aware of any books "published" by McKinney, though I do know of other titles they printed, and have at least one in my collection, though it bears little resemblance to the first edition Expert (different format, binding, etc.).

Bill Mullins | 03/04/15 09:21 PM | link | filter

Brad Jeffers wrote:

Richard Evans wrote: The copyright application for TEATCT is hand-written

Is there a copy of this available online?

I don't know it to be online anywhere, but the front page of the application is reproduced on p 274 of The Man who was Erdnase. It does not have the same handwriting as Sanders's will.

Bill Mullins | 03/04/15 10:04 PM | link | filter

Here is a book published by Jas. P McKinney of Terre Haute IN in 1890. Same guy?

Marty Demarest | 03/04/15 11:11 PM | link | filter

I would say that we don't know who filled out the copyright form. It could have been anyone affiliated with McKinney & Co. It could have been the author. One point of interest is that, if it was filled out by the author, then he would likely have had direct contact with the title page, which needed to be included as a part of the application.
personally ensure that clues were on the page. But again, I don't think we can make any assumptions as to who filled out the form.

I was able to compare the application at the Library of Congress with samples of Wilbur Edgerton Sanders's handwriting from as near 1902 as I could find. (Samples from that period are very rare in his surviving papers.) In my opinion Sanders's handwriting samples didn't match the handwriting on the application.

Roger M. | 03/05/15 11:20 AM | link | filter

Of course there's no way of knowing precisely who filled out the copyright form, but it's a far safer assumption that it was the author of EATCT who filled it out than it was anybody else.

The sheer weight of a self published work having its copyright applied for by the author of that work can't be discounted.

If one maintains the KISS principle, there is really no other party who could have, or would have completed the copyright form.

It does however, remain an unknown for seekers of hard evidence. But if you stop your Erdnase research every time there's an "unknown", there would be far less quality Erdnase research.

Occasionally, assumptions might benefit in an effort to move forward and hopefully discover new avenues of research that might lead to more solid evidence.

Of course the elephant in the room considers that if you accept that the author filled out the copyright application, then the author likely isn't Sanders. As a result, confirmation bias implies that some folks might not be so inclined to consider the author as being the party that filled out the application for copyright.

Marty Demarest | 03/05/15 12:31 PM | link | filter

I see no reason to make any assumptions about the copyright application, nor do I trust it. After all, it was supposed to indicate whether a pseudonym was used, and to state the author's real name. It gives "S.W. Erdnase" and no indication of a pseudonym. It also lists his residence as "73 Plymouth Place, Chicago, Ill"--which was James McKinney & Company's address. Elsewhere, it lists the author's full name as "S.W. Erdnase care of Jas. McKinney & Co." That's a lot of fibbing and loopholing--even writing outside the lines on the relatively straightforward application form--to assume that the applicant was keeping it simple.
look at the material and compare it to Sanders’s handwriting). But there isn’t much handwriting to analyze on the form. And there isn’t much of anything from Sanders in that period to compare it with. Still, I’ve seen a lot of Sanders’s handwriting (which changed dramatically, even in a single journal). To my untrained eye it differs from that on the application.

But it’s a pure assumption that the copyright application was filled out by the author. We don’t even have any evidence that he was ever in physical possession of his books—the mailing of which was required to complete the copyright registration. The only hard evidence we have about the handling of the books themselves (A. Plate’s first edition) indicates that the book was sold by McKinney & Co., making them the only known source and representatives of the work. That is supported by the firm’s name and address being listed as the author on the copyright application. The form—filed in late February 1902—could just as easily have been filled out by them.

I tend to doubt everything. That hardly impedes research. In my experience it yields better results.

Marty Demarest | 03/05/15 12:43 PM | link | filter

I know that Richard Hatch has a letter written by Edwin Sumner Andrews. How does the handwriting on it compare with that on the copyright application?

Roger M. | 03/05/15 12:52 PM | link | filter

I don’t particularly disagree with anything you’ve posted Marty, my point was simply that it was far more likely that the author filled out the form that it was that somebody else filled it out.

A guy writes a book, and then self publishes the same book. The balance of the evidence we have in our possession would seem to imply that the same guy who wrote and published the book also filled out the copyright form ... however full of discrepancies that form might be.

It would be somewhat presumptuous of me to state that the author did fill out the copyright application. I simply choose to assume that the likelihood that it was his pen on the application is greater than the likelihood that it was not his pen.

Marty Demarest | 03/05/15 01:04 PM | link | filter

Roger, you assumptions about the implications of self-publishing make sense. But evidence suggests otherwise. I have examples of self-published works that applied for
For example: The New Century Edition of The Household Cookbook, edited by James B. Smiley and published by Smiley Publishing Company had its copyright application submitted by the printing firm of Frederick J. Drake and Company on the same date (February 17, 1902) as The Expert at the Card Table.

An examination of copyright applications in The Library of Congress indicates that self-published works often had their copyright applications submitted by the printing firms or other representatives.

**Brad Jeffers** | 03/05/15 03:41 PM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:* the front page of the application is reproduced on p 274 of The Man who was Erdnase.

I wonder why they reproduced only lines five through nine of the application. What information (and further handwriting example) is contained in lines one through four?

**Jonathan Townsend** | 03/05/15 04:04 PM | link | filter

*Roger M. wrote:* [ ] to state that the author did fill out the copyright application. I simply choose to assume that the likelihood [...].

What percentage of copyright forms are filled out by the author?

**Brad Jeffers** | 03/05/15 05:36 PM | link | filter

The fact that the application may have been filled out by the author himself, makes it definitely the most intriguing, and potentially the most important artifact in the search for the identity of Erdnase.

Of course, if it was not filled out by the author, then it is about as interesting and useful as a discussion of the different fonts used in varying editions.

*Marty Demarest wrote:* An examination of copyright applications in The Library of Congress indicates that self-published works often had their copyright applications submitted by the printing firms or other representatives.

A copyright application for another book printed by McKinney & Co., in the same
Unless of course, Erdnase also wrote that book.

Then we will know who he is.

Unless of course, he used a pseudonym.

---

**Bob Coyne** | 03/05/15 05:44 PM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:*

*Brad Jeffers wrote:*

*Richard Evans wrote:* The copyright application for TEATCT is hand-written

Is there a copy of this available online?

I don't know it to be online anywhere, but the front page of the application is reproduced on p 274 of *The Man who was Erdnase*. It does not have the same handwriting as Sanders's will.

TMWWE says that McKinney and Company had filled out the application form. Though maybe that's just supposition. It seems like McKinney would have filed other copyright forms that could be compared to see if the handwriting matches.

I agree the handwriting on the copyright form doesn't look like Sanders's handwriting on the holographic will.

---

**Roger M.** | 03/05/15 06:25 PM | link | filter

*Bob Coyne wrote:*

TMWWE says that McKinney and Company had filled out the application form.

One caveat with TMWWE is that it's often desirable (although often not possible) to know which of the three authors wrote whatever it is you're reading.

In this case, a statement like this would carry more weight if one was sure Bart Whaley researched and wrote it, and less weight if Busby or M.G. wrote it (as both of them were unnaturally wedded to the concept that MFA was definitely Erdnase, and rigidly unwilling to be swayed even slightly by the movement begun with Tom Sawyer's books).
Richard Evans wrote:

Richard Evans wrote: The copyright application for TEATCT is hand-written. I’m not sure whether it’s been established if this was completed by the author or the publisher (has anyone ever checked against any other book published by McKinney?). However, if Wilbur Sanders’ handwriting and that of the copyright application were similar, then that would certainly be of significance.

Richard

A couple of small comments on the above. The copyright application is mostly a printed form, but does have spaces filled in by hand. I assume that the author likely filled it out, even though his address is given in care of McKinney. I would not describe McKinney as the "publisher", though we presume his firm did the printing and binding, because of their connection to the author in the copyright application and the fact that they were a source of copies of the book. The title page clearly states "Published by the Author" so the mysterious Erdnase himself would be the "publisher". I am not aware of any books "published" by McKinney, though I do know of other titles they printed, and have at least one in my collection, though it bears little resemblance to the first edition Expert (different format, binding, etc.).

Thanks Dick. Apologies - that was pure clumsiness on my part. Publisher and printer are of course different issues and I should have been clearer about McKinney being the printer.

In terms of the general comments about the relevance of the handwriting on the copyright application, it is only really relevant if it matches the handwriting of a candidates and otherwise tells us little. Nevertheless, would be interesting to see if any other books printed by McKinney (being careful this time!) have the same writing.

Bill Mullins wrote: TMWWE says that McKinney and Company had filled out the application form. Though maybe that's just supposition.

TMWWE assumes that MFA = Erdnase. Since the handwriting on the copyright form doesn't match that of MFA, then it must be by someone other than the author. QED.
If you don't make an assumption about the identity of the author, then you can't rule out the possibility that it is from the hand of the author (although I believe it was done by someone at McKinney, for reasons laid out above).

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**Bob Coyne** | 03/05/15 07:56 PM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:*

*Bob Coyne wrote:* TMWWE says that McKinney and Company had filled out the application form. Though maybe that's just supposition.

TMWWE assumes that MFA = Erdnase. Since the handwriting on the copyright form doesn't match that of MFA, then it must be by someone other than the author. QED. They leap to the conclusion that it was McKinney.

Maybe that's the logic they went through, but I don't know how you know that. It seems perfectly possible that the authors of TMWWE had good reasons to claim that the copyright form was filled out by McKinney.

---

**Roger M.** | 03/05/15 09:40 PM | link | filter

*Bob Coyne wrote:*

Maybe that's the logic they went through, but I don't know how you know that.

We know that because all three authors stated quite succinctly over the years that Erdnase = MFA, and that their conclusion was not debatable.

Unlike Marty, David Alexander, Richard Hatch, etc ... who are putting forward their candidates without stating unequivocally that *"they're right"*, Busby, Gardner, and Whaley pretty much made it clear that folks who didn't believe that MFA was Erdnase after reading their book just didn't have the smarts to get it.

---

**Bill Mullins** | 03/05/15 09:55 PM | link | filter

*Bob Coyne wrote:* Maybe that's the logic they went through, but I don't know how you know that. It seems perfectly possible that the authors of TMWWE had good reasons to claim that the copyright form was filled out by McKinney.

When there were good reasons to support a claim, the authors always presented them.
above, so I think what I described is what happened. Can't prove it, though.

Roger M. wrote: We know that because all three authors stated quite succinctly over the years that Erdnase = MFA, and that their conclusion was not debatable. . . . Busby, Gardner, and Whaley pretty much made it clear that folks who didn't believe that MFA was Erdnase after reading their book just didn't have the smarts to get it.

While Gardner was a believer in the MFA=Erdnase theory, I doubt his attitude was anywhere near as aggressive as you describe. Maybe Busby and Whaley were. But Gardner wasn't the sort of person who treat someone who disagreed with him like you are saying. And I believe that, after hearing Richard Hatch's theories and research, he even backed out of the MFA camp somewhat.

I don't know, and the principals are all dead so I can't ask, but I always kind of believed that very little of the final manuscript of TMMWE was actually written by Gardner -- that it was mostly written by Busby and Whaley (particularly the stuff that outright asserts that MFA and Erdnase are one and the same), but that they built heavily on Gardner's research and quote extensively from it, and so they gave him author credit. If someone knows otherwise, I be happy to be corrected on that.

Roger M. | 03/05/15 10:13 PM | link | filter

Although I hadn't considered I'd have to reference it some day, and therefore didn't make a record of which book or article it was in, I had read a statement by Gardner within a couple of years prior to his untimely passing in which he stated quite clearly that the answer to the question "who is Erdnase" was answered in TMWWE.

I took this to mean he still strongly believed the MFA assertion to be the end of the Erdnase search.

Perhaps he meant something else, but I doubt it.

I didn't intend for my comment to read as if these guys were as_holes about it, only that they remained highly supportive of their conclusion, and apparently saw no reason to alter that conclusion.

Perhaps Richards research did tilt Gardner away from being unwilling to entertain any other candidate but MFA. In many ways I'd like that to be true, as I find the concept of being absolutely adamant that Erdnase was MFA mildly annoying, and yet hold Gardner in extremely high regard.
In Magicol #176, Richard Hatch wrote an article about Gardner and how Hatch met him. "[Gardner] was not the least upset that I was questioning his candidate and was genuinely intrigued by the things I was finding."

Marty Demarest wrote: I see no reason to make any assumptions about the copyright application, nor do I trust it. After all, it was supposed to indicate whether a pseudonym was used, and to state the author's real name. It gives "S.W. Erdnase" and no indication of a pseudonym. It also lists his residence as "73 Plymouth Place, Chicago, Ill"--which was James McKinney & Company's address. Elsewhere, it lists the author's full name as "S.W. Erdnase care of Jas. McKinney & Co." That's a lot of fibbing and loopholing--even writing outside the lines on the relatively straightforward application form--to assume that the applicant was keeping it simple.

The 4 page copyright application does not request pseudonym information. Part 4 on the first page does request the name, residence and nationality of the author, but specifically notes that the name and address may be withheld, but not the nationality (which he gives as "American"). I'm not sure that I would regard the use of a pseudonym and the printer's address in place of a residence (possibly the author did not have a stable residence) as a lot of fibbing.

My recollection is that the Copyright office maintained a registry of pseudonyms for those wishing to do so and when I checked Erdnase was not registered. But such a declaration was not required.

It sure would be nice if someone would post an image of the full four pages of the copyright application so we would have a better point of reference than the fragment given in The Man Who Was Erdnase.

I checked with the U.S. Copyright Office and they are happy to provide assistance with such matters.

However, their assistance entails a $200/hr fee with a two hour minimum.
That means we need to raise $400. Perhaps we can get them to also look for other McKinney printed/related copyright applications and provide copies of these, too. I am willing to put $50 into the pot. Anybody willing to add to that?

**Jack Shalom** | 03/06/15 10:45 AM | link | filter

I'm in.

**Jonathan Townsend** | 03/06/15 11:53 AM | link | filter

If the idea is to post the data so we will have it onhand for future reference - count me in as well. Magical Crowdfunding?

**lybrary** | 03/06/15 12:24 PM | link | filter

Yes, the idea is to post it online. I hope that doesn't mean that people will hold back. There is also no requirement to contribute exactly $50. You can pledge less. $5 or $10 is fine, too. Of course, you can also give more. Either way, let's see if there are enough who are willing to enable this.

If I read the posts above correctly we stand at $150 pledged to have the original Erdnase copyright application scanned and posted online and perhaps we also find other McKinney applications around the same time. I think that two hours should be enough to search and hopefully find other copyright applications where McKinney was involved. If anybody has a list of books that may qualify please post here.

**Marty Demarest** | 03/06/15 12:26 PM | link | filter

> Richard Hatch wrote: I'm not sure that I would regard the use of a pseudonym and the printer's address in place of a residence (possibly the author did not have a stable residence) as a lot of fibbing.

Don't worry Dick--I won't tell the taxman.

Didn't E.S. Andrews have a permanent Chicago address at the time?

Interpretations may differ, of course. But I see any discrepancy between the claimed name of the book's author (question 4) and the name of the author claiming copyright (question 6) as indicative of a pseudonym. No difference indicates that no pseudonym was used. (The applicant does give the author's name as S.W. Erdnase in question 4, lists the claimant as author in question 5, and claims copyright under the name S.W. Erdnase in question 6.)
Obtaining the copyright application shouldn't require hundreds of dollars and a researcher. This page gives instructions. To help circumvent a research fee, you are looking for the Application for Copyright filed for the book *Artifice Ruse and Subterfuge at the Card Table* by S.W. Erdnase published in 1902. The application was received by the copyright office on Feb. 17, 1902 and was tagged CL.A27174Feb171902. You should only need to pay for copies.

Brad Jeffers | 03/06/15 04:00 PM | link | filter

This page gives the fees.

The cheapest way is to go to the Copyright Office in person and search for the files yourself. That's free. The only cost will be to have the records copied.

Now, if only we had a forum member who lives in Washington D.C.

Hmmm ...

Richard Hatch | 03/06/15 06:08 PM | link | filter

No need to spend the money on copying fees, I did that years ago and have scans of all four pages of the original copyright application on my computer. If someone can let me know how to post them or (probably easier) I can email them as attachments to someone to post, happy to do so. My recollection is that the copying fees cost me about $40, but that was more than 15 years ago. Took a couple of months after my visit to the copyright office to get them...

Ken Herrick | 03/06/15 06:24 PM | link | filter

I'd be happy to put them up on my Dropbox Public site, providing a link (or links) thereto--hopefully more readily useable this time. You could email them to me for that purpose.

Ken Herrick

Jason England | 03/06/15 06:52 PM | link | filter

With regard to the veracity of Martin Gardner's defense of MFA as the author, here is a note he wrote to me in 2004.

"Yes, I still think Erdnase was Milton Franklin Andrews, though it lacks a certain"
I tried to upload an image of the note to the board, but got some message saying the attachment quota had been reached.

Jason

Richard Hatch | 03/06/15 07:07 PM | link | filter

Thanks, Ken, I just emailed them to Bill Mullins, thinking he’d know how to put them up for Forum members. If not, happy to email them to you.
On Gardner’s conviction in MFA as Erdnase, when I first interviewed him on this topic, he put his conviction in the high 90% range. He thought it pretty unlikely that another gambler named Andrews with the necessary skill set and a history of activity in Chicago living in the right time frame would exist. When I started to question some of the discrepancies of the MFA theory (height, age, etc. as recalled by Marshall Smith) and presented some alternative candidates, he was at one point willing to lower his conviction rate a bit (into the 80% range, I believe). I think he later raised it back into the 90% range. Obviously these numbers don’t mean anything in terms of who the actual author was, but show Gardner’s willingness to consider thoughtfully presented alternatives.

Rick Ruhl | 03/07/15 01:17 AM | link | filter

Richard,

I’d like a copy of that as well if Bill can’t get it online.

Rick

Bill Mullins | 03/07/15 01:51 AM | link | filter

Thanks to Richard Hatch:

Copyright Application

Richard Hatch | 03/07/15 02:01 AM | link | filter

Thanks, Bill. Always struck me as impressive that the application which was apparently filled out and mailed in Chicago on Feb 15, 1902 was delivered to the copyright office in DC two days later.
Somewhere I also have a photocopy of the one page copyright registration which shows the receipt of two printed copies, but it is not handy and is a document
Brad Jeffers 03/07/15 02:06 AM | link | filter

Very nice!
Thanks.

lybrary 03/07/15 09:30 AM | link | filter

Dick, Bill, thanks for posting it.

My first reaction was: "How neatly written." Whoever wrote this must have taken real care filling out this form. If I may venture a guess it does not look like some designated employee of McKinney who had to potentially fill out many of these but rather a first time filler outer.

Here is another line of investigation that this may open. Having seen my son being taught handwriting in a French school rather than the Austrian schooling I received myself, I know that handwriting is being taught differently in different localities. The detailed shapes of each letter can be quite different from place to place. For example, the big A I learned to write is completely different from the one I see on this application. I wonder if an expert may be able to deduce from the handwriting where the person who filled this out learned to write.

Marty Demarest 03/07/15 10:20 AM | link | filter

The most interesting thing about the copyright application, to my mind, is its lack of legal validity.

The entire purpose of a copyright registration was to establish legal ownership and rights to the material. But by withholding his legal name, the author of The Expert essentially forfeited those rights. The copyright application is legally untruthful.

That's a big reason I don't trust it. But it does raise the intriguing questions: Why was the author's real name not included on the application? Did the author have some other means of proving that he was S.W. Erdnase? How was copyright of the book legally established?

Incidentally, I note that the handwriting on the application doesn't match the handwriting of the applicant(s) on E.S. Andrews's marriage license. (Reproduced in Richard Hatch's article "Reading Erdnase Backwards."
Marty Demarest wrote: Why was the author's real name not included on the application? Did the author have some other means of proving that he was S.W. Erdnase? How was copyright of the book legally established?

I am not a lawyer but I think these questions would only be investigated if it should come to a dispute of some kind. The copyright office does not check anything. They simply record and store the information.

Marty Demarest | 03/07/15 10:40 AM | link | filter

I meant questions for me (and other researchers), Chris. The copyright application should answer those questions. It doesn’t.

The simplest answer that fits the evidence is: The form was filled out by someone who believed that someone named S.W. Erdnase wrote the book, that he was a real person, and that he could be contacted through James McKinney & Co.

Otherwise, it was filled out by someone who did it, essentially, for no purpose.

Lybrary | 03/07/15 10:52 AM | link | filter

I can see all kinds of purposes for the person hiding behind the pseudonym. For one, a copyright application (truthful or not) could deter possible infringers.

KenHerrick | 03/07/15 12:38 PM | link | filter

A copyright is like a patent, a license to sue and not much more. But being that, it surely is useful as a deterrent.

We’re likely to be left forever with mere circumstantial evidence as to the real author. But I’d stick, on that basis, with Wilbur Sanders. (Admitting that I’d not mind basking in his reflected glory as his step-grandson...tho not for long since I’m 87.)

Some of that evidence in Wilbur’s favor: 1. A mining engineer (an “earth-nose”). 2. His name an exact anagram. 3. His father (or grandfather; don’t remember off-hand) a prominent Senator. 4. My grandmother, his wife, a Christian Scientist. And not only that: a C.S. Practitioner. That being a person who engages in intercessory prayer for others, for a fee. 5. Known to have carried with him on his travels several, if not numerous, new packs of playing cards. 6. And perhaps a few more tidbits that I’ve overlooked.

So there are powerful reasons there, familial in nature, to have kept his authorship a
My first reaction was: "How neatly written." Whoever wrote this must have taken real care filling out this form. If I may venture a guess it does not look like some designated employee of McKinney who had to potentially fill out many of these but rather a first time filler outer.

Here is another line of investigation that this may open. Having seen my son being taught handwriting in a French school rather than the Austrian schooling I received myself, I know that handwriting is being taught differently in different localities. The detailed shapes of each letter can be quite different from place to place. For example, the big A I learned to write is completely different from the one I see on this application. I wonder if an expert may be able to deduce from the handwriting where the person who filled this out learned to write.

Recall that in 1902, typewriters were not as common as they later became, and many official forms were filled out by hand -- so people who regularly filled them out needed to do it neatly. And also, it is my belief that people in general had better handwriting back then than they do now (see Vernon’s handwriting, for example).

So I don’t necessarily think that "neat handwriting" implies a person who filled out this form for the 1st time. In fact, I’d argue that if McKinney was in the business of taking manuscripts and turning them into books for independent authors, that doing the copyright paperwork would be part of the service that it would be appropriate for them to offer.

I’d love to find half-a-dozen books published and/or printed by McKinney ca. 1902, and compare the copyright applications on all of them.

Bill Mullins wrote: I’d love to find half-a-dozen books published and/or printed by McKinney ca. 1902, and compare the copyright applications on all of them.

That is exactly what I think we should do. It is a fairly straight forward step to get some clarity on the handwriting. Richard Hatch has one other McKinney book in is collection but he never tried to look-up the copyright application for it. That means we have at least one book. Don’t know when it was published. The big question is how we
One possible way would be to start with Drake assuming he acquired more than Erdnase from McKinney and see if any of the Drake books were originally printed by McKinney.

Richard Evans | 03/07/15 06:10 PM | link | filter

Thanks Richard and Bill for posting full copyright application.

The typesetting on the sample front page is slightly different to the printed first edition isn’t it? There appears to be a much larger space between the R and the T in 'ARTIFICE'.

Bill Mullins | 03/07/15 07:58 PM | link | filter

Richard Evans wrote: Thanks Richard and Bill for posting full copyright application.

The typesetting on the sample front page is slightly different to the printed first edition isn’t it? There appears to be a much larger space between the R and the T in 'ARTIFICE'.

Could be from a proof.

Scott Lane | 03/08/15 12:09 AM | link | filter

I would like to thank Richard Hatch for allowing the copyright application to be posted. That was very nice of you!

Richard wrote in an earlier post ...
Thanks, Bill. Always struck me as impressive that the application which was apparently filled out and mailed in Chicago on Feb 15, 1902 was delivered to the copyright office in DC two days later.

Do you think the application could have been hand delivered?

Scott Lane | 03/12/15 10:33 PM | link | filter

Top 10 Reasons to Attend
Erdnase Lecture: Back to the Future
Taking a cue from his success, we give you the top ten reasons why you should attend Scott Edward Lane's March 25, 2015 lecture/demonstration on Erdnase.

10. The seminal S W Erdnase book, Expert at the Card Table, was published in 1902 and its influence on card magic continues today, 113 years later.
9. The Ask Alexander database (Linking Ring) includes over 600 references and citations to Erdnase, beginning in 1903 and as recently as 2014.
8. The book is deeply rooted in the sneakiest of gambling sleights, not in card magic.
7. Gamblers have been killed after being caught applying Erdnase sleights.
6. The sordid influence of the Erdnase book reached the upper levels of politics, including U.S. Congress members.
5. You will get a free deck of cards to practice 22 Erdnase non-knuckle busting sleights during the lecture/demonstration workshop: False Shuffles, False Cuts, Passes/Shifts, Palming, Mnemonic Techniques, Top/Bottom Changes, Card Stacking and Memorized Decks. Even if you use some of these sleights regularly, Erdnase offers a new twist for you to consider.
4. You will be taught nine card tricks that rely heavily on Erdnase sleights, tricks performed by (in alphabetical order) Steve Forte, Professor Hoffmann, John Hilliard, James Harto, Ricky Jay, Bill Malone, Edward Marlo, August Roterberg, and Dai Vernon
3. This is not your ordinary lecture but rather a production that includes a book on Erdnase, handouts, demonstrations, and a PowerPoint Presentation.
2. Scott will present previously unpublished information about Erdnase, which comes directly from his family elders who lived in French Lick, Indiana, the Midwest gambling center at the turn of the century and the genesis of the Erdnase book.
1. At least a dozen prominent individuals have speculated on who S.W. Erdnase really was and Scott Lane has documentary evidence to show they were all wrong.

You are now Sherlock Holmes. The mystery is before you. The clues by past researchers have been filled with speculation and controversy. It is now up to you to untangle the web and discover for yourselves...The Elusive World of S W Erdnase...

Please join us as we go back to the Erdnase future at 7:00pm, Wednesday, March 25th, IBM Ring 41, Tripoli Shrine Center, 3000 W. Wisconsin Ave, Milwaukee, 53208. Ring 41 members, free. Others, $5.00. Questions? Contact Slanelittleton@yahoo.com

Richard Kaufman | 03/12/15 10:50 PM | link | filter

The first thing I would do is take the copyright application to a handwriting analyst and find out if it was written by a man or a woman. The writing appears feminine to me.
Scott Lane wrote: At least a dozen prominent individuals have speculated on who S.W. Erdnase really was and Scott Lane has documentary evidence to show they were all wrong.

Hubris, so unbecoming.

Jonathan Townsend | 03/15/15 12:18 PM | link | filter

Marty Demarest wrote: ...The copyright application should answer those questions. It doesn’t.

The simplest answer that fits the evidence is: The form was filled out by someone [false dichotomy removed -JT].

The artifact supports a claim that the form was filed as filled in by the staff who stamped a date on it. As to whether or not there was a person other than the filing clerk who filled in the form, and what any person may have believed... projection and conjecture which may be better suited to writing fiction than recoding history.

Jonathan Townsend | 03/15/15 04:35 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: Thanks to Richard Hatch:

Copyright Application

Richard, Bill

Thanks so much for obtaining that data and making it available here.

There’s something about looking at evidence from over a hundred years ago...

again, thanks,

JonT

Richard Hatch | 03/15/15 08:17 PM | link | filter

Just to clarify a point in an earlier discussion, in my interview with Martin Gardner published in the April 2000 issue of MAGIC, he said "You’ve convinced me now that there is good reason for doubt that Milton Franklin Andrews was Erdnase. I still think it was Milton Franklin, but my conviction rate is lowered... to 60%".
Scott Lane | 03/15/15 06:32 AM | link | filter

Mr. Hatch,

Concerning MFA … your clues are so juicy,,, “Clayton Hill”, Eva Howard”, “Coded Books”. “Rosella E”, “W.S. Maunder”…

Don’t forget William Hilliard and James Harto worked for the great Edward Ballard…..

As Sherlock Holmes would say … “The game is afoot Dr. Watson … “

Richard Hatch | 03/15/15 09:26 AM | link | filter

Scott, wish I could attend your Erdnase lecture! Will your book on Erdnase be available to those who cannot attend?

Lybrary | 03/15/15 03:56 PM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: The first thing I would do is take the copyright application to a handwriting analyst and find out if it was written by a man or a woman. The writing appears feminine to me.

Just received an answer from the AAHA (American Association of Handwriting Analysts): "Handwriting cannot tell gender, age, or handedness (right or left)."

Richard Kaufman | 03/15/15 04:11 PM | link | filter

Maybe it was written by an orangutan.

Jonathan Townsend | 03/15/15 06:24 PM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: Maybe it was written by an orangutan.

That by way of Planet of the Apes or Edgar Allen Poe? A non-human author… good story material.

Scott Lane | 03/16/15 02:50 AM | link | filter

Richard Hatch wrote: Scott, wish I could attend your Erdnase lecture! Will your book on Erdnase be available to those who cannot attend?
I just want to clarify that I will not be selling any books at the lecture. I wrote and illustrated a book that was self published in the late 1980’s and published in 1990. I only have a few of the original copies left. It was entitled Gambling Card Sharps – How to beat a Cheater. The purpose of my lecture is to detail the “what” and “who” of the Erdnase mystery. There is a large volume of work that I inherited from my family elders which I am trying to preserve but I wish to leave that up to a professional publisher this time around.

**Jack Shalom** | 03/17/15 12:31 AM | link | filter

Last I looked, Mr. Kaufman and Mr. Hatch were some very professional publishers... Perhaps with some more description of what you're talking about, they could become interested?

**Scott Lane** | 03/18/15 12:27 AM | link | filter

Saying Mr. Kaufman and Mr. Hatch are professional publishers is an understatement. Their contribution to the magic community is unsurpassed. It would be hard to calculate how many quality words, illustrations, articles, magazines and books they have produced.

On the gambling side, relatively little has been preserved or disclosed. Historically, magicians were the ones to document the information. For example, in French Lick there was a concerted effort to destroy any documentation regarding their gambling history.

When a new pamphlet or book is discovered it is a big deal. Examples would be How Gamblers Win or The 52 Wonders.

**Richard Hatch** | 03/18/15 01:15 AM | link | filter

Scott Lane wrote: Saying Mr. Kaufman and Mr. Hatch are professional publishers is an understatement.

I appreciate the sentiment but must exclude myself from the compliment. While my former company, H & R Magic Books, did publish (and continues to publish) books for the profession, I had little to do with that aspect of our business, which was handled almost exclusively by my business partner, Charlie Randall.

**lybrary** | 03/18/15 11:04 AM | link | filter
11 page report is in. It has clearly answered some of the outstanding questions I had and also sheds new light on Erdnase and who this person was.

To get access to the report and read it you will need to purchase the "Hunt for Erdnase" ebook [http://www.lybrary.com/the-hunt-for-erd ... 73843.html](http://www.lybrary.com/the-hunt-for-erd ... 73843.html)

The report was not cheap and the proceeds from the sale of this ebook will fund further investigations and fact finding regarding Erdnase. Any additional post report analysis as well as other research we are doing will be shared with our supporters.

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**John Bodine** | 03/20/15 01:53 PM | link | filter

Thanks Chris, very interesting read!

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**Bill Mullins** | 03/22/15 01:59 PM | link | filter

Music to second deal by . . .

And this guy is having way too much fun giving bad reviews to the Magic Makers EATCT DVD set.

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**Rick Ruhl** | 03/22/15 09:59 PM | link | filter

Anyone who will not put their real name with a review doesn't fly with me. Just because some idiot so called magician, who probably couldn't second deal his way out of a wet paper bag, puts up an opinion on his blog, doesn't make it a fact.

Too many people cannot tell the different between fact and opinion today. to me, blog's have always been yellow journalism.

😊

And yes, the above is my opinion and I signed my name to it.

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**Scott Lane** | 03/23/15 08:03 PM | link | filter

In response to . . .

Music to second deal by . . .

And this guy is having way too much fun giving bad reviews to the Magic Makers EATCT DVD set
liked the DVDs by Wesley James and Simon Lovell. Anyone who takes on such a job should be commended, not ridiculed. Also, the reprinted book was really cool!

Another clue for MFA:

Riddle me this, Mr. Mullins:

I’m not soup for you to eat,  
MFA from the bars to keep,  
One last try is worth a go,  
Hire the best, the lawyers know ...  
Who am I?

Scott Lane | 03/24/15 08:34 PM | link | filter

You will find the answer to the riddle in TMWWE.

KenHerrick | 03/24/15 09:26 PM | link | filter

Am I missing something? Is this blog about "Eardnase", the guy who wrote the book? Are we off-topic or have I jumped to the wrong blog?

Ken Herrick

Bill Mullins | 03/24/15 10:42 PM | link | filter

KenHerrick wrote: Am I missing something? Is this blog about "Eardnase", the guy who wrote the book? Are we off-topic or have I jumped to the wrong blog?

Well, it's a forum, not a blog. And this particular thread is a twelve-year-old (!!!) discussion that meanders far and wide. It has a lot of informed speculation about the author, and much good information about the contents of the book. Some of the world's top practitioners of sleight of hand have weighed in from time to time, and it's well worth going back to the first posts and following it to the end. But it also has a bunch of chaff.

Sometimes, if I see something related (even tangentially) to Erdnase (the writer or the book), I'll link to it just to keep the thread active.

Leonard Hevia | 03/24/15 10:56 PM | link | filter
submitting a paper detailing all of your research? Can we expect an essay with your thesis in a future publication of Genii, Magicol, or Magic? Perhaps you would rather self-publish it instead in one of those Lybrary.com e-books. Maybe a comb bound manuscript would be more to your liking.

**Jonathan Townsend** | 03/25/15 08:55 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

KenHerrick wrote: Am I missing something? Is this blog about "Erdnase", the guy who wrote the book? Are we off-topic or have I jumped to the wrong blog?

Ken Herrick

Most here presuppose a single author using a pseudonym "S. W. Erdnase". Some have proffered historical research. As to whether you are in the wrong blog ... that’s up to you and the rest of your group which may agree upon some topic.

**Scott Lane** | 03/29/15 09:22 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Previous Post:

Hi Scott--following your presentation on Erdnase tomorrow, do you plan on submitting a paper detailing all of your research? Can we expect an essay with your thesis in a future publication of Genii, Magicol, or Magic? Perhaps you would rather self-publish it instead in one of those Lybrary.com e-books. Maybe a comb bound manuscript would be more to your liking.

I would be happy to provide an interview or essay to any one of those publications. I will be doing another lecture on Erdnase at the Michigan Magic Day convention this May 1-3. MichiganMagicDay2015.com

**lybrary** | 03/31/15 10:36 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I have commissioned and received two handwriting reports for the copyright application. We have also located four more books printed by James McKinney. Three were published in 1902 and one in 1915. All of this and more has been added to the "Hunt for Erdnase" ebook [http://www.lybrary.com/the-hunt-for-erd ... 73843.html](http://www.lybrary.com/the-hunt-for-erd ... 73843.html)

Your support in funding this kind of research is very much appreciated. It has allowed me to bring in some specialists, such as the forensic linguist and handwriting analysts. I am also in contact with a rare book curator in Chicago and Chicago printing history expert. All of these interactions reveal new information about Erdnase and his immediate surrounding.
copyright form. But as research often goes we may make completely unexpected finds.

Scott Lane | 04/01/15 12:39 AM | link | filter

The answer to the riddle is A. Sorrs Campbell. This will fit in with your most excellent research.

Scott Lane | 04/01/15 03:22 AM | link | filter

Previous Post:
Riddle me this, Mr. Mullins:
I'm not soup for you to eat,
MFA from the bars to keep,
One last try is worth a go,
Hire the best, the lawyers know ...
Who am I?

Previous Post:
We have also located four more books printed by James McKinney. Three were published in 1902 and one in 1915.

It looks like the Baker Street Gang has hit a home run! To clarify, the answer to the riddle is A. Storrs Campbell found on page 105 of TMWWE. You are getting warmer. The game is still afoot ...

Scott Edward Lane

Bill Marquardt | 04/01/15 03:28 AM | link | filter

What do you think of the following?

"As some have conjectured, there was more than one author to Artifice, Ruse and Subterfuge at the Card Table. The secret to understanding this is to first reverse the letters in the name of the alleged author, S. W. Erdnase. This gives us ESANDREWS. It is then necessary to separate the letters into an earlier construction, which was "E. S. and R. E. W. S.," and before that, "E.S. and E.W." (The underlines are mine, for the sake of clarity.) Here is the backstory, or at least part of it:

"In 1901, a well-known gambler whose initials were E.S. and who traveled
decided the world of "advantage play" was no longer suitable as a way of life. By chance, he encountered a popular magician (E. W.) at a fair. The two of them became friends of a sort and discussed the art of card manipulation, comparing notes and sharing ideas.

"E.S. proposed the idea of co-writing a book exposing the secrets of the card cheat, with an additional section on card magic in order to promote greater sales. To maintain anonymity, they decided to claim authorship as "E. S. and E. W."

"Not long afterwards, the magician got cold feet. He had heard rumors of the proposed formation of a national organization of magicians, The Society of American Magicians, an idea he had supported during his visits to Martinka's shop. He did not want to be known as an exposé of magical secrets, fearing that someone would recognize his initials and suspect him. He asked E. S. to eliminate the magic portion of the book but E. S. refused. E.S. appealed to the magician's ego by insisting that a little added confusion would maintain the secrecy of their authorship yet their initials would still be there on the cover of the book.

"E. S. suggested further obfuscating the name of the author(s) by adding the letters 'R' and 'S' to the original "E. S. and E. W.," as in "ESAND(R)EW(S)," to create a normal sounding name, E. S. Andrews. The magician agreed so long as the name would be reversed to add another level of deception, thereby creating the infamous "S. W. Erdnase."

"Soon after the publication of the book, the magician became a member of the S.A.M. and later advanced to the office of president, which he held for many years. By now you have probably realized that he was none other than Erich Weiss, better known as Harry Houdini. E. S. returned to a life among his family in the Midwest. Houdini went to his grave 24 years later without having ever revealed his complicity in the writing of the book known as The Expert at the Card Table."

- Anonymous

 Carlo Morpurgo | 04/01/15 07:20 AM | link | filter

 Very creative.....The possibilities are endless!

 Jonathan Townsend | 04/01/15 09:04 AM | link | filter
I got as far as the McKinney's needing a name and seeing the reflection of a truck with "Andrews" on the side ... but this latest fantasy with E. W. is a great story thread - bravo!

Bill Mullins | 04/01/15 09:13 AM | link | filter

Biographical sketch of Storrs Campbell.

Scott Lane | 04/01/15 12:35 PM | link | filter

Previous Post: As some have conjectured....

Trust was broken when Mr. Erich Weiss turned his “selected” card face up and executed a shift. It was not only foolish but dangerous to do at the time. Rumour has it that Professor Moriarty was not pleased...

Scott Edward Lane

Bill Mullins | 04/01/15 01:08 PM | link | filter

Bill M. -- where is that quotation from?

Scott -- are you suggesting that Campbell was Erdnase, or that MFA was, and Campbell was his ghost writer?

Roger M. | 04/01/15 05:40 PM | link | filter

I find your "puzzle posts" contrary to the tone of the rest of the thread Scott.

If you don't want to partake in the sharing of information related to Erdnase (as has always been the goal of this thread), that's fine ... but one would have to wonder what then you find of interest in this thread?

Richard Kaufman | 04/01/15 06:54 PM | link | filter

Mr. Lane, unless you have something worthwhile to contribute other than selling stuff and nonsensical messages, please stop.

Ken Herrick | 04/01/15 07:57 PM | link | filter
astray. Sorry...awkward English.

Ken Herrick

Brad Jeffers | 04/01/15 11:10 PM | link | filter

Mr. Lane,
Is the website swerdnase.net yours? I am thinking it is, as the sole item in the store is your book, although it seems there are no copies for sale.

Richard Evans | 04/03/15 11:14 AM | link | filter

Bill Marquardt wrote: What do you think of the following?

"As some have conjectured, there was more than one author to Artifice, Ruse and Subterfuge at the Card Table. The secret to understanding this is to first reverse the letters in the name of the alleged author, S. W. Erdnase. This gives us ESANDREWS. It is then necessary to separate the letters into an earlier construction, which was "E. S. and R. E. W. S.," and before that, "E.S. and E.W." (The underlines are mine, for the sake of clarity.) Here is the backstory, or at least part of it:

"In 1901, a well-known gambler whose initials were E.S. and who traveled between Chicago and the east coast, was discovered to be a cheat and suffered for it with a severe beating. Friendless and nearly broke, he decided the world of "advantage play" was no longer suitable as a way of life. By chance, he encountered a popular magician (E. W.) at a fair. The two of them became friends of a sort and discussed the art of card manipulation, comparing notes and sharing ideas.

"E.S. proposed the idea of co-writing a book exposing the secrets of the card cheat, with an additional section on card magic in order to promote greater sales. To maintain anonymity, they decided to claim authorship as "E. S. and E. W."

"Not long afterwards, the magician got cold feet. He had heard rumors of the proposed formation of a national organization of magicians, The Society of American Magicians, an idea he had
someone would recognize his initials and suspect him. He asked E. S. to eliminate the magic portion of the book but E. S. refused. E.S. appealed to the magician’s ego by insisting that a little added confusion would maintain the secrecy of their authorship yet their initials would still be there on the cover of the book.

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"Soon after the publication of the book, the magician became a member of the S.A.M. and later advanced to the office of president, which he held for many years. By now you have probably realized that he was none other than Erich Weiss, better known as Harry Houdini. E. S. returned to a life among his family in the Midwest. Houdini went to his grave 24 years later without having ever revealed his complicity in the writing of the book known as The Expert at the Card Table."

- Anonymous

Interesting, Bill. Where is that taken from?
I made a similar suggestion for an alternative interpretation of 'SW Erdnase' on page 63 of this thread (admittedly, without implicating Houdini).

Richard

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**Bill Marquardt** | 04/03/15 12:19 PM | [link] | [filter]

My post was meant as something of an April Fool's joke, however, it is based upon an actual theory I created to fit the facts. I put the idea into a narrative form, and placed quotes around it to distance myself from it. That's the joke part.

There is no evidence to my knowledge that the scenario I created is true. It is fun to speculate, though, and I have long suspected the "and" part of the reversed name might be an actual clue that there were two or more authors. Wouldn't it be cool if Houdini actually was the second author?
SwanJr wrote: My research is going to be published in the Magicana Erdnase issue, but in quick summary: by publishing in Chicago where the Comstock Laws were almost universally ignored, Erdnase would have much less need of anonymity than in most cities in the United States, including New York where the law was enforced vigorously. However for reason's of safety while travelling, it was prudent to use a false name, since you could be arrested anywhere in the States if you used the U. S. Mail to distribute your work; therefore almost everyone who sold gambling supplies from Chicago used a pseudonym to sell their wares. Most did not go to too much trouble beyond that to remain anonymous.

- Hurt McDermott

Comstock on Metafilter.

Bill Mullins | 04/25/15 10:36 AM | link | filter

Did anyone hear anything about Scott Lane's lecture? How did it go?

Tom Sawyer | 05/23/15 06:03 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

We are coming up on the 25th anniversary of Jeff Busby’s "scoop" of John Booth relating to Jeff’s "suicide or snuff" theory.

If you have a copy of Thaumaturgist, No. 15 ("Special Erdnase Edition," June-July 1990), you have seen that it indicates a dateline of May 25, 1990, and that it was mailed on May 29, 1990. The issue was rushed out, so that Jeff Busby could beat John Booth to the punch basically regarding John’s revelations of Jeff’s “suicide or snuff” theory.

It is a somewhat complicated story (summarized in The Man Who Was Erdnase), but briefly, it appears that Lynn Healy had learned the theory from Jeff, and Jeff considered the theory to be confidential.

I don’t know in detail what Lynn’s side of the story was, but it is clear from that Thaumaturgist and The Man Who Was Erdnase that she also did some of her own research on the topic.
punch, in *Thaumaturgist*, No. 15, in which he outlined the original “suicide or snuff” theory and published a picture of Milton Franklin Andrews.

There is actually much more to the story, including some involvement in connection with the *Inside Magic* newsletter.

The account in *The Man Who Was Erdnase* on pages 127-131 is not completely one-sided, and it does tell some of Lynn’s side of the story. Nonetheless, to me the account comes across as heavily weighted toward the Busby-Whaley side of the dispute.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Tom Sawyer** | 05/24/15 09:58 PM | [link] [filter]

Hi All,

In *Artifice, Ruse & Ernase*, Hurt McDermott, in discussing Edwin Sumner Andrews’s second wife, says that, “Dolly could well be a nickname for Adelia,” the thought being that Dolly (or Dollie) could have been named after Dalrymple’s mom.

I don’t think that is the case, based on information in the November 2011 issue of the *Seeley Genealogical Society Newsletter*, page 14, where it says, “Jennie named her daughter after her mother Dolly (wife of Ebenezer Seely). Her brother S.M. Seely also had a daughter, Miss Dolly Seely of Chicago.” This information is apparently from Linda Crocker, the editor.

The reference to S.M. Seely’s daughter appears to be an aside. Most of the discussion is about the other Dolly, Jennie’s daughter.

We know from a clipping in Richard Hatch’s “Reading Erdnase Backwards” that Dolly’s dad was named S.M. Seely. The end of the quotation above thus appears to refer to Andrews’s second wife.

Something else I find rather interesting is that the same newsletter (in the same section, information from Linda Crocker) indicates that this Jennie’s husband at the pertinent time was Addison Bates Crosby. It has been mentioned in this thread and also in “Reading Erdnase Backwards” that Edwin Sumner Andrews’s first wife was Elizabeth Crosby.

My supposition is that Andrews met his second wife via Elizabeth or Elizabeth’s relatives.
A fun article on Erdnase in today’s San Francisco Examiner, despite a number of unfortunate typos (143 pages? Boutin? etc.): http://www.sfexaminer.com/sanfrancisco/ ... id=2931064

June 9, 1900. Census time. Edwin S. Andrews (age 41); Dorothea Andrews (age 33); Ethel Andrews (age 10); and William E. Andrews (age 6) are all lodgers at 1750 Stout Street, Denver, Colorado. Edwin is a travelling agent for the RR. He was born in Minnesota and his parents were born in Pennsylvania. Dorothea was born in California and her parents were from New York. Both Edwin and Dorothea stated that they had been married for 17 years. That puts their wedding in 1883, when Edwin is said to have married Elizabeth Crosby!


Dolly Frances Seeley was only 16 in 1883. Did she get married under the name ‘Elizabeth Crosby’ because she was either under age or didn’t have her father’s consent?

“The age of consent in Illinois is 17. However, it is illegal for a person 18 or older to commit sexual acts on a person under the age of 18 if he/she has a position of authority or trust over the victim.” [Wikipedia]

Food for thought and maybe discussion?

But I still don’t believe that Edwin S. Andrews was 'Erdnase'

Peter Zenner

A newspaper article (July 7, 1898) reproduced in Richard Hatch’s "Reading Erdnase Backwards" indicates that "Dolly Seely" and "E.S. Andrews" were married the previous day. Richard reiterates that July 6, 1898 date for the marriage elsewhere in the article.

Yes Tom, but in the 1900 Census they both said that they had been married for 17
girl twice - the first time was illegal and the second time legitimised the marriage. Check the Census for yourself!

**Bill Mullins** | 06/07/15 06:03 PM | link | filter

The most straightforward explanation is that the Census was wrong (which happens A LOT).

Elizabeth Crosby and Dollie Seeley were not the same person; there are too many other contemporary records that describe them separately for this to even be considered.

**Zenner** | 06/07/15 07:04 PM | link | filter

Ah but, Bill. Not only does it say that they have been married for 17 years, it says that Dorothea is the mother of two children and that those two children are still alive. They are then listed as Ethel, age 10 (born in March, 1890) and William E., age 6 (born in July, 1893). And their parents were, supposedly, only married in 1898?

Something fishy was going on...

**Bill Mullins** | 06/07/15 07:53 PM | link | filter

It doesn't say that Dorothea was their mother, it says that two children lived in the household. The census taker probably canvassed the house and interviewed someone who said that Dorothea was born in California, and made the assumption that Dorothea was the kids' mom and that therefore their mother was born in CA. But their mom was Elizabeth, and the 1910 census reflects this --- it says that the kids' mom was born in Illinois and their father was born in Minnesota, which is consistent with what we know about Elizabeth and Edwin. The 1910 census also says that Edwin and his wife have been married 11 years, but says her name is "Frances" (Dollie's middle name).

While the 1900 census says that Edwin was married 17 years, if you look at the entry next to "Dorothea", you can see that "2" has been written over the "17".

Again, the most reasonable explanation was that the census taker made a mistake. There is no reason to think that Dollie had anything to do with Edwin before Elizabeth's death, or that Dollie and Elizabeth were the same person.

If you look at lots of census records, you find little mistakes all the time. The census takers weren't paid very much and would often get information from neighbors or other people who might not know the right answers to questions.
Bill Mullins wrote: It doesn't say that Dorothea was their mother, it says that two children lived in the household.

At the top of the column it says "Mother of how many children" and the answer is "2". There is no attempt to indicate that she was their step-mother.

Bill Mullins wrote: While the 1900 census says that Edwin was married 17 years, if you look at the entry next to "Dorothea", you can see that "2" has been written over the "17".

Or "17" has been written over the "2". If the former then why wasn't "2" written over the "17" after Edwin's name?

Bill Mullins wrote: Again, the most reasonable explanation was that the census taker made a mistake. There is no reason to think that Dollie had anything to do with Edwin before Elizabeth's death, or that Dollie and Elizabeth were the same person.

Well it is possible that the enumerator made a load of mistakes but then again it is possible that Mr & Mrs Andrews were covering up a past felony. How come you're so adamant?

Bill Mullins wrote: If you look at lots of census records, you find little mistakes all the time. The census takers weren't paid very much and would often get information from neighbors or other people who might not know the right answers to questions.

And then again it could be that he was deliberately given wrong information.

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Bill Mullins | 06/07/15 10:49 PM | link | filter

Believe what you want.

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Roger M. | 06/08/15 12:58 AM | link | filter

Zenner wrote: How come you're so adamant?

Because Bill M. has demonstrated over a period of years that his Erdnase research is, quite simply, second to none.
Thanks, Roger, but nearly everything we know about Edwin Sumner Andrews comes from Richard Hatch, not me.

I think that I have read everything that Richard Hatch has written about his candidate but I don't recall anybody commenting on the anomalies in that 1900 Census.

Being criticised by Messrs Mullins and "M" will not affect my belief that something was fishy. I merely brought it to your attention, gentlemen.

Perhaps Richard "H" would like to comment. I have searched for Elizabeth Crosby "of Chicago", age 20 in 1883. I couldn't find one apart from her marriage to E.S.A. There was one in Peoria and another in Cherry Valley, both in Illinois, and either one of them could have been working in Chicago and have her named purloined by Dorothea Seeley. It happens.

Are you serious? "Criticized"?

This thread, the most in depth examination of the identity of Erdnase available anywhere, is totally comprised of posts from people openly exchanging ideas.

Some ideas gain traction, some don't.

Don't confuse the fact that people aren't jumping up and down thanking you for presenting your ideas with any sort of a critique.

Enjoy participating in the ongoing discussion ... and don't get all twisted out of shape when folks don't immediately buy into your comments as a new, and revolutionary discovery.

Perhaps further investigation on your part will bolster your case?
Perhaps further investigation on your part will bolster your case? Following along that tack - an easy way to gain traction is to post the source data and offer conservative interpretation so that others can build. Unstated presuppositions and unfounded conjectures are fair sport/clay pigeons.

Brad Jeffers wrote: Mr. Lane,
Is the website swerdnase.net yours? I am thinking it is, as the sole item in the store is your book, although it seems there are no copies for sale.

Scott Lane's book from 1992 "Gambling Card Sharps: How to Beat a Cheater" is now available as a PDF here http://www.lybrary.com/gambling-card-sh ... 22500.html

While it is not about Erdnase, it is about sophisticated cheating methods very much in the spirit of Erdnase's teachings.

This line in the blurb is interesting:

"Much of this book's material is from French Lick, Indiana, the reputed origin of the elusive author of The Expert at the Card Table"

Obvious question would be, how can you have a "reputed origin" of somebody for whom you have absolutely no idea in the world who he actually is?

What a load of rubbish.

Just making sure folks are keeping up to date with Tom's blog on Erdnase, with lots of recent posts on the subject.

https://erdnasequest.wordpress.com/

As Tom ramps up for the release of his new book, his blog posts reveal his extremely interesting thinking on Erdnase and the ongoing identity search.

Tom's new book promises to be a great read.
Roger, thank you so much for those laudatory comments! That is very kind of you, and I appreciate it a great deal.

--Tom

New edition of Erdnase.

Roger M. wrote:

Zenner wrote: How come you're so adamant?

Because Bill M. has demonstrated over a period of years that his Erdnase research is, quite simply, second to none.

Yours included.

Zenner, thanks for your contribution to this thread. I certainly agree with Bill that census information isn't necessarily reliable, so you could be barking up the wrong tree; but on the other hand perhaps you are on to something -- in any case nothing in the responses to your observations adequately disposes of your concerns. As for Roger M.'s remarks, alas sometimes people confuse quantity with authority and doubt with scholarship.

On other fronts ...

Over 6 years ago in this thread, I suggested that a bibliographical study of Expert could be fruitful, but since then little progress seems to have been made in this area. There has been some discussion recently about the bibliographical elements of Expert, such as the font used and the means of printing both the first edition and the Drake editions.

By the early 20th century, hand-set type a la Gutenberg was largely a thing of the past in commercial printing, being left to very small, custom printers and to the "artisan" printing movement. Large print jobs were done from Linotype or Monotype. But Linotype and Monotype machines were not cheap, so most of the smaller job printers would have their work composed by larger printing companies (such as the local newspaper) and receive set type in galleys.
printing practices, and without such training, neophytes are bound to run into many dead-ends, or worse, to rely on fragmentary or incorrect information and believe therefrom that the problem has been solved. For example, at least one suggestion was made that Drake could have done a photo-facsimile of the first edition. While doing so would have been technologically feasible, such a theory overlooks the prohibitive cost of doing so and thus the fact that a second-tier publisher like Drake would have never gone to such expense for a book like Expert. It’s a practical certainty that Drake printed from the same type plates used for the first edition.

The only way to get an accurate bibliographical picture of Expert is to consult with an expert in the field. If and when this is done, some new and valuable facts bearing on the authorship question may have been gleaned.

— Lybrary, 06/28/15 09:28 AM

magicam wrote: The only way to get an accurate bibliographical picture of Expert is to consult with an expert in the field. If and when this is done, some new and valuable facts bearing on the authorship question may have been gleaned.

I have consulted with an expert. While I don't really disagree with anything you wrote, there is one point that I think can't be stated as strongly as you have. EATCT has more than 100 illustrations. Essentially the same process would be used to print these illustrations as would be used for a photo-facsimile reproduction. If a small printer like James McKinney could print such an illustrated book then Drake would certainly be able to do a photo-facsimile. At least I don't see a reason to categorically rule it out as you have. On top of this, an examination of digital scans of two editions by the expert I consulted suggests that a facsimile process was used. However, the expert could not make a strong and categorical statement about this. But he thinks it is likely from what he examined. Unfortunately the digital editions available to me were not of sufficient quality that we can really draw a strong conclusion from it. However, to rule it out like you have done, purely on what you think are economical reasons, is just as wrong a conclusion as you blame others have come to.

— Roger M., 06/28/15 10:10 AM

magicam wrote: As for Roger M.’s remarks, alas sometimes people confuse quantity with authority and doubt with scholarship.

I've always respected your writing, and admired your knowledge Clay, and it's certainly good to see that you don't let the overall quality of both diminish when
with, but considering that you were nowhere to be found in this thread for the past three years, I’m surprised you went out of your way to focus on me personally.

It’s very sweet of you to pay me your attention, but I’m forced to ponder its true meaning.

Thanks for dropping by.

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**magicam** | 06/28/15 08:08 PM | link | filter

I have consulted with an expert. While I don't really disagree with anything you wrote, there is one point that I think can't be stated as strongly as you have. EATCT has more than 100 illustrations. Essentially the same process would be used to print these illustrations as would be used for a photo-facsimile reproduction. If a small printer like James McKinney could print such an illustrated book then Drake would certainly be able to do a photo-facsimile. At least I don't see a reason to categorically rule it out as you have. On top of this, an examination of digital scans of two editions by the expert I consulted suggests that a facsimile process was used. However, the expert could not make a strong and categorical statement about this. But he thinks it is likely from what he examined. Unfortunately the digital editions available to me were not of sufficient quality that we can really draw a strong conclusion from it. However, to rule it out like you have done, purely on what you think are economical reasons, is just as wrong a conclusion as you blame others have come to.

Chris, your efforts are to be commended, and I’m not sure they’ve been adequately acknowledged in this thread. That said, I’m not surprised that your expert (though I’m not sure what his/her expertise really is) wouldn’t make any firm statements – doing so wasn’t possible because digital scans are wholly inadequate (and believing that better quality scans would have made a difference bolsters the point about the perils of amateurs doing bibliographical work). One must have the original documents in hand for side-by-side comparison, and nothing less. I’m not trying to knock you – in fact I applaud your efforts – but your expert should have told you up front that there would be little gained by the study of digital images.

As for your belief that Drake could have produced a photo-facsimile of the first edition, I can add little other than: economics always informs printing practices, Drake was in the business of making money, first and foremost, and to divorce technological capabilities from economics completely undermines sound bibliographical analysis.

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**lybrary** | 06/28/15 08:44 PM | link | filter
I have found out about print technology and print practice back then, I don't see a justification to rule out a facsimile. I would agree if it is stated less strongly, such as a facsimile edition is perhaps less likely based purely on economical terms. However, also more likely based on other logistical terms regarding the original plates which I have pointed out earlier in this thread. So factoring in several aspects it doesn’t appear to be more or less likely in my opinion.

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**Zenner wrote:** June 9, 1900. Census time. Edwin S. Andrews (age 41); Dorothea Andrews (age 33); Ethel Andrews (age 10); and William E. Andrews (age 6) are all lodgers at 1750 Stout Street, Denver, Colorado. Edwin is a travelling agent for the RR. He was born in Minnesota and his parents were born in Pennsylvania. Dorothea was born in California and her parents were from New York. Both Edwin and Dorothea stated that they had been married for 17 years. That puts their wedding in 1883, when Edwin is said to have married Elizabeth Crosby!


Dolly Frances Seeley was only 16 in 1883. Did she get married under the name ‘Elizabeth Crosby’ because she was either under age or didn’t have her father’s consent?

“The age of consent in Illinois is 17. However, it is illegal for a person 18 or older to commit sexual acts on a person under the age of 18 if he/she has a position of authority or trust over the victim.” [Wikepedia]

Food for thought and maybe discussion?

Your wikipedia excerpt relates to today and has little to do with how things were in the 1880s. Back in 1883, the age of consent was much younger than 17. In Illinois, it was 10. Google Age of Consent Laws by Stephen Robertson, University of Sydney, Australia.

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**Bill Mullins** | 07/02/15 01:05 PM | link | filter

Earlier in the thread, Peter Zenner suggested (from an anomaly in the 1900 census) that Elizabeth Crosby Andrews and Dollie Seeley Andrews (Edwin’s first and second
"In the evening, the picnickers returned, reaching the city about 7 o’clock. The picnic is an annual affair and is always enjoyed. Those present were Messrs and Mesdames E. S. Andrews and children, of Chicago, S. M. Seeley, George McCallister and children, Michael Burk, E. E. Sheetz and children, A. M. Hetfield; Mrs. Ralph Seeley, of Des Moines, and Miss Dollie F. Seeley, of Chicago."

This article describes Mrs. Andrews (Elizabeth) and Dollie Seeley, both being at the same place at the same time. Ergo, they are two different people.

Richard Hatch | 07/05/15 04:22 PM | link | filter

Does anyone on the forum live in the DC area and can check on one of the Library of Congress first edition copies? Apparently one of them has an advertisement for the book pasted inside and a review tipped in. I examined two first edition copies at the LoC about 15 years ago and don’t have easy access to my notes of that visit, so don’t recall seeing this copy offhand. Apparently it is copy 1, which I would think would be one of the two copies submitted with the copyright application, but perhaps not.

Here’s a link to the LoC entry on the first edition, which lists the Adrian Plate/Houdini copy as Copy 3 (and mentions the inscription "Sold by James McKinney and Co,... Chicago" on the title page)
http://catalog.loc.gov/vwebv/holdingsIn ... Id=6789584

Here’s what it says about Copy 1:

It is a bit confusing, however, as they seem to list two Copy 1s, one part of the McManus-Young Collection (which I assume is the one with the advertisement and clipping) and another that I assume is one of the two copyright submission copies. I recall examining two copies when I was there, the Plate/Houdini copy and the copyright submission copy. I don’t recall seeing the advertisement and clipping. Hope someone can follow up and report on this!

Zenner | 07/07/15 05:47 AM | link | filter

ERDNASE FOUND

Pull up a chair and grab a coffee.

The man who used the nom-de-plume "S.W. Erdnase" was none other than Chicago magician, Harry Stuart Thompson. Harry was born on February 28, 1858, which means that he was 44 on February 28, 1902, just after the copyright application was made out. What did Marshall D. Smith say? Between 40 and 45? He would have been 43
Smith said he was about 5'6" in height. I don't know exactly but you can tell from a photograph in 'The Sphinx' that he was a shorty. (See the March, 1910, edition, volume 9, page 9) He is seen perched on a piano stool in order to raise himself up a little higher.

Harry was a commercial traveller at the time of the book, specialising in printing inks. He had been brought up in his father's printing and publishing company, J.S Thompson & Co of Chicago, and his brother Frank was still a printer in 1902. On page 16 of his book he refers to printer's ink used in the marking of playing cards and, of course, he speaks with authority. He gave lectures on such inks and even presented specimens to the United States National Museum in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Wilson mentioned in 'The Sphinx' that Harry "is interested in magic more from the ethical and literary standpoint than from the operative side, as he does not give entertainments of any kind, although he often mystifies his brother 'knights of the grip' with his skill in pure sleight of hand. Mr. Thompson has one of the largest and most practical collections of books, newspaper and magazine articles on magic extant" (See the December, 1905, edition, where Harry's photograph features on the front cover).

So yes, 'Erdnase' had access to virtually everything available on sleight of hand AND was an expert in the execution of it. Readers of books on Houdini will recognise his name as they were close friends and correspondents. Why wouldn't Harry show the other Harry a few moves which were later shown to a few others and then miscredited?

You might be wondering why he concealed his name. It seems, from correspondence that I have had with his grand-daughter, that the family were very religious. She sent me a photograph of Harry in his library and there is a cross affixed to one of the bookcases. The thought of him being an ex-card cheat would not have gone down very well in society and the book was obviously marketed in that way in order to sell it.

He had a steady job and was regularly included in the 'Chicago Blue Book', so why did he "need the money"? Dr. Wilson often mentioned the help that Harry gave to the Vernelos when they were setting up 'The Sphinx' and I suspect that he was helping financially as well as practically. Harry was a great supporter of magic and magicians and I doubt that the S.A.M. would have succeeded so quickly had it not been for his role as Western Representative. He used his journeys to cities far and wide in his regular job to promote the S.A.M. as well.

Harry eventually retired from the road and became the manager of Ruxton's Printing Ink Company in St. Paul, Minnesota. He died there on December 20th, 1930, at the age of 72, and was buried in Roselawn Cemetery, Roseville. It seems that he might have lost his interest in magic later on in life. After many mentions of his activities in 'The
I suspect that you are wondering why he used the name 'S.W. Erdnase'. O.K. In 1901 Emory Cobbe Andrews graduated from university in Chicago and went to work in the Chicago office of Ruxton’s, the company for which Harry worked. Why 'S.W. Erdnase' and not 'S.W. Erdnace'? I don't know. They sound the same.

I came to realise that Harry was 'Erdnase' way back in April, 2013, but have kept it to myself for two years as I have been researching his life and times in the hope of making a book out of it. It took a long time to get a response from his descendants. Circumstances have forced me to come clean now and there may well be a book in due course.

Peter Zenner

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**Jack Shalom** | 07/07/15 07:10 AM | link | filter

I guess I'll ask the obvious follow-up questions:

Why Harry, and not one of the other candidates?

Is there a smoking gun?

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**Richard Hatch** | 07/07/15 09:03 AM | link | filter

Certainly an interesting candidate! If his brother was a printer, why work with McKinney? To keep the family in the dark about it? The same argument was made by Gardner about MFA’s family not knowing he was the author. Why keep it secret from his brother magicians? Do we have other samples of his writing style to compare to Erdnase?

Looking forward to hearing more about him!

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**Rick Ruhl** | 07/07/15 09:32 AM | link | filter

And David Ben, in the new book The Experts at the card table, points to railroad worker E.S Andrews and even puts the family picture in.

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**Zenner** | 07/07/15 10:17 AM | link | filter

*Jack Shalom wrote:* I guess I’ll ask the obvious follow-up questions:
Is there a smoking gun?

Everything we know from the book and from Marshall D. Smith's description fits perfectly with Harry S. Thompson. This cannot be said of any of the other candidates. I haven't found a link with Louis Dalrymple but I have found a link with another political cartoonist. Martin Gardner tried to bully Mr. Smith regarding the author's height and it may well have been Gardner who planted the idea that it was Dalrymple.

No smoking guns; he wasn't a murderer or a suicide

For his full life story, you will have to wait.

Peter Zenner

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**Roger M. | 07/07/15 10:26 AM | link | filter**

You have simply identified a 5'6" man of 44 years who lived in Chicago and was a magician.

Where's the evidence that this has anything to do with TEATCT or its author?

You've offered *nothing* to link the two together.

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**Zenner | 07/07/15 10:33 AM | link | filter**

*Richard Hatch wrote:* Certainly an interesting candidate! If his brother was a printer, why work with McKinney? To keep the family in the dark about it? The same argument was made by Gardner about MFA's family not knowing he was the author.

Why keep it secret from his brother magicians? Do we have other samples of his writing style to compare to Erdnase?

Looking forward to hearing more about him!

I said he was "a printer", Richard, not that he had a printing company of his own. Their father's firm had long gone and the sons had to find alternative employment with other companies. Hint, hint...

The reason why I believe that he used a pseudonym has been covered in my original post.

I suspect that he published two other books anonymously - and have good reasons for...
You can find a couple of articles which he wrote for the latter online via Google.

Peter Zenner

Richard Hatch | 07/07/15 11:58 AM | link | filter

Are you doing an article or book on it?

Brad Jeffers | 07/07/15 03:47 PM | link | filter

Richard Hatch | 07/07/15 04:37 PM | link | filter

Without knowing more than what Peter has just shared with us today, Thompson is, to me, a surprising candidate, as would be anyone from the magic community of the time. My prejudice against the author likely being someone as embedded in the magic community as Thompson was stems from two arguments:

1. Erdnase begins the Legerdemain section by noting that magicians, whose books he has read and performances he has attended, don't use a system of blind shuffles, rather than the pass: "We are aware that all conjurers advise the shift or pass, as the first accomplishment... But so far as we can learn from the exhibition and literature of conjurers, not one of them knows of, or at least employs or writes of a satisfactory
who considers himself part of the magic community. It sounds like an interested outsider looking in and making a helpful observation. (As to whether the author was himself a card cheat, that is an entirely different subject. In the Card Table Artifice section he often refers to the “expert” and “the fraternity” and while he gives examples of where he himself was cheated, so clearly had extensive gambling experience, he never claims to have moved under fire himself, though he does not deny it either...)

2. It seems to me extremely unlikely that someone as embedded in the magic community as Thompson clearly was (friend of Houdini, friend of Vernelo, who was founding publisher of The Sphinx, Western representative of the SAM, friend of Dr. A. M. Wilson, etc.) would have kept his authorship of this book a secret from so many for so long. The author is clearly proud of his work and his improved methods, some of which (the stock shuffles, for example) he taught to others. Why would he not tell his magical intimates about his authorship of the book? Why would Vernelo not advertise it in the very first issue of the Sphinx, which came out the same month the book did (March 1902) rather than wait until the November issue, 9 months later?

I look forward to learning more about Thompson from Peter’s forthcoming book. If a direct connection from Thompson to the book can be established (such as a provable relationship to McKinney or his descendants confirming his authorship), then he becomes a much more viable candidate, in my opinion.

On Marshall Smith’s description: While I personally put a lot of stock in Smith’s recollections, as the only really credible witness to the creation of the book, he recalled meeting someone clean shaven (both photos I have seen of Thompson show him with a mustache. Of course, he might have grown it after 1901...), who had come to Chicago from the East (i.e., not a Chicago resident) to publish his book. He also describes him as a reformed gambler, though how much of this description (like the confirmation of the name “Andrews”) was prompted by Gardner’s questioning is hard to evaluate at this point.

Richard Hatch wrote: Peter, do we know what happened to his extensive library of magic? It likely had a first edition copy of Erdnase and it would be great to examine that copy to see if there were any inscriptions, annotations, or other interesting features.

I asked his grand-daughter about his library. She has some books that used to belong to Harry but none of them are magic books. She does own a silver serving spoon of his which is engraved “The Wizard” and that’s all she has pertaining to magic.

It seems that he disposed of his magic library later in life, when he started concentrating on his other interests - photography, genealogy, history and art.
Don't hold your breath about a book folks, I'll let you know if or when!

Peter Zenner

Richard Hatch wrote: Without knowing more than what Peter has just shared with us today, Thompson is, to me, a surprising candidate, as would be anyone from the magic community of the time.

Are you saying that "Erdnase" knew nothing about magic? There is absolutely no reason why he shouldn't be a member of the magic community. As Dr. Wilson said in 'The Sphinx', Harry never did public shows but he enjoyed showing off his sleight of hand skills. There are many "magicians" around today who can flick cards around but never do shows.

Richard Hatch wrote: My prejudice against the author likely being someone as embedded in the magic community as Thompson was stems from two arguments: [snip]

Magicians are supposed to be able to keep secrets. The mass marketing of books and tricks to the general public indicates that they blab all too easily. Harry had a secret and he kept it. Some of his close friends must have known but, full marks to them, they kept his secret.

Richard Hatch wrote: 1. Erdnase begins the Legerdemain section by noting that magicians, whose books he has read and performances he has attended, don't use a system of blind shuffles, rather than the pass: "We are aware that all conjurers advise the shift or pass, as the first accomplishment... But so far as we can learn from the exhibition and literature of conjurers, not one of them knows of, or at least employs or writes of a satisfactory substitute; hence their entire dependence upon that artifice to produce certain results." (pp. 125-6 of the Charles & Wonder edition). This does not sound to me like someone who considers himself part of the magic community. It sounds like an interested outsider looking in and making a helpful observation.

Just put "Harry S. Thompson" into the search facility of your Sphinx disc and do a check. He was attending performances by magicians regularly but he never did shows himself. He WAS an outsider regarding performing shows. He loved magic and he
are many young lads in my local society who can run rings around me with their finger-flicking, but do a show in front of an audience? NEVER

Richard Hatch wrote: (As to whether the author was himself a card cheat, that is an entirely different subject. In the Card Table Artifice section he often refers to the "expert" and "the fraternity" and while he gives examples of where he himself was cheated, so clearly had extensive gambling experience, he never claims to have moved under fire himself, though he does not deny it either...)

He was an EXPERT - according to Dr. Wilson. He mixed with other members of the FRATERNITY in Chicago and on his travels. It is most probable that he witnessed card cheats and maybe was cheated by them, on his many train journeys - how else would a commercial traveller get around in the late 1800s and early 1900s?

Richard Hatch wrote: 2. It seems to me extremely unlikely that someone as embedded in the magic community as Thompson clearly was (friend of Houdini, friend of Vernelo, who was founding publisher of The Sphinx, Western representative of the SAM, friend of Dr. A. M. Wilson, etc.) would have kept his authorship of this book a secret from so many for so long. The author is clearly proud of his work and his improved methods, some of which (the stock shuffles, for example) he taught to others. Why would he not tell his magical intimates about his authorship of the book? Why would Vernelo not advertise it in the very first issue of the Sphinx, which came out the same month the book did (March 1902) rather than wait until the November issue, 9 months later?

The author wanted to make money. The book was obviously aimed primarily at the general public. It would sell in far greater numbers if advertised in the way it was. Annemann copied the technique, selling a book on "Forcing" as if it was a method of getting your way with women. Shoddy but true.

Richard Hatch wrote: I look forward to learning more about Thompson from Peter's forthcoming book. If a direct connection from Thompson to the book can be established (such as a provable relationship to McKinney or his descendants confirming his authorship), then he becomes a much more viable candidate, in my opinion.

I have suspected for a long time that Harry's brother, Frank Thompson, worked for McKinney but I have not been able to prove it. Recent events, however, indicate that some evidence of this may soon be forthcoming. The person with that evidence has so
Richard Hatch wrote: On Marshall Smith’s description: While I personally put a lot of stock in Smith’s recollections, as the only really credible witness to the creation of the book, he recalled meeting someone clean shaven (both photos I have seen of Thompson show him with a mustache. Of course, he might have grown it after 1901...),

Of course he might. We have no photographs of Harry before December, 1905. Some people grow them, shave them off, grow them again. Ad infinitum. An artist is a trained observer and Martin Gardner must have been desperate in trying to force Smith into remembering someone shorter than him as someone much taller. I trust Smith; I don’t trust Gardner!

Richard Hatch wrote: who had come to Chicago from the East (i.e., not a Chicago resident) to publish his book.

From memory, didn’t he say that his accent indicated that he was from the East? Not that he had specifically come from the East to publish the book? Harry’s father, Jeremiah (Jerry) Thompson, was from Goshen, New York State, and his mother, Josephine (Sampson), was from Duxbury, Massachusetts. Are those places far enough East for you? Jerry’s sister, Susan Thompson, lived with the family for a long time and she was a schoolteacher. Don’t you think that young Harry would grow up speaking like his parents and aunt? I do...

Richard Hatch wrote: He also describes him as a reformed gambler, though how much of this description (like the confirmation of the name "Andrews") was prompted by Gardner’s questioning is hard to evaluate at this point.

That was his back story. That was the way the book was marketed. He wanted to make money. Gardner wanted Smith to verify that ‘Erdnase’ was Milton Franklin Andrews so that he could sell his sensational story. He wanted to make money also.

Peter Zenner

Bill Mullins | 07/08/15 09:35 PM | link | filter

Tom Sawyer recently posted about early non-magic Erdnase advertisements, and linked to a Genii Forum post from Richard Hatch about a Mar 28 1903 Police Gazette advertisement for the book.

Here is an ad from Police Gazette from a week earlier (Mar 21 1903). It is the earliest advertisement for a book that is listed on Genii Forum and on Gardener's Erdnase Facebook page.

Edgar R. Pdfullins | 07/08/15 09:35 PM | link | filter
And [here](#) is an ad from Billboard from later in the year (Sept 5 1903).

[These last two links work fine for me in Google Chrome, but not in MS Internet Explorer. Dunno why.]

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**Richard Hatch** | 07/09/15 01:02 AM | [link] | [filter]

Peter, thanks for your detailed reply.
A couple of quick points:
It is clear from his book that the author knew quite a bit about card magic, including moves from very recently published books marketed to the magic fraternity. That does not mean that he was or considered himself a member of the magic fraternity and my point was that the voice he uses in the Legerdemain section implies that he did not consider himself a member of the magic (as opposed to the gambling) fraternity. Thompson was clearly a major player in the magic community, being among other things the Western representative of the newly formed Society of American Magicians. Whether or not he performed as a magician has no bearing on whether he considered himself a member of the magic fraternity. I'll wager that the young finger flingers in your local club who never perform consider themselves magicians and not outsiders. My argument is that the author seems to position himself outside the magic community, and in my opinion is unlikely to been as embedded in it as was Thompson.

You say:

> The book was obviously aimed primarily at the general public. It would sell in far greater numbers if advertised in the way it was.

Please educate me on this point: How do we know it was aimed at the general public? It is not at all obvious to me that is was. In his famous preface (used as the basis for the November 1902 Vernelo ad), he does offer the book to the "public" and outlines those he thinks will find it of interest ("all lovers of card games"), but we don't know of any general publication ads for the book prior to 1903 and those early ads were not from the author. I think most early Erdnase researchers thought it was aimed at the gambling and (to a lesser degree) magic communities. How did the author market it? That is one of the big mysteries. To go over old ground on this forum: copies of the book were available in March 1902, but no mention of them earlier than September 1902 (in the Sphinx, without any purchase details) has been found. The first known ad (also in the Sphinx) is November 1902. I'd love to see an ad from the author (and not a middleman such as Vernelo or Atlas) in a general publication (OK, in any publication!) as I suspect it might reveal much about his intent and identity. No such ad has turned up to date (though the search continues!).

If a relationship between Thompson and McKinney can be shown (and not just
favor in my opinion. I look forward to hearing those details!

You say,

That was his back story. That was the way the book was marketed. He wanted to make money. Gardner wanted Smith to verify that 'Erdnase' was Milton Franklin Andrews so that he could sell his sensational story. He wanted to make money also.

I think this is incorrect on several levels. As mentioned previously, we don’t know how the author marketed the book or to whom (other than magic dealers and gambling supply houses, assuming Vernelo got it from the author and based on the testimony of Edwin Hood's son Richard Hood, of H. C. Evans & Company). Gardner first interviewed Smith on December 13, 1946. He did not develop the Milton Franklin Andrews theory until October 1949, at which point he did correspond with Smith hoping for confirmation. But in his early encounters with Smith, although he did prompt him on the name "Andrews" (when Smith was perplexed by the name "Erdnase", which he didn’t recognize), he seems to have been unbiased in his questions regarding Smith’s recollection of the author. Prior to developing the MFA theory, Gardner looked for both magicians and gamblers named Andrews, hoping to link them to to book, Dalrymple, and Smith’s description. I do not believe that Gardner promoted the MFA theory because its sensational aspects might make the story more marketable. In fact, Gardner was apparently dismayed by the sensational rewrite of his story by his credited co-author John Conrad that was published in TRUE MAGAZINE in January 1958, some nine years after he began researching this candidate. Gardner may have written the article for money, but I don’t believe that motive was behind his promotion of the MFA candidacy. It is only thanks to Gardner's early research that we have most of the few clues we now have and I am quite sure that his motive in tackling this research topic was not pecuniary.

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Richard Hatch wrote: It is clear from his book that the author knew quite a bit about card magic, including moves from very recently published books marketed to the magic fraternity.

Harry S. Thompson had one of the four biggest magic libraries in America, according to Doc. Wilson. I think that the others were Houdini, Ellison and Wilson himself.

Richard Hatch wrote: That does not mean that he was or considered himself a member of the magic fraternity and my point was that the voice he uses in the Legerdemain section implies that he did not consider himself a
He was posing as a reformed card cheat and writing a book on the methods of such people. He was posing as an outsider, not as a magician.

*Richard Hatch wrote:* Please educate me on this point: How do we know it was aimed at the general public? It is not at all obvious to me that it was.

It was aimed at people who wanted to cheat at cards. All magicians are suspected of cheating at cards - "I wouldn't play cards with you" is a regular comment made to magicians. If a person known to be a magician actually were to join in a game, he would immediately be suspected of cheating.

*Richard Hatch wrote:* In his famous preface (used as the basis for the November 1902 Vernelo ad), he does offer the book to the "public" and outlines those he thinks will find it of interest ("all lovers of card games"),

Well there you go. He wanted the book to sell, so it was aimed at everybody with an interest in playing cards. How it was advertised and where it was advertised has no bearing on who wrote it. That is the mystery we have all been trying to solve.

*Richard Hatch wrote:* If a relationship between Thompson and McKinney can be shown (and not just suspected), such as Thompson supplying ink to McKinney or his brother working as a printer for McKinney, that would certainly strengthen the circumstantial case in his favor in my opinion. I look forward to hearing those details!

So do I. The person who indicated that he had such evidence initially offered to publish my research. He then decided to go it alone and suggested that we were now in a race to see who would be credited with finding Erdnase first. I have been researching Harry's life since April, 2013, and didn't want to be in a race. That's why I have submitted my case to the Genii Forum.

I don't want to get into an argument about Martin Gardner's motives. I am happy that he started the 'Search for Erdnase' and tracked Marshall D. Smith down. I am happy that you published the correspondence between the two of them. Without you three we would only have the book to go on.

From the book we know that Erdnase was an "Expert" at sleight of hand. [Harry was.] We know that Erdnase was capable of publishing a book. [Harry had years of experience in the printing and publishing trade.] We know that Erdnase knew about printing inks. [Harry was by then a commercial traveller, selling them and lecturing on them.] We know that Houdini showed Selbit a move which he (Selbit) then...
The 'Card Through Handkerchief' effect was said by Roterberg to have originated in Chicago. He called it 'Penetration of Matter' and wrote --

"The following trick, which originated in this city several years ago, has since then become popular with conjurers the world over, being no doubt one of the best of latter-day card tricks. I can conscientiously advise my readers who, until to-day were unacquainted with the trick, to add it to their repertory." (New Era Card Tricks, 1897, page 57)

There have been twelve previous candidates for Erdnase so far, according to the article on MagicPedia. I have added Harry S. Thompson as the thirteenth - unlucky for some

Would you, Richard, or anybody reading this, please show me any other candidate who ticks so many boxes as does Harry S. Thompson.

Peter Zenner

Richard Hatch | 07/09/15 12:04 PM | link | filter

Zenner wrote: Would you, Richard, or anybody reading this, please show me any other candidate who ticks so many boxes as does Harry S. Thompson.

Absent the confirmation of Thompson's connection to McKinney, I can think of a half dozen Chicago area magicians who tick of as many boxes: August Roterberg, E. S. Burns, Ed Vernelo, H. J. Burlingame, William J. Hilliar... All were in Chicago at the time, all had self-publishing experience, all could have had the knowledge contained in the book... I've researched all of them to some degree and don't think any of them were Erdnase, but let's take just one to compare him with Thompson: Bill Hilliar had extensive experience writing and editing magic, was considered an expert with cards (on one occasion filling in for Thurston on short notice with the audience none the wiser), he likely knew enough about copyright to explain the strange triple copyright, he worked for Frederick J. Drake, which sold first edition copies starting in 1903 and was first to reprint the book in 1905, he was employed by the Sphinx which was the first place we know of that the book was mentioned (by him) and the first we know of to advertise the book (by Vernelo, the publisher of the Sphinx). If one extends the search to magicians whose name was not Andrews, I'm sure one can find many who tick off many of the boxes you cite as plausibly as Thompson. That doesn't make them Erdnase, or even good candidates.

Bill Mullins | 07/09/15 12:08 PM | link | filter
I don't think so -- he openly mocked reformed card cheats ("The hypocritical cant of reformed (?) gamblers, or whining, mealy-mouthed pretensions of piety, are not foisted as a justification for imparting the knowledge it contains.")

We know that Erdnase knew about printing inks.

Well, that's a claim I have never seen made before. Why do you think so?

Roger M. | 07/09/15 01:55 PM | link | filter

Pardon my brusqueness, despite a lifetime of effort to improve, I'm simply not as politically polite as Mr. Mullins and Mr. Hatch.

The issue with candidates like Mr. Zenner has proposed (that is - candidates for whom there is absolutely no supporting evidence beyond the nominator simply putting their name forward) ... is that they are a major distraction in a search with very little manpower behind it to begin with.

Mr. Zenner does not connect his candidate in any way with Erdnase or EATCT. Indeed, when one reads between the lines of Mr. Zenners posts, it is quickly realized that he has offered nothing of substance in support of his statements.

Mr. Zenner has previously authored a book declaring Shakespeare not be the true author of his own works. Mr. Zenner's authorship of this work provides additional framework to his comments in this thread related to S.W. Erdnase and his authorship of EATCT.

Bill Mullins | 07/09/15 02:03 PM | link | filter

If you want to compare Thompson's writing style to that of Expert, here is an article he wrote. Here is another. This may be another.

Here is Harry's grave.

Peter, one thing that comes up with every proposed candidate for Erdnase is "what do they know about cards?" That answer is obvious with MF Andrews, and one of the most important pieces of Marty Demarest's research into WE Sanders tied him to card tricks and owning decks of cards. I've been able to locate newspaper references to both WE Sanders and Edwin S Andrews participating in card games.

So what's the connection between Thompson and playing cards? Why do you believe that he is Erdnase? There are questions here, aren't there?
I've gone over every reference to “Harry S. Thompson” (and "H. S. Thompson", and "Harry Thompson", etc.) I can find in AskAlexander, and see nothing that supports the idea that he knew anything about performing card magic, executing gambling sleights, played poker or other gambling card games, inventing card tricks, or anything else having to do with the contents of Expert at the Card Table. The closest I can come is a statement that "he often mystifies his brother “knights of the grip” with his skill in sleight of hand", but that same passage emphasizes "'He is interested in magic more from the ethical and literary standpoint than from the operative side, as he does not give entertainments of any kind" (Sphinx, Dec 1905). That reference may apply to cards, but it may also apply to coins, billiard balls, silks, or any of dozens of other pieces of magic apparatus. It is a leap of faith to say it means cards.

It is quite clear that from about 1902 onwards, he was an active in corresponding with magicians and in the SAM, in contributing to and publishing The Sphinx, had an advanced collection of magic books, and even acted as a while as a magic book dealer (odd, though, that his ads for selling books in the May 1904 and Feb 1905 Sphinx did not include Expert.) Excerpts of correspondence to and from Thompson that were published in the magic journals always talk about collecting and history, never about him performing or being interested in card magic.

But I can find nothing that suggests he has any skills, experience or knowledge relating to playing cards that the author of Expert would have to have.

Bill Mullins wrote:

We know that Erdnase knew about printing inks.

Well, that's a claim I have never seen made before. Why do you think so?

Offline, Richard Hatch pointed me to this line from Expert: "Nearly all standard cards are red or blue. Marking inks absolutely indistinguishable from the printer's ink can be obtained from any of the dealers." So I can see why you say Erdnase "knew about printing inks."

Roger M. wrote:

I have always read the reference to card marking in EATCT as Erdnase noting only that red cards can be marked with available red ink, and blue cards can be marked similarly with available blue ink.
Considering the obvious depth of his knowledge, that Erdnase knows how to mark a red or blue deck of cards isn’t at all surprising.

Richard Hatch wrote: I’ve researched all of them to some degree and don’t think any of them were Erdnase, but let’s take just one to compare him with Thompson: Bill Hilliar had extensive experience writing and editing magic, was considered an expert with cards (on one occasion filling in for Thurston on short notice with the audience none the wiser), he likely knew enough about copyright to explain the strange triple copyright, he worked for Frederick J. Drake, which sold first edition copies starting in 1903 and was first to reprint the book in 1905, he was employed by the Sphinx which was the first place we know of that the book was mentioned (by him) and the first we know of to advertise the book (by Vernelo, the publisher of the Sphinx). If one extends the search to magicians whose name was not Andrews, I’m sure one can find many who tick off many of the boxes you cite as plausibly as Thompson. That doesn’t make them Erdnase, or even good candidates.

According to Whaley’s *Who’s Who in Magic*, Hilliar "Moved to USA in June 1901". So, if he was Erdnase, he would have had to lose his English (Oxford!) accent pretty damn quick in order to fool Marshall D. Smith.

I can’t work up the enthusiasm to go through all of the reasons why I cannot support any of the other candidates. I am convinced 100% that Harry was the man. You people can debate and obfuscate as much as you want to. Time will tell. It is now 01.10 a.m. over here and I am tired. Goodnight.

Peter Zenner

Bill Mullins wrote: Completely unrelated to the topic at hand, but Harry’s nephew, Frank R. Thompson (son of Frank L. Thompson) was thought by Chicago police to have supplied the machine guns used in the St Valentine’s Day massacre.

Go back to your regularly scheduled Erdnasia.
McKinney, I can think of a half dozen Chicago area magicians who tick of as many boxes: August Roterberg, E. S. Burns, Ed Vernelo, H. J. Burlingame, William J. Hilliar... All were in Chicago at the time, all had self-publishing experience, all could have had the knowledge contained in the book... I've researched all of them to some degree and don't think any of them were Erdnase

OK Richard, we have both discounted the magicians you mentioned, for one reason or another. Let's stop clouding the issue and stick to our respective candidates. You have suggested several "Andrews" over the years but you have settled on one - Edwin Sumner Andrews. Was your first mention of him in print the article in the December, 1999, edition of Magic? So you have been promoting him as a possible candidate for almost 16 years (at least), compared to my promotion of Harry for 3 days. You should be able to defend your candidate better than my defence of mine.

They both appear to be a little short in stature and roughly the same age. Period. Can you tell me about Edwin's background in magic and book publishing? Erdnase certainly had knowledge in both fields and so did Harry.

Peter Zenner

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*Zenner* | 07/10/15 08:14 AM | [link] | [filter]

*Bill Mullins* wrote: Completely unrelated to the topic at hand, but Harry's nephew, Frank R. Thompson (son of Frank L. Thompson) was thought by Chicago police to have supplied the machine guns used in the St Valentine's Day massacre.

Go back to your regularly scheduled Erdnasia.

Dear Bill,

You are very good at using Google and the genealogy web-sites. Trouble is that you are telling me stuff, both publicly and privately, that I knew 2 years ago. I even supplied Find A Grave and MagicPedia with the relevant dates for Harry way before I let on about the Erdnase business.

If you want to do something really useful, why don't you track down the McKinney Bankruptcy File? If one person can do it then I am sure somebody else can. That would really be a feather in your cap.

Peter Zenner
Zenner wrote: [You are very good at using Google and the genealogy web-sites. Trouble is that you are telling me stuff, both publicly and privately, that I knew 2 years ago.

Sorry to trouble you. Don’t worry, it won’t happen again.

If you want to do something really useful, why don’t you track down the McKinney Bankruptcy File? If one person can do it then I am sure somebody else can. That would really be a feather in your cap.

If one person has already done it, no sense in me wasting my time doing it again. After all, I wouldn’t want to trouble anyone.

And my cap has enough feathers, thank you. I do what I do for my own amusement, not to impress anyone. But doing has allowed me to become friends with a number of people whose work I greatly respect, and opened doors to rooms I never expected that I would ever be able to enter.

You’ve made your Thompson case, and it’s not picking up too much traction. That’s fine, this is all just a parlor game anyway. It’s not like any of us will ever prove that anyone in particular wrote the book. This will still be a mystery after we are all long gone.

I personally don’t think Thompson is any more likely to have written the book than Theodore Roosevelt. But if you ever find that he could do a shift, or a false cut, or even the 21 card trick, let us know. Then he might be interesting.

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Bill Mullins | 07/10/15 12:26 PM | link | filter

Zenner wrote: Can you tell me about Edwin’s background in magic and book publishing? Erdnase certainly had knowledge in both fields and so did Harry.

Erdnase’s knowledge of book publishing seemed to go no farther than hiring a printer. He screwed up the copyright statement. David Ben’s recent reorganization of the text, and the numerous errors in the text, suggest that a good editor would have been helpful. Despite your claims that the book was "aimed primarily at the general public," there is little to no evidence that it was marketed to the general public -- something that a knowledgeable publisher would have done.

If someone with actual book publishing experience were intimately involved in the production of the book, I think we would have ended up with a different text, and that
possibly to the general public.

Roger M. wrote: Pardon my brusqueness, despite a lifetime of effort to improve, I'm simply not as politically polite as Mr. Mullins and Mr. Hatch. Those two, especially Richard Hatch, are vetting Zenner's candidate in a generally respectful way and were focusing on the merits. Perhaps you could learn a thing or two from their examples. Dick has done considerable original research over many years, and Bill, having the good fortune of access to an incredible array of online databases, has kindly put in the time to contribute (among other things) countless factual tidbits over the past several years. And whatever the merits may be of Zenner's candidate and arguments, it seems clear enough that he has put some genuine effort into thinking about and researching his candidate.

Roger M. wrote: The issue with candidates like Mr. Zenner has proposed (that is - candidates for whom there is absolutely no supporting evidence beyond the nominator simply putting their name forward) ... is that they are a major distraction in a search with very little manpower behind it to begin with.

These remarks are truly breathtaking in their conceit, among other things. We all look forward to your cogent essay providing concrete guidance on exactly when one has enough evidence – and the type of evidence needed -- in order to safely post on this thread and thereby avoid “major distractions” to our paltry manpower. In my view, Zenner has clearly tried to make connections between his candidate and Erdnase, and has certainly gone beyond merely dropping a name.

Roger M. wrote: Mr. Zenner does not connect his candidate in any way with Erdnase or EATCT.

When arguments are boiled down to hard facts, couldn’t that criticism be laid at the feet of any person who has proposed a candidate? Please tell us a candidate -- and the facts about him -- that satisfy your criteria.

I sincerely appreciate your kind remarks about my work, Roger, and the only reason I’m singling you out is because it seems that you are the only one who has really gone off the courtesy rails, at least that seems so based on the exchanges in the last two pages of this thread. I certainly share your desire for focused discussion, but after reading your mini lecture to Scott Lane about the desired “tone” of this thread, find it sadly ironic that you seem to have lost sight thereof in some of your recent posts. For example, you slammed Zenner’s inquiries and concerns about the Seely/Crosby marriage and told him he was wrong. Your reason? “Because Bill M. has demonstrated over a period of years that his Erdnase research is, quite simply, second to none.”
only did you possibly embarrass Bill (who to his credit quickly tried to temper your claims) but you also insulted Richard Hatch, David Alexander and Todd Karr, et al., all of whom deserve considerable credit for doing original research. We all have our moments; it’s just that in my view you have come on way too strong recently.

Speaking of facts and moving on to the merits …

Like Dick Hatch, I tend to doubt that a magician with any modicum of prominence wrote The Expert. Yes, the magicians’ stock in trade is secrecy, as Zenner points out, but as history shows magicians aren’t always good about keeping secrets, and if a magician wrote The Expert, I would think that someone would have eventually come forth with a name and some stories. It just seems very unlikely that a magician-author of such an important book could have remained unknown. Which brings up a question: when was The Expert recognized as an important book in conjuring literature? When did a critical mass of magicians start talking about and praising Erdnase’s work? Aside from ads and Hilliar’s passing mention, were any reviews done? If so, when? What did the reviews say?

On the other hand, secrecy, anonymity, and discretion would all seem crucial for card cheats, for their livelihood and personal freedom would be at risk, and in some cases their very lives as well.

It may seem like a dry and fruitless exercise to do a competent bibliographical study of the early editions and issues of The Expert, but what’s written in it and its physical existence are in my opinion, the best – and arguably the only – undisputable evidence we have to date. I’m not suggesting that solid bibliographical work on The Expert will yield the identity of Erdnase, but for reasons too lengthy to detail here, such a study could provide some very helpful clues. For example, one could look at the earliest Drake issues and see if the paper is the same as the original edition and if any Drake copies have a cancelled title page. One could also study Drake’s proclivities re copyright statements for previously published works; did Drake simply use the old copyright statements or did it update them or claim its own copyrights? Etc. One could also compare the physical structures of the first edition and the earliest Drake issues. The Expert was advertised in 1903 (by Drake I think) as a 12mo, but it seems that the early Drake issues may be 16mos. Assuming the original edition was indeed a 12mo and the early Drake issues 16mos, if Drake had the “original” plates (i.e., stereos, electros, or possibly the original linotype slugs), it would have been easy to reimpose the book as a 16mo. In fact, many publishers often did that sort of thing in the 50+ years preceding Erdnase’s book, largely so they could publish in a cheaper format.
While I disagree with Peter's conclusions, I welcome his interest in and contributions to the discussion. I hope my comments and questions are similarly welcomed. If this mystery is ever solved, it will be because someone decided that a particular person was worth investigating. If that solution is ever accepted by the community, it will be because advocates and critics have gone over all the relevant details until a conclusion is reached. By definition, everyone who is proposed but one will be the wrong guy, so the odds of proposing the right guy are small to start with.

As far as bibliographical inquiries go, one thing I’m curious about is how the material that is missing from the 178 page editions corresponds to signatures in the 205 page edition. Was a signature simply dropped? Or was more careful editing done?

I’d love to have clean, 100% size transparencies from a number of pages of a legitimate 1st edition. I think overlaying them on succeeding editions would be interesting. Are the later editions that we casually say are from the same “plates” really identical (allowing for age and wear)? Can wear from the printing plates be shown to accumulate on successive editions?

I’d like to see original copyright forms from other books printed by McKinney ca. 1902. The handwriting on the Erdnase copyright application is distinctive (to me); can it be shown to be similar to other documents from 1902 McKinney?

Which brings up a question: when was The Expert recognized as an important book in conjuring literature?

Two points on the timeline are worth noting:

1. Hoffmann's columns in _The Magic Wand_ starting in Sept 1910 are the first major recognition in the magic community of the book (although, per personal communications with Will Houstoun, Hoffmann was mentioning the text favorably in correspondence several years earlier).

However, this recognition could have withered on the vine were it not for:

2. Vernon's evangelism about the book starting when he was in New York in the 1920s. Vernon preached the gospel of Erdnase for most of 70 years, and if he hadn't, we likely wouldn't be having this discussion now.

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**Zenner** | 07/11/15 07:10 AM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:* While I disagree with Peter’s conclusions, I welcome his interest in and contributions to the discussion.
and pro-Edwin though. Perhaps Richard will answer my query soon about Edwin’s knowledge of magic and the book publishing trade. He seems to have so many supporters and yet so little evidence.

The handwriting on the Erdnase copyright application is distinctive (to me); can it be shown to be similar to other documents from 1902 McKinney?

I have a sample of Harry’s handwriting from 1923. This is not exactly the same as that on the copyright application but there are a couple of similarities. For example, the tails on the letters ‘y’ and ‘g’ are straight lines rather than loops. I find that to be unusual but there are 22 years between the two samples and handwriting can change over the years.

My original posting of a summary of my research into Harry S Thompson was to establish him as a candidate. My reason for doing so has been explained. I did not intend to hang around and suffer the “slings and arrows” but I am still here. Hey-ho!

Messrs Hatch and Mullins at least post under their real names. I gather that Clay = Clay Shevlin. So I do at least know who a few of you are and feel comfortable in your presence. The anonymous lurkers who serve no purpose other than to barrack from the sidelines are to my mind the pits. Come out of hiding you cowards and let us all know who you are!

Peter Zenner

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Roger M. | 07/11/15 11:06 AM | link | filter

Zenner wrote: The anonymous lurkers who serve no purpose other than to barrack from the sidelines are to my mind the pits. Come out of hiding you cowards and let us all know who you are!

Peter Zenner

I'll assume that this is a reference to those who don’t provide full names to fellow posters, such that their identities are not made fully public in internet forum posts. This is the old internet nugget that claims a persons posts are somehow rated in response to the amount of personal information the poster chooses to share with the entire internet. Ridiculous in any form, here it is here - so I’ll address it.

Since I first posted to the Genii Erdnase thread in 2007, the owner of this forum has known exactly who I am (for example), has my home address (as a subscriber), my
Mr. Zenner, that you feel simply signing up on the Genii Forum a few weeks ago somehow entitles you to my (or anybody else's) personal information is a folly equal to that of your Erdnase candidate.

I await even the smallest shred of evidence in support Mr. Zenners candidate, and if I'm proven incorrect or dishonest in anything I've posted to date, I'll gladly eat my words with a public apology to Mr. Zenner, and will also humble myself before Clay Shevlin for offending his sensibilities and failing to meet the standards he's apparently set for this thread.

Beyond that, I will let stand everything I've posted to date.

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**Bill Mullins** | 07/11/15 11:18 AM | [link] | [filter]

Zenner wrote: I don't understand why you are so anti-Harry and pro-Edwin though.

I'm not sure that I am "pro-Edwin" -- I think I'm on record as saying that it is more likely than not that no one has yet identified Erdnase's identity. Therefore, Edwin S. Andrews is probably not Erdnase. The many coincidences between his life and the history of the book are fascinating, though.

And it's not so much that I'm "anti-Harry" as it is that I don't believe the case you've laid out for him is particularly convincing, for reasons some of which I've already gone into (and for the most part, which you haven't rebutted, although you certainly have no obligation to do so). I'm willing to change my mind if more comes out about him that strengthens the case.

We don't know much about Erdnase, but we know he knew his way around a deck of cards, and I've seen no evidence that Thompson did.

"S. W. Erdnase" is a very contrived sounding pseudonym, and for anyone proposed as being Erdnase, there should be a chain of logic that says why he would choose that as a name. That exists for anyone named "E S Andrews", and it exists for W. E. Sanders. It doesn't for Thompson, and I don't think the fact that he knew someone named "E. C. Andrews" is sufficient to sway me.

You may disagree, and that's fine.

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**Bill Mullins** | 07/11/15 11:21 AM | [link] | [filter]

"Roger M" is Roger Moore, who used to play James Bond. Once you know that, it's easy
Lots of interesting new material here!

Bill, I question notion that *The Expert* might well have fallen into obscurity if it weren’t for Dai Vernon. Certainly Vernon is responsible for a great deal of the book’s success. But it doesn’t follow that the book would be forgotten without him. In any case, the subject is regularly mentioned in discussions of Erdnase, and I think the facts deserve to be pulled out from beneath Vernon’s rather formidable shadow.

The first serious correspondence I’ve been able to find amongst professional magicians regarding *The Expert* are the aforementioned letters of Professor Hoffmann. The first of these appear in 1903 and are extremely engaged in their examination of fine points of Erdnase’s technique, and in their critique of his style. These make it clear that, shortly after its appearance, the book was already being taken seriously by some of the best minds in magic.

In 1905 an advertising note in *The Sphinx* describes the book as being highly in-demand. By 1906, Erdnase’s technical language—the persistent use of ”seize” in describing card handling, the Erdnasian usage of terms such as ”jog” and ”break”—was starting to spread throughout published conjuring. By 1911 *The Expert* had been praised, plagiarized, cited or annotated by T. Nelson Downs, Hatton and Plate, Ellis Stanyon, Devant and Maskelyne, and Professor Hoffmann. Multiple editions of *The Expert* were published before Dai Vernon even arrived in New York City in 1913. By then the book was already influential, controversial and successful.

While there is ample evidence that Vernon subsequently did more than any other single person in singing the book’s praises, his influence largely ended with magicians. What Dai Vernon said or did had almost no effect on non-magicians. And yet *The Expert* sold (and continues to sell) very well to the general public. Vernon himself recounted that when he visited the offices of *The Police Gazette* just before they closed, he was told that sales of *The Expert* had kept them in business for several years.

Vernon might have made *The Expert* into a bible (and consequently turned Erdnase into the Holy Ghost). But Vernon was not single-handedly, nor even primarily, responsible for *The Expert*’s success. *The Expert* is first and foremost a success due to its author and subject. (Whoever and whatever they are...)

^^^^ Many thanks for your input, Marty. Very interesting! I note especially the 1905 remark in *The Sphinx* that *The Expert* was in high demand. That might help explain the
Atlas Trick and Novelty Co. sold so many of The Expert at The Card Table that their ad is continued this month.

In the correspondence you’ve seen, was any curiosity expressed about who Erdnase was?

Perhaps this ground has already been ploughed, but just in case … did a quick search of Sphinx issues from March 1904 to Feb. 1907.

Starting in the Nov. 1905 issue, and continuing most months thereafter until June 1906, Atlas Trick & Novelty Co., advertised The Expert for only 25 cents. This ad is typical:

$2.00 Worth for 25 Cents
THE EXPERT AT THE CARD TABLE.
By S. W. Erdnase.
Published to sell for $2.00. For a limited time we will send you this wonderful book for 35c post paid. Without a doubt the best treatise on the science and art of manipulating- cards. Embracing the whole calendar of Sleights used by the Gambler and Conjurer, describing with detail and illustrations every known expedient, maneuvre and stratagem of the expert card handler, with over one hundred copyright drawings from life. This book will prove of excellent service to the up-to-the-minute conjurer. Read this ad over again, then send your order at once. Address: ATLAS TRICK & NOVELTY CO. (Not Inc.)
154 Illinois St., Chicago.

From March 1904 through mid 1906, only W.D. LeRoy also regularly advertised Erdnase’s book (with many other books), with the following typical text: “Expert at the Card Table (a $2.00 Book), $1.00.”

To my mind, the reference to a $2 book indicates that the original edition was being sold, and that the price on the title page thereof was relied upon for the claim of a $2 value. So it appears that as late as the press deadlines for the June 1906 issue of The Sphinx, new copies of the original edition were still for sale.

But why did Atlas elect to bargain-price The Expert starting with the Nov. 1905 issue of Sphinx? Why the whopping 75% cheaper price than other dealers’ prices? Perhaps it was in response to Drake’s cheaper reprint?

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*Bill Mullins wrote:* … While I disagree with Peter’s conclusions, I welcome his interest in and contributions to the discussion. I hope my comments...
be because someone decided that a particular person was worth investigating. If that solution is ever accepted by the community, it will be because advocates and critics have gone over all the relevant details until a conclusion is reached. [emphasis added]...

I also find Zenner’s arguments to be unpersuasive, and share the view that instead of baldly slamming them as worthless and inadequate, it’s more intellectually honest to address and scrutinize the weaknesses in his arguments. Unlike Roger M., I do not think your and Richard Hatch’s measured responses to Zenner are “disingenuous” or constitute “pandering” by any stretch of the imagination (else academia at large “disingenuously” engages in “pandering” whenever vetting a new idea or theory). Your respectful approaches will leave a record which will be read by future researchers should they come across, and wish to (re)consider, Thompson as a candidate, while the (borderline hysteric) non-substantive naysaying will be consigned to the trash bin as internet dross.

*Bill Mullins wrote:* … As far as bibliographical inquiries go, one thing I’m curious about is how the material that is missing from the 178 page editions corresponds to signatures in the 205 page edition. Was a signature simply dropped? Or was more careful editing done? ...

Good questions, and it’d be surprising if someone hasn’t already at least figured out what text was dropped in the shorter version(s) of the book. My guess (without any evidence whatsoever) would be that the text was simply lopped off at a convenient point rather than condensed by editing – such a thing was not unheard of in that era, and one can even find examples of this in magic, examples being Laird & Lee’s abridged issues of Burlingame’s *Herrmann the Great* and Evans’ *Spirit World Unmasked*.

Without collating the relevant copies, it’s hard to say much else with any degree of concreteness. But one thing should be kept in mind when we discuss signatures in a book: it’s the number of leaves that is relevant, not the pagination of the printed pages. The last page number of an early Drake issue may be “205,” but when talking about signatures, we have to add the blank on the verso of pp. 205, for a total of 206 pages, or 103 leaves. Then, we have to bear in mind that some pages or leaves in a signature may be blank, and that, absent the publisher’s (or binder’s) excision of an odd number of leaves, a whole signature (or a book comprised of whole signatures) can never have an odd number of leaves.

With some extremely rare exceptions (pertaining to the printing of a book one side of a single leaf, like a broadsheet), books were always printed in formats to the power of 2, i.e., in 2s, 4s, 8s, 16s, 32s, 64s, etc. But (to further complicate things for bibliographers!) that doesn’t always mean that they were gathered and sewn in the printed format. For examples: many incunabula were printed as folios, but gathered and sewn in 6s, 8s,
thread and thus more difficult to bind); and many editions of Henry Dean’s *Hocus Pocus* book were printed as “work and turn” 12mos (i.e., each forme consisted of two identical 6-page sections of text) and gathered and sewn in 6s. The upshot is that determining how many leaves are in a sewn gathering doesn’t necessarily indicate the format of a book, i.e., how it was printed.

Trying to tackle the signature construction of *The Expert*, I’d guess that all of the earlier editions of *The Expert* were printed as 12mos or 16mos (or possibly even 32mos gathered in 16s). I believe Tom Sawyer noted that there is a blank leaf at the start of his 205 pp. copy. I suspect this leaf would be conjugate with the last leaf of the first signature. Alas, if Tom’s copy has 104 leaves (i.e., 205 pp. plus blank p. 206 plus the blank leaf at the front of the book), neither 12 nor 16 divides evenly into 104 (nor does 8, in the unlikely event that the book was printed as an octavo). So this means that some leaves were added to the book (usually in pairs of conjugate leaves for sewing), or some were excised from one of the signatures. Or, in cases with ads in the front or rear of the book, the ads were printed as part of the book itself. That’s about all that can be said without doing a physical collation.

*Bill Mullins wrote:* … Are the later editions that we casually say are from the same “plates” really identical (allowing for age and wear)? Can wear from the printing plates be shown to accumulate on successive editions? …

Only careful examination of the type, leading, etc., from different editions and issues can answer the first question. On the second, it’s quite common for wear to show in cases of stereo or electro plates or (less likely) repeated use of Linotype slugs, much of which would often occur from the (mis)handling, cleaning, and storage of the plates, as opposed to the mere process of printing.

*Bill Mullins wrote:* … “S. W. Erdnase” is a very contrived sounding pseudonym, and for anyone proposed as being Erdnase, there should be a chain of logic that says why he would choose that as a name. That exists for anyone named “E S Andrews”, and it exists for W. E. Sanders. It doesn’t for Thompson, and I don’t think the fact that he knew someone named “E. C. Andrews” is sufficient to sway me. …

All things considered, it does indeed seem difficult to escape such thinking. IMO, it seems very odd that the author would use three synonyms (“Artifice Ruse and Subterfuge”) for the main title of the book, but the ordering does make sense if one reads those words, and the letters in the author’s name, in reverse, arriving at “Subterfuge and Ruse [Andrews] Artifice” and E. S. Andrews. It’s as if the author decided to book-end a somewhat phonetic spelling of his real name with the clues “Subterfuge” and “Artifice.”
Bill Mullins wrote: Therefore, Edwin S. Andrews is probably not Erdnase. The many coincidences between his life and the history of the book are fascinating, though.

Apart from his name being a reversal of S.W. Erdnase, what are these fascinating coincidences? There were others with the same name as his who have been discounted. A link between his Seely and the Dalrymple Seeleys has not been established.

Here's something for you to ponder - Richard Hatch wrote in *Erdnase Unmasked*, “The same day that Gardner interviewed Smith, Richard W. Hood, the son of Edwin C. Hood, founder of H.C. Evans & Co. gambling supply house in Chicago, answered a letter from Gardner and told him that his father had known Erdnase well in the 1890s.” Dick Hood was born about 1882, so would have been very young in the 1890s. He would have been about 20 when the Erdnase book was published and his father had died 5 years before. If the Hoods knew Erdnase before the book came out then Dick Hood must have known who he was.

Guess what - at the time of the publication of *The Expert*, Harry's "aunt-in-law" Helen L. Hood was living with the Thompson family on Lunt Avenue, Chicago. Helen was Harry's mother-in-law's sister, so he was related to a Hood family. But I have not presented this as "evidence" that he was related to the people who ran the gambling supply house, because I have not been able to prove it. Is that coincidence fascinating enough for you?

Why would Richard introduce the Seely/Seeley business when he cannot prove there is a connection?

And it's not so much that I'm "anti-Harry" as it is that I don't believe the case you've laid out for him is particularly convincing, for reasons some of which I've already gone into (and for the most part, which you haven't rebutted, although you certainly have no obligation to do so). I'm willing to change my mind if more comes out about him that strengthens the case.

I have been through all of the 12 previously suggested candidates and I maintain that there is far more evidence for Harry being Erdnase than any of the others. Don't you think that Smith would have detected a trace of a foreign accent if it was Roterberg (German), Hilliar (English), Burns (Danish), Foster (Scottish), or L'Homme Masque (Spanish). That knocks out five of the twelve.
smaller than Smith. Milton F. Andrews is ruled straight out (too tall and too young),
William Symes Andrews was too old at 54, Roterberg was 37 (and German!), E.S.
Burns was 27 (and Danish!), Foster was 48 (and Scottish!)

Harry was the right size and the right age, with the right accent and the right
experience. He knew about magic and he knew about printing & printing inks and
publishing. He is the ONLY candidate who fits all of the criteria.

We don't know much about Erdnase, but we know he knew his way around
a deck of cards, and I've seen no evidence that Thompson did.

Have you seen any evidence that Edwin Sumner Andrews was an expert at sleight of
hand and knew how to get a book published? Any evidence that he knew anything
about magic? And yet he is accepted by many (including David Ben!) as being The
Expert!

You may disagree, and that's fine. 😊

Oh, I do. And the more I look at the lack of evidence for ALL of the other candidates,
the more I am convinced that it was Harry

All the best,

Peter Zenner

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**Bill Mullins** | 07/12/15 02:26 PM | [link] [filter]

*Zenner wrote:*

*Bill Mullins wrote:* Therefore, Edwin S. Andrews is probably not
Erdnase. The many coincidences between his life and the
history of the book are fascinating, though.

Apart from his name being a reversal of S.W. Erdnase, what are these
fascinating coincidences?

They have been well-documented in many places, including elsewhere in this thread.

A link between his Seely and the Dalrymple Seeleys has not been
established.
Why would Richard introduce the Seely/Seeley business when he cannot prove there is a connection?

Because it is an interesting lead which others of us may wish to investigate further (and have investigated, for that matter). If you hadn't reacted so negatively to what I found out about Thompson, I might be willing to try and strengthen the case for him. I've done it for Hatch and Demarest and Karr. But the attitude I'm getting from you is "Case closed, piss off", so I'll spend my time doing other things.

Harry was the right size and the right age, with the right accent

Right accent? Smith (a "trained observer," as you say) thought that Erdnase was not a native Chicagoan, and was from "the East" -- not consistent with the accent that a native Chicagoan like Thompson would have had.

We don't know much about Erdnase, but we know he knew his way around a deck of cards, and I've seen no evidence that Thompson did.

Have you seen any evidence that Edwin Sumner Andrews was an expert at sleight of hand

We know that he played cards socially, which is a stronger connection to cards than we can make for Thompson.

Marty Demarest | 07/12/15 02:34 PM | link | filter

Magicam, yes, the reference to sales of *The Expert* in *The Sphinx* is the example you found. 12/15/1905, p. 118, "Among the Dealers."

I interpret that section of the magazine somewhat akin to Richard's notes at the beginning of *Genii*, where he often mentions products that catch his eye, or comments on the popularity of various items. In any case, it's certainly not a paid advertisement. And it comments on how "so many" copies of *The Expert* have sold, and notes that the success is linked to the purchase of additional advertising space. I find it a notable record of how *The Expert* was received by the 1905 magic community.

And thank you for contributing your insight into the binding of *The Expert*! I don't believe 100% that James McKinney & Co. bound all of what we call "first edition" copies of the book. (I think it's likely, but far from certain.) My reasoning comes from...
possibly important line of inquiry. A business transaction concerning *The Expert*
between McKinney & Co. or Erdnase, and any other party, could be extremely
revealing with regards to the author's role and identity.

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**Bill Mullins** | 07/12/15 02:39 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*magicam* wrote:

> *Bill Mullins* wrote: … As far as bibliographical inquiries go, one
> thing I'm curious about is how the material that is missing
> from the 178 page editions corresponds to signatures in the 205
> page edition. Was a signature simply dropped? Or was more
careful editing done? …

Good questions, and it'd be surprising if someone hasn't already at least
figured out what text was dropped in the shorter version(s) of the book.

TMWWE (p 334) states that pages after 178 were simply dropped -- what I'm curious
about was if a signature transition occurred here (or near here, if one accounts for
following blank leaves or ad pages). My glued-up perfect bound paperback copies are
difficult to examine for an answer, and I don’t have any of the early cloth bound
editions.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 07/12/15 04:05 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Hi All,

This is to address Clay's comments regarding my 205-page "1905" Drake copy. (The
last numbered page is 205.) The final two signatures are 16 pages each.

There are 17 pages of advertisements, so even if the book's last page had been page 206,
the mathematics still works out, as long as there is an odd number of 16-page
signatures. (Whether this would be optimum for imposition purposes is another
thing.)

Here is a brief quotation from a post I made on this thread in January. Even though I
showed a little uncertainty, there is very little chance that the numbers stated are
inaccurate:

"I think it is quite likely that the book has 6 signatures of 32 pages, and 2
signatures of 16 pages.

"The arithmetic seems to work out, unless I have made a mistake in my
is 224. That’s the total number of pages in the book, including the 2 blank pages at the very front and the 17 pages of advertising in the back.”

--Tom Sawyer

Leonard Hevia | 07/12/15 04:42 PM | link | filter

Zenner wrote: Oh, I do. And the more I look at the lack of evidence for ALL of the other candidates, the more I am convinced that it was Harry Peter--does that mean you have dismissed the circumstantial evidence for W.E. Sanders pointed out by Alexander and Demarest?

1. The fact that W.E. Sanders played with anagrams of his name as a schoolboy in his notebook and W.E. Sanders is an anagram for S.W. Erdnase.

2. The fact that Sanders purchased a large quantity of decks before heading out to the Rockies for some R & R.

3. The fact that Sanders was not far from Chicago during the crucial window of time when Smith met Erdnase around December 1901 at possibly the State Street Hotel for the illustrations.

4. The fact that Sanders knew at least one card trick--Mutus dedit nomen Cocis--which is published in Hoffman’s Modern Magic.

5. Sanders compartmentalized certain parts of his life to keep things under the radar.

6. Sanders also fits Smith’s physical and age description of Erdnase.

7. Sanders was also a published writer as was Thomson.

magicam | 07/12/15 11:10 PM | link | filter

I have to correct a whopper of a misstatement about book formats, when I wrote, “books were always printed in formats to the power of 2, i.e., in 2s, 4s, 8s, 16s, 32s, 64s, etc.” I should have caught that major brain cramp when I went on to discuss 12mos only a sentence or two later! The notion of formats in the “power of 2” is flat out wrong; not sure what I was thinking, except that I was conscious of trying to keep the discussion fairly simple, and probably was thinking about the fact that all functional impositions yielded conjugate leaves. In any case, in addition to the formats noted, other formats seen were 12mos, 18mos, 24mos, 36mos, 48mos, 72mos, and 96mos. So
going on with how books can be imposed and how the sheets can be folded, but it’s probably best to stop here!

*Marty Demarest wrote:* … And thank you for contributing your insight into the binding of *The Expert*! I don’t believe 100% that James McKinney & Co. bound all of what we call "first edition" copies of the book. (I think it’s likely, but far from certain.) My reasoning comes from having physically examined many many early copies. But my research in that area is still in progress, so I’ll be silent about that topic for now. Still, it is an interesting and possibly important line of inquiry. A business transaction concerning *The Expert* between McKinney & Co. or Erdnase, and any other party, could be extremely revealing with regards to the author’s role and identity.

Marty, I know nothing of McKinney’s operations and production capabilities, but can say that it wouldn’t be surprising if the first edition had been bound by someone else, either by subcontract with McKinney or direct contract with the author. If McKinney had a bindery, I’d expect him to have advertised this from time to time, as bookbinding was a significant and (I think) usually separate trade from printing. By 1902, most of the case binding processes had been mechanized (with varying degrees of efficiency gains), so to be a production binder in that era required a fair amount of capital investment.

As mentioned earlier, it would be helpful to compare the paper in many first edition copies with that of the earliest Drake issues, and to look for a Drake title page cancillans. From what little I know (with an emphasis on “little”!), it appears that all first editions have the same stamping and cloth color. This suggests that all copies may have been bound in one run (absent, of course, a finding that some early Drake issues had the same paper and discovery of a Drake TP cancillans), but of course doesn’t prove it. One thing that comes to mind is that the cloth type and its color were probably fairly standard and widely available/used, and thus I’d guess that one could find other contemporary books bound in that same cloth type and color.

*Bill Mullins wrote:* TMWWE (p 334) states that pages after 178 were simply dropped -- what I’m curious about was if a signature transition occurred here (or near here, if one accounts for following blank leaves or ad pages). My glued-up perfect bound paperback copies are difficult to examine for an answer, and I don’t have any of the early cloth bound editions.

Bill, considering my major gaff when discussing different formats, perhaps the rest of my discussion wasn’t clear either! I think the short answer is to reiterate that only a physical examination of the relevant book(s) can provide concrete information. For 12mos, if the book is composed of whole sheets, then the number of leaves in the book should be divisible by 12.
binding leaves (e.g., flyleaves) from leaves that were part of the sheet, which is often easy to do because the binding leaves use different paper.

Tom Sawyer wrote: … This is to address Clay's comments regarding my 205-page "1905" Drake copy. (The last numbered page is 205.) The final two signatures are 16 pages each.

There are 17 pages of advertisements, so even if the book's last page had been page 206, the mathematics still works out, as long as there is an odd number of 16-page signatures. (Whether this would be optimum for imposition purposes is another thing.)

Here is a brief quotation from a post I made on this thread in January. Even though I showed a little uncertainty, there is very little chance that the numbers stated are inaccurate:

"I think it is quite likely that the book has 6 signatures of 32 pages, and 2 signatures of 16 pages.

"The arithmetic seems to work out, unless I have made a mistake in my calculations. Six times 32 is 192. Two times 16 is 32. Add 192 and 32, and the sum is 224. That's the total number of pages in the book, including the 2 blank pages at the very front and the 17 pages of advertising in the back." …

Let's assume the foregoing information is correct (and with you, I'm confident it is!). If your copy was printed as a 16mo, the fact that the last 32 pages (including the ads) would be comprised of 2 16-page signatures suggests that the ads were separately printed (likely completely unrelated to the book), and bound in at the back of the book, which was a very common publisher's practice (as you can attest from your study of Victorian-era books). So if your copy was printed as a 16mo and if the ads had been pre-printed, then perhaps the last, 16-page signature of The Expert was printed as 16mo half-sheets, imposed for work and turn (known as 16mo in 8s, half-sheet imposition). And there's yet another mistake in my earlier posts: I said that an 8vo book of 104 leaves wasn’t divisible by 8 in whole numbers – wrong again! 104/8 = 13. Lordy …

In the end, discussion of the physical structures of the various editions and issues of The Expert is mostly speculation without really digging into the books themselves, and on reflection, I'm inclined to think that my attempts to be helpful, mistakes and all, haven't really helped much!

Brad Jeffers | 07/12/15 11:47 PM | link | filter

magicam wrote: I have to correct a whopper of a misstatement about book...
The notion of formats in the “power of 2” is flat out wrong; not sure what I was thinking, except that I was conscious of trying to keep the discussion fairly simple, and probably was thinking about the fact that all functional impositions yielded conjugate leaves. In any case, in addition to the formats noted, other formats seen were 12mos, 18mos, 24mos, 36mos, 48mos, 72mos, and 96mos. So my apologies if I created any confusion.

Thanks for clearing that up.

Roger M. and Clay Shevlin: Knock it off. If you have issues with each other, use the PM system. Better yet, ignore each other.

Leonard Hevia wrote:
Peter--does that mean you have dismissed the circumstantial evidence for W.E. Sanders pointed out by Alexander and Demarest?

1. The fact that W.E. Sanders played with anagrams of his name as a schoolboy in his notebook and W.E. Sanders is an anagram for S.W. Erdnase.

2. The fact that Sanders purchased a large quantity of decks before heading out to the Rockies for some R & R.

3. The fact that Sanders was not far from Chicago during the crucial window of time when Smith met Erdnase around December 1901 at possibly the State Street Hotel for the illustrations.

4. The fact that Sanders knew at least one card trick--Mutus dedit nomen Cocis--which is published in Hoffman's *Modern Magic*.

5. Sanders compartmentalized certain parts of his life to keep things under the radar.

6. Sanders also fits Smith's physical and age description of Erdnase.

7. Sanders was also a published writer as was Thomson.
- the similarity in writing style between Erdnase and Sanders. This ranges from the frequent use of "scare quotes" to emulating speech patterns to the use of many of the same idioms and word choices. And on top of those, I hear the same clear, authoritative voice.

Leonard Hevia wrote: Peter--does that mean you have dismissed the circumstantial evidence for W.E. Sanders pointed out by Alexander and Demarest?

Yes.

1. The fact that W.E. Sanders played with anagrams of his name as a schoolboy in his notebook and W.E. Sanders is an anagram for S.W. Erdnase.

I don't remember seeing anywhere that one of those anagrams was S.W. Erdnase. Please give me the reference.

2. The fact that Sanders purchased a large quantity of decks before heading out to the Rockies for some R & R.

So, he was a card player. Is there any evidence anywhere that he was capable of showing "his skill in pure sleight of hand", as Dr. Wilson said of Harry S. Thompson?

3. The fact that Sanders was not far from Chicago during the crucial window of time when Smith met Erdnase around December 1901 at possibly the State Street Hotel for the illustrations.

Harry was living in Chicago at that time, at 541 Lunt Avenue.

4. The fact that Sanders knew at least one card trick--Mutus dedit nomen Cocis--which is published in Hoffman's *Modern Magic*.

There is no sleight of hand involved in that trick, which, as you point out, was authored by Hoffman - a well known author of books for the lay public. I have not seen any evidence that Sanders had the knowledge to write *The Expert* or the capability of demonstrating the sleights for Marshall D. Smith.
the radar.

Don’t we all? The author of *The Expert* didn’t want his name to be known. Why can’t you allow that Harry wanted to keep something “under the radar”?

6. Sanders also fits Smith’s physical and age description of Erdnase.

That was what Bill would call "a fascinating coincidence". There must have been thousands of men in America smaller than Smith and aged between 40 and 45. To that you would have to add the knowledge and capability needed to write a book on sleight of hand and magic effects that is still in print and said to be the best book on card magic ever written.

7. Sanders was also a published writer as was Thomson.

But Thompson had "skill in pure sleight of hand", had been brought up in the printing and publishing trade, and was by 1901 a travelling salesman selling printing inks. Erdnase knew about printing inks...

Sorry Leonard, I am sticking with Harry S. Thompson. When that elusive McKinney Bankruptcy File shows up, I feel sure that we will find Frank Thompson listed as a former employee. He was Harry’s brother and still a printer in Chicago. There was obviously a contact at McKinney’s and he is the obvious candidate.

Peter Zenner

Zenner | 07/13/15 07:24 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote:

 Zenner wrote:  A link between his Seely and the Dalrymple Seeleys has not been established.

 Nor has it been for Thompson.

I am not depending on it, Bill. I haven’t found a link between Harry and Louis Dalrymple, but I have found a link between Harry and another political cartoonist. It could be that Martin Gardner planted the name "Louis Dalrymple" when Smith mentioned that the author knew a political cartoonist - just as Gardner was trying to make Smith remember a man much smaller than him as a man much taller than him! We don’t know and that’s why it might be wise to forget the Dalrymple business and look for other proof.
If you hadn't reacted so negatively to what I found out about Thompson, I might be willing to try and strengthen the case for him. I've done it for Hatch and Demarest and Karr. But the attitude I'm getting from you is "Case closed, piss off", so I'll spend my time doing other things.

I don't use such terminology and certainly didn't wish to give you that impression. I merely wanted to point out that the things you were telling me were already known to me. As I have pointed out, I have now been on Harry's trail for over two years and the information available on Google and the genealogy sites was obtained within the first two weeks of my research - April, 2013.

Right accent? Smith (a "trained observer," as you say) thought that Erdnase was not a native Chicagoan, and was from "the East" -- not consistent with the accent that a native Chicagoan like Thompson would have had.

Just to remind you, as I have already posted, Harry's parents came from New York State and Massachusetts respectively. His Aunty Susan, a teacher, also from New York State, was living with the Thompson family during Harry's formative years. How much further east do you want me to go? What makes you think that Harry would have a different accent to the rest of the family?

We know that he [i.e., Edwin Sumner Andrews] played cards socially, which is a stronger connection to cards than we can make for Thompson.

WOW! - a man PLAYED CARDS in the latter part of the 19th century and the very beginning of the 20th century? And that makes him a candidate for the authorship of the most advanced book on card magic published up to 1902?

Harry S. Thompson was skilled in "pure sleight of hand", according to Doctor Wilson, and yet you pour cold water on his candidacy in favour of a man who just PLAYED CARDS?

I am shaking my head in disbelief.

Peter Zenner

Matthew Field | 07/13/15 08:20 AM | link | filter

Give me a second to don my stainless steel shield as I enter the battleground.

David Ben, in his new "The Experts at the Card Table" lists the authors as David Ben
E.S. Andrews was S.W. Erdnase.

This is not some newbie, it's David Ben.

Thoughts?

Matt Field

---

**Zenner** | 07/15 08:57 AM | link | filter

*Matthew Field wrote:* Give me a second to don my stainless steel shield as I enter the battleground.

No need for that, Matt. You have lived in England for long enough to realise that we Brits are capable of debating in a gentlemanly way.

David Ben, in his new "The Experts at the Card Table" lists the authors as David Ben and E.S. Andrews. There’s a photo of Andrews and his family on pg. 20 and David’s commentary, beginning on pg. 16, makes it unequivocally clear that, for the writer, E.S. Andrews was S.W. Erdnase.

David Ben has obviously been swayed by many years of brainwashing. It has not been proved that any E.S. Andrews was Erdnase. Publishing a photograph of a man with his family is no proof of his authorship of *The Expert at the Card Table*, unless of course he was holding a copy of said book. Is the photograph of the family the same photograph that was published in *Erdnase Unmasked*?

This is not some newbie, it’s David Ben.

Are you saying that David is infallible? Are you putting him alongside the Pope? I don’t believe that anybody is infallible, even if they are sitting on St. Peter’s Chair!

Thoughts?

My thoughts are (1) that David is being a bit premature, and (2) he is asking for ridicule if or when it is ever proved that Erdnase was some other guy.

Cheers,

Peter
Dustin, I applaud your work and the efforts of every volunteer who moderates these forums. I’m also grateful to Richard for operating them. I thank you all for your time and attention. It’s y’all’s party, I’m happy to be a guest and play by the rules.

But I’d like to respectfully object to the deletion of posts, even if they seemingly constitute nothing more than a flame war.

Heightened passions and ridiculous behavior are hallmarks of magicians who are under the thrall of Erdnase. The bickering, personal attacks and intimate affronts are all part of the Erdnase story. It can seem ridiculous--grown men squabbling over a century-old literary mystery. But both that passion and absurdity are integral parts of the Erdnase phenomenon. Personally, I’ve enjoyed and made notes about every bit of it. But I understand your desire to censor that part of the record--it’s not the most flattering example of magician’s behavior. However, I think it deserves to be documented.

---

**Marty Demarest** | 07/13/15 11:18 AM | link | filter

Matthew Field wrote: This is not some newbie, it’s David Ben.

Matt, David’s books are riddled with errors both mundane and acute--a clear indicator that David has no higher education. (I’m citing David himself for the "logic" behind that statement. But for a good time, check out David’s book Tricks and his biography of Allan Slaight for some textual howlers.) Moreover, his work displays a crucial lack of basic editorial oversight. (Try using the table of contents in his reprint of A Grand Expose, or count the illustrations in Revelation.) This intellectual poverty seems to extend to his entire organization. (When I read his recent interview in MAGIC, I found it by following a link on David’s website that used the title of an article I had written in Genii four years earlier, rather than the title of David's MAGIC interview.) I would expect anybody who isn’t a newbie to have the ability to count from 1 to 101, or the capacity to accurately copy all the letters in a large-type title.

This is not some newbie, it’s David Ben.

Alas, magic!

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 07/13/15 11:49 AM | link | filter

Rather than judge the interested parties as people, I prefer to appreciate the efforts and results such as they are.
I believe that David graduated from university and then law school, so to say that he has no "higher education" is a little baffling, Marty.

Richard, my note was sardonic. (Hence the wink.) I was responding to Matt's inquiry by applying David's reasoning to his own work. To wit:

"I would be surprised, for example, if the author had a college education. He may have had the gift of gab--a skillset not uncommon for advantage players, particularly those who worked solo, as one has to soothe the ego and feelings of the losers in order for them to keep losing. But I also believe that he probably learned to turn a phrase because of his work experience. And while magicians are fond of quoting various passages--there are many pithy and profound lines in the book--it is very poorly organized and rife with errors. There are technical errors in the language, the illustrations, and the grammar."

--David Ben, quoted in Alan Howard, "Shuffling Erdnase," MAGIC, April, 2015, pp. 56-57.

Zenner wrote: I haven't found a link between Harry and Louis Dalrymple, but I have found a link between Harry and another political cartoonist.... it might be wise to forget the Dalrymple business and look for other proof.

This is typical of how you are presenting your case, and why some of us find it lacking. You place great emphasis on things that don't really matter much (Erdnase makes passing reference to ink used in marking cards, therefore a guy who wholesales ink to printing houses MUST BE HIM). But when direct evidence that could be used to specifically tie an individual to authorship (the Dalrymple connection) comes up, you discount it as not being relevant.

We know that he [i.e., Edwin Sumner Andrews] played cards socially, which is a stronger connection to cards than we can make for Thompson.

WOW! - a man PLAYED CARDS in the latter part of the 19th century and the very beginning of the 20th century? And that makes him a candidate for the authorship of the most advanced book on card magic published up to 1902?
man who just PLAYED CARDS?

I didn't bring up cards to say that it means that Andrews wrote EATCT, but to show how weak the case for Thompson is in terms of card sharping; that is, a guy who only played cards recreationally has a stronger tie to the text than does Thompson.

You keep bringing up Wilson’s statement as justification that Thompson had the expertise to write the most important book on cards to date, when there is absolutely no evidence that he even touched a deck. Wilson used the phrase "pure sleight of hand" numerous times in The Sphinx. The vast majority of them are like the reference to Thompson, where we really don't know what he means. There are a couple of times where he obviously uses it to include card work, but there are also times when he says "pure sleight of hand" in reference to magic that is explicitly not card related.

For example, in his review of “Later Magic” (3/04 p 11 col 2) he specifically points out that it has no card tricks, yet praises it as a work on “pure sleight of hand”. And mentions Emile Bamberg’s specialty of “pure sleight of hand, particularly with billiard balls” (6/08 p 40 col 1). There are other occasions where it clearly means silk work. He used it in reference to Clivette, who was known at the time primarily as a juggler and shadowographer.

Without further knowledge about Thompson's specialties in magic, it is leaping to a large conclusion to say that Thompson was qualified in any way to have written EATCT. To me, this is the largest (but not the only) reason to discount Thompson as Erdnase. If you can't put a deck in his hand, how can you claim he wrote the seminal book of modern card magic?

(And to be sure, if we had any evidence that Edwin Andrews did card tricks, or that W. E. Sanders ever "moved" at the card table, the cases for them would get much stronger as well.)

Dustin Stinett | 07/13/15 03:39 PM | link | filter

Marty,

I was very careful not to delete anything that added to the ERDNASE narrative, even in an ephemeral manner. What was deleted could have (and should have) been private correspondence. This thread will in no way suffer from the loss of the two full posts and the partial deletion of what may as well have been two people saying "Neener-neener" and "I know you are, but what am I?" Ridding that type of nonsense from a thread as important as this one is not something I consider censorship. It's a janitorial service.
Oh come on, Dustin! All that stuff is what makes Erdnase the professional wrestling of magic.

(Don't tell me this thread wouldn't suffer if you deleted the post where Paul Wilson compares someone's intelligence to his dog's when they disagree about a move in *The Expert*. It's the best!)

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I thought Bill Mullins's discussion of Wilson’s “pure sleight of hand” reference was quite well-reasoned -- and that it is nicely supported by his most recent post on this thread. Ironically, Wilson's comment may leave Thompson with a worse case regarding playing cards than he would have if Wilson had never mentioned Thompson at all -- though that may be a matter of opinion.

--Tom Sawyer

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Zenner wrote: I suspect that you are wondering why he used the name 'S.W. Erdnase'. O.K. In 1901 E[mory] C[obbe] Andrews graduated from university in Chicago and went to work in the Chicago office of Ruxton's, the company for which Harry worked. Why 'S.W. Erdnase' and not 'S.W. Erdnace'? I don't know. They sound the same.

Evidently, you believe that Thompson took the name of a co-worker, spelled it backwards and used the result as his pseudonym. It doesn't account for the discrepancy of that letter "c" instead of the "s" and by your own admission, you can't explain this.

The Demarest article in the September 2011 issue of *Genii* clearly provides evidence of Wilbur's anagrams of his name in his school notebook. We don't see the name S.W. Erdnase on the note page, but don't you think, Peter, that he would have eventually in time come up with the name S.W. Erdnase? It is, after all, a perfect anagram of W.E. Sanders with no discrepancies.

---

The discussion of Erdnase continues...I have read, considered, and enjoyed the
different ideas by different participants, some I know, and David Alexander was a
good friend, whose passing was a personal loss.

I would like to mention that I appreciate what Bill Mullins has done over the years.
Not just as it pertains this topic, but for his selfless help in research he has given to me,
and I am sure, (as David Alexander did) many others, for a wide array of research
quests...including sharing from data bases not all of us have immediate access to.

Thanks Bill!

---

Zenner | 07/14/15 05:35 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: This is typical of how you are presenting your case, and
why some of us find it lacking. You place great emphasis on things that
don’t really matter much (Erdnase makes passing reference to ink used in
marking cards, therefore a guy who wholesales ink to printing houses
MUST BE HIM). But when direct evidence that could be used to specifically
tie an individual to authorship (the Dalrymple connection) comes up, you
discount it as not being relevant.

Oh Bill - you are deliberately missing out all of the other "fascinating coincidences"
between Erdnase and Harry S. Thompson. His father was a printer and publisher and
he and his brother worked in the same trade. The Expert was published by the author.
His family were from "the East". He fitted Smith’s description of Erdnase. He was
interested in magic. He was a friend of Houdini and so was in a position to show him
the move for transforming a card which Houdini then showed to Selbit. How would
Houdini have known that move before it was published had not somebody shown it to
him? Have you evidence that Andrews knew Houdini? Of course not...

Please read my posts again; I am NOT depending solely on the fact that he sold and
lectured on the use of printing inks!

I didn’t bring up cards to say that it means that Andrews wrote EATCT, but
to show how weak the case for Thompson is in terms of card sharping; that
is, a guy who only played cards recreationally has a stronger tie to the text
than does Thompson.

Come on Bill. Get back to Google and see if you can find out what percentage of
American men played cards 113 years ago. Show me evidence that Andrews had any
knowledge of magic. Harry did; he had one of the largest magic libraries in America.
Erdnase did; he wrote a section on magic tricks for his book. One of them, the Card
Through Handkerchief, was originated in CHICAGO several years before it was
If you can't put a deck in his hand, how can you claim he wrote the seminal book of modern card magic?

Read all of the "fascinating coincidences" above which I have to keep repeating. "There are none so blind as those who WILL not see"

(And to be sure, if we had any evidence that Edwin Andrews did card tricks, or that W. E. Sanders ever "moved" at the card table, the cases for them would get much stronger as well.)

Of course they would. And all I have to prove is that Harry’s brother, Frank Thompson, a printer/compositor living in Chicago, worked for James McKinney and was the contact for all of the mail sent to S.W. Erdnase, c/o McKinney. What evidence is there that ANY of the other candidates might have known ANYBODY at McKinney’s?

Peter Zenner

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Zenner | 07/14/15 06:02 AM | link | filter

Leonard Hevia wrote: The Demarest article in the September 2011 issue of Genii clearly provides evidence of Wilbur’s anagrams of his name in his school notebook. We don’t see the name S.W. Erdnase on the note page, but don’t you think, Peter, that he would have eventually in time come up with the name S.W. Erdnase? It is, after all, a perfect anagram of W.E. Sanders with no discrepancies.

He might have done Leonard, but that’s not to say that he did. I believe that, apart from that "fascinating coincidence", there is no evidence that he had anything in common with the man who wrote The Expert.

People have taken the fact that S.W. Erdnase spelt backwards = E.S. Andrews and they have looked for anagrams of the name - and then they have gone looking for people who fitted with the results. Hey Presto! They have a candidate whether or not they fit with Smith’s description or even have the experience to write and publish the book in question. I didn’t do that; I had a hunch where I would find him and I knew that the author’s name didn’t have to be Andrews.

I realise that this discussion has been going on for a very long time and that I am, as Matt put it, "a newb". That doesn’t mean that I am wrong; it just means that I am going to have a struggle to convince you all that I am either right or, at least, have a better case than all of the previously nominated candidates.
Jonathan Townsend | 07/14/15 09:46 AM | link | filter

? make a better case.
One approach to argue rationally would be to make a table of "convincers" and see which candidates have the most, or of all "convincers" which should be weighted more than others.

Why is the spread missing yet the title page offers the "whole calendar" of available methods and yet claims no confidences are betrayed ... so he did not know, did not figure it out, withheld information ... then again yours truly is easily perplexed by such things.

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magicam | 07/14/15 11:28 AM | link | filter

Random thought: has anybody made a plea at this forum, The Magic Café, or better yet, The Thayer Forum, for people to send in snapshots of the cover and title and copyright pages of their first editions and early Drake copies, and to note the dates of any early inscriptions in the Drake issues? Smartphone cameras are very good these days, so it wouldn’t be too difficult and might provide some interesting information.

Dustin, apologies that you had to be a janitor, but thanks for taking out the garbage.

Zenner wrote: …I realise that this discussion has been going on for a very long time and that I am, as Matt put it, "a newbie". That doesn’t mean that I am wrong; it just means that I am going to have a struggle to convince you all that I am either right or, at least, have a better case than all of the previously nominated candidates. …

Alas, sometimes a theory can accrue, by the mere passing of time, a patina of authority or legitimacy that isn’t justified by the underlying facts, and that phenomenon can unduly burden a new theory. Your theory, like all others, should be tested vigorously, but fairly, and not simply shouted or bullied down.
Whether or not you are a "newbie" should be irrelevant to how your evidence is judged – it’s obviously the quality of your evidence that matters. Ultimately, all evidence should be judged after independent and objective examination by a number of people, so time will tell with your candidate. But right or wrong, when a new theory is being introduced (and absent conclusive evidence therefor), oftentimes initial perceptions of its legitimacy are a direct function of its proponent’s credibility. Hopefully you can see by now that I think your candidate is worthy of continued consideration and study, and I suspect all but a vocal super-minority of others here would agree. To your credit, it’s clear your candidate reflects some thought and research. But speaking strictly for myself, some of your comments and responses undermine your credibility.
properly research the Illinois age-of-consent law for the 1880s); and sweeping (and false) generalities:

Zenner wrote: … I believe that, apart from that "fascinating coincidence" [that W.E. Sanders played with anagrams], there is no evidence that he [Sanders] had anything in common with the man who wrote The Expert. …

In my view, Leonard Hevia’s nice summary includes at least a couple of crystal-clear commonalities: (1) Sanders’ height and age; and (2) Sanders being a published writer. (And there is also the “writing voice” mentioned by Bob Coyne, admittedly more a judgment call but perhaps the most critical evidence there is.)

Zenner wrote: … I trust Smith; I don’t trust Gardner!

I may be wrong, but I’m under the impression that everything we “know” from Smith was through Gardner. If that’s the case, then if you don’t trust Gardner, how can you trust Smith? In a couple of posts I believe you have suggested that Gardner more or less tainted Smith’s recollections (or at least some of them), which might create a dilemma, for it doesn’t seem reasonable (or good scholarship) to always discount or dismiss inconvenient “facts” from Smith while always embracing the convenient ones. We all make mistakes, however (a couple of mine are noted above!). It’s just that, as a general matter, I wish you were more circumspect in the treatment of your evidence and the evidence for the other candidates.

Good night all!

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**Bill Mullins** | 07/14/15 11:29 AM | [link] | [filter]

Zenner wrote:

Right accent? Smith (a "trained observer," as you say) thought that Erdnase was not a native Chicagoan, and was from "the East" -- not consistent with the accent that a native Chicagoan like Thompson would have had.

Just to remind you, as I have already posted, Harry’s parents came from New York State and Massachusetts respectively. His Aunty Susan, a teacher, also from New York State, was living with the Thompson family during Harry’s formative years. How much further east do you want me to go? What makes you think that Harry would have a different accent to the rest of the family?

Because that is how people work. Typically, a kid will have an accent that reflects the area where he grew up, rather than where his parents/family grew up. Surely you
parents from Poland, Russia, Jordan and Ghana; the parents have strong foreign accents but the kids all have standard North Alabama accents. My son's pulmonologist was raised in Athens, Georgia, but his parents are from India. If you spoke to him on the phone you'd assume he was just another Georgia Good Ole Boy. I have a good friend who is from New Jersey and who moved here after he got out of college. His kids, to his chagrin, have strong Southern accents. My parents are from rural Central and East Tennessee, and have distinctly different Southern accents than my own (I grew up in Nashville, but can code-switch when visiting family). Magician Gene Matsuura's family is from Japan, but his accent is Central Californian, where he was raised. Our own Richard Kaufman has a strong New York accent, but when I met his daughter at the Genii Bash, she had more of a standard Mid-Atlantic accent, as befits a girl raised in Washington DC.

But that's just anecdata, and I'm sure you will discount it. Maybe this will help convince you (bottom of the page):

He was a friend of Houdini and so was in a position to show him the move for transforming a card which Houdini then showed to Selbit.

Are you now seriously contending that Thompson showed Houdini the "Transformation Two Hands First Method"? Based on what? For that matter, is there any evidence that Thompson and Houdini ever met (particularly before 1902?) (I know they were correspondents).

How would Houdini have known that move before it was published had not somebody shown it to him?

The obvious answer is that Houdini invented the move. Despite Vernon's comments, Houdini was quite the card man. Farelli, Gaultier, and Selbit all credited the move to Houdini.

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Bill Mullins | 07/14/15 11:32 AM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote:
One approach to argue rationally would be to make a table of "convincers" and see which candidates have the most, or of all "convincers" which should be weighted more than others.
Bill Mullins | 07/14/15 11:56 AM | link | filter

magicam wrote:

Zenner wrote: ... I trust Smith; I don't trust Gardner!

I may be wrong, but I’m under the impression that everything we “know” from Smith was through Gardner. If that’s the case, then if you don’t trust Gardner, how can you trust Smith? In a couple of posts I believe you have suggested that Gardner more or less tainted Smith's recollections (or at least some of them), which might create a dilemma, for it doesn’t seem reasonable (or good scholarship) to always discount or dismiss inconvenient “facts” from Smith while always embracing the convenient ones.

Only to an extent. The original accounts of Smith were interpreted by Gardner (1947 SAM Program, _The Man Who Was Erdnase_, Introduction to Dover Edition of Erdnase, Addendum to Ortiz's _Annotated Erdnase_) but _The Gardner Smith Correspondence_ quotes Smith's letters directly, unfiltered by Gardner's interpretation. So they may be taken as primary sources (unless you don't trust Hatch and Randall, the publishers -- I do trust them).

Tom Sawyer | 07/14/15 03:02 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

Regarding Jonathan Townsend's outline of a method for evaluating candidates (a list of weighted “convincers”), in my opinion this is one of the best methods for evaluating candidates, and of allowing comparison of one candidate to another.

Not long ago, I attempted pretty much that exact idea (for certain aspects of certain candidates), and I thought it worked well.

Bill Mullins made a good point about it being difficult for everyone to agree on the “convincers” or their weight.

That is true, but at least it can be used by each interested person, and his results will be comparable to his other results for his own guidance -- even if he never tells anyone else what his results are.

The weakness that Bill mentions is easier to deal with than some of the unfocused arguments that are sometimes made for candidates.
Zenner wrote: Dick Hood was born about 1882, so would have been very young in the 1890s. He would have been about 20 when the Erdnase book was published and his father had died 5 years before.

Are you saying that Edwin Hood died ca. 1897? Because he is listed as living in Chicago in the 1910 Census. TMWWE suggests he died in 1921.

And it’s often said that H. C. Evans is a pseudonym that he used. But the following makes me question that:

*******************

Chicago Inter Ocean, Jun 3, 1906 p 6

FOUND LOADED DICE
Marked Cards Also Confiscated by Police – Gaming Goods Sellers Held

H. C. Evans, a dealer in gaming paraphernalia, was arrested at his place of business, 125 Clark street, by Detectives Wooldridge and Barry of Chief Collins’ office yesterday. He was fined $200 by Justice Prindiville at the Harrison street police court.

In the possession of Evans were found, it is alleged, hundreds of packs of marked cards and loaded dice.

*******************

Perhaps Evans was a real person? But if not, a possible explanation for Hood to use that as a pseudonym was that Hood had an adopted brother, H. C. Hood.

Here’s an excerpt from another article that suggests that Evans was a pseudonym for Hood:

*******************

Belvidere IL Daily Republican, Dec 29, 1910 p 4

. . . the last grand jury indicted Jacob Schimberg, president of the Slack Manufacturing company, 126 Franklin street, and Edward O. and Richard W. Hood, operating as H. C. Evans & Co., 104 Van Buren street, Chicago, on evidence provided by Inspector Mullen.
**Bill Mullins wrote:** ... this is all just a parlor game anyway

With that in mind, when you see a post that begins ...  

"ERDNASE FOUND  
Pull up a chair and grab a coffee",  

at least you know the game is going to be fun for awhile.  

Contrarily, when you see a post that devotes a thousand words to ruminations on possible variations in the binding of different editions ...  

then I'd just as soon be "playing solitaire to dawn with a deck of 51".  

Thank you Zenner, for sharing an interesting theory.

**magicam** | 07/14/15 08:27 PM | link | filter

**Brad Jeffers wrote:** ...Contrarily, when you see a post that devotes a thousand words to ruminations on possible variations in the binding of different editions ...  

then I'd just as soon be "playing solitaire to dawn with a deck of 51". ...

LOL. That, and doubtless such forays could also quickly cure insomnia for 99.9% of the populace. I was hoping (perhaps in vain) to spark an interest in bibliography in that .1%.

**Bill Mullins wrote:**

*magicam wrote:* I may be wrong, but I'm under the impression that everything we "know" from Smith was through Gardner. ...  

Only to an extent. ... _The Gardner Smith Correspondence_ quotes Smith's letters directly, unfiltered by Gardner's interpretation. ...  

I'd certainly be inclined to agree. But unless I've misunderstood Dick Hatch, most (or perhaps even the vast majority?) of those letters were written after Gardner's personal meeting(s) with Smith. So bearing in mind Zenner's suggestions about Gardner's possible undue influence on Smith, seems like a logical extension of that argument could be that Smith's subsequent letters were tainted by such influence. Not an
A further good night to all!

**Tom Sawyer** | 07/14/15 08:51 PM | link | filter

I guess I'm not too surprised that people still look at Marshall D. Smith's description of Erdnase as being reliable. (His comments on height and age appear to be among the most mentioned attributes of Erdnase.)

I do wonder why Hurt McDermott's discussion (in *Artifice, Ruse & Erdnase*) of Smith's comments does not seem to have tempered people's enthusiasm on this somewhat.

I think Smith's comments can be useful in some ways, but I would hesitate to give much weight to his comments on height and age.

--Tom Sawyer

**Richard Kaufman** | 07/14/15 10:41 PM | link | filter

Bill, I no longer have a "strong" New York accent. Your hearing must be deceiving you.

**Richard Hatch** | 07/14/15 11:18 PM | link | filter

I'm not sure how relevant the whole "accent" discussion is to this thread, though it is interesting. Gardner's notes of his interview visit with Smith indicate only that the author did not have a foreign accent ("14: Thinks he had an American accent. At any rate, doesn't recall any foreign accent. Voice was quiet and soft spoken."). Smith's placing of the author as coming from outside Chicago are based on other circumstantial factors, not his accent or lack thereof: "6. Has impression he was not a Chicago man (otherwise he would have mentioned living there before, etc.)."

That would rule out Thompson, I guess... Smith also accepted immediately upon Gardner suggesting it that the man's name was "Andrews", though he could not confirm or recall his initials. Again, if you accept that recollection, that rules out Thompson... In later correspondence (not with Smith), Gardner says that Smith recalled the man's first name as "James", though it is difficult to know whether that was prompted by Gardner's finding the "Coney Island Fakir" article by James Andrews, rather than the reverse...

In later correspondence Smith mentions thinking the man came from the East, specifically New York, though it is hard to know how much confidence he had in that recollection.
Chicago, was educated in upstate New York, moved to Chicago in the early 1890s (as recalled by Richard Hood of H. C. Evans & Co.) and moved to New York in 1903, the year the book's price dropped. He was the author of numerous "treatises" (so described on the title page), at least one of which began with a glossary of terms as does The Expert. A very good circumstantial case can be made for James, though no connection to conjuring or card play has been found (though his daughter was an expert bridge player and his grandson a blackjack aficionado...). It was in trying to connect James Andrews to Dalrymple that I stumbled on Edwin Sumner Andrews, who seemed to me an even better circumstantial fit, though I am still fond of JDA and consider him a possible "person of interest"...

Bill Mullins | 07/15/15 02:46 AM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: Bill, I no longer have a "strong" New York accent. Your hearing must be deceiving you.

Oh, I'm sure there are much stronger ones to be heard.

But to this Southern boy, your accent (and pretty much everyone else's from north of the Ohio River) is "strong". It's more a statement about my ears than your voice.

And it works the other way -- I was in a cafeteria at the Univ of Rochester about 25 years ago and cussed out a server who was giving me grief about the funny way I talk. Me? I don't have an accent -- I speak normal.

Zenner | 07/15/15 08:04 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: Are you saying that Edwin Hood died ca. 1897? Because he is listed as living in Chicago in the 1910 Census. TMWWE suggests he died in 1921.

Edwin Clark Hood died on April 11, 1897, according to my research. Have I got the wrong man?

Peter Zenner

Zenner | 07/15/15 09:02 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: He was a friend of Houdini and so was in a position to show him the move for transforming a card which
Are you now seriously contending that Thompson showed Houdini the "Transformation Two Hands First Method"? Based on what? For that matter, is there any evidence that Thompson and Houdini ever met (particularly before 1902?) (I know they were correspondents).

Read what I said again, Bill - "so was in a position to show him the move". You are a naughty boy

Can anybody show that any of the other candidates knew Houdini? What Harry's meetings with magicians were, prior to The Sphinx, we don't know. They weren't reported. But it is obvious that, from then onwards, he made a point of visiting with magicians and attending shows wherever his job took him. Living in Chicago, as a fan of magicians, he would no doubt have attended the "World's Columbian Exhibition" in 1893 and/or Middleton's Clarke Street Theatre between December 26th, 1898, and January 21st, 1899. I can't believe that such an ardent fan would miss an opportunity to see a magician performing in his home town, and, knowing Harry from his later habits, visit with him after the show.

**Zenner wrote:** How would Houdini have known that move before it was published had not somebody shown it to him?

The obvious answer is that Houdini invented the move. Despite Vernon's comments, Houdini was quite the card man. Farelli, Gaultier, and Selbit all credited the move to Houdini.

Selbit wrote, "The change by using the method I am about to describe is quite inexplicable, and by far the most deceptive that has come under my notice. For the knowledge of the movement I am indebted to my friend Mr. Harry Houdini, the celebrated 'king of handcuffs', who is an extremely clever card manipulator."

He did NOT say that Houdini invented it. Farelli got his information from the Selbit book and he, like you, got it wrong. I haven't got access to the Gaultier book but I shall check him out - thanks for the tip-off.

Peter Zenner

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**Bill Mullins** 07/15/15 09:11 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Zenner wrote:*

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Edwin Clark Hood died on April 11, 1897, according to my research. Have I got the wrong man?

Peter Zenner

I think so.

The 1900 Chicago City Directory on ancestry.com has Edwin C. Hood, occupation "manager", working at 125 Clark St. and living at 1336 Wabansia Ave. It doesn’t have a listing for the business H. C. Evans. But the 1903 directory does: H. C. Evans & Co., sporting goods, 125 Clark St.

So our guy is still alive in 1900.

The 1900 Census has him at 1336 Wabansia, age 43 (b. 1857), born in Iowa, parents born in PA, occupation "merchant", married to Rachel age 40 (b. 1860).

The 1910 Census has Edwin C. Hood, age 58 (born ca. 1852) living on 3800 Lexington, born in Iowa, parents born in PA, married to Margaret G., occupation "merchant sporting goods". So I think this is still him.

So between 1900 and 1910, he got a new wife. I don't have an explanation for why his apparent birth year changes. But like I said in reference to Andrews's two wives, these sorts of discrepancies are not uncommon, and you've just got to roll with them.

Here is an obituary for his son, Richard Hood. Another obit, with a picture. He was born in 1882, as you suggested earlier. This article suggests Edwin died ca. 1923. This suggests it was 1914.

Evans went out of business in 1955. This article includes some history of the company.

Richard Hatch | 07/15/15 12:51 PM | link | filter

Chris Wasshuber had the following Erdnase related news in his Lybrary.com Magic newsletter #679 sent out today:

With work spanning over several months I was finally successful locating the more than 110 year old James McKinney & Co. bankruptcy files - more than 600 pages in total. For those who can't put James McKinney into context, he was the printer who printed "Expert at the Card Table" (EATCT) by S. W. Erdnase. He went bankrupt just a year after release of EATCT. For research into the 'who was Erdnase' question this is a major breakthrough.
is much larger than originally assumed. He used 9 printing presses and had
32 employees. Several books were under preparation side by side. He
stored
a large amount of printing plates and had a good set of metal types on
hand. The bankruptcy records detail lists of creditors, lists of people
certain plates belonged to, plate owners who have been contacted but
could
not be reached, amounts loaned and paid out, etc. There is also a bit of a
dispute between some creditors who accuse McKinney of hiding and
moving
assets while under bankruptcy orders. It is a remarkable set of documents.
I am amazed that these are still around after 112 years and that nobody has
found them before.

Initially I was hoping that I will find a smoking gun inside these records.
I was hoping that I would find the plates for EATCT listed with a name who
owned them. That would have been Erdnase, or at least somebody very
close
to Erdnase. However, no such statement is found in the documents.
However,
there are a number of unnamed sets of plates which are associated with
particular companies and individuals. All of these could potentially be the
plates for EATCT and thus point us to Erdnase. There are also other hints
and leads in the documents which I have started to follow. Some of them
may
strengthen or weaken existing candidates. Others will suggest entirely new
ones.

The real breakthrough with these documents is that we are not anymore
limited to dreaming up some anagram for the name and then start looking
for
people with that name, and then build a case to somehow link them to
gambling and McKinney, but rather we can start with a list of names and
then research those names and see if anybody looks like Erdnase. This is
much easier. The bankruptcy documents firmly establishes the link with
James McKinney. If the owner of printing plates can be linked with card
play and or gambling and if other aspects check out, too, then we have a
potential new candidate for Erdnasehood. If this will indeed lead us to
Erdnase is still an open question. But the hunt for Erdnase has entered a
new very exciting era.

He then indicates plans to make these documents available for researchers in the near
future.
Bill Mullins wrote:

Zenner wrote:

Bill Mullins wrote: Are you saying that Edwin Hood died ca. 1897? Because he is listed as living in Chicago in the 1910 Census. TMWWE suggests he died in 1921.

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So between 1900 and 1910, he got a new wife. I don't have an explanation for why his apparent birth year changes. But like I said in reference to Andrews's two wives, these sorts of discrepancies are not uncommon, and you've just got to roll with them.

Here is an obituary for his son, Richard Hood. Another obit, with a picture. He was born in 1882, as you suggested earlier. This article suggests Edwin died ca. 1923. This suggests it was 1914.

Evans went out of business in 1955. This article includes some history of the company.
"My" Edwin C. Hood turns out to be the son of Edwin Holland Hood, born in 1846 in Dayton, Ohio.

The Chicago Edwin C. Hood was the son of Richard W. Hood, born on January 15, 1857 in Davenport, Iowa. He died on September 12, 1914, and was taken back for burial in Davenport, Iowa, the following day.

He appears to have married Elizabeth (Lizzie) R. Clarke on July 7, 1880 (presumably also known as Rachel) and then Margaret G. Whatever before 1910.

Thanks for putting me straight on that one!

Peter Zenner

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**Tom Sawyer** | 07/16/15 12:52 AM | link | filter

I have been pondering Chris Wasshuber's announcement of the discovery of the James McKinney & Co. bankruptcy file. I believe this is one of the most significant things to be turned up regarding *The Expert at the Card Table* in a long time.

A lot of the other recent discoveries have pertained to specific people who have been proposed as candidates -- so this new discovery basically approaches the situation from a different direction.

On an somewhat different topic, I was looking at a 1944 Charles T. Powner version of *The Expert at the Card Table*. In view of the fact that the *Police Gazette* has recently been mentioned on this thread as a seller of the book, I was interested in the fact that the book has a "The National Police Gazette" label at the foot of the back cover.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Zenner** | 07/17/15 07:16 AM | link | filter

I have another "fascinating coincidence" for Bill Mullins to ponder. Way back in 2003, David Alexander wrote the following on the Genii Forum, and I do remember Richard Hatch has also mentioned that the copyright ran out in 1930.

*David Alexander wrote:* The year 1930 rolls around, important because that is the year the copyright comes up for renewal. No one renews it. Drake can’t because he doesn’t own it or have legal rights to it, otherwise he would
The "fascinating coincidence" (if that's what it is) is that my candidate, Harry S. Thompson, died on December 20, 1930, "AFTER A LONG ILLNESS" (according to his grand-daughter).

So renewing a copyright would have been the last thing on his mind. After 28 years MY candidate may have "dropped any interest he has in the project" also.

For what it's worth, I'll throw in another "fascinating coincidence".

Way back in 2008, Richard Hatch told us

*Richard Hatch wrote:* “Vernon also speculated that he might perhaps have met the mysterious author as a youth while studying magic books at the library in Ottawa. A stranger with a red beard engaged him in conversation about card work and gave him some fine points on the pass. Vernon never saw the man again and fantasized that perhaps it might have been the mysterious Erdnase.”

Harry S. Thompson's daughter, Nathalie, married Ibra Conners in 1926 and “In 1929 Dr. Gussow brought him [Ibra Conners] to Ottawa specifically to take charge of the annual plant disease survey reports and the mycological herbarium. With his field and herbarium experience under W. P. Fraser, in addition to his academic training, Conners was well fitted to be curator of the herbarium.” [*Canadian Field Naturalist*]

It is quite likely that Harry visited Ottawa to visit his daughter and her family but the problem is that Dai Vernon would no longer be a youth in 1929. He would have been about 35. Perhaps Vernon's memory was at fault? I don't know, but it's a "fascinating coincidence", isn't it? Can anybody else place their candidate in Ottawa?

And, before you ask, I have no idea what colour Harry's hair was or whether or not he ever grew a beard.

Peter Zenner

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**Zenner** | 07/17/15 07:32 AM | link | filter

*Tom Sawyer wrote:* I have been pondering Chris Wasshuber's announcement of the discovery of the James McKinney & Co. bankruptcy file. I believe this is one of the most significant things to be turned up regarding *The Expert at the Card Table* in a long time.

I was aware that this announcement was imminent and have been awaiting it's publication with bated breath.
Harry's brother (there must have been a contact at McKinney's for Erdnase to be addressed c/o there).

I shall also be checking the list of suppliers to see whether or not McKinney purchased his inks from Phillip Ruxton Incorporated of 205 Harrison Street. After working in his father's printing and publishing business, that is the company with which Harry spent the rest of his working life.

Peter Zenner

Richard Kaufman | 07/17/15 10:38 AM | link | filter

Vernon was living in New York in 1929, not Ottawa,

Bill Mullins | 07/17/15 10:44 AM | link | filter

Zenner wrote: I suspect that you are wondering why he used the name 'S.W. Erdnase'. O.K. In 1901 E[mory] C[obbe] Andrews graduated from university in Chicago and went to work in the Chicago office of Ruxton's, the company for which Harry worked. Why 'S.W. Erdnase' and not 'S.W. Erdnace'? I don't know. They sound the same.

So Thompson, whom you say is on the road at the time as a commercial traveller, still had time to develop a relationship with a new hire at the Ruxton firm, just out of college, 20 years his junior, that is so strong that he wrote a book in his name? [and just to check, since you haven't specifically said so, did Thompson work for Ruxton before 1902? I haven't found anything that ties him to the firm that early]

E. C. Andrews wrote a book as well, but didn't return the favor -- no mention of Andrews at all.

E. C. ended up hanging himself to death in 1932. Probably out of despair that no one realized that the most important book in card magic was written in his name.

Zenner | 07/18/15 06:14 AM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: Vernon was living in New York in 1929, not Ottawa,

My posting was offered as a "fascinating coincidence", Richard. Vernon said he was a youth when he thought he might have met Erdnase, so I cast doubt myself. Mind you, there is nothing to say that Vernon never ever went back to Ottawa on a home visit. We don't know.
Bart Whaley wrote: “In 1946 John Scarne stunned a gathering of the New York Magic Round Table with three claims. First, he said he often took lunch with Mrs Erdnase. Second, he had the original Erdnase manuscript, for which he claimed Audley Walsh had offered him $500. Third, Andrews wasn’t Erdnase’s real name. When Vernon told him he was “getting as crazy as the rest”, Scarne smiled and said, “I’m checking a few points before I spill everything.” This was probably just another bit of the usual bragging from ‘Flukey Johnny’. I’ve caught him in many cheap lies in his books. Also his checking apparently shut him up, as nothing more was heard of these three claims.” (Bart Whaley, The Man Who Was Erdnase, page 269, quoting from Dai Vernon’s letter to Fawcett Ross dated June 21, 1946)

As you no doubt have noticed by now, my candidate is Harry S. Thompson, i.e., his name was not Andrews. (Flukey Johnny’s third claim)

He may not have owned ”the original Erdnase manuscript”. Flukey Johnny lived on until 1985 and I feel sure that we would have heard other mentions of it. There is no mention of Erdnase in his autobiography, The Odds Against Me (1966)

Now for the ”fascinating coincidence”. Mrs Erdnase had a nephew in New York called Warren Faxon and he worked for an advertising agency. It is possible that Scarne knew Faxon through his business activities and that Faxon introduced him to his aunty whilst she was visiting him. Marion Thompson died in 1946 and that could well be the reason why Scarne couldn’t ”check a few points”.

Did Scarne meet Marion Thompson? I don’t know - but the fact that she died in 1946 makes it a ”fascinating coincidence”, don’t you think?

Peter Zenner

PS. How many ”fascinating coincidences” do I need to post in order to convince at least a few of you that Harry S. Thompson is a worthy candidate?

Zenner | 07/18/15 06:33 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: So Thompson, whom you say is on the road at the time as a commercial traveller, still had time to develop a relationship with a new hire at the Ruxton firm, just out of college, 20 years his junior, that is so strong that he wrote a book in his name?

(a) I never said that Thompson developed a relationship with F.C. Andrews. I
(b) He didn't write a book "in his name". The author of the book used the name "S.W. Erdnase" - have you forgotten already?

(c) Commercial travellers have a base somewhere. Are you suggesting that Harry Thompson never met E.C. Andrews in Ruxton's Chicago office?

You can imagine my delight when I came across the name "E.C. Andrews" when researching Ruxton's. Harry Thompson wasn't the first to borrow the name of somebody else when looking for a nom-de-plume or a pseudonym. If you don't like what I am posting, just put it down as another "fascinating coincidence".

How many more do you need? I have certainly posted more than have been posted in support of any other candidate.

Peter Zenner

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**Jack Shalom** | 07/18/15 06:40 AM | link | filter

Seems like it would have been awfully easy to anagram to C.W. Erdnase. That initial S wasn't doing any particular linguistic work. Just saying.

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**Bill Mullins** | 07/18/15 12:28 PM | link | filter

So your list of fascinating coincidences includes:
1. Before the book was published, Thompson may have known a guy whose name is not an anagram of "S. W. Erdnase".
2. In 1904 or 1905, Vernon met someone whom he fantasized was Erdnase. Thompson may have gone to the same city 25 years later.
3. I'm not sure I can parse the Scarne anecdote, but I think the coincidence is: A known serial exaggerator who claimed to know Erdnase's wife may have met the nephew of the wife of Thompson. Or maybe not. (There were, what, 7 million people in NY at the time? Yeah, they probably met.)

[*clunk*]

What's that sound? Is it the scales falling from my eyes?

---

Zenner wrote: I suggested that he used his name, probably as a joke.

It isn't funny.
It would seem any Erdnase candidate must be proposed with either hard evidence, or with circumstantial evidence in support of that name being put forward.

Circumstantial evidence is what we’re talking about in the Erdnase search to date, and circumstantial evidence has an *actual* definition. In the search for Erdnase, one isn’t allowed to redefine a word in order for their candidate to appear legitimate.

What is being brought forward by P. Zenner isn’t circumstantial evidence at all, it is a series of large, and personal leaps of faith.

When a candidates champion offers only his own personal leaps of faith as evidence, and then becomes incredulous when nobody else "jumps" along with him, that’s not a failure to convince, rather it’s simple common sense on the part of those readers who may ask for just a bit more evidence of any kind to be offered before they are asked to consider the candidate as a "serious" contender for Erdnase.

I’m not saying Zenner is silly, and I’m not saying his passion for what has obviously been a personal project of some depth is silly ... I’m saying that stating unequivocally that a magician who lived in Chicago in the same time period as the book was written was obviously Erdnase, and doing so in the complete and utter absence of any hard or circumstantial evidence seems just a bit silly.

Personal leaps of faith are not evidence, and if wishes were horses - beggars would ride.

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Jonathan Townsend wrote: One approach to argue rationally would be to make a table of "convincers" and see which candidates have the most, or of all "convincers" which should be weighted more than others.

Well Jonathan, I have been posting "convincers" (or "fascinating coincidences", as Bill Mullins calls them) for well over a week. I shall summarise them, off the top of my head; there may have been others.

1. Harry fitted the description given by Marshall D. Smith.

2. Harry was an ‘expert’ at sleight of hand.

3. Harry had experience in the printing and publishing trade and therefore knew how to self-publish a book.
5. Harry is known to have written other material.

6. Harry died in 1930, after a long illness, the year the copyright ran out.

7. His wife, Marion, died in 1946, the year John Scarne said he was going to check some details with 'Mrs Erdnase' and failed to do so.

8. Harry knew Houdini and was in a position to show Houdini a move with which Houdini was later credited.

9. Harry had one of the largest magic libraries in America.

10. Harry knew a young man called 'E.C. Andrews' and most probably used his name in constructing his pseudonym.

11. The 'Card Through Handkerchief' effect was said by Roterberg to have originated in Chicago, Harry's home city.

That will do for now. Do you think that anyone will come up with more "convincers" than that for their candidate? I doubt it. Some while back I asked Richard Hatch for evidence that his candidate had any knowledge of magic or of publishing books (Erdnase obviously did). He hasn't responded yet.

Peter Zenner

Brad Henderson | 07/19/15 09:05 AM | link | filter

the printers ink thing is ridiculous. ANY gambler of that day would have been familiar with marked cards and would know that the were marked with ink. Now, had EATCT contained a FORMULA for ink you might have a case - but this barely meets the level of a coincidence, let alone a fascinating one.

The idea that someone lived in a city that a trick may have come from is equally unconvincing. I live in a town where Stevie Ray Vaughan called home, I have a music degree, but that doesn't mean I can play guitar.

dying in the year of the copyright expiration is an 'interesting' coincidence, but someone dying anytime between 1902 and 1930 would be equally coincidental.

Also, I have a very large magic library, but that doesn't make me a card cheat - and it is clearly the card cheating stuff that makes EATCT the book that it is.
many of the antiquarian books on magic). If one could find earlier sources for the material and then show a candidate had THOSE books in his library, then we would be on a firm 'coincidence' grounding.

knowing someone whose last name was Andrews is also hardly a coincidence, especially when the initials of that person require one to forget that when rearranged the actual letters in their name do NOT spell s w Erdnase.
I once met a guy named Andrew Sims. it you overlook the letters that don't belong I have a near equal claim to being the mysterious author on that count.

being in Chicago at the time, fitting the description, and knowing people in the printing business ARE good leads. Knowing magic and sleight of hand helps the case, but do not rise to the level of fascinating coincidence as would knowing the person had a penchant for anagrams OR knew a specific trick in EATCT.

The scarne thing is a fun story, but given his reputation I can't say it hold much water.

I do appreciate your work on this. And perhaps your guy will turn out to be the right guy. But given the criteria above, I don't think your case is anywhere close to being conclusive or fascinating - just coincidental

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**Bill Mullins** | 07/19/15 09:52 AM | link | filter

It's not the number of coincidences/convincers that makes a candidate interesting, but the quality of them.

For example, M. F. Andrews was known to have cheated at cards. This one fact trumps everything you have said about Thompson and, despite the many problems with his candidacy, makes him more viable than Thompson, because the book in question was about cheating at cards. There is no evidence that Thompson (correct me please if I am wrong) knew anything about advantage card play, or performing card magic.

Both Edwin S. Andrews and W. E. Sanders have names that can be anagrammed into "S. W. Erdnase". This one fact trumps everything you have said about Thompson and, despite the problems with their candidacies, makes them more viable than Thompson, because "S. W. Erdnase" is clearly a pseudonym, and their is a logical reason for ESA and WES to have developed it from their own names. There is no such reason for Thompson to have done so. If the book had been written by S. M. Photon, your guy would be a much stronger candidate.

Many of your coincidences aren't even known to be true. They are "mights" or "maybes". Take the Houdini issue -- you say that "Harry knew Houdini and was in a
this coincidence to be supportive of your argument, both would have to be true, and we don't know that either one is.

I've said before, and I'll say again, anyone who seriously wants to discuss a new candidate is welcome, and most of us who care are happy to help investigate a new potential author. But to come into a conversation that's been going on for 12 years and say, "you guys can give it up, I've solved the mystery" with such a weak candidate is off-putting. You will get challenged. Martin Gardner got challenged. Richard Hatch has been challenged. David Alexander, Marty Demarest, Todd Karr, Richard Wiseman and all the others have had their arguments poked and prodded, looking for weaknesses. And they all have weaknesses. The biggest difference between these other investigators and you is that they accept that weaknesses exist, and engaged their debaters in a spirit of "lets figure this out together".

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**Richard Kaufman** | 07/19/15 10:24 AM | [link] [filter]

Brad, you probably haven't been keeping up on the literature of this whole thing, but yes, Erdnase did read magic books--there are a number of items which appear in the book that are clearly taken from earlier magic texts. Some of the ideas have been improved, such as the Diagonal Palm Shift, but others are just rewritten (such as the "Erdnase" color change, which I believe had been published a year earlier by Selbit).

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**Brad Henderson** | 07/19/15 11:40 AM | [link] [filter]

I am aware erdnase (or someone who contributed to EATCT) had familiarity with magic, either through books or performances. My question was if someone had tracked down specific sources as they have with material that appears in old conjuring books. If we could prove that Thompson had the books containing the source material used in EATCT then the 'large magic library' claim becomes more interesting. Otherwise we are left with a little hole and a big hole. We still need to establish the card cheating bona fides as well as establish that Thompson knew the material published in EATCT.

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**lybrary** | 07/19/15 11:53 AM | [link] [filter]

Why the name Erdnase?

I would like to start a discussion on this very simple question. Why did he choose the name Erdnase? Following the discussion here I get the sense that many believe there has to be some kind of 'logical' explanation for the name, for example the reverse spelling, or the anagram. Candidates who can 'logically' explain the name Erdnase are seen as stronger. Those that cannot are seen as weaker.
randomly? Without any logic or purpose? Perhaps he used some word he picked up somewhere? Or he was just throwing around names, modifying them, combining them, changing them, dropping characters, adding others, until he had a name that somehow sounded fine to him?

To me that would be just as likely a scenario than coming up with a logical derivation of the name. If you agree with me then you also must consider an E.S. Andrews just as good a candidate as any other name everything else being equal. It shouldn't add points to the candidate just because we have a logical way of deriving it. If you think mathematically about conditional likelihoods you can quickly convince yourself that this must be so.

The only exception I would make is that if we find a man whose name is actually Erdnase, or perhaps his middle name is Erdnase, or some close relatives given name is Erdnase. Then I think one could argue that it is a strong piece of evidence. Anything else I find pretty weak, particularly if applied in reverse such as: "Aha, your candidate can't explain the name Erdnase. Thus he can't be Erdnase, or is much less likely Erdnase."

What say you?

Bill Mullins | 07/19/15 12:05 PM | link | filter

Jason England has a set of notes that explores sources. TMWWE and Ortiz’s annotations also do. Roterberg and Sachs are the two big sources.

These books are common enough that even small libraries would have had them, so I don't see Thompson's large library as being too relevant.

One rare book that contains a sleight later found in Erdnase is "52 Wonders", which was only discovered last year. If it could be shown that Thompson had a copy of it, that would make him much more interesting.

Bob Coyne | 07/19/15 12:12 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: Why the name Erdnase?

To me that would be just as likely a scenario than coming up with a logical derivation of the name. If you agree with me then you also must consider an E.S. Andrews just as good a candidate as any other name everything else being equal. It shouldn't add points to the candidate just because we have a
Since S.W. Erdnase is so obviously a made up name, I think it's most likely there's a reason for it. It doesn't have to be an anagram, but it seems like there should be *some* reason to pick a name that sounds so fake (unlike, say, Lewis Carroll which passes as a real name while still being a pseudonym). Selbit as "Tibbles" in reverse (with minor modification) is another example of a logically derived name. This is one reason I like WE Sanders as the candidate...it's both an anagram and involves wordplay (erdnase = earth nose in german, and Sanders was a mining engineer).

Bob, I think unless somebody has actually studied say a couple of hundred nom-de-plums and has statistically evaluated how likely a priori it is that a pseudonym is logically derived and how likely it is not, I feel we have to allow for both being essentially equally likely.

Here is an example from my own world of name creation. A few years back I was into registering domain names. I thought it might be a good investment. It turned out not to be, but that is another story. However, back then I tried to come up with interesting, nice sounding, short and memorable domain names, which were not yet registered. One such creation of my imagination was fantok. I am the proud owner of fantok.com (If you want to buy it email me.) I could now dream up some logical explanation for it such as that it is related to 'fan' and an alternative spelling of 'talk' - a site where fans can talk. Sounds logical, right? But it would be pure and utter nonsense. I simply made it up. There was no logic behind it except frantic letter mixing, pronouncing, writing, and checking if the domain was still not taken.

Why could that not be the case with Erdnase? Why should that be so much less likely?

Our human brain craves patterns and logic. We are predisposed to see patterns in purely random noise. I think the need for a logic explanation of Erdnase is like trying to see a pattern in white noise. It is what our brain tells us to do. But purely from a likelihood point of view it makes no sense to me. With that I mean that it is just as likely that Erdnase derived it by logic as it is that he just dreamed it up without any particular thought about how he derived it.

Leo Garet | 07/19/15 01:30 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: With that I mean that it is just as likely that Erdnase derived it by logic as it is that he just dreamed it up without any particular thought about how he derived it.
Family/friends/acquaintances and are at best a very thin near-disguise. Family/friends and whatnot can work it out if they feel like it. Where, however, the object is to thoroughly hide identity, then a made-up-no-connection-with-anybody-or-anything at all name is more likely. Or even a name that throws investigators into areas that seem to have possibilities; leaving evidence that isn’t really evidence. Spoils the fun a bit, I know, but there we are.

Moving sideways a little
Love this thread and I’m always interested to see Scarne thrown into any mix. I fell under his spell when I was about three years old and read “The Amazing World Of John Scarne”. Truly fabulous stuff.

As the years have rolled by I’ve come to the conclusion that he could not have chosen a more inappropriate title. “Amazing” simply isn’t the word for Scarne’s yarns. In no way does “Amazing” do credit to the bullshype.

In passing “The Odds Against Me” (being believed) is almost as good as “Amazing”.

As for Erdnase, I have no idea. Although, if we rejig C.W. Erdnase, howsabout Ed W Scarne?
I now return control of this thread to the genuine students.

Roger M. | 07/19/15 01:43 PM | link | filter

S.W. Erdnase is such an odd a name, wouldn’t it seem much more likely that W.E. Sanders or E.S. Andrews would be anagrammed directly into that extremely odd name? It seems that "Erdnase" would otherwise be almost impossible to come up with from scratch, as a search for the Given or Surname name "Erdnase" has born out over and over again.

That Demerest/Alexander, and R. Hatch have also found additional pieces of evidence for those two candidates remains compelling.

I’ve yet to read any book or document that offers anywhere near the amount of circumstantial evidence offered to date for W.E. Sanders or E.S. Andrews.

Could Mr. Erdnase have had a name completely unrelated to his nom-de-plume?... absolutely.
Is it likely he anagrammed S.W. Erdnase from his own name, absolutely.

In those terms, I see it as a wash
name.

In short, the circumstantial evidence combined with the direct reversal for Andrews, and the jumbled anagram for Sanders remains too compelling to diminish.

Richard Kaufman | 07/19/15 01:46 PM | link | filter

I really am busy with other matters and have not followed everyone’s various candidates closely, but is David Ben’s candidate an entirely different guy and the other candidates that have been put forward?

Leonard Hevia | 07/19/15 01:52 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: Why the name Erdnase?

I would like to start a discussion on this very simple question. Why did he choose the name Erdnase? Following the discussion here I get the sense that many believe there has to be some kind of ‘logical’ explanation for the name, for example the reverse spelling, or the anagram. Candidates who can 'logically' explain the name Erdnase are seen as stronger. Those that cannot are seen as weaker.

I disagree. Couldn’t it just as likely have been the case that he chose the name randomly? Without any logic or purpose? Perhaps he used some word he picked up somewhere? Or he was just throwing around names, modifying them, combining them, changing them, dropping characters, adding others, until he had a name that somehow sounded fine to him?

To me that would be just as likely a scenario than coming up with a logical derivation of the name. If you agree with me then you also must consider an E.S. Andrews just as good a candidate as any other name everything else being equal. It shouldn’t add points to the candidate just because we have a logical way of deriving it. If you think mathematically about conditional likelihoods you can quickly convince yourself that this must be so.

The only exception I would make is that if we find a man whose name is actually Erdnase, or perhaps his middle name is Erdnase, or some close relatives given name is Erdnase. Then I think one could argue that it is a strong piece of evidence. Anything else I find pretty weak, particularly if applied in reverse such as: "Aha, your candidate can’t explain the name Erdnase. Thus he can’t be Erdnase, or is much less likely Erdnase."
This book was an ego trip for the author. David Alexander reminds us that "...Erdnase had a healthy ego and was proud of what he learned, developed, refined, and created. He enjoyed parading his intelligence before the reader and mentioned that while he had taught his stock shuffling system to several people, they only knew that it worked, they could not fathom the mathematics of how it worked."

Alexander also points out that "He attached the last name of his pseudonym to five different "systems," two sleights, and his full initials to one sleight in particular. Thirty percent of the material in Card Table Artifice has Erdnase's name applied to it. Erdnase knew that what he had created was well beyond anything then written for years to come and said so..."

This tells me that whoever wrote this book was not about to hand over the credits to a possible? co-worker, nor was he going to pull this name randomly out of thin air without any logic or purpose. No, the name "Erdnase" is connected to him in some way as his ego would certainly demand.

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**Roger M.** | 07/19/15 03:58 PM | [link] | [filter]

Richard, the E.S. Andrews that is Richard Hatch's candidate is the same E.S. Andrews that David believes wrote EATCT.

David arrived there by developing an independent profile of Erdnase, which he compared to all the candidates, and found that Richards candidate fit his independent profile almost exactly.

They are one and the same E.S. Andrews.

If you have David's new book, you already know that David definitively lists E.S. Andrews as the author of EATCT, whereas Richard hasn't been quite that definitive to date.

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**Marcus** | 07/19/15 06:56 PM | [link] | [filter]

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* Brad, you probably haven't been keeping up on the literature of this whole thing, but yes, Erdnase did read magic books--there are a number of items which appear in the book that are clearly taken from earlier magic texts. Some of the ideas have been improved, such as the Diagonal Palm Shift, but others are just rewritten (such as the "Erdnase" color change, which I believe had been published a year earlier by Selbit).
own (for example writing down in the margins where the Erdnase color change has its true origins).

(If this has already been clearly answered in a previous post I apologise, I usually read through all posts but this thread will take me quite some time to finish.)

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**Bill Mullins** | 07/19/15 07:56 PM | [link] | [filter]

*Marcus wrote:* Is there a book or other medium where these things are well documented? References to earlier magic texts etc, I mean.

*Bill Mullins wrote:* Jason England has a set of notes that explores [Erdnase's] sources. TMWWE and Ortiz’s annotations also do.

*Marcus wrote:* I like to make notations about these things in books I own (for example writing down in the margins where the Erdnase color change has its true origins).

Which is why Richard Hatch has tried to examine as many first edition copies as possible, in hopes that one would have marginalia or inscriptions or other notes that would lead to the author.

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**Pete McCabe** | 07/19/15 08:15 PM | [link] | [filter]

It seems clear that there are several things that might have led the writer to choose the name S.W. Erdnase, including an infinite number that no researcher has even thought of. So it is interesting if a candidate can be linked to the pseudonym, And you might investigate such a candidate further, but it does not count as evidence if they do or don’t.

Same thing for the author's finances, based on the line that the author "needs the money." This may have meant the author needed money but it could just have been a folksy turn of phrase. It does not count as evidence if a candidate did or did not need money.

I think I’ve mentioned this before, but to me one of the biggest mysteries of the entire Erdnase story is Dai Vernon’s apparent indifference to finding him. When Vernon was spreading the word of Erdnase, it was very possible and even likely that Erdnase was still alive. Vernon drove across the country to meet Kennedy. Why didn’t he do everything possible to meet Erdnase?
think he took that secret to the grave. I think there may be clues somewhere, to be found, by examining Vernon's life.

I also think, based on less than nothing, that Persi Diaconis knows.

Tom Sawyer | 07/19/15 08:57 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

Personally, I think that a person's name is possibly the most important component of any case that is being made for (or against) any proposed candidate. If the name were not of high importance, then E.S. Andrews (the railroad guy) would have essentially no case whatsoever. Yes, you could still make a case for him, but he would have maybe a 1 in 50,000 chance of being Erdnase.

Likewise, there were a number of card magicians who were writers in Chicago in 1902. In several cases, the principal thing that keeps them out of serious candidacy is that their names do not work well in the context of authorship of the book.

As Chris Wasshuber says, it is quite possible that the name Erdnase was made up out of nothing. The two main reasons I think this is unlikely are:

1. "S.W. Erdnase" does have a potential name reversal.

2. "Erdnase" makes sense even if you don't reverse it.

Of those two reasons, the second one is much more significant.

For those who don't like the whole "earth nose" business, it should be relatively easy to accept the chances that someone simply made up the name "Erdnase" with no discernible connection with anything.

--Tom Sawyer

lybrary | 07/19/15 09:15 PM | link | filter

Tom, by that argument one could read all kind of meaning into names. I could then argue that Andrew means that 'An drew' something. Or take ERDNASE, reverse it to get ESANDRE which could mean ES-and-RE, the two author theory confirmed! It clearly was E.S. and R.E. who wrote the book. If you throw in a couple of foreign languages you multiply the ways to interpret it.
Could Erdnase have a logical derivation? Certainly. But it could also be noise we are desperately trying to interpret.

---

**Tom Sawyer** | 07/19/15 09:49 PM | link | filter

Chris, you make a very good point. And to me, the reversal of Erdnase gives you, as you said, Esandre -- certainly not Andrews.

The main problem I have in this connection is that Erdnase makes sense as a discrete unit.

I do not have any problem at all with the idea that Erdnase's real name has no detectable relationship to "S.W. Erdnase."

--Tom

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**Bob Coyne** | 07/19/15 10:03 PM | link | filter

*lybrary wrote:* Tom, by that argument one could read all kind of meaning into names. I could then argue that Andrew means that 'An drew' something. Or take ERDNASE, reverse it to get ESANDRE which could mean ES-and-RE, the two author theory confirmed! It clearly was E.S. and R.E. who wrote the book. If you throw in a couple of foreign languages you multiply the ways to interpret it.

My point is that this is exactly what I referred to earlier, it is seeing patterns in noise.

Could Erdnase have a logical derivation? Certainly. But it could also be noise we are desperately trying to interpret.

It's true that people can see patterns in noise. But not all patterns are created equal, and the question is how likely a given pattern would be there by chance. Very few names can be spelled backwards to form a real-sounding name -- that's not what you find in noise. It's a sign of something that's planned and designed. Surely the author must have done that on purpose. So although the author's name isn't necessarily ES Andrews, it becomes much more likely than it would be otherwise. A similar argument can be made for WE Sanders whose name and occupation match in other fairly direct ways. None of this proves either author's identity, but it does increase the likelihood of those authors versus authors with names that can't as easily be derived.
suggested to me by a genealogist after she read my nickname theory. (As a quick refresher, my nickname theory says that Erdnase 'earth nose' was the nickname of a German immigrant who wrote the book. BTW, I have dropped that theory due to the fact that the linguistic fingerprint does not suggest the author spoke any foreign language as a native language.)

Here it goes: The Erie and Ohio canals were dug primarily by Irish immigrants. It was hard dirty work. During the 1840s Germans started to settle in the same area. Germans considered themselves above the Irish, usually taking higher skill jobs such as tailors, goldsmith, bakers, restaurant operators, entrepreneurs, etc. It could be that the Germans used Erdnase as an ethnic slur to refer to the Irish who were digging in the earth getting dirty. As I documented earlier Erdnase is for example used in Germany to refer to pigs and dogs who dig in the ground. So the Germans saw the Irish as 'pigs and dogs digging in the ground' and thus referred to them as Erdnasen. Say our mystery author was of Irish heritage growing up in that area and was exposed to that term, maybe he used it as his nom-de-plume later.

Does anybody consider this plausible?

Leonard Hevia | 07/19/15 10:21 PM | link | filter

Pete McCabe wrote: I think I've mentioned this before, but to me one of the biggest mysteries of the entire Erdnase story is Dai Vernon's apparent indifference to finding him.

Vernon was definitely curious about the identity of Erdnase. He traveled to Chicago where he met John C. Sprong who informed Vernon about Drake's theory "...that Erdnase is Andrews spelled all mixed up." The trail went cold from there and Vernon left it at that. There is also that photo of the 1947 S.A.M. convention of Smith signing books for Faucett Ross, Martin Gardner, and Dai Vernon, who is taking notes in a notebook.

Pete McCabe wrote: Vernon drove across the country to meet Kennedy. Why didn't he do everything possible to meet Erdnase?

Vernon was already in Wichita cutting silhouettes at the Innes Department store when Faucett Ross informed him about the Mexican advantage player who had been incarcerated on murder charges at the Sedgwick Count Jail. The player gave Vernon the hot tip about Kennedy who lived in Kansas City, which is northeast of Wichita but not far. The Kennedy trail pretty much fell on Vernon's lap while he was working his magic with the shears. I bet Vernon would have hopped in a car if someone had told him the location of Erdnase.
Leonard Hevia | 07/19/15 10:31 PM | link | filter

*lybrary wrote:* Here it goes: The Erie and Ohio canals were dug primarily by Irish immigrants. It was hard dirty work. During the 1940s Germans started to settle in the same area.

Chris, I think you mean the 1840s. The Germans were expanding by the 1940s but never made it to Ohio.

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*lybrary* | 07/19/15 10:36 PM | link | filter

Yes, sorry. 1840s. Went back and corrected it.

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Roger M. | 07/19/15 10:50 PM | link | filter

*lybrary wrote:* Say our mystery author was of Irish heritage growing up in that area and was exposed to that term, maybe he used it as his nom-de-plume later.

Does anybody consider this plausible?

As relates to the "earthnose" theory, it's the most complete explanation I've ever read ... an explanation that, as you've laid it out, is indeed plausible.

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Bill Mullins | 07/19/15 11:06 PM | link | filter

Yes, we can impose patterns on noise. But that's what we, a century after the fact, are doing. What's important is what happened in 1902. Either the author chose "Erdnase" at random, or the choice was the end result of a logical process.

If the author's choice was a random one, the odds of it ending up as "Erdnase" are vanishingly small – one in ten thousand?? One in 100 thousand?? One in a million?? He could have just as easily chosen "Miller" or "Chevalier" or "apfel" or "cabeza".

But if it were the result of a logical process, ending up with "Erdnase" is much more likely, because a straightforward process which is known to have been used in creating pseudonyms (anagrams/reversal) when operated on relatively common names (Andrews, Sanders) gives that result (the 1900 census had about 50000 people named Andrews, and about 70000 named Sanders, out of a U.S. population of 117 million). The processes (random and logical) may be comparable in likelihood -- Chris says earlier that they are "essentially equally likely". But we are dealing with the result of a process, not the process. And (random yielding Erdnase) is much less likely than
lybrary wrote: It could be that the Germans used Erdnase as an ethnic slur to refer to the Irish who were digging in the earth getting dirty. As I documented earlier Erdnase is for example used in Germany to refer to pigs and dogs who dig in the ground. So the Germans saw the Irish as 'pigs and dogs digging in the ground' and thus referred to them as Erdnasen.

Is there any evidence that Germans did use this slur? Because otherwise this is in the "maybe might have" category, like "Thompson was in a position to show Houdini", of which I have been so critical of Zenner.

lybrary | 07/19/15 11:22 PM | link | filter

Bill, by random we not only have to consider truly random where you would pick any character out of 26 for each letter in the name, but random of the kind where he might take bits and pieces from existing names, then perhaps jumbles up some letters, maybe reverses all or a portion of it. Perhaps he then changes or drops some characters simply because it sounds or looks better, etc. Doing it like that the likelihood of arriving at Erdnase is not that small. But it would still be randomly derived without any clear method to it.

Bill Mullins | 07/19/15 11:25 PM | link | filter

Pete McCabe wrote: I think I’ve mentioned this before, but to me one of the biggest mysteries of the entire Erdnase story is Dai Vernon's apparent indifference to finding him. When Vernon was spreading the word of Erdnase, it was very possible and even likely that Erdnase was still alive. Vernon drove across the country to meet Kennedy. Why didn’t he do everything possible to meet Erdnase?

I voiced the same concerns some time ago, and was quickly set right.

lybrary | 07/19/15 11:30 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: Is there any evidence that Germans did use this slur? Because otherwise this is in the "maybe might have" category, like "Thompson was in a position to show Houdini", of which I have been so critical of Zenner.

There is plenty of evidence that Germans use the word 'dog' (Hund) and 'pig' (Schwein, Sau) as insults and slurs. Even the combination pig-dog (Sauhund) is used. Just ask any...
that Erdnase is also used as a slur seems a small step.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 07/19/15 11:38 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

To me, the main thing about "Erdnase" in this context is that it makes sense, and THAT is what makes it unlikely to have been created out of nothing. Reversed, though, it doesn't make much sense (Esandre).

In the Erdnase context, I usually don't like stories that are made up to explain facts. However, I think the "canal" theory is in a somewhat different category. It is kind of saying, "Maybe someone should look at Irish canal workers."

Wikipedia indicates that the Ohio and Erie Canal was in Ohio. It also shows the Illinois and Michigan Canal as running very near Chicago.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Bill Mullins** | 07/19/15 11:45 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

The copyright for EATCT was not renewed after it expired in 1930. In advocating for particular candidates for Erdnase, arguments have been made explaining why a particular person couldn't or wouldn't have renewed the book. Thompson was very sick (or soon to be so), M. F. Andrews killed himself years before, etc.

I'm not sure that any argument is needed. It was unusual for a book to be renewed. The vast majority of works copyrighted in 1902 weren't renewed, and there is no particular reason to expect that EATCT should have been renewed.

Per Copyright Office Annual Reports, there were ~93,000 works copyrighted in the year ending Jun 30 1902 (7000 of them were books). Twenty eight years later, only ~6000 of them were renewed. Only 6-1/2% of copyrighted items got renewed.

Most things get published, have a short life in print, and then go to fade into obscurity. It was unusual for authors to renew copyrights back then, and maybe Erdnase had no good reason to do so. It doesn't mean he was dead.

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**Dustin Stinett** | 07/19/15 11:58 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Curious ...

"Erdnase" can be linked to "digging in the dirt."
**Tom Sawyer wrote:** In the Erdnase context, I usually don't like stories that are made up to explain facts. However, I think the "canal" theory is in a somewhat different category. It is kind of saying, "Maybe someone should look at Irish canal workers."

--Tom Sawyer

I think the canals were mostly finished at the time Erdnase was likely born. Erdnase was perhaps a son or grandson of an Irish canal digger or simply grew up in an Irish community. An ethnic slur can linger on even if the original meaning doesn't directly apply anymore. Or perhaps it was simply passed down in stories by grandpa: "You know those German bastards called us Irish Erdnasen." Different ways this could have happened. But as I mentioned before, I am simply testing the theory to see what others think about it.

**Zenner | 07/20/15 11:26 AM | link | filter**

*Brad Henderson wrote:* the printers ink thing is ridiculous.

It was offered as one "coincidence" in a list of eleven.

The idea that someone lived in a city that a trick may have come from is equally unconvincing.

It was offered as one "coincidence" in a list of eleven.

dying in the year of the copyright expiration is an 'interesting' coincidence, but someone dying anytime between 1902 and 1930 would be equally coincidental.

It was offered as one "coincidence" in a list of eleven.

Also, I have a very large magic library, but that doesn't make me a card cheat - and it is clearly the card cheating stuff that makes EATCT the book that it is.

It was offered as one "coincidence" in a list of eleven. I don't believe that 'Erdnase' was a card cheat. He was a magician who pretended to be a reformed card cheat - "Andrews told Smith he was a former card shark who had decided to go straight, and was writing
knowing someone whose last name was Andrews is also hardly a coincidence, especially when the initials of that person require one to forget that when rearranged the actual letters in their name do NOT spell sw Erdnase.

It was offered as one "coincidence" in a list of eleven. The name 'Erdnase' sounds the same as 'Erdnace'.

being in Chicago at the time, fitting the description, and knowing people in the printing business ARE good leads. Knowing magic and sleight of hand helps the case, but do not rise to the level of fascinating coincidence as would knowing the person had a penchant for anagrams OR knew a specific trick in EATCT.

I am not relying on any one "coincidence". Add then all together and I think that a lawyer would believe he was a good suspect, suitable for further investigation.

The scarne thing is a fun story, but given his reputation I can't say it hold much water.

It was offered as one "coincidence" in a list of eleven. It was a strange thing of Scarne to claim, if there was no truth in it at all. Who are we to decide whether or not it was a bunch of lies?

I do appreciate your work on this. And perhaps your guy will turn out to be the right guy. But given the criteria above, I don't think your case is any where close to being conclusive or fascinating - just coincidental

Thank you. Now please consider the list as all being coincidences. Eleven of them. Sit back and wait for the wall of silence to descend as all the other candidates are listed with the "coincidences" that make them the perfect fit for S.W. Erdnase. You will be waiting a long time

Peter Zenner

Brad Henderson | 07/20/15 11:44 AM | link | filter

except none of the coincidences are all that fascinating. Erdnase was able to write in English. So could Thompson. You now how 12 coincidences and yet the case isn't any
I'm sure both men had 10 fingers as well.

Now we are up to 13.

Jonathan Townsend | 07/20/15 11:46 AM | link | filter

That table with columns for "interesting fact" and rows for candidates ...

"known to have played with anagrams", "known to have done card tricks", "known to have played cards for money"... may was well tick the box with a hyperlink to the evidence.

Bill Mullins | 07/20/15 11:47 AM | link | filter

 Brad Henderson wrote: except none of the coincidences are all that fascinating.

And many of them aren't even coincidences.

Brad Henderson | 07/20/15 11:49 AM | link | filter

fwiw I think demarest's candidate has an amazing litany of coincidences, if that's the measure of a candidate. We know he knew one of the tricks in EATCT and we KNOW he played with anagrams. There is tangible evidence for those 'facts' and those relate directly to the text/history of erdnase.

and yet I don't think his case is conclusive either, though it makes a compelling story.

Richard Hatch | 07/20/15 12:53 PM | link | filter

 Brad Henderson wrote: fwiw I think demarest's candidate has an amazing litany of coincidences, if that's the measure of a candidate. We know he knew one of the tricks in EATCT...

I don't believe this is correct. His Yellowstone diary shows him playing with MUTUS NOMEN, a trick NOT in EATCT. Which is a bit puzzling, if he was Erdnase... why not include it?

Brad Henderson | 07/20/15 01:03 PM | link | filter

my mistake. I misremembered his talk thinking the trick was in erdnase.
Zenner wrote: Now please consider the list as all being coincidences. Eleven of them. Sit back and wait for the wall of silence to descend as all the other candidates are listed with the "coincidences" that make them the perfect fit for S.W. Erdnase. You will be waiting a long time

Apologies for the long silence. I was at our family summer home in the Uintah Mountains (Paul Wilson and Jason England spent a night there a couple of years ago on the way home from Marty Demarest’s wonderful Erdnaseum gathering) and we have no internet or cell access there, so it is taking me a while to catch up to this discussion.

At the risk of boring those who have been following this thread since the beginning, here’s a list of 14 coincidences, roughly in order of my weight for them, that make me interested in Edwin Sumner (possibly Summer) Andrews (1859-1928) as a candidate for Erdnase. If he is not the author (and I think there is a very good chance he is not!), then these are just coincidences. But absent that knowledge, I think he makes a very compelling circumstantial candidate:

1. His name reverses to S. W. Erdnase. ’Nuff said!
2. Married a Seely in 1898, possibly a relative of Louis Dalrymple’s mother, whose maiden name was Seel(e)y (I have seen both spellings for Dalrymple’s mother, though Seeley is more common).
3. Born 1859, making him the right age based on Marshall Smith’s recollection
4. Lived in Chicago in the early 1890’s as recalled by Edwin C. Hood (via Richard Hood)
5. Moved back to Chicago late in 1901, when Smith is presumed to have illustrated the book there
6. Moved from Chicago to San Francisco in February 1903, when the price on the book dropped to $1
7. Worked in the Railroad industry since adolescence, giving him ample opportunity to observe and participate in card play.
8. He is mentioned in a newspaper article in relation to card play in San Francisco in 1911
9. Strong links to Denver (where he lived from 1896 to 1901), where Hugh Johnston reportedly later met Erdnase
10. His 1901-1903 Chicago address was 117 S. Austin Blvd in Oak Park (Chicago was across the street). E. S. Burns (aka Emil Sorensen)’s Atlas Novelty Co. was at 295 Austin Ave, Chicago
11. His nearest neighbor in the 1865 Minnesota state census is an Irish immigrant farmer named Patrick McKinney (same name as James McKinney’s brother)
12. Died in 1928 and his will emphasizes that he was “known as and called E. S. Andrews”
13. Apparently right height range (based on M. D. Smith’s testimony) from the one photo we have found of him
Bill Mullins has convinced me that 10 is a coincidence, and I strongly suspect that 11 is. If it could be shown that Dolly Seely is reasonably closely related to Adelia Seely (say cousin or second cousin), then I would have a hard time thinking this a coincidence and would put all my chips on this particular E. S Andrews. Alas, I don’t have the genealogical skills/tools to pursue this angle. At it now stands, his candidacy is purely circumstantial. Lacking are any proof that he had the knowledge contained in the book or writing skills. Which is not to say that he did not...

I personally like Todd Karr’s E. S. Andrews quite a bit, though so little is presently known about him that it is easy to project our personal profiles of the author on him. I also like Milton Franklin Andrews quite a bit, despite his many flaws. There are a few non "Andrews" candidates I have followed with interest and continue to do so, but I admit a strong preference for candidates with the name "Andrews" (W. E. Sanders also makes a very strong circumstantial case thanks to the research of David Alexander and Marty Demarest).

As others have pointed out, it is not the quantity of coincidences that counts, but the quality, though that is much harder to measure. Despite the quantity (11) that Peter Zenner has enumerated in favor of Harry Thompson, I don’t find his candidacy as compelling as several others at this point. That would change if his brother Frank turns up as an employee of McKinney or if Harry himself supplied McKinney with ink, just as I think interest in train agent Andrews would be greatly strengthened if he does turn out to be closely enough related to Dalrymple that he would have known it.

While on the subject of ink, however, I agree with those who do not find the passing reference to ink in Erdnase implies that the author was an expert on the subject. One might just as easily argue that his passing reference to barns on page 23 implies that Erdnase was an expert on agricultural architecture.

[Jack Shalom] 07/20/15 10:00 PM | link | filter

As others have pointed out, it is not the quantity of coincidences that counts, but the quality, though that is much harder to measure.

Just for fun:

Suppose we rate a "coincidence" on a scale of 0-100%, the higher the number, the better chance that it is just a coincidence and not real evidence. For example, the statement "Candidate X and Erdnase are both males" would rate a 99.99% because it really gives us no new information. On the other hand if Candidate X had a 1902 diary that said "Just finished writing my book about card cheating and magic" we might rate it 5% because there’s very much less possibility that that was just a coincidence.
So let’s say we look at ten coincidences and assume that the statements are independent of each other. Then if we have ten statements each with a 95% coincidence rating, the probability that ALL the statements are coincidences is about 60% [Simply, .95^10]. In other words, the chances are greater than even that we have the wrong person.

But if you have much higher quality information, say where each statement is equally likely to be true as false, then the probability that those ten statements are ALL coincidences drops dramatically to about .1%—that is, a tenth of one percent. [Again, .5^10] Basically, we can almost be certain then that we’ve gone and found our man.

That is why, as many have pointed out, while the number of “coincidences” is important, the quality is even more so.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 07/21/15 01:48 AM | link | filter

Hi All,

I think I pretty much understand the logic behind the sequence of coincidences (or possible coincidences) stated by Dick Hatch.

Personally, though, I would be inclined to move the Seely connection downward quite a bit, because it is so difficult to know what the chances are that a Dalrymple relationship exists.

Also, the age is right, according to Marshall D. Smith, but I do not put much weight in Smith’s recollection of age (or height, for that matter).

--Tom Sawyer

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**lybrary** | 07/21/15 08:12 AM | link | filter

Tom Sawyer wrote: Also, the age is right, according to Marshall D. Smith, but I do not put much weight in Smith’s recollection of age (or height, for that matter).

--Tom Sawyer

I want to build on that, because I think it is really important. In my opinion way too much emphasis has been given to the M.D. Smith recollections. They could very well be mostly wrong.

Do a little experiment. Think back when you were in your mid 20s and remember
my 60s, only 40s, but when I think back when I was about 27 and try to remember names and faces of people I met once or even a few times, then I am drawing mostly blanks. For example, most colleagues at University who were acquaintances but not friends who sat in several classes with me, who I saw many times, spoke to, and interacted with, I don’t remember their names anymore. What makes us believe that a 45 year gap has not erased such details as to how Erdnase was called or what he really looked like including age, height, weight, hair color etc? Remember, the only thing Smith volunteers regarding the name was that it had a ‘W’ somewhere. Then Gardner directly asks him about Andrews and Smith seems to remember. But later in his letters we also get a sense that he is mixing up names and says about himself that he has a vivid imagination.

All of this could very easily mean we are looking for the wrong guy if we take Smith by his word!

In my mind I have three categories of facts coming from M.D. Smith. Those facts which are very unique and can hardly be overlayed with something else I do believe. For example, his description of the green board that Erdnase used to demonstrate the moves. It is unlikely that Smith encountered such a board anywhere else, and there is a purpose for it during the meeting. Also the soft hands of Erdnase that Smith describes as ‘softer than any woman’ is unique and also fits the card handler type. Or that the hotel room was cold is quite believable and special enough that it is likely correct.

Other physical traits such as height and weight, hair color, etc., are things that are much less reliable, because they could be overlayed with other people Smith met or could have been simply forgotten. Meeting a 5’6” men is not something that stands out or is unique in and of itself. There is also no mental hook that would make it more likely for Smith to remember it correctly. Others have said that Smith being an artist means he is a great observer. I don’t think that can be applied to height and weight of a man he met perhaps a few times 45 years ago.

Judging age comes with its own problems even ignoring any memory issues. When I was in my mid 20s people regularly judged me as being a teenager. In high-school I had a friend who people regularly judged being in his mid to late 20s. So here are two examples where consistently people where wrong up or down by about a decade. Add to this what 45 years of not thinking about a person does to your memory. To me this means that Erdnase’s age could easily be anywhere from his 20s to 50s.

Then we also have to factor in that some of the things Erdnase states himself could be a red herring. For example Smith remembers that Erdnase said he is related to Dalrymple. First we have the problem with Smith’s memory. It is possible that he does not correctly remember this fact. Smith is an artist. He probably heard the name.
means that this fact is very unreliable.

The most unreliable recollections in my mind are the ones about the name. Letters are abstract. They don’t mean anything. Smith will have heard and read literally many tens of thousands of names in 60 years. The likelihood that the name of Erdnase is still lodged in his mind is pretty much zero, because he did not remember it. I simply don’t buy his prompted recollections regarding the name. I do think we have erroneously made this very likely false fact, that Smith confirmed Andrews, the name Gardner planted, our guiding light. I think at best it is a hint and should be rather low in our hierarchy of facts. I do believe that this is one of the main reasons why our search for Erdnase has not yielded anything better than circumstantial candidates.

Hurt McDermott in his "Artifice, Ruse and Erdnase" also addressed this very same memory issue. More should read it and reflect on it http://www.lybrary.com/artifice-ruse-er...51122.html

Richard Hatch wrote: 1. His name reverses to S. W. Erdnase. 'Nuff said!

It would have to. You were looking for someone, anyone, called E.S. Andrews! I approached the problem from a totally different angle and ended up with a man who worked with an E.C. Andrews, which, reversed, does sound the same. People have been known to to take other people's names as pseudonyms.

2. Married a Seely in 1898, possibly a relative of Louis Dalrymple's mother, whose maiden name was Seele(y) (I have seen both spellings for Dalrymple's mother, though Seeley is more common).

You haven't shown that the Seeleys/Seelys were related. If you're counting that then I am having the fact that Harry was related to a Hood family and Dick Hood, who said that his father knew Erdnase, was of another Hood family. Make mine 12!

7. Worked in the Railroad industry since adolescence, giving him ample opportunity to observe and participate in card play.

OK, Harry was a commercial traveller and as such he also would have to use trains. Make mine 13.

8. He is mentioned in a newspaper article in relation to card play in San Francisco in 1911.
that he knew anything about sleight of hand? Did he know enough about magic to write a book about it? Had he got the experience in how to publish a book?

14. Likely needed the money in 1901, living with his invalid Father, mother, two teenage kids and wife.

I don't believe that Harry needed money for himself. He had a steady job and never seems to have been out of work. I believe that he was raising money to help establish and maintain *The Sphinx*.

Peter Zenner

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**Jack Shalom** | 07/21/15 09:19 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

It might be worth looking at how *The Sphinx* obtained its advertisers. Some may have been through the publishers, but some appear to be quid pro quos for donated material. Is there any work on that?

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**Bill Mullins** | 07/21/15 09:57 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Zenner wrote:* People have been known to take other people's names as pseudonyms.

You may well be right. But I can't think of any who did. There are many more people who have scrambled the letters of their name to make a pseudonym. Just in magic, there are:

- P. T. Tibbles => P. T. Selbit
- Persi Diaconis => R. Sid Spocane II
- Ed Solomon => denomolos
- Edgar Beynon => The Great Benyon
- Martin Gardner => Nitram Rendrag
- E. J. Norris => Sirronje
- Charles Folkard wrote under the name Draklof
- James Swoger sold tricks as "Regow's House of Enchantment"
- Ed Marlo => Olram subtlety
- Joe Sinatra => Artanis
- John Calvert wrote and directed a movie as John Trevlac
- Ivor Parry performed as "Rovi"

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 07/21/15 10:08 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)
Bill Mullins wrote:

Zenner wrote: People have been known to take other people's names as pseudonyms.

You may well be right. But I can't think of any who did.

Elvis Costello
Reg Presley
Elton John
Carl Harrison

Karl Fulves used a substantial ensemble, not all of whom were anagrams. I wonder if they were made up, or have some connection to the mysterious Mister F.

Bob Coyne | 07/21/15 10:35 AM | link | filter

Leo Garet wrote:

Bill Mullins wrote:

Zenner wrote: People have been known to take other people's names as pseudonyms.

You may well be right. But I can't think of any who did.

Elvis Costello
Reg Presley
Elton John
Carl Harrison

Right, there are lots of cases of people using (seemingly arbitrary) pseudonyms that seem like regular names. What's relevant here, though, is a pseudonym that is something strange sounding in its given form but spells out a normal name BACKWARDS (ES Andrews). None of the above (or others of that ilk) do that. It's very unlikely that would happen by accident. Plus, strange sounding ones (Nitram Rendrag, SW Erdnase) are almost advertising that they're made up and that there's some formula involved.
Bob Coyne wrote: Right, there are lots of cases of people using (seemingly arbitrary) pseudonyms that seem like regular names. What’s relevant here, though, is a pseudonym that is something strange sounding in its given form but spells out a normal name BACKWARDS (ES Andrews). None of the above (or others of that ilk) do that. It’s very unlikely that would happen by accident. Plus, strange sounding ones (Nitram Rendrag, SW Erdnase) are almost advertising that they’re made up and that there’s some formula involved.

I agree entirely, but in the absence definitive evidence, this simply makes the "game" a bit more interesting. For me, anyway. Another blind nightmare alley, I’m sure, but nonetheless fascinating.

Richard Hatch | 07/21/15 11:04 AM | link | filter

Zenner wrote:

Richard Hatch wrote: 1. His name reverses to S. W. Erdnase. 'Nuff said!

It would have to. You were looking for someone, anyone, called E.S. Andrews!

Actually, I was trying to link Chicago law professor and attorney (and treatise author) James DeWitt Andrews to Louis Dalrymple when I stumbled across Edwin Sumner Andrews' 1898 Illinois marriage to Dolly Seely in Sterling, Illinois, J. D. Andrews' hometown. I initially thought that was the link to Dalrymple that strengthened JDA's circumstantial case, but the more I learned about train agent E. S. Andrews, the more I liked his circumstantial case better. Though I still like JDA, too!

Bill Mullins | 07/21/15 11:13 AM | link | filter

Leo Garet wrote:

Bill Mullins wrote:

Zenner wrote: People have been known to to take other people's names as pseudonyms.

You may well be right. But I can't think of any who did.

Elvis Costello
Reg Presley
Not quite what I meant. These are all examples (I think) of taking parts of one name and adding to parts of another. It seemed like Peter was referring to taking one individual's name, and using it as the pseudonym for another.

(But that's not what he claims Thompson did. He supposedly took another person's name, reversed it, changed one letter, and used it as a pseudonym.)

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**The case for a card shark not named E.S. Andrews**

I think the majority of you believe Erdnase was a card shark and not a magician. I agree and I will give my reasons below. But from those same reasons it also follows that it wasn’t somebody named E.S. Andrews which might surprise some.

If you read Erdnase one clearly gets the impression that Erdnase does not consider himself a magician, but he does consider himself a card shark. This argument has been made by others before, but there is another good reason for Erdnase to be a card shark.

While card sharks and magicians use the same or similar methods (sleight-of-hand, marked cards, confederates) they have very different personalities. The card shark is one that wants to blend in, an unremarkable man who does not want to be noticed. As soon as you are outed as card shark or just considered as 'good with cards' you can’t ply your trade anymore. Even family members will be kept in the dark. Or can you imagine somebody tucking in their child and saying: "Sleep tight, Papa is cheating some folks out of their money and will be back later." Or "Honey, I am leaving to cheat some folks and will be back for dinner." Being a card shark is not something you want to let other people know. You might have a small circle of confederates and close friends who know what you are doing, but for the most part you keep your skill and your trade to yourself.

The magician is totally different. A magician is a performer. They want to be known, known for their skill. Rather than hide their achievements (such as writing a great book) they will be tempted to add a few achievements that aren’t true just to trump up their resume. And if they camouflage their name, for example by spelling it backwards, they want to be cute, not really hide their name. Every child can figure out who it actually is. It is simply a gimmick not a necessity for staying anonymous. (That is why Bill Mullins found so many magicians who are using that scheme. These people do not want to remain unknown.)

From this it follows that Erdnase was a card shark, and it also follows that he was not named E.S. Andrews. Because if his name really was E.S. Andrews then S.W. Erdnase
I have emailed Richard Hatch about this same argument in the past and his counter was: Why, if Erdnase really wanted to stay anonymous, did he pay M.D. Smith with a check where his real name was on it? Initially I thought this is a good counter argument, but at closer inspection it falls apart. It is quite different to give the illustrator your name than to let everybody else know who you are. Smith was not among the people he gambled with. He stated that he was going straight, so he was also not worried to run into Smith at some future game. His primary worry must have been past marks whom he cheated. If they would find out he might be in bodily harm. Thus his need for anonymity, both in the book and on the copyright form. Therefore Erdnase's real name was not E.S. Andrews.

I think it most likely that he did take the name from somewhere, reversed it and that was it. Richard Hatch suggested in the past that Erdnase might have been a printer or typesetter who saw his name in reverse and thus used it. I will modify this theory by saying perhaps Erdnase was a printer or typesetter who did typeset the name E.S. Andrews for some book, ad sheet, card, label or whatever, and used its reversed form S.W. Erdnase for his own book.

I think we therefore should not look for a magician, but for a card shark, who maybe was a printer or typesetter by profession.

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**Bill Mullins | 07/21/15 05:16 PM | link | filter**

Seen elsewhere on the internet:

I am not sure of very many things in life, but based on the facts and arguments I have seen on the Erdnase thread of the Genii forum, I AM sure of the following:

1. Harry S. Thomson was not S.W. Erdnase.

And yes, I realize that this makes the second time today a substantive post by Chris Wasshuber gets derailed by HST.

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**Bill Mullins | 07/21/15 05:43 PM | link | filter**

As I understand Chris's most recent post, since "S. W. Erdnase" announces a real name of "E. S. Andrews", and card sharks want anonymity but magicians want publicity, then Erdnase must have been a card shark who was not named E. S. Andrews. I don't necessarily agree with this line of thinking, but even if I did, I don't see why the argument excludes a magician who was named E. S. Andrews.
library wrote: While card sharks and magicians use the same or similar methods (sleight-of-hand, marked cards, confederates)

Erdnase rejected two of the three (marked cards and confederates).

they have very different personalities. The card shark is one that wants to blend in, an unremarkable man who does not want to be noticed. As soon as you are outed as card shark or just considered as 'good with cards' you can't ply your trade anymore. Even family members will be kept in the dark. Or can you imagine somebody tucking in their child and saying: "Sleep tight, Papa is cheating some folks out of their money and will be back later." Or "Honey, I am leaving to cheat some folks and will be back for dinner." Being a card shark is not something you want to let other people know. You might have a small circle of confederates and close friends who know what you are doing, but for the most part you keep your skill and your trade to yourself.

The rest of the argument may apply to an active card shark. It need not apply to a former card shark. J. H. Green, Mason Long, J. P Quinn, Harry "Kid" Royal all were content to be known publicly after they left the life.

library | 07/21/15 06:15 PM | link | filter

Bill, you are correct, but they also did not try to camouflage their names. They used their real names. I don’t see a lot of middle ground, to be cute, for a card shark. Either you are willing to out yourself and use your real name and perhaps make a career out of it, write books, give lectures, be a consultant, etc. Or you really want to hide your name from the public and remain in the shadows.

We also have to allow for the fact that Erdnase only told Smith that he is going straight but in reality he might not have wanted to do that, or at least leave the door open to get back into the action.

Richard Hatch | 07/21/15 06:54 PM | link | filter

library wrote: I have emailed Richard Hatch about this same argument in the past and his counter was: Why, if Erdnase really wanted to stay anonymous, did he pay M.D. Smith with a check where his real name was on it?
above is that we don't know if the author's real name was on the check he gave Smith. I assume he could have opened an account under an assumed name or business name at the time, though perhaps someone in the banking industry will straighten me out on that.

The argument I believe I made in favor of the author not necessarily requiring the strong anonymity argued by those who believe his name could not have been E. S. Andrews (too easily identified from the pseudonym) is that if he did want/require strong anonymity, he made a huge mistake in putting the artist's true name "M. D. Smith" on the title page. Smith's name added no value to the book, as he was not a known artist at the time, and he could easily have been tracked down immediately after the book's publication and interviewed regarding the author. I have no doubt that the details he would have recalled then would have quickly led to the author, even if he did not know his true name (and he may well have known it at the time). The fact that no one did that for more than four decades is an accident of history, not an expression of the author's desire for strong anonymity. True anonymity could have easily been achieved by putting a fake artist's name on the title page, resulting in a dead end for any investigator. Similarly, the author could have used a plausible fake name for his pseudonym, one not only having no connection to himself, but also not arousing suspicion as an obvious pseudonym (as S. W. Erdnase proved to be, once attention focused on the mystery). I also think it doubtful that he would have bothered to copyright the book had he needed strong anonymity, since the connection to McKinney also could have been pursued immediately and led, I suspect, swiftly to the author. Any challenge to the copyright would have required the author to come forward. He didn't bother to follow through on two of the three copyright applications, so why bother with the U. S. one? I'm not saying the author necessarily wanted to be found (though that is possible!), but my profile of the author does not include the need for strong anonymity. I also am not convinced that he was a card shark, in the sense of being a professional cheat. He never admits to having cheated in the book, though it is clear that he had played for money in his youth, since he confesses to several instances of having been cheated, which led to his education in the ways of cheaters. Did he go over to the dark side himself? Possibly, but not necessarily. Smith recalled him as saying he was a reformed card shark, so that may carry some weight, though the arguments regarding Smith's memory on various matters after more than 40 years raised by Hurt McDermott and Tom Sawyer, along with possible leading questions on this point by Gardner (as in the prompting for the name "Andrews") should also be kept in mind.

Richard, my apologies, I was quoting from memory and may very well have gotten this wrong. Thanks for clarifying your argument for the need or lack of strong anonymity.
engineered pseudonym as the author on the book versus leaving some doors open for an investigator to track you down. Keep in mind that back then there was no Internet, business documents were in most instances not kept for very long. Could somebody have tracked down Smith and interviewed him? Yes, possibly. But I don't think it would be that easy as it may seem today.

Maybe Erdnase's gambling action was not in Chicago, but somewhere else, French Lick in Indiana, Mississippi river boats, other places. Erdnase might have felt that the distance provides sufficient protection and makes it unlikely enough that somebody would do track him down by getting in touch with Smith or McKinney. And with a name like Smith I think you will have a major problem anyway, because it is so common.

Joe Pecore | 07/21/15 07:53 PM | link | filter

It is sometimes hard to follow the different threads within this topic.

Would it be better to have a specific "Erdnase" on at the top level of http://forums.geniimagazine.com/index.php, so it can have specific threaded topics (rather than this one topic in the "General").

Joe Mckay | 07/21/15 07:56 PM | link | filter

Was Erdnase actually a bona fide card cheat?

Didn't Tony Giorgio use to argue that Erdnase was useless for the genuine card cheat?

Richard Hatch | 07/21/15 08:01 PM | link | filter

Joe Mckay wrote: Was Erdnase actually a bona fide card cheat?

Didn't Tony Giorgio use to argue that Erdnase was useless for the genuine card cheat?

Tony did not think the author of the book could have been a cheat himself, based on some of the advice (or lack thereof) that he gave. He covers much of this in his Giorgio Letters in GENII.

Bill Mullins | 07/21/15 08:35 PM | link | filter

In addition to Smith and (probably) McKinney, Erdnase outed himself to Edwin Hood,
members of the Chicago community including Hilliar, Vernelo, or Roterberg.

The evidence that Erdnase wanted to be and stay anonymous isn't iron clad. Like Richard says above, it may be more of an accident of history that we don't know who he was.

**lybrary | 07/21/15 08:51 PM | link | filter**

*Richard Hatch wrote:* I assume he could have opened an account under an assumed name or business name at the time, though perhaps someone in the banking industry will straighten me out on that.

But why do that when you anyway tell the illustrator your real name? He would then probably have introduced himself as Erdnase.

**Roger M. | 07/21/15 08:54 PM | link | filter**

*lybrary wrote:* And with a name like Smith I think you will have a major problem anyway, because it is so common.

Except this wasn't some "Mr. Smith", it was Marshall D. Smith, known artist, eventually to become very well known for his paintings of various courtyard and other views of New Orleans.

Additionally, consensus to date seems to point towards Smith being introduced to Erdnase through McKinney, which also implies that somebody reading the title page of the book and seeking M.D. Smith could easily find him with just the information that he penned the books "drawings from life", or perhaps they could additionally follow the bread crumbs to McKinney whereupon they would discover the identity of the M.D. Smith that Erdnase referenced on the title page of his book.

The placement of the easily found M.D. Smith on the title page of the book certainly implies strongly that Erdnase wasn't trying at all to conceal his own identity for the ages, but rather he was toying around with anagrams, and came up with S.W. Erdnase.

Were anybody bothered at the time to be looking for Mr. Erdnase, the M.D. Smith reference on the title page would have been like a giant, flashing arrow shouting "THIS WAY"

McKinney, Smith, the bank that gave him his book of cheques ... they all knew who "Mr. Erdnase" actually was, with the evidence scattered about at the time (the month or two either side of the books publication) that would likely make it quite easy to get a
And why would it not be possible that Erdnase was even cleverer than that? What if he assumed the name E.S. Andrews simply for the purpose to write his book, opened a bank account (assuming this is possible with a pseudonym, or perhaps using a fake ID), got his checkbook and introduced himself as Andrews to Smith and McKinney. Smith remembers the check was #1. This could be indication that Erdnase opened the bank account just for that purpose. Then he reverses his fake name E.S. Andrews to get S.W. Erdnase to use as his nom-de-plume. This would be a great psychological trick, a two layer protection for his identity. Then he would have had strong anonymity, because neither Smith, nor McKinney nor the bank, if he used a fake ID, would have known who he really was.

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**Leonard Hevia** | 07/21/15 10:03 PM | link | filter

*lybrary wrote:* And why would it not be possible that Erdnase was even cleverer than that? What if he assumed the name E.S. Andrews simply for the purpose to write his book, opened a bank account (assuming this is possible with a pseudonym, or perhaps using a fake ID), got his checkbook and introduced himself as Andrews to Smith and McKinney. Smith remembers the check was #1. This could be indication that Erdnase opened the bank account just for that purpose. Then he reverses his fake name E.S. Andrews to get S.W. Erdnase to use as his nom-de-plume. This would be a great psychological trick, a two layer protection for his identity. Then he would have had strong anonymity, because neither Smith, nor McKinney nor the bank, if he used a fake ID, would have known who he really was.

Chris, it appears that you have come full circle and just repeated David Alexander’s argument for the reasons W.E. Sanders used the name "E.S. Andrews":

**We believe that "E.S. Andrews" is the name he used with illustrator M.D. Smith, printer McKinney, and a local bank where he established a checking account.**

I don't have a problem with M.D. Smith's recollection of Erdnase's age and height. People forget names over time but faces, overall appearance, and behavior stays in the memory. He remembered Erdnase as a fairly short, middle-aged white guy with soft hands and a polite, educated demeanor. He must have remembered a few wrinkles or
Leonard, just shows you that I am not that well read when it comes to Erdnase theories. But that has a purpose. I don’t want to get too much influenced by other peoples assumption. Just to be clear, I am simply stating possibilities, not what I personally think is the most likely.

I personally do not buy into the Andrews stories in either version, because I don’t believe the Smith recollections when it comes to the name. Bottom line for me is that we don’t know his real name and don’t have any clues on what it could potentially be. Thus, we have to find him based on other traits, not based on his name.

Richard Hatch wrote:

Brad Henderson wrote: fwiw I think demarest’s candidate has an amazing litany of coincidences, if that’s the measure of a candidate. We know he knew one of the tricks in EATCT...

I don't believe this is correct. His Yellowstone diary shows him playing with MUTUS NOMEN, a trick NOT in EATCT. Which is a bit puzzling, if he was Erdnase... why not include it?

Because it was not accomplished by sleight of hand?

A magician is a performer

Nope. Not always. The majority of "magicians" who form the "fraternity" are not performers. They are hobbyists and amateurs (in the true meaning of the word, i.e., 'lovers' of magic). They buy tricks, play with them, and stick them in a drawer. Some watch performers and criticise them. Some flick cards up and down and then retire to the bar whilst the Gala Show is on, so that they may follow their true love - finger flicking.

Bill Mullins wrote: Seen elsewhere on the internet:

I am not sure of very many things in life, but based on the facts and arguments I have seen on the Erdnase thread of the Genii forum, I AM sure of the following:

1. Harry S. Thomson was not S.W. Erdnase.
Mr. Sawyer has a vested interest in Harry not being 'Erdnase'; he wants to keep self-publishing books on the subject. What makes him so sure? Is it because he IS Tom Sawyer, just as David Ben can't be wrong because he IS David Ben? And Bill Mullins can't be wrong because he IS Bill Mullins? (He has been researching Erdnase for years you know) Others are in the same boat. They have spent many years defending their candidates and then this "ridiculous" "newbie" comes along with a new theory, with evidence to back it up. Oh dear...

So what happens? Sheriff Bill Mullins rounds up his posse and they try to shoot down said "newbie". Debate is not enough; they have to exterminate any new ideas.

Joe McKay wrote: Was Erdnase actually a bona fide card cheat?

Didn't Tony Giorgio use to argue that Erdnase was useless for the genuine card cheat?

At last we hear from a sane person. The clues are in the book. We have a section on 'Legerdemain'; we have references to "entertainment" and "amusement" and "performer". The author was a magician with access to books previously published on the "art" of "card manipulation". Period.

Bill Mullins wrote: In addition to Smith and (probably) McKinney, Erdnase outed himself to Edwin Hood, Hugh Johnston, Del Adelphia, and probably Frederick Drake (at least, Drake claimed to know who he was). I would bet that Emil Sorenson knew him, and possibly other members of the Chicago community including Hilliar, Vernelo, or Roterberg.

I posted my initial findings on July 7th. My hunch was that Erdnase was known to the people behind The Sphinx and that's where I went looking for a suitable candidate. Why wouldn't the unusual name 'Erdnase' be queried right from the start? Because they knew who it was.

lybrary wrote: What if he assumed the name E.S. Andrews simply for the purpose to write his book, opened a bank account (assuming this is possible with a pseudonym, or perhaps using a fake ID), got his checkbook and introduced himself as Andrews to Smith and McKinney. Smith remembers the check was #1. This could be indication that Erdnase opened the bank account just for that purpose. Then he reverses his fake name E.S. Andrews to get S.W. Erdnase to use as his nom-de-plume. This would be a great psychological trick - a two-layer protection for his identity. Then he...
Elementary my dear Watson. But I believe that McKinney should be deleted from that paragraph. If mail addressed to "S.W. Erdnase c/o James McKinney" was being delivered to his business premises then he had to know where to redirect it.

Peter Zenner

Not necessarily so. Erdnase could have visited McKinney occasionally to pick up anything that arrived there for him. Or if he himself, a relative, or friend worked at McKinney, then it would also work without knowing the actual mailing address. Of course if Erdnase works at McKinney then McKinney will know who he is unless he built up an elaborate fake identity, but I think this would be a bit far fetched.

Brad Henderson

not all tricks in EATCT require sleight of hand. we have zero problem that Thompson could do anything with a deck of cards.

Brad Henderson

why the personal attacks? sherif Bill et al.

are you so thin skinned that you cannot abide your ideas being placed under scrutiny? If you cannot or will not allow your claims to be questioned you come across less a scholar and more a religious zealot.

Roger M.

I think you’re misreading the thread Brad.

There are no personal attacks taking place, and Zenner isn’t effectively questioning anything, least of all the other candidates.

Zenner states unequivocally that he has found Erdnase, but in doing so he has failed to achieve any traction. Zenner is engaging in discussion such that he’s asking folks to
That Zenner doesn’t like the answers he’s getting is simply human nature. He may need a thicker skin, or better evidence. Such is life.

A positive side effect of the above though, is the huge increase in the number of posts and visitors to the Erdnase thread, which always makes for great reading.

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**Brad Henderson** | 07/22/15 01:19 PM | [link] | [filter]

the sheriff bill nonsense and accusing Tom of being intellectually dishonest because he publishes enters the fray of the personal attack, IMO

to an objective observer such as myself, who has no dog in the contest, it belies the confidence he clearly has for his candidate.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 07/22/15 02:49 PM | [link] | [filter]

Brad, thanks for the comment! I appreciate it. --Tom

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**Roger M.** | 07/22/15 03:32 PM | [link] | [filter]

Sorry Brad, I completely misunderstood your post.

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**Bill Mullins** | 07/22/15 04:44 PM | [link] | [filter]

Thanks, Brad. But I’ve been insulted worse online. Besides, I’m not a sheriff, I’m a
Roger M. wrote: I think you're misreading the thread Brad.

There are no personal attacks taking place, Zenner is defending his candidate and attempting to defend the attacks against himself with humour.

and Zenner isn't effectively questioning anything, least of all the other candidates.

Zenner HAS questioned ALL of the other candidates in supporting his own candidate. He dismissed five of them because they were foreigners and didn't believe that Smith wouldn't realise that they were.

Zenner states unequivocally that he has found Erdnase, but in doing so he has failed to achieve any traction.

Zenner believes that he has found Erdnase and believes that no other candidate comes anywhere close. He also believes that the other participants in this thread don't want Erdnase to be found. What would they have to talk about if it were to be proved, beyond doubt, that it was anybody?

Zenner is engaging in discussion such that he's asking folks to explain that lack of traction.

Zenner didn't understand why he failed to attract one supporter but he has never asked "folks to explain that lack of traction". He explained why he posted his findings and stuck around to see what effect that would have.

People are explaining to Zenner as best they can why his candidate has failed to achieve any traction.

Zenner still doesn't understand why a man experienced in printing and publishing, an expert in sleight of hand, fitting Smith's description, has been so totally dismissed in favour of men who "played cards". The Expert was self-published, don't you know. Nobody has presented evidence that their candidate was capable of doing that. 61% of the book was 'technique' and 39% was 'Legerdemain', yet Erdnase has been dismissed as being a magician?
He may need a thicker skin, or better evidence.  
Such is life.

Zenner knows that he has better evidence than all of that given in support of any previously nominated candidate. He now realises that whatever evidence he has now, or ever comes up with, will be totally dismissed on the Genii Forum because of vested interests. Nobody likes egg on their face.

“All truth passes through three stages: first, it is ridiculed; second, it is violently opposed; and third, it is accepted as self-evident.” [19th century German philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer, 1788-1860]

A positive side effect of the above though, is the huge increase in the number of posts and visitors to the Erdnase thread, which always makes for great reading.

Well thank you, Roger, at least I have accomplished something of which you approve

Peter Zenner

**Brad Henderson** | 07/23/15 10:49 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

you’re wrong. I know that many of the people who are looking into erdnase would happily consider new candidates and many of them HAVE switched primary candidates in the face of better evidence.

And again, you are making this personal. Rather than considering FOR A MOMENT that maybe your ‘evidence’ isn't nearly as strong as you would like it to be, you find fault with the other researchers, their intellectual honesty, and accuse them of having a 'vested interest.'

that’s not 'humour', that's childish.

**Richard Kaufman** | 07/23/15 12:37 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Return to your corners and be calm or banning will begin.

**Roger M.** | 07/23/15 01:01 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I’m pretty sure that those folks who would state in a de facto manner that the entirety
Roger M. wrote: I'm pretty sure that those folks who would state in a de facto manner that the entirety of the contributors to this thread "don't want Erdnase to be found" probably should be responded to, and probably should be called out for making such an utterly ludicrous statement.

I'm not part of the hunt, though I enjoy reading the work of those who are. I'd certainly, truly, madly deeply love to know who Erdnase was, and I'm sure that applies to all the searchers. However I just don't think it's going to happen.

Roger M. | 07/23/15 01:24 PM | link | filter

The odds undoubtedly seem stacked against finding out who Mr. Erdnase actually was, but some remarkable advances have been made to date ... and all it takes is one single piece of indisputable evidence to show up (as Richard Hatch has noted, a detailed inscription in a yet to be "discovered" first edition), and you'd have your man.

Lybrary | 07/23/15 04:22 PM | link | filter

Perhaps we can get this thread back to a more productive conversation. In my research I have discovered a new 'why the name S.W. Erdnase' theory. First let me repeat the main current theories I am aware of:

- name spelled backwards (E.S. Andrews; be it the authors real name, or taken from somewhere else)
- anagram (ex. W.E. Sanders)
- German nickname or ethnic slur 'earth-nose'
- purely random by accident - no logic connection to anything

If we believe what has been passed down verbally then the first reversed spelling should be the most likely of the four. I personally do not believe this because I don't see any real believable evidence for it.

Anyway, here is a new theory. Assume our candidate for Erdnasehood has a mother with first initial S, and a father with first initial W. That is why S. W. ... Further assume the first name of our candidate is Alexander, but he likes to write it Alexandre (with the trailing er reversed). Now reverse his first name to get Erdnaxela. Exchange the X to S like in the short form for Alexander which is Sandy. We now have Erdnasela. Lop off the last two characters to get Erdnase. And thus S. W. Erdnase.
name reversal but it includes a few 'playful' modifications to a strict reversal. These modifications could be motivated by how the end result sounds or looks, for example.

What say you?

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**Brad Jeffers | 07/23/15 04:50 PM | link | filter**

Roger M. wrote: ... and all it takes is one single piece of indisputable evidence to show up (as Richard Hatch has noted, a detailed inscription in a yet to be "discovered" first edition), and you'd have your man.

I agree.

If the true identity of Erdnase is ever to be known, it will be through discovery, not deduction.

Given the nature of magicians, their love of deception, especially the satisfaction derived from deceiving their fellow magicians, I would not be surprised if a forgery of such a piece of indisputable evidence were to surface at some point in time.

An inscribed first edition would be easy.

My personal fantasy discovery would be a box containing the original 101 M.D. Smith drawings.

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**Bill Marquardt | 07/23/15 05:38 PM | link | filter**

As an outsider to the discussion (save for my April Fool post,) I would be inclined to bet on W. E. Sanders as the author, based on what I have read here and elsewhere. For one thing, an anagram that reverses into a rather common name seems a more likely ruse than a straight reversal that might be "decoded" rather easily.

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**Jonathan Townsend | 07/23/15 10:58 PM | link | filter**

I am calling it the 'playful reversal' theory. The main way the name is derived is via a name reversal but it includes a few 'playful' modifications to a strict reversal. These modifications could be motivated by how the end result sounds or looks, for example.

What say you?
were based upon anagrams?

Erdnase wrote -

"Works on conjuring invariably devote much space to the consideration of card tricks, and many have been written exclusively for that purpose, yet we have been unable to find in the whole category more than an incidental reference to any card table artifice; and in no instance are the principal feats even mentioned."

Are you still saying that 'Erdnase' wasn't a magician? He has searched through "the whole category" of "works on conjuring" for references to "card table artifice". Who else but a magician would have access to all of the available magic books at that time?

And again -

"The conjurer employs the shift in nine-tenths of his card tricks, and under his environments it is comparatively very simple to perform. A half turn of the body, or a slight swing of the hands, or the use of "patter" until a favourable moment occurs, enables him to cover the action perfectly."

Magician's language? Or that of a man who merely "plays cards"?

Peter Zenner

Jonathan Townsend wrote:

I am calling it the 'playful reversal' theory. The main way the name is derived is via a name reversal but it includes a few 'playful' modifications to a strict reversal. These modifications could be motivated by how the end result sounds or looks, for example.

What say you?

I'd have to see some examples of other known pseudonyms to get any sense for how plausible that theory is. Of other known pseudonyms used at the time what percent were based upon anagrams?
EREWHON: Backwards spelling in the name of satire has a long history. The title of Samuel Butler’s 19th century novel lampooning the society of the time was meant to be “nowhere” spelled backwards, but the 'h' was moved out of place. It features properly backwards-named characters like Yram (Mary) and Senoj Nosnibor (Robinson Jones). Found here http://mentalfloss.com/article/56337/9- ... -backwards

Who says that S.W. Erdnase was not an accident or formed with some errors? Maybe he wanted to spell something backwards but made an error. And once he had it, it stuck. Etc. Etc. My point being there are lots of ways S. W. Erdnase could have happened.

**lybrary** | 07/24/15 08:44 AM | link | filter

Well, that explains a lot. The technical term for a word that spells backwards another word is called a Semordnilap. An example is the S.W.Erdnase/E.S.Andrews pair. Now guess who coined that term? Guess ... Guess ... it was no other than Martin Gardner.

To me this means that Martin Gardner had big blinders on. He can only see a reversal theory here and nothing else while there are many many other ways the name S. W. Erdnase could have happened.

"Those good with a hammer think everything is a nail."

**Jonathan Townsend** | 07/24/15 09:22 AM | link | filter

Of the decade or so around 1901, how many books were published using pseudonyms, and of those how frequent was any kind of playful shuffle of the actual author’s name used as the pseudonym?

Just so stories are just so ...telling

**Edward Finck** | 07/24/15 10:51 AM | link | filter

My 2 cents and they might not be worth that much.

Discounting primary source material like M. D. Smith’s recollections because they don’t fit a profile is very dangerous. We have only a few unequivocal eye witnesses to Erdnase and I don’t think we should discount their recollections without strong reasons and other real evidence. Martin Gardner did this to some extent once he was
We also have somewhat credible evidence via Dai Vernon that his much older friend John Sprong had questioned F. J. Drake (the son I believe although it might have been the father) and determined that S. W. Erdnase was E. S. Andrews. Throwing this primary evidence away for convoluted pseudonym theories risks side tracking the actual search.

Of course all are free to use their time as they wish but no matter how many posts this very interesting thread receives, Occam’s razor still applies.

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**Bill Mullins** | 07/24/15 11:06 AM | [link] | [filter]

*Zenner wrote:* Magician’s language? Or that of a man who merely "plays cards"?

The language of a man who is commenting on what a magician does. Or, the language of a man who is knowledgeable about how to handle cards when someone is watching him (something that there is no evidence that Thompson is knowledgeable about).

*lybrary wrote:* Etc. My point being there are lots of ways S. W. Erdnase could have happened.

Yes, but once you’ve settled on a person to offer as Erdnase, you need a reasonable explanation of how that person got to that pseudonym. Occam suggests that a simple explanation (reversal) is more likely than a complicated one (pick an acquaintance, reverse his name, substitute a different letter, etc.).

*lybrary wrote:* Well, that explains a lot. The technical term for a word that spells backwards another word is called a Semordnilap. An example is the S.W.Erdnase/E.S.Andrews pair. Now guess who coined that term? Guess ... Guess ... it was no other than Martin Gardner.

To me this means that Martin Gardner had big blinders on. He can only see a reversal theory here and nothing else while there are many many other ways the name S. W. Erdnase could have happened.

**Ananym** is also a word for a word created by reversing another word. When the word/phrase in question is a name, it is a **boustrophedon**. And most sources I see online say that Dmitri Borgmann coined semordnilap, but Gardner’s citation of this was a prominent early usage of the word. So I don’t see how Gardner, discovering a word in the 1960s, means he had blinders on in the 1940s. Word Play was one of
Edward Finck wrote: We also have somewhat credible evidence via Dai Vernon that his much older friend John Sprong had questioned F. J. Drake (the son I believe although it might have been the father)

Drake died in 1912. His son Frederick died much later, 1937, but I don’t believe he was involved in the publishing company. His sons Stafford and Logan were.

Leo Garet | 07/24/15 11:56 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: Yes, but once you’ve settled on a person to offer as Erdnase, you need a reasonable explanation of how that person got to that pseudonym. Occam suggests that a simple explanation (reversal) is more likely than a complicated one (pick an acquaintance, reverse his name, substitute a different letter, etc.).

Agreed, although what passes for reasonable over here might not pass for reasonable over there.
As for Occam, a "simple reversal" might be the case. I'd love it to be good old E.S. Andrews, whichever he was. But a pseudonym that is not simple to third party observers might be perfectly simple and logical and natural to the creator of the pseudonym.

Probably doesn't help, I know, but that's not to say it isn't so.

Jonathan Townsend | 07/24/15 12:44 PM | link | filter

Leo Garet wrote:

Bill Mullins wrote: Yes, but once you’ve settled on a person to offer as...

As for Occam, ...

simpler to start with real people who were directly involved in the book's production than to introduce mysterious strangers if you're trying to uncover history rather than create a mystery.

Edward Finck | 07/24/15 12:45 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote:

Drake died in 1912. His son Frederick died much later, 1937, but I don't
Point taken, I didn't realize that FJD jr. probably wasn't involved with the publishing firm.

My larger point was that I don't believe that Vernon's account of Sprong's discovery was specific about who at Drake was the source. Vernon often conflated details but the crux is that a) at least one source of the simple S. W. Erdnase = E. S. Andrews seemingly came from Drake via Sprong via Vernon and b) Sprong was old enough and possibly interested enough to have asked Frederick sr. himself prior to 1912. But as far as I know now we don't know when Sprong got this info or from whom. We do know it was published (the source possibly being Sprong) in the Sphinx in 1929 or so and probably shouldn't be dismissed out of hand for convenience in shoehorning in other candidates. Vernon's story is suspect on it's face because he says he continued "badgering" old man Drake for months but "old man" Drake was dead and had died at 47 years of age and years before Vernon even came to the U.S. The sons were all around Vernon's age or younger. This strongly implies that Vernon never asked any of the Drakes anything but doesn't refute that Sprong might have.

below are the Drake family ages in 1910.

Frederick J Drake 45  
Julia F Drake 40  
Logan R Drake 17  
Frederick J Drake 16  
Stafford W Drake 14  
Gertrude F Drake 5  
Robert J Drake 3

Richard Hatch | 07/24/15 01:01 PM | link | filter

Didn't Vernon cut silhouettes in Chicago at the 1933 World's Fair? I always assumed that was when he followed up on Sprong's lead and "pestered" the Drake folks then for more information, which they either didn't have or weren't willing to share. Drake was still publishing the book then.

Bill Mullins | 07/24/15 01:01 PM | link | filter

Arguing for "E. S. Andrews"
- simplicity of explanation/Occam's Razor/existence of other reversals as pseudonyms
- Smith's statement, quoted by Gardner
- Sprong's 1920s statement, quoted by Vernon (See Genii Aug 1970 "The Vernon Touch", where Vernon says he later spoke to "Mr. Drake". Diaconis date Sprong's
Thompson died, so if Rullman was wrong, Thompson would have had a chance to correct him, and he didn’t)
- Graham Adams statement at his Jan 1931 lecture

The 1920s statements are early enough to have been refuted by people who would actually know better, if they weren’t true.

Jonathan Townsend wrote: simpler to start with real people who were directly involved in the book's production than to introduce mysterious strangers if you’re trying to uncover history rather than create a mystery.

Yep. And then where to? Blind alleys are everywhere. But that’s the fun. I think. At least I hope it’s fun, because if it ain’t, then why bother? Unless it’s the day job, of course. Then we generally have little choice.

Yes, that is simpler. But investigations of Gallaway, McKinney, Drake, and others haven’t lead to much yet. Gardner' interviews of Smith have provided some of the only real "evidence" we have, and it is used to vet possible suspects.

But the straws to grasp at are few, so we use other means to investigate, such as starting with the name, trying to figure out how "S. W. Erdnase" was arrived at, and going from there.

They aren’t mutually exclusive.

Richard Hatch wrote: Didn’t Vernon cut silhouettes in Chicago at the 1933 World’s Fair? I always assumed that was when he followed up on Sprong’s lead and "pestered" the Drake folks then for more information, which they either didn’t have or weren’t willing to share. Drake was still publishing the book then.

This is possible but there was no "old man" Drake even then. Sprong was still alive in
Let's make this a bit more interesting:

Based on my reading of the McKinney bankruptcy files and other research spanning the last weeks, it is my current belief that the author of the book was either Edward Gallaway the typsetter working at McKinney or his brother Alexander or a collaboration of the brothers. Details to follow...

bated breath . . .

It is news to me that Edward had a brother Alexander.

Then I have lots of news for you. I have a full genealogy of the entire family several generations up and down, relatively detailed moves of Edward etc. As I said lots of exciting material. But just to wet your appetite one of the books Edward wrote, "Estimating for Printers'" was self-published, copyright applied for (I do have the application form) and the title page shows the price the same way as on EATCT. Pretty unusual parallel and only one of many pieces of real evidence I have gathered...

Does the Erdnase candidate field remind anyone else of the current Republican presidential candidate field? Getting crowded, but nothing wrong with that! I'll refrain from drawing any further parallels, as politics is verboten on this board!

Would it be wrong to suggest that one candidate is more like Donald Trump than any of the others?

That hair would make a great hold out.
Hi All,

Regarding Chris Wasshuber's breakdown of possible sources of the name S.W. Erdnase, I don't really disagree with those five categories, but I think one or two of them could be viewed as subsets of other groups, and maybe the groups could be broken down further or expanded.

I might make a list something more like the following. I have placed three items in boldface italics, for reasons that will become clear:

1. A backwards spelling (E.S. Andrews).

2. Other "perfect" anagrams (examples: W.E. Sanders or Wes Anders).

3. Near anagrams (of many kinds, including M.F. Andrews).

4. Not very close to an anagram, but with a sort of anagram flavor or some other word-play flavor. Maybe the author's real name was (as a made-up example) Andrew Drew. That isn't very close to a reversal of S.W. Erdnase, but on the other hand it isn't even remotely random.

5. Use of Erdnase as a word (nickname or otherwise).

6. No obvious derivation (could be made up out of nothing, or could be influenced by something unknown).

Without pretending to go into a lot of detail, here are a couple of observations:

a. It is almost impossible to estimate usefully the relative likelihoods of use of those methods.

b. I agree with Chris's indications that the author's real name has a good possibility of being something apparently normal and completely unrelated to "S.W. Erdnase." For instance, his name could easily have been something like "Chandler Smithson Smithington" (another made-up example).

HOWEVER: A major rub is that if Erdnase used any theory other than 1, 2, or 5 (in boldface italics), the value of the name "S.W. Erdnase" as a "clue" drops off quite quickly to zero, or nearly zero.

Also, without a "good" name (like E.S. Andrews or W.E. Sanders) as a component of a case, I would think that the other proof would need to be much stronger than with a
Still not understanding the pseudonym relevance. Were there many anagram pseudonyms in use at the time? Was that the preferred strategy of that time for pseudonyms?

If making a table of items to explore where the book fits in genre literature we might also ask what, in the conjuring section, was novel? In the cheating section - was it the "entire calendar" of the time, or a decade before perhaps?

Richard mentioned earlier that the "spread" strategy for unloading cards was known at the time yet missing from the book. I recall seeing that kind of thing used by non-magicians to cheat at a card bluffing game so it's history and context seem puzzling.

Jonathan, you have raised many insightful points in the course of this thread in general, and on the pen-name business recently, which I appreciate.

With particular reference to the first paragraph of your most recent post, a good answer to this would probably be hard to find, and would be heavily flavored with opinion, because the evidence would be subject to many interpretations.

Wikipedia has an article called "List of pen names." From what I have seen on that list, most pen names do not seem to be easily traceable back to the author's real name. An example of an exception would be Carr Dickson, a name used by John Dickson Carr. Then again he also used Roger Fairbairn. Maybe that is in some way related to him or his life, but not obviously so.

However, I have seen one or two pen names used by someone else that were extremely clever and obscure, which made sense once you knew "the secret."

But I can see where some people might contend that magicians tend to look at pen names (and stage names) in a particular way. Obviously, one thing they like to do is reverse their names, or nearly do so. I don't know who the first magic author to do this was. But that may be more common in the magic field than in other fields. I do not understand why magicians (ostensibly creative people) would fall back on such a pedestrian way of choosing an alternate name.

Whatever the merits (or lack thereof) might be for the last method of analyzing a
Edward Finck wrote: Vernon's story is suspect on it's face because he says he continued "badgering" old man Drake for months but "old man" Drake was dead and had died at 47 years of age and years before Vernon even came to the U.S. The sons were all around Vernon's age or younger. This strongly implies that Vernon never asked any of the Drakes anything but doesn't refute that Sprong might have.

This may be a case of misreading the text. Sprong told Vernon that he found out from Drake that S.W. Erdnase was E.S. Andrews spelled backwards. It was Sprong who had kept badgering old man Drake for Erdnase's identity--not Vernon.

Unless Vernon is quoting Sprong with no quotation marks, which to me doesn't seem likely, it looks to me as though Vernon is the one speaking (writing).

The key pieces of evidence for Edward Gallaway being Erdnase are:

1) He sounds just like Erdnase. When I read the introduction of his "Estimating for Printers" Erdnase jumped off the page, grabbed me by the neck and said: "Here I am!" Seriously, the experience was that strong. On top of that we have that the book was self-published, copyright applied for and price printed on title page just as EATCT.

2) He worked for James McKinney right up to the bankruptcy (proof is in the bankruptcy files), which puts him at the time and place of the 'crime'. It also nicely explains the 'care of James McKinney' on the copyright application.

3) We know he owned a first edition of EATCT. While you can of course argue that since he was probably the typesetter for the book he most likely kept a copy, it is still an important point to consider.

4) Edward Gallaway became a printer and typesetter when he was 14 years old. He chose the profession due to his love for books. As a typesetter one does read a lot across multiple subject categories. Typesetters were typically the most widely read
attended high-school or college.

5) We know that he had other gambling books in his library.

There is a ton of circumstantial evidence which I will describe in detail in a forthcoming article and/or book. But with the hard and documentary evidence above there is just no denying that Edward Gallaway is by far the strongest candidate yet. I will not write at this point in time "Erdnase found" because I am still wrapping up some parts of my investigation and the data I uncovered has not yet been vetted by others, but I myself am convinced that the search is over.

Edward Finck | 07/24/15 11:24 PM | link | filter

Leonard Hevia wrote:

Edward Finck wrote: Vernon's story is suspect on it's face because he says he continued "badgering" old man Drake for months but "old man" Drake was dead and had died at 47 years of age and years before Vernon even came to the U.S. The sons were all around Vernon's age or younger. This strongly implies that Vernon never asked any of the Drakes anything but doesn't refute that Spong might have.

This may be a case of misreading the text. Spong told Vernon that he found out from Drake that S.W. Erdnase was E.S. Andrews spelled backwards. It was Spong who had kept badgering old man Drake for Erdnase's identity--not Vernon.

I'm afraid that is NOT what Vernon himself said in Genii Magazine. Please read Vernon's column for August 1970 and you will find that Vernon said:

"So I went back there religiously for months and kept badgering the old man to tell me something about this Andrews."

Now if we take into consideration that Vernon never, or at least rarely, told the same story twice perhaps Mr. Hevia has an alternative source for Vernon's story. Maybe Vernon put this on Spong in an interview or some other place?

Leonard Hevia | 07/25/15 01:15 AM | link | filter

Edward Finck wrote: Now if we take into consideration that Vernon never, or at least rarely, told the same story twice perhaps Mr. Hevia has an alternative source for Vernon's story. Maybe
As a matter of fact, Mr. Hevia does have an alternative source for Vernon’s story. It’s in Volume 15 of the Revelations DVDs. Vernon recounts the story of Sprong pestering old man Drake to tell him the identity of Erdnase, with old man Drake stubbornly refusing to divulge any more information apart from the Andrews clue. Vernon’s recollection on this video clearly illustrates, in spite of the missing quotation marks in that Vernon Touch column, that Vernon was referring to Sprong who asked Drake and NOT himself:

He said he found out from Drake, who was one of the later publishers of Erdnase that Erdnase is Andrews spelled all mixed up. His real name was Andrews. I asked Mr. Drake who this fellow was, and he said he was sorry, he couldn't tell me.

Edward Finck | 07/25/15 01:46 AM | link | filter

Leonard Hevia wrote: Vernon’s recollection on this video clearly illustrates, in spite of the missing quotations in that Vernon Touch column, that Vernon was referring to Sprong who asked Drake and NOT himself:

Thank you for clarifying. So we should now understand that when Vernon is speaking in the first person and uses the word I he actually is referring to another person like Sprong? Anyone who reads Vernon’s comments from 1970 can clearly see that your interpretation makes no sense at all. Inferring phantom quotation marks doesn’t fix the discrepancy. But read it however you like. I’m sure Sprong thought that Drake was an old man too, being that he was a year older than himself.

Leonard Hevia | 07/25/15 02:29 AM | link | filter

Edward Finck wrote: Thank you for clarifying. So we should now understand that when Vernon is speaking in the first person and uses the word I he actually is referring to another person like Sprong? Anyone who reads Vernon’s comments from 1970 can clearly see that your interpretation makes no sense at all. Inferring phantom quotation marks doesn’t fix the discrepancy. But read it however you like. I’m sure Sprong thought that Drake was an old man too, being that he was a year older than himself.

In this instance, why not? Nobody is immune to misplaced or missing quotation marks. Vernon is discussing Sprong’s encounter with Drake, and then it seems as if he
about Sprong continues in a logical fashion.

Inferring the "phantom quotation marks" puts that Vernon Touch narrative in perfect harmony with Vernon's discussion in the Revelations video. You mentioned that Vernon could not have met Drake because Drake died in 1912. You are absolutely correct, which means either Vernon lied in that column, or we are seeing missing quotation marks on that page. I believe the latter.

The reference to "old man Drake" is directly from Vernon in that Revelations video. He kept referring to Drake with that moniker. If you haven't watched it yet, and I don't think you have, it will certainly open your eyes.

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**magicam** | 07/25/15 02:57 AM | link | filter

*lybrary wrote:* ... one of the books Edward wrote, "Estimating for Printers" was self-published, copyright applied for (I do have the application form) and the title page shows the price the same way as on EATCT. Pretty unusual parallel and only one of many pieces of real evidence I have gathered.

No doubt it will be interesting to learn about the other evidence at the appropriate time. Though the similarity between the pricing statements should not be dismissed as a piece of circumstantial evidence, in a vacuum (and speaking for myself of course) I don't find such similarity to be very unusual, especially if we (safely, perhaps?) assume that Edward typeset his own book and Erdnase's. Work-a-day individual typesetters are creatures of habit. My hunch is you'll end up discovering other books with similar typesetting, and perhaps even a magic book or two.

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**Pete McCabe** | 07/25/15 03:15 AM | link | filter

Weren't the Vernon pieces from the 70s dictated by him? If that's so, then the quotation marks may not be the way Vernon had in mind.

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**lybrary** | 07/25/15 05:38 AM | link | filter

*magicam wrote:

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Except the typesetter is not the one who decides what is written in a book. He simply sets it in type. Why should the typesetter know what the book’s price is to begin with? I guess you have not yet read my list of major evidence a few posts above the quarrel about what Vernon said or didn’t say.

**mam** | 07/25/15 06:48 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*lybrary wrote:* 1) He sounds just like Erdnase. When I read the introduction of his "Estimating for Printers" Erdnase jumped off the page, grabbed me by the neck and said: "Here I am!" Seriously, the experience was that strong. On top of that we have that the book was self-published, copyright applied for and price printed on title page just as EATCT.

Have you also had the chance to look at or read Gallaway’s other book on printing ("How to price job printing properly")?

**lybrary** | 07/25/15 07:01 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I am aware of two other books by Gallaway also on the same subject. But they are quite a bit thinner than his "Estimating for Printers" and I have not yet read them. However, "How to price job printing properly" can also be found in the card index of copyright applications at the Library of Congress.

The books I found published under Edward Gallaway’s name are:


- "Problem in estimating, prepared for the students of the Printers Estimating School of Chicago." by Edward Gallaway, 23 pages.
That you have not read the two other books, is it because you have not been able to locate copies of them?

I have located copies of all but not in the public library around the corner. So it will take a bit until I have copies.

I just want whatever Gallaway was washing with!

A professional lifetime handling type and fresh print in the ink-stained trenches, and not a mark on them. And no trace of scrubbing or solvents either. As M. D. Smith said--some of the softest hands he'd ever held.

Chris--my apologies for derailing your discussion on Gallaway. I noticed that Gallaway published his books much later than TEATCT. Isn't it possible that if/when Gallaway typeset *The Expert*, he liked the design of the book and just remembered and copied that format for his own books later on? According to you, he did own a copy, so he must have had it for handy reference for over two decades before he began publishing.

lybrary wrote: I myself am convinced that the search is over.

There are many who won't be Chris, based on what you've brought forward to date.

Parallels, happenstance, circumstance, coincidences, and leaps-of-faith seem to be the order of the day (month?) in the search for Erdnase lately, but what remains missing is any actual evidence.

I sense we're entering a phase in the search where we're going to read "ERDNASE FOUND!!" on a bi-weekly basis, which is fine, but please ... don’t become offended when others who post in the Genii Erdnase thread take the time to let you know that they find nothing compelling enough in your presentation to agree with you (yet).
the corner. So it will take a bit until I have copies.

Keep us posted! Really interesting stuff you have presented here recently.

Leonard, yes sure that is of course possible. But it is also quite possible that this is yet another fingerprint Erdnase has left. In any case, it is not the prime evidence here just one more indication in favor of him.

Think about it this way. We know that Gallaway became a print estimator. Exactly when he started to estimate the cost of print runs is unclear, but a print estimator knows exactly what a book costs in production and thus has a good idea about the price the book should be offered at. The fact that somebody actually prints the price on the title page is not something that common and fits the print estimator profile quite well. But maybe he saw it at Roterberg's "New Era Card Tricks" and simply copied it. Different ways this could have happened, but taken together (price, self-published, copyright applied for) quite a compelling parallel.

Roger M. wrote:

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I am not offended and would appreciate real feedback and criticism.
and rejected the notion. Jay then moved all of his attention to Milton Franklin who, I believe, he continued to believe was Erdnase until his death. Jay did much of the important early legwork on the subject, in some ways more than Martin Gardner did. His discovery of Gallaway in 1955 or so was significant but did not convince Jay that he had written the book.

Gallaway has been referred to here as the typesetter, Jay believed he was the binder and working separately from McKinney. Is there any evidence he was a/the typesetter?

This fascinating thread takes some great twists and turns and also does some laps, revisiting old ideas. Although this is sometimes done by those that unknowingly are treading old ground it is still useful for new, fresh eyes to examine old ideas and sometimes discover new hard evidence, like the bankruptcy files.

**Bob Coyne | 07/25/15 01:26 PM | link | filter**

lybrary wrote: The key pieces of evidence for Edward Gallaway being Erdnase are:

1) He sounds just like Erdnase. When I read the introduction of his "Estimating for Printers" Erdnase jumped off the page, grabbed me by the neck and said: "Here I am!" Seriously, the experience was that strong.

Do you have any samples of his writing you could post here? I wasn't able to find any online.

**Roger M. | 07/25/15 01:28 PM | link | filter**

I really am quite interested in where your Galloway search takes you Chris, and look forward to your updates.

**Jonathan Townsend | 07/25/15 01:36 PM | link | filter**

The particular words in the Vernon story, "can not" convey an absence where "will not" conveys additional considerations.

There's another historical and magical lodestone in the book - the FASDIU approach to magic as distinct from the "keep your special items at hand" advice in other books of the time.
Edward Finck wrote: Regarding Edward Gallaway as a candidate. Jay Marshall considered him in the 50s and after contacting his then extant family etc. decided he wasn't a strong contender and rejected the notion.

This is interesting.
What were the factors that led Marshall to consider Gallaway as a candidate? Were they the same as those being presently set forth, or were they different? What exactly did the family offer, that caused Marshall to dismiss Gallaway?

Where can the answers to these questions be found? Although there is some information on Gallaway in *The Man Who Was Erdnase*, I can find no mention of him ever being a considered as a possible candidate.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 07/25/15 05:17 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Brad, I was wondering almost the exact same things, cuz I couldn't remember ever hearing that Jay thought Gallaway was in the running. If Jay had some powerful evidence that changed his mind, that would be highly significant.

--Tom

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**Edward Finck** | 07/25/15 05:49 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Tom Sawyer wrote: Brad, I was wondering almost the exact same things, cuz I couldn’t remember ever hearing that Jay thought Gallaway was in the running. If Jay had some powerful evidence that changed his mind, that would be highly significant.

--Tom

Some of the info came from Jay directly via conversation and some comes from documents of Jay’s that he shared pertaining to the research he did in the 50s. One other theory (that might have been transitional for him) was that the E. S. part of the anagram (that couldn’t come from M. F.) came from the E in Edward (Gallaway) and the S in Smith (Marshall D.).

I think I have an old photo of Jay’s anagram of this somewhere and if I can find it I will try to post it.

E.F.
Here? I wasn't able to find any online.

I have arranged with Harvard Library that a digital version of "Estimating for Printers" will be made available free of charge to the public. This should be available soon.

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**Lybrary** | 07/25/15 06:19 PM | [link] [filter]

From the bankruptcy files it is pretty clear that James McKinney did not have an in-house bindery and outsourced such work. This was the norm back then for print shops. Typesetting and printing go together well, but binding is a different beast and was usually handled by separate companies who specialized in it.

This means that Gallaway certainly did not do the binding of EATCT. It is also crystal clear that Gallaway was employed by McKinney (not working separately) because he had outstanding wages which were paid through the bankruptcy court process.

I am just as curious as you are regarding Jay Marshall's investigation into Gallaway. I am in contact with Sandy Marshall to find out if any notes, letters, etc. of Jay's research into Erdnase are still around. If anybody knows or remembers anything about it please post here or email me.

When I first looked into Gallaway I was totally surprised that nobody ever even considered him remotely as a possible Erdnase. At least I could not find any comment regarding it and anybody I have asked so far has not heard any theory that Gallaway could have been Erdnase.

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**Edward Finck** | 07/25/15 06:59 PM | [link] [filter]

*Lybrary wrote:* From the bankruptcy files it is pretty clear that James McKinney did not have an in-house bindery and outsourced such work. This was the norm back then for print shops. Typesetting and printing go together well, but binding is a different beast and was usually handled by separate companies who specialized in it.

Actually McKinney was both a printer and a book-binder and when he dissolved into bankruptcy he immediately reformed in 1903 as McKinney and Gallaway (with McKinney's son Patrick onboard too) and they too were book-binders. It's likely that some assets where surreptitiously moved from McKinney and Co. and put in McKinney and Gallaway but there doesn't seem to be solid evidence of that. And by evidence I mean public accusations at the time etc. But it is strange that McKinney goes personally and professionally bankrupt several times and then pops up almost immediately with capital to start new firms shortly thereafter. Probably McKinney
Edward Finck wrote: Gallaway has been referred to here as the typesetter, Jay believed he was the binder and working separately from McKinney. Is there any evidence he was a/the typesetter?

His obituary makes no reference to typesetting. In the 1910 and 1920 censuses (censii?) he reported his occupation as "printer". To the extent I have located him in Chicago city directories, he is always listed as a printer.

Edward Finck wrote:

lybrary wrote: From the bankruptcy files it is pretty clear that James McKinney did not have an in-house bindery and outsourced such work. This was the norm back then for print shops. Typesetting and printing go together well, but binding is a different beast and was usually handled by separate companies who specialized in it.

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E.F.

Why then does McKinney outsource bindery work? Clearly seen in outstanding payments to companies specializing in book binding. In the list of assets there is no bindery equipment. I also think it is not so easy to move bindery machines unnoticed while under bankruptcy orders. Financial assets yes, perhaps the odd plate or printed inventory, but bindery machines? I don't think so.
Here are two companies mentioned in the bankruptcy files which are clearly binderies:

Chicago Book Binding Company
Engberg, Helenberg Bindery

The file also has a section where it says:

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Paper Stock (in process) at following places:

Chicago Book Binding Co:
- For Presbytarian Board of Education "Whom Say Ye That I Am"
- For Engberg Homberg Pub. Co. "Psalm Books"
- For J. M. Towers "Lives of Our Presidents" (3 volumes)
- For World's Publishing Co, Ontario "Victoria Books"

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This, together with no indication of bindery equipment, is more than clear indication that they outsourced their bindery work.

Richard Kaufman | 07/25/15 08:23 PM | link | filter

And a few weeks ago I thought this topic was starting to slow down ...

Jack Shalom | 07/25/15 08:42 PM | link | filter

Re pseudonyms:

In the various re-caps of reasons for a pseudonym, there's been an important one I haven't seen mentioned, at least not recently: a pseudonym is often used when there is more than one author. Has the case for more than one author been persuasively dismissed?

Edward Finck | 07/25/15 08:51 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote:

Edward Finck wrote: Gallaway has been referred to here as the typesetter, Jay believed he was the binder and working separately from McKinney. Is there any evidence he was a/the typesetter?
In the 1910 and 1920 censuses (censii?) he reported his occupation as "printer". To the extent I have located him in Chicago city directories, he is always listed as a printer.

I suspect he knew the whole business. That’s how he could competently write books on estimation etc.

---

**Jack Shalom wrote:** Re pseudonyms:

In the various re-caps of reasons for a pseudonym, there’s been an important one I haven’t seen mentioned, at least not recently: a pseudonym is often used when there is more than one author. Has the case for more than one author been persuasively dismissed?

A forensic linguist I hired who analyzed the text does not see anything that would suggest two authors. However, one possibility I am considering is that one is the writer (Edward Gallaway) and one is the cardshark who met with Smith (his older brother Alexander Gallaway). At this point it is merely a hypothesis.

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**lybrary wrote:** Regarding Gallaway being the typesetter this should clear it up:

*Marty Demarest wrote:* This is interesting considering that Whaley, Gardner and Busby, in *The Man Who was Erdnase*, state: "This [first edition] copy of *The Expert*, bearing Gallaway's bookplate [Edward Gallaway--typesetter for James McKinney and Company], still rests in Chicago in the collection of Jay Marshall..."
Marty is only quoting TMWWE here (p. 57), from a section that is, at best, loosely sourced (letters from Gardner to Marshall, third hand reports of phone conversations with people who may not have accurately known details, undated work notes, etc.) Note that this same page says that McKinney provided binding services.

Is there any evidence, independent of TMWWE, that Edward Gallaway was a typesetter?

Jay Marshall wrote in a 1958 memo (reproduced in the 2007 catalog of the auction of his estate) that he thought Gallaway was a binder.

TMWWE is a great place to start research, but there is much in it that should only be trusted as far as you can independently verify it.

Consider: on p. 57, it says that Gallaway, presumably the typesetter, wrote two books of his own and had a large collection of gambling and magic books. On p. 65, however, it refers to him as "semi-literate".

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**Tom Sawyer** | 07/26/15 01:02 AM | link | filter

Chris Wasshuber has said that McKinney's had 32 employees. I'm not sure exactly when this was, but it seems to me that it is unlikely that Gallaway was in any way involved with the typesetting of the book -- even if he was a "typesetter."

To me, by far the most interesting fact regarding Edward Gallaway is that there exists a copy of the book with his bookplate. Just what this implies, though, I don't know.

But I doubt that it has anything to do with him having typeset the book.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Zenner** | 07/26/15 06:50 AM | link | filter

*Marty Demarest wrote:* I just want whatever Gallaway was washing with!

A professional lifetime handling type and fresh print in the ink-stained trenches, and not a mark on them. And no trace of scrubbing or solvents either. As M. D. Smith said--some of the softest hands he'd ever held.

But Chris has dismissed everything that Smith said. He must think that he was totally senile to ramble on at Gardner and for it ALL to be wrong.
was 61 when the Census was taken the month before. That would make him 32 when Erdnase met Smith, far nearer to Smith's own age, 29. Don't you think that Smith would have realised that?

Peter Zenner

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**lybrary** | 07/26/15 07:12 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Bill Mullins wrote:* Note that this same page says that McKinney provided binding services.

Providing binding services and doing the work in-house are two entirely different things. Of course they offered binding services to their clients who needed them to have their books produced. But they outsourced bindery work to companies specializing in it as was the norm.

(Bill, you should also give us a clearer picture about your feelings of TMWWE. In one post you say that what is written in TMWWE is not to be trusted, and in your next post you cite it as evidence against other conclusions. It is a bit confusing. Perhaps you can clarify what you trust in TMWWE and why, and what you do not trust and why.)

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**lybrary** | 07/26/15 09:28 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Bill Mullins wrote:*

*lybrary wrote:* Regarding Gallaway being the typesetter this should clear it up:

*Marty Demarest wrote:* This is interesting considering that Whaley, Gardner and Busby, in *The Man Who was Erdnase*, state: "This [first edition] copy of *The Expert*, bearing Gallaway's bookplate [Edward Gallaway--typesetter for James McKinney and Company], still rests in Chicago in the collection of Jay Marshall..."

Marty is only quoting TMWWE here (p. 57), from a section that is, at best, loosely sourced (letters from Gardner to Marshall, third hand reports of phone conversations with people who may not have accurately known details, undated work notes, etc.)

Marty stated in an earlier post on this forum that he did inspect this first edition.
for James McKinney and Company”. If that is true then that would conclusively prove that he was a typesetter at least during some period of his 47 years in the print industry.

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**Bill Mullins** 07/26/15 03:13 PM | link | filter

*Zenner wrote:* Bill Mullins quoted from the *Chicago Tribune* in a much earlier posting on here - back in August, 2012. He said that Gallaway was 67 when he died in May, 1930. He wasn't; he was 61 when the Census was taken the month before.

Note: I didn't say that Gallaway was 67. The obit said it, and I was only quoting it.

And for whatever it is worth, the Illinois Death Index gives Ed's DOB as 1 July 1869. Unless a better date comes along, I'll take that as definitive.

While I don't particularly think Gallaway is Erdnase, he got married on 26 Jun 1901 -- as good a reason as any to "need the money".

*lybrary wrote:* (Bill, you should also give us a clearer picture about your feelings of TMWWE. In one post you say that what is written in TMWWE is not to be trusted, and in your next post you cite it as evidence against other conclusions. It is a bit confusing. Perhaps you can clarify what you trust in TMWWE and why, and what you do not trust and why.)

This is as clear a statement as I know how to make regarding my feelings about TMWWE: "TMWWE is a great place to start research, but there is much in it that should only be trusted as far as you can independently verify it."

I've quoted TMWWE several times lately, so I don't know specifically what you mean. But several of the recent quotes were meant to show that TMWWE is not internally self-consistent, so they should be taken as commentary on TMWWE, and not meant to support the idea that Gallaway was or was not a typesetter, or that he was or was not literate.

If you are talking about McKinney providing binding services, I was subtly trying to point out that if you trust TMWWE when it says that Gallaway was a typesetter, why is it not also trustworthy when it says McKinney did binding? (I don't know specifically what Gallaway did in the printing industry ca. 1902 -- but the evidence that he was a typesetter isn't ironclad, in my opinion. I don't know whether or not McKinney did binding in house or jobbed it out. It may have been that they did both.
lybrary wrote:

*lybrary wrote:* Regarding Gallaway being the typesetter this should clear it up:

*Marty Demarest wrote:* This is interesting considering that Whaley, Gardner and Busby, in *The Man Who was Erdnase*, state: "This [first edition] copy of *The Expert*, bearing Gallaway's bookplate [Edward Gallaway--typesetter for James McKinney and Company], still rests in Chicago in the collection of Jay Marshall..."

Marty stated in an earlier post on this forum that he did inspect this first edition. Perhaps he can speak to what was written on the bookplate. From the quote from TMWWE one could conclude that the bookplate reads; "Edward Gallaway--typesetter for James McKinney and Company". If that is true then that would conclusively prove that he was a typesetter at least during some period of his 47 years in the print industry.

The quote from TMWWE doesn't say that Gallaway is a typesetter. That particular fact is in square brackets in Marty's quote, indicating he added afterwards (probably based on other statements found elsewhere in TMWWE). If you go back to TMWWE (p. 390), you can see that they do not mention any details about Gallaway as being on the bookplate. [and I have edited the nesting quotes above somewhat -- apparently the GF software only lets you nest them three deep]

Here is a bookplate of Gallaway's from another book. It doesn't give any personal info about him. Who knows if the one in Erdnase is the same bookplate?

And finally, whether or not Gallaway was a typesetter, or the typesetter of EATCT, may not be all that important. Clearly he worked for McKinney at the time in question, and he owned a 1st edition copy. Those are the salient facts.

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**lybrary | 07/26/15 03:34 PM | link | filter**

It is quite interesting to see in which book the Gallaway bookplate was found (the one Bill is linking to, which is a resource Richard Hatch found and pointed out to me a few days ago). The book is a magazine from 1700 which is a compilation of book reviews. The title is "The History of the Works of the Learned".
Imagine, Gallaway had this book, which was 200 years old back in 1900, in his collection. That reveals a book lover. Also the bookplate itself with the quote from Milton makes clear that he loves books.

Richard Kaufman | 07/26/15 03:37 PM | link | filter

I don’t know why the fact that Gallaway worked at the publisher and had a copy of the Expert at the Card Table is any indication that he was the author.

I use a book printer in the midwest. I know that if someone working there happens to be interested in magic, they’re going to pick up one of my books at the factory. And isn’t that most of what you can say about Gallaway: he was working at the printer (who cares in what capacity) and either had an interest in magic, or just found the subject of this book interesting for whatever reason and picked one out of a box.

Chris, having an old book among your possessions doesn’t point to anything other than having an old book. Someone might have given it to him. He might have picked it up off the street. Who knows? It doesn’t mean anything.

Richard Kaufman wrote: Chris, having an old book among your possessions doesn’t point to anything other than having an old book. Someone might have given it to him. He might have picked it up off the street. Who knows? It doesn’t mean anything.

Richard, have you read what is written on his bookplate? I will type it up here:

"As good almost kill a Man as kill a good Book. Many a Man lives a burden to the Earth; but a good Book is the precious Lifeblood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose, to a life beyond life. - Milton"

Who else but a book lover would use such a quote? Also the fact that he pasted bookplates in his books suggests somebody quite fond of them. I might add that he chose to become a printer with 14 even though nobody in his immediate family worked in the print industry. That also suggests somebody who likes books. I am not saying this is cold hard proof of it, but the evidence pretty much suggests this to be the case.
about the text of that book that refers directly to earlier works. If Erdnase were a book lover, isn't it more likely that he would have referred directly to Hoffmann, Sachs, Roterberg, rather than just using material found there?

Wouldn't there be evidence in EATCT of his bibliophilia?

Richard Hatch | 07/26/15 04:35 PM | link | filter

I also don't think the quotes on the bookplate give us great insights into the owner of the books. A google doc search indicates that the uncredited poem was pretty standard on bookplates of the period and I suspect the Milton quote was as well. In fact, it appears to me that a generic bookplate was taken and "Library of Edward Gallaway" and the cherubic image was printed in the relevant blank space. Possibly this bookplate was one of McKinney's printing products?

Now, if we could find Gallaway bookplates on copies of Roterberg, Hilliar, Hoffman, Sachs, etc., as well as the gambling books we know influenced him, then a strong case would begin to take shape. And if it turns out that his own published books sound like the writer of The Expert, even better...

Library | 07/26/15 04:36 PM | link | filter

Bill, in case you haven't understood my argument from my initial post about the main points of evidence for Erdnase I will repeat my point in more detail:

Erdnase is quite an interesting author, writes very well and eloquently. So we are looking for a guy who is capable of doing this. In the past many suggested that he must have had higher education, gone to college, or must have written extensively before or during his regular job. My explanation of why Gallaway was capable of writing EATCT is different. I suggest that Gallaway loved to read and loved books. Perhaps one of those kids who just read and read. With 14 when it is time for him to find a full-time job he chooses to become a printer because that way he is close to the books he loves. He will also have access to plenty of free reading material to satisfy his thirst for reading and knowledge.

So my argument is that even though Gallaway did not go to high-school let alone college, and even though it does not look like he wrote any other books before EATCT or immediately after, he was perfectly capable to write it the way EATCT is written. He had acquired a huge vocabulary through reading and his job as typesetter and printer.

Richard Hatch | 07/26/15 04:45 PM | link | filter

Chris has filled in the blanks that Bill left to give a strong case.
worker is a book lover. It does seem likely from what we know about his library that he collected a variety of books. That does not mean he read them! I know from my own experience and that of others that many book collectors with large libraries don’t read all that much! Loving and collecting books and reading them are different things. But let’s assume that he was widely read. That alone does not make him a good writer. Lots of well read folks are not particularly interesting writers. I think the key to your argument at this point will hinge of whether you can convince us that the unique voice in *The Expert* in 1902 is the same unique voice expressed in his later publications. The circumstantial case takes many leaps (we have no indication at this point that he had the knowledge expressed in the book or the ability to write it).

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**Edward Finck** | 07/26/15 04:48 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I also think that it shouldn't be overlooked that Gallaway does not match the description of Erdnase that Gardner got from Smith nor does he match internal evidence from *The Book*. Apologies if I've duplicated other recently made points.

Gallaway was born in Ohio, Smith thought Erdnase was from the East Coast. Gallaway was a tradesman and although this does not disqualify him from having received a good education it strongly implies otherwise. If Gallaway indeed became a printer at 14 he wouldn’t have had time for a proper education. It also must be considered that Erdnase probably came from a wealthy family ("unlicked cub with a fairly fat bankroll...") and wealthy families don’t often spawn 14 year old printers. As Mr. Demarest points out, a press worker (or binder, or typesetter) might not end up with the most beautiful hands. Gallaway is about 10 years younger than Erdnase had appeared to Smith.

My money is not on Gallaway as author but Gallaway is interesting nonetheless.

E.F.

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**lybrary** | 07/26/15 05:15 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Richard, Edward, all fair points. A couple of counter arguments you may want to consider:

- The suggestion that he became a printer with 14 because of his love for books comes from the certified genealogist I am working with. She has researched many families from that region. That was here comment. I found it quite plausible. But I am well aware of the fact that plausible is not proof. But I am also not looking for proof. I am simply showing that it is plausible for Gallaway to write the way Erdnase wrote. Once you will have the opportunity to read Gallaway's other books it will become quite
- Typesetters were some of the most educated folks. (I am using educated not in the sense of going to school for many years but in the sense of informed, well read, eloquent, etc.) This is from a typesetter and printer I have spoken with. He has told me a lot about the world of typesetters, their work in detail, how a print shop is organized, the importance of printing guilds back then, etc. Think about it, as a typesetter you typically read the portions you typeset 3 times during the course of setting it. Quite a lot of on the job reading.

- I have given my detailed reasoning why I don't believe the Smith recollections, particularly when it comes to age, before.

- A typesetter develops very nimble fingers due to the constant handling of movable type. It is actually quite beneficial for a card shark to be a typesetter. This was an observation a typesetter shared with me. The dexterity of typesetters is no surprise.

None of these are hard facts, simply points to consider which in my eyes make him quite capable of being Erdnase.

Richard Kaufman | 07/26/15 05:52 PM | link | filter

It should be a fairly simple matter to use a computer program to compare the text of Expert with Gallaway's other authored works.

Lybrary | 07/26/15 06:03 PM | link | filter

Richard, it is all in the works. Wait a bit and I will have a report by a forensic linguist who will compare the books. Here is a part from the beginning of the introduction to "Estimating for Printers"

"This is a practical book - it is not padded with ponderous editorial homilies, old newspaper clippings, interest tables or platitudinous dissertations on the uplift of the printing industry."

I would say quite an eloquent start for somebody without high-school or college education. Gallaway certainly was capable of writing EATCT.

Richard Hatch | 07/26/15 06:27 PM | link | filter

Lybrary wrote: Here is a part from the beginning of the introduction to "Estimating for Printers"
dissertations on the uplift of the printing industry."

I agree with Chris that this does sound like it could have been written by the same author who wrote the "Professional Secrets" section of EATCT. But one sentence from one book is hardly enough evidence. I suppose it is like the monkeys at typewriters eventually writing Shakespeare: Given enough work to choose from, one can always find some parallel. The question is whether enough of it sounds enough like him to be convincing...

Richard, I think the monkey argument does not apply to somebody who we know worked for McKinney. I haven't pulled Gallaway out of an otherwise unspecified collection of authors.

How many people would McKinney had business with in 1901? I would say perhaps a couple of hundred. How many of those had a first edition of EATCT which Erdnase certainly had, too? Out of these couple of hundred folks doing business with McKinney - perhaps 20? So from these ~20 how likely is it that one of them sounds similar to Erdnase? Not quite the monkey business you describe.

I think this sentence at least should deflate the argument that he was not good enough a writer to write EATCT. Or that he was not educated or endowed with enough funds or whatever argument one wants to make here. Gallaway was most certainly capable of writing very well.

Hi All,

I was quite interested in some of the views expressed above by Richard Kaufman, Richard Hatch, and Bill Mullins concerning the significance of the Edward Galloway bookplate in a copy of the first edition of Erdnase. My own views as to certain things said are pretty different. Here are a few observations:

1. It could be a stock bookplate, but it is a heavily "typographical" design, which to me implies that he might well have had it printed by one of the printers he worked for.

2. I do believe that bookplates are one of THE key ways in which some collectors like to say "This is who I am," or "Look how special I am for believing such cool things," or maybe be a little sententious. Nobody else really gives a rap what they include on their bookplates, but many collectors seem to. I think that the wording on the bookplate
really describe Erdnase.

3. At least for the present, I do not think there has been much evidence supporting Gallaway as Erdnase. However, to me, in light of all of the basic surrounding facts and semi-facts, there are two primary reasons why Galloway would have owned a copy of the book. Either:

a. He was the author of the book, or
b. He acquired a copy because of his (apparent) interest in gambling. At least for the present, this seems like the probable reason.

4. I don’t think he would have acquired a copy merely because he was the typesetter. I don’t think he was the typesetter, but if he was, I don’t think he would have felt the need to possess a copy. The theory that Gallaway had a copy because he typeset the book was I think the suggestion of *The Man Who Was Erdnase*. That would have made some sense if McKinney’s was a small firm by today’s standards -- but it obviously was not.

5. It was more or less shown (rather weakly) in *The Man Who Was Erdnase* that Gallaway was interested in gambling and owned books on the subject. It would seem, however, that the available information on this is quite slight.

--Tom Sawyer

**lybrary** 07/26/15 09:39 PM | link | filter

I just realized something: S.W. Erdnase is an anagram for "Ed Answers". Ed is short for Edward. Edward Gallaway that is

**magicam** 07/27/15 02:46 AM | link | filter

Chris,

You deserve much credit for hiring specialists in several fields to assist with your Erdnase research, which should (hopefully) yield more than uninformed speculation. And your even-keel demeanor in the face of others’ vetting of your theory and arguments is also admirable. That said, I’m struggling with a number of your comments and interpretations.

**lybrary wrote:** The suggestion that he became a printer with t4 because of his love for books comes from the certified genealogist I am working with. She
Not sure why a certified genealogist’s speculation about Gallaway’s motivation to become a printer at age 14 is relevant. In any case, is this motivation within the realms of possibility? Okay. Plausible (in the positive connotation of that word)? I’m sceptical. What does sound plausible (again, in the positive connotation of that word) is EG was at an age where it was time to learn a trade.

*lybrary* wrote: …Typesetters were some of the most educated folks … This is from a typesetter and printer I have spoken with. He has told me a lot about the world of typesetters, their work in detail, how a print shop is organized, the importance of printing guilds back then, etc. Think about it, as a typesetter you typically read the portions you typeset 3 times during the course of setting it. Quite a lot of on the job reading. …

You alluded to this earlier when you wrote that “typesetters were typically the most widely read and thus informed folks in those days.” Is this what your typesetter/printer told you? I’d be curious to know his exact background. What exactly did he do? Did he work in a major publishing house? Was he an independent job printer? Did he work in a small or large printing firm? When was he in the trade? Etc. When would a typesetter proper in the early 20th century read text 3 times? Typesetters (better known as compositors in the trade) in that era were, by and large, specialists – that’s all they did, unless it was pretty much a one or two-man shop and the owner was also asked to edit the text. Typesetters, cold and hot metal alike, had their “head in the lead” -- composing text was not a leisurely job of reading and pondering the meaning of words. These guys worked fast (and in some cases still in the early 1900s, their wages strictly depended on it, because they were paid on a piece-work basis, which was the long-standing tradition), and in most cases, they didn’t care what the author wrote – their job was to set the words per the author’s text. Try this experiment: take any page of definitions out of the Oxford dictionary and then type it into your word processor as fast and accurately as you possibly can, while at the same time maintaining the exact wording, spelling, punctuation, bolding, font size changes, italics, etc. That approximates the job of a compositor (and my guess is you would not retain much of the substance of what you typed).

Perhaps more important, and as others have pointed out, has the fact that Gallaway was a compositor been clearly established?

*lybrary* wrote: … A typesetter develops very nimble fingers due to the constant handling of movable type. It is actually quite beneficial for a card shark to be a typesetter. This was an observation a typesetter shared with me. The dexterity of typesetters is no surprise. …

That seems a very large stretch. Moreover (and still assuming he was a compositor), it
McKinney primarily worked with cold-metal type, I would expect that he'd have a very large and varied stock of founts, in which case this important asset should be listed as an asset in his BK docs. If a stock of founts is not listed, do the BK docs state that McKinney had any linotype or monotype machines (the former being more likely if he had either), another high-value asset? In that case the nimbleness you refer to would have been typing on a lino or mono keyboard. If not, then it seems likely that McKinney outsourced the typesetting to a larger company (newspapers and larger printing houses often did composing work for smaller printing companies in that era), and if that's the case, then it seems unlikely that Gallaway was a compositor of any real significance, at least at that time.

IMHO, the foregoing seem minor quibbles in comparison to the following: where did Galloway get such cheating knowledge – knowledge that many have claimed to be revolutionary and cutting-edge – and how did he find the time to do so? Chris, are you suggesting it was book-learned? I'm not at all an Erdnase student, but I have the vague recollection that Erdnase hints (or outright says it?) that his knowledge was gained over a period of years spent earning the trust of sophisticated cheats. (Hopefully the Erdnase cognoscenti can chime in!) In any event, it seems improbable that Gallaway – a man who worked in the printing trade since the age of 14 – was able to learn the “real work” in his off-hours.

*Tom Sawyer wrote:* ... I was quite interested in some of the views expressed above by Richard Kaufman, Richard Hatch, and Bill Mullins concerning the significance of the Edward Galloway bookplate in a copy of the first edition of Erdnase. ...

Do we know that the bookplate image kindly posted by Bill Mullins is the same as in Gallaway's copy of TEATCT? Or maybe I've missed something here ...

*Tom Sawyer wrote:* ... It could be a stock bookplate, but it is a heavily "typographical" design, which to me implies that he might well have had it printed by one of the printers he worked for. ...

The one posted by Bill is also very peculiar for a *private* bookplate. I’ve seen a few private bookplates over the years, and can’t recall seeing one looking so institutional, with the fields “Catalogue Page,” Shelf,” and “Volumes in Set” (though perhaps they exist).

*Tom Sawyer wrote:* ... I do believe that bookplates are one of THE key ways in which some collectors like to say "This is who I am," or "Look how special I am for believing such cool things," or maybe be a little sententious. Nobody else really gives a rap what they include on their bookplates, but many
Certainly agree with your first point, Tom, but how far can we press the point? After all, would we expect to see sentiments such as “You Can’t Learn a Damned Thing from a Book” or “Books are Worthless” on a bookplate?

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Zenner | 07/27/15 05:26 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote:

Zenner wrote: Bill Mullins quoted from the Chicago Tribune in a much earlier posting on here - back in August, 2012. He said that Gallaway was 67 when he died in May, 1930. He wasn’t; he was 61 when the Census was taken the month before.

Note: I didn't say that Gallaway was 67. The obit said it, and I was only quoting it.

And for whatever it is worth, the Illinois Death Index gives Ed's DOB as 1 July 1869. Unless a better date comes along, I'll take that as definitive.

Oh Bill - I was careful to say that you were quoting from the Chicago Tribune. After checking with the actual source though, I realise that it was the Chicago Sunday Tribune!

Regarding the date of birth; the Illinois Death Index is wrong. Check the Censuses - he was 41 in April, 1910; 51 in January, 1920, and 61 in April, 1930. His birthday was after those dates, i.e., on July 1. So he was 42 on July 1, 1910, etc., making his year of birth 1868.

For more information about Peter Edward Gallaway and his family, check http://www.adkins9.net/individual.php?pid=I2654

Peter Zenner

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lybrary | 07/27/15 05:50 AM | link | filter

Zenner wrote: Regarding the date of birth; the Illinois Death Index is wrong. Check the Censuses - he was 41 in April, 1910; 51 in January, 1920, and 61 in April, 1930. His birthday was after those dates, i.e., on July 1. So he was 42 on July 1, 1910, etc., making his year of birth 1868.

Well done Sherlock. I have Gallaway's baptism records. He was born 7/1/1868 and baptized a month later together with one of his brothers.
name or perhaps it was a still birth. One of is older brothers also died in childhood leaving him with one older brother who was 7 years older than him and two younger sisters. One of the sisters moved to Chicago. Her mother joined her after her husband died in 1900.

As was mentioned before, Gallaway married in 1901. His wife had a daughter from a prior marriage. I think these are good reasons to both go straight and give up card sharking, as well as motivation for 'needing the money', if you suddenly have a family to care for. His son was born 1903.

**lybrary | 07/27/15 06:11 AM | link | filter**

*magicam wrote:* If McKinney primarily worked with cold-metal type, I would expect that he'd have a very large and varied stock of founts, in which case this important asset should be listed as an asset in his BK docs. If a stock of founts is not listed, do the BK docs state that McKinney had any linotype or monotype machines (the former being more likely if he had either), another high-value asset?

There is an entire page in the bankruptcy files dedicated to the metal type McKinney had. So yes, he had quite a bit of it. There is no indication of a linotype machine. But he did outsourc work to other typesetting companies. My reading of this is that whatever he couldn't handle in-house with the 20-25 typesetters he probably had, he outsourced to other companies.

As to the typesetter and printer I am consulting with, he is in his seventies and did start his career as typesetter and printer. He worked in a fairly large print shop where they also had Miele printing machines. Of course, he worked about 70-80 years after Gallaway, which means that the industry wasn't exactly the same anymore. But the work as a typesetter working with movable type did not change that much until one actually used linotype or later computers to set type. My consultant later moved into other functions of the print industry similar to what we already know Gallaway did, too. So for me this guy is the closest living proxy I have to somebody like Gallaway.

Regarding the genealogist who offered the suggestion that Gallaway probably took up the printing trade for his love of books: Just as any expert who works for years in their field one develops a certain instinct and gut feeling. She has researched hundreds of families from that time and location. She has researched the entire family tree of the Gallaway family for me. I think that her gut feeling is as good as any other suggestion I have read here. In asking her flat out why she thinks that, she said that one indication for this is that neither Edward's father nor grandfather worked in the printing industry. Also none of his older brothers did. I guess back then a good portion of 14
the case with Edward we have to ask why the printing trade? There can be many other reasons for it than a love of books. But taken together with the facts surrounding his bookplates I say a very reasonable assumption we can make.

It really should be asked how we know James McKinney & Co. printed The Expert.

The Expert's LoC copyright application lists "c/o James McKinney & Co." as Erdnase's contact address and residence, but the company is not named as the book's printer.

The LoC registration of the submission of the title page, interestingly, lists Erdnase as being "of" Chicago, and records that "he" is "author and proprietor." They probably assumed his address from the copyright application. But how did they determined his gender? And why did they change the clear, singular designation of "Author" on the application to "Author and Proprietor" on the registration?

The LoC's card catalogue of copyrights also has a piece of paper pasted at the top of The Expert's card that names "J. McKinney & co., printers." How they determined that I don't know.

We could also link The Expert to James McKinney & Co. via Adrian Plate's first edition copy (also in the LoC), which is inscribed in pencil at the bottom of the title page as "sold by James McKinney & Co. / 73 & 75 Plymouth Court / Chicago Ill." (That's pretty specific.)

Finally, there is Edward Gallaway's first edition copy at the Conjuring Arts Research Center. It has the same bookplate that has been depicted elsewhere, pasted--somewhat askew and off-center--on the front cover endsheet.

So in summary:

**McKINNEY & CO. and S. W. ERDNASE/ THE EXPERT AT THE CARD TABLE**

**EVIDENCE SOURCE**

**PRIMARY SOURCES:**
--The copyright application at the Library of Congress (filled out presumably by either McKinney & Co., Erdnase, or one of their agents.)

**SECONDARY SOURCES:**
--Adrian Plate's first edition of the book, indicating that it was sold by James McKinney & Co. and giving the firm's address (presumably written by Plate)
CIRCUMSTANTIAL SOURCES:
--Bookplate in Edward Gallaway's first edition of *The Expert* (Gallaway was an employee of McKinney & Co.)

**McKINNEY & CO. and S. W. ERDNASE/THE EXPERT AT THE CARD TABLE INFORMATION**

**S. W. ERDNASE'S NAME:**
--**Primary Source:** copyright application (S. W. Erdnase)
--Secondary Source: card catalogue of copyrights (S. W. Erdnase)
--Secondary Source: registration of copyright (S. W. Erdnase)

**S. W. ERDNASE'S ADDRESS:**
--**Primary Source:** copyright application ("73 Plymouth Place, Chicago, Ill."--pp. 1, 2)
--**Primary Source:** copyright application ("c/o Jas. McKinney & Co. / 73 Plymouth Place / Chicago, Ill."--p. 2)
--Secondary Source: registration of copyright ("73 Plymouth Place, Chicago, Ill.")

**S. W. ERDNASE'S BUSINESS ROLE WITH THE BOOK**
--**Primary Source:** copyright application ("Author")
--Secondary Source: registration of copyright ("Author and proprietor")

**JAMES MCKINNEY & CO. AS PRINTERS OF THE BOOK:**
--Circumstantial Source: Edward Gallaway's bookplate in first edition

**JAMES MCKINNEY & CO. AS BINDERS OF THE BOOK:**
--NO EVIDENCE

**JAMES MCKINNEY & CO. AS SELLERS OF THE BOOK:**
--Secondary Source: Adrian Plate's first edition copy ("sold by James McKinney & Co. / 73 & 75 Plymouth Court / Chicago Ill.")

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**Richard Hatch** | 07/27/15 11:49 AM | link | filter

Here's a more direct link to Edward Gallaway's genealogy and major life events (thanks, Peter!). Note that his parents spelled the last name Galloway, so confusion on that is understandable:
Richard Hatch wrote: Here's a more direct link to Edward Gallaway's genealogy and major life events (thanks, Peter!). Note that his parents spelled the last name Galloway, so confusion on that is understandable: http://www.adkins.ws/individual.php?pid ... Adkins.GED

I would like to add that a good part of the information on the Adkins website comes from research my genealogist did and which we contributed to Adkins website. There was a big error that mixed up two different families which we sorted out.

Bill Mullins | 07/27/15 12:29 PM | link | filter

An interesting magical pseudonym: William Brisbane Dick wrote as "Leger D. Mayne".

He was a partner in Dick and Fitzgerald, which published magic and gambling books in the 19th century, and wrote a number of books himself.

lybrary | 07/27/15 12:48 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: I just realized something: S.W. Erdnase is an anagram for "Ed Answers". Ed is short for Edward. Edward Gallaway that is

Or perhaps: "Edw. Sans Re" which I translate as "Edward Without Reference".

lybrary | 07/27/15 01:17 PM | link | filter

The bankruptcy files are now available for anybody who is interested to read them: http://www.lybrary.com/the-james-mckinney-co-bankruptcy-files-p-741390.html

They include the 1899 James McKinney bankruptcy and the more interesting 1902 James McKinney & Co bankruptcy. In an introduction I am describing how I found them.

Leo Garet | 07/27/15 01:32 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote:

lybrary wrote: I just realized something: S.W. Erdnase is an anagram for "Ed Answers". Ed is short for Edward. Edward Gallaway that is
Or possibly Ned SWEars.

Or "Wand Seers" quite fitting for somebody writing on magic, don't you think?

Simple question.

How did Gallaway, if he began a career as a print-setter at the age of 14, accumulate the many thousands of hours that would have been required to come up with the hitherto unseen, and extremely revolutionary material we see in the book? Also, Erdnase's brilliant thinking that would lead to the development of the material in the book could hardly have occurred in a vacuum, so again, if he was a career printer at 14, when did he spend the years that would have been required to expose him to the state of the art cheating and hustling of his day ... such that he would build upon what he had learned to create his original creations in EATCT? As one investigates various candidates, the sheer brilliance of the material in the book, and the diverse experience Erdnase himself must have already had in order to develop that material can't simply be overlooked. Somehow, one must explain the how, what, where, and when that would have exposed Erdnase to "the life" prior to writing the book, and further, detail the subsequent years it would have taken him to develop his original work. A man who began his career at age 14 as a typesetter, and died a typesetter after a life long career as a typesetter doesn't seem to have had the decade (or more) of gaming experience required to actually develop and create the original work we see in EATCT. The material in the book remains the best evidence we have of Erdnase's true mindset, and that evidence points to a man who had a deep and fundamental understanding of cheating at cards for money. As has been said many times before here, putting a deck of cards into the hands of the candidate is critical. And that deck of cards has to be representative of what he wrote in the book ... it has to show he had the deep understanding of cheating at cards that Erdnase so brilliantly demonstrates he indeed has.
completely.

Is Gardners "fabulous gambler" anywhere in the recently proposed list of candidates?

Roger, so basically what you are saying is that one can't have a regular job and also learn how to manipulate the cards to the degree Erdnase must have.

I completely disagree with that notion. I will give you a counter example from my life. I was a serious athlete with ambitions to become a professional athlete. In my world of sports in Austria, which was a mix of amateurs and pros, there were many who held a full time job as well as played the sport on the highest level in Austria. They spent every week dozens of hours to perfect their game and train their body. By all measures some of them achieved expert level. I think it is actually easier to do that with cards, because you can practice your moves and sleights almost anywhere. Having full time work does not mean you have no other time for anything else.

We also do not know if Gallaway was continuously employed. With all the bankruptcies McKinney alone had there could be significant stretches of unemployment which would allow even more time for practice and gambling.

It's important to recall that (for the large part) Erdnase didn't just "manipulate" cards, he created, from scratch a revolutionary new way of looking at hustling and cheating at cards.

As compared to your athlete analogy, this would be comparable to an athlete coming up with an entirely new sport from scratch, and then having that sport accepted into the Olympics.

One of my points above was that a person doesn't create something as substantial as EATCT while sitting on the edge of their bed. They have to be out in the gritty world of hustling and cheating at cards, such that they can build up a substantial enough understanding of the craft that they can subsequently turn that entire craft on its head and forever change how it's viewed and practiced.

I haven't yet seen a deck of cards in Gallaway's hands.
Chris, thanks for making the bankruptcy files available. As you pointed out to me a few weeks ago, McKinney’s 1903 bankruptcy in several places shows indebtedness to one “E. C. Andrews” or “E. B. Andrews” of Chicago, clearly the same person being indicated, though with some question as to his middle initial. In the one place where this is handwritten, the middle initial is illegible, though it appears in that case to be a B overwritten by a C to me. It seems McKinney owed this person $3 for sales of goods delivered. We know from the Adrian Plate copy that McKinney was selling copies of the book, though we don’t know if it was at retail ($2) or wholesale or both. The $3 could easily be explained as the author’s share of sales of his book (anywhere from 3 to 12 copies, I would guess) by McKinney prior to the imposition of receivership on December 23, 1902. No proof of this that I can see in the files, but it is certainly intriguing that one of the people owed money has a “name of interest”!

Conjuring Arts | 07/27/15 03:26 PM | link | filter

Conjuring Arts has also had the McKinney Bankruptcy papers for some time and have decided to release them to all, free of charge. The files are now available to search and view via Ask Alexander to all account holders (even at the free level) and are in the S. W. Erdnase directory located here:

Erdnase

Please note that this will also allow users to post links to interesting pages.

Library | 07/27/15 03:35 PM | link | filter

No surprise here that unethical Kalush tries to steal my historic discovery. He already infringes my copyrights. Must be very proud of himself.

Brad Jeffers | 07/27/15 07:06 PM | link | filter

Marty Demarest wrote: JAMES MCKINNEY & CO. AS BINDERS OF THE BOOK:
--NO EVIDENCE

Perhaps this one line could be amended to read ...

JAMES MCKINNEY & CO. AS BINDERS OF THE BOOK:

A copy of that note can be seen HERE, page 23, item 101.
be the binder, McKinney to be the printer, and Milton Franklin Andrews to be the author.

If someone could provide a complete transcript of this note, it would be appreciated, as there are parts that I cannot clearly make out.

Larry Horowitz | 07/27/15 07:21 PM | link | filter

Chris,

As your candidate began working at 14, well before the enactment of proper child labor laws, the question becomes what did the typical work day and week look like? That would go towards the question of when he could develop the card skills.

Our modern athlete has a lot more time and access to spent on their chosen sport.

Richard Kaufman | 07/27/15 08:17 PM | link | filter

12 to 14 hour workdays were not uncommon.

Larry Horowitz | 07/27/15 09:49 PM | link | filter

Richard, I would agree. And 6 days a week

Bill Mullins | 07/27/15 09:54 PM | link | filter

Brad Jeffers wrote:
JAMES MCKINNEY & CO. AS BINDERS OF THE BOOK:

A copy of that note can be seen HERE, 23rd page, item 101.

The resolution is not very good, but I can make out that Marshall believed Gallaway to be the binder, McKinney to be the printer, and Milton Franklin Andrews to be the author.

If someone could provide a complete transcript of this note, it would be appreciated, as there are parts that I cannot clearly make out.

Here is a more legible copy of that catalog page, where the note can be read.
I find it ironic that Jay would go to the effort to prepare a formal letter in connection with the Gallaway copy. Viewed from the standpoint of over 50 years later, there is not much of significance in the letter.

Obviously the main point of interest is the reference to Gallaway's activities, but even there Jay qualifies the remark with "I believe."

I am not sure whether it makes much difference in the big picture, but so far it continues to be unclear to me exactly what Gallaway's duties were in the McKinney firm. At the moment it appears that he may well have been the estimator. Other duties do not appear to be very well demonstrated.

I am sure Gallaway knew how to set type. The May 1922 issue of *The American Printer* (viewable on Google Books) mentions classes he gave, and in connection therewith, there were "practical demonstrations in hand composition, machine composition and lockup," apparently by Gallaway.

Binding? To me that seems way out in left field, but then again, one wonders why Jay alluded to that idea.

Also, I get now that Edward Gallaway had a name that was also spelled "Galloway." But to me that does not seem to clear up the situation raised by Bill Mullins some time ago regarding William J. Galloway.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Zenner** | 07/28/15 11:12 AM | link | filter

*Richard Hatch wrote:* Chris, that for making the bankruptcy files available. As you pointed out to me a few weeks ago, McKinney's 1903 bankruptcy in several places shows indebtedness to one "E. C. Andrews" or "E. B. Andrews" of Chicago, clearly the same person being indicated, though with some question as to his middle initial. In the one place where this is handwritten, the middle initial is illegible, though it appears in that case to be a B overwritten by a C to me.

Phew! It has taken me all day to download the file - but thanks to Chris for making it available. Best $15 I have ever spent.

See pages 141, 151, 152, 162, 171 & 397 [E.B. must be a mistake here] for E. C. Andrews of Chicago, Ill. Then on page 627 'E.B. Andrews' has been corrected to 'E.C. Andrews', as you say. E.C. Andrews of Chicago, Ill., was contracted in August, 1902. His goods were
The date ties in with the publication of *The Expert* and I have been saying for some time that Harry S. Thompson took his nom-de-plume from Emory Cobb Andrews, the new boy at Ruxton’s Inks. Why Erdnase and not Erdnace, as I said, I do not know. Typesetter’s error?

And yes, Philip Ruxton was one of McKinney's creditors.

Case closed?

Peter Zenner

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**Edward Finck** | 07/28/15 12:30 PM | link | filter

Zenner wrote:
Case closed?

Peter Zenner

Wow! it's great that we finally all agree and can move on to other great mysteries in magic.

It’s quite astonishing how quickly the majority of serious researchers dropped their candidates and came around to the obvious fact that Harry S. Thompson was Erdnase.

Well done Mr. Zenner. Shall we button up this thread now?

---

**Leo Garet** | 07/28/15 12:52 PM | link | filter

*Edward Finck wrote:*

Zenner wrote:
Case closed?

Peter Zenner

Wow! it's great that we finally all agree and can move on to other great mysteries in magic.

It’s quite astonishing how quickly the majority of serious researchers dropped their candidates and came around to the obvious fact that Harry S.
Well done Mr. Zenner. Shall we button up this thread now?

Doesn’t this post warrant a smiley of some sort? Mister Zenner is at least asking a question (I think) to which the answer is "No". I think.

Edward Finck | 07/28/15 01:03 PM | link | filter

Leo Garet wrote:

Edward Finck wrote:

Zenner wrote:
Case closed?

Peter Zenner

Wow! it’s great that we finally all agree and can move on to other great mysteries in magic.

It’s quite astonishing how quickly the majority of serious researchers dropped their candidates and came around to the obvious fact that Harry S. Thompson was Erdnase.

Well done Mr. Zenner. Shall we button up this thread now?

Doesn’t this post warrant a smiley of some sort? Mister Zenner is at least asking a question (I think) to which the answer "No". I think.

I think you are right! And I agree with your answer.

Roger M. | 07/28/15 05:21 PM | link | filter

Zenner wrote:
Case closed?

Nope, not even close.

W.S. Sanders and E.S. Andrews remain far more compelling candidates for author of EATCT than either Thompson or Gallaway. Thompson and Gallaway have had leaps of faith made that (for me) are just too large to
I'd also place M.F.A. ahead of Thompson or Gallaway. The leaps of faith taken by the champions of Gallaway and Thompson certainly exceed any leaps taken by Busby/Gardner/Whalley in TMWWE.

Indeed, the case remains wide open.

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Edward Finck | 07/28/15 09:04 PM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote:

Zenner wrote:
Case closed?

Nope, not even close.

W.S. Sanders and E.S. Andrews remain far more compelling candidates for author of EATCT than either Thompson or Gallaway. Thompson and Gallaway have had leaps of faith made that (for me) are just too large to actually consider either of them seriously at this point in time.

I'd also place M.F.A. ahead of Thompson or Gallaway. The leaps of faith taken by the champions of Gallaway and Thompson certainly exceed any leaps taken by Busby/Gardner/Whalley in TMWWE.

Indeed, the case remains wide open.

Roger, excellent points. I was thinking the same thing. If a candidate isn’t at least as compelling as MFA (who at this stage in the game is not considered seriously by most) he should be scrutinized extremely closely and not given the benefit of the doubt. MFA probably has the most circumstantial evidence in his favor yet very few now believe he is Erdnase.

I also find the tendency by some, when advocating for a candidate, to discount M.D. Smith’s inconvenient testimony to be a fatal flaw in reasoning. After all, Smith is the only one we know for certain met Erdnase. Even McKinney or Drake might not have dealt with him in person. We only know for a fact that Smith did. Discounting Smith is a huge mistake, one that Gardner made and in doing so probably caused him to miss many other possible avenues he could have followed up on.

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Roger M. | 07/28/15 10:54 PM | link | filter
I also find the tendency by some, when advocating for a candidate, to
discount M.D. Smith's inconvenient testimony to be a fatal flaw in
reasoning.

I agree completely.
It's often suggested that Smith's memories were those of an old man, and that
specifically his memory of Erdnase's appearance would have been flawed simply
because of his (Smith's) advanced age, and the supposed difficulty some folks have
remembering people from their past in detail.

In fact, Smith recalled a large number of things, many more than are often taken into
account when discounting only Smith's recollection of Erdnase's appearance.
The champions of new candidates frequently attempt to discredit Smith's memory of
Erdnase's appearance if their own candidate doesn't match Smith's description.

But when trying to paint Smith's memories as faulty, let's just remember what Smith
did remember:

*Smith recalled thinking that Erdnase was trying to save some money.*

*Smith recalls nothing that would suggest Erdnase had a wife.*

*Smith recalled that he (Smith) kept his overcoat on during the session.*

*Smith recalled that Erdnase did not keep his overcoat on during the session.*

*Smith remembered that Erdnase showed him some card tricks.*

*Smith remembered Erdnase rubbing his hands together to get them warm.*

*Smith recalled Erdnase telling him he had to keep his hands “greased”.*

*Smith recalled Erdnase telling him that he was a former card shark.*

*Smith remembered Erdnase telling him that he had decided to go straight.*

*Smith remembered thinking that Erdnase was not from Chicago.*

*Smith recalled that Erdnase was a small man of slight build, with blonde hair, 5’10” at the
tallest.*
Smith remembered thinking that Erdnase was a good looking chap.

Smith recalled that Erdnase was very well spoken, and a gentleman.

Smith recalled VIVIDLY that Erdnase’s hands were the softest he’d ever seen.

Smith recalled Erdnase telling him that he had to work constantly to keep his hands in good shape.

Smith remembered that Erdnase had a small board with green baize on it, with a ridge around the edge.

Smith recalled Erdnase telling him that the pictures he was drawing didn’t have to be artistic, just accurate.

Smith recalled that Erdnase had to OK each drawing before he would let Smith ink the drawings in.

Smith remembered that Erdnase paid for the drawings with a check on a big Chicago bank, with the number #1 on it.

Smith recalled thinking that the job took him two weeks to complete.

Smith recalled that nothing Erdnase said or did implied that he was “gay” despite being soft spoken, with a quiet demeanor.

Smith remembered Erdnase telling him that he (Erdnase) was related to Dalrymple from Puck magazine.

Smith recalled thinking that Erdnase was “the real article”.

Smith remembered thinking that Erdnase was extremely honest with him in his tales told while the drawings were being made.

Smith recalled thinking that Erdnase “put more cards on the table than was necessary” in the discussions he had with him.

Smith remembered thinking that he liked Erdnase’s “ways”, further thinking that Erdnase had “sold himself” to him (Smith).
difficulty recalling Erdnase himself, and the circumstances that surrounded their meeting each other.

If one is going to discount Smith's memory of Erdnase's appearance, then one must absolutely address the sheer number of memories Smith had of Erdnase, some of which Smith himself described as vivid. In addressing those many memories, one would have to attempt to explain how exactly Smith would recall everything he did, but grievously err in his description of Mr. Erdnase himself.

Of course Smith might be making everything up, but OCCAM suggests that what Smith recalled for Gardner is quite likely exactly what happened.

(BTW, this is where Gardner, Busby et al went sideways IMO, despite Smith telling Gardner at least half a dozen times that Erdnase wasn't 6'3" tall, Gardner couldn't accept Smith's memory of Erdnase's height, as M.F.A. was 6'5" tall and Gardner wasn't able to let M.F.A. go).

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Zenner | 07/29/15 06:29 AM | link | filter

Zenner wrote: “All truth passes through three stages: first, it is ridiculed; second, it is violently opposed; and third, it is accepted as self-evident.”
[19th century German philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer, 1788-1860]

When I originally set out to investigate the authorship of The Expert, I assumed several things when looking for a candidate.

1. The author was a magician. Self evident. 61% of the book is technique and the other 39% consists of tricks using those techniques. Arguments that someone else wrote the 'Legerdemain' section are voided by several passages in the 'Artifice' section which I have already posted.

2. The author was known to the people behind The Sphinx. Self evident. When the book was first mentioned there, in September, 1902, no comment was made about the name 'Erdnase'. A peculiar name like that, with no track record as an author, and no comment? They had to know who he was. (We now know that 'E.C. Andrews' had a contract with McKinney dated August, 1902, so September was the earliest issue that the book could have been mentioned.)

3. The author had to be good at sleight-of-hand. Self evident. He not only wrote the book, he also demonstrated the sleights for the artist to illustrate.

4. The author had access to the "whole category" of "works on conjuring". Self evident.
5. The author knew how to publish a book. Self evident. The title page proclaims "Published by the Author".

So I searched through The Sphinx, looking for a candidate, and I decided upon Harry S. Thompson. He fitted the profile and upon further research I realised that he fitted the description given by Smith. The genealogy web-sites told me about his background and experience. The more I found, the more I realised that 'Erdnase' had to be Harry.

The release of the McKinney Bankruptcy Files has confirmed that he was using the name "E.C. Andrews" in his dealings to do with the book. The Files do not confirm any other name in this respect.

Now I don't expect the above to convince the naysayers on this forum. As far as I am concerned it's Q.E.D. on the Erdnase question. But I shall carry on researching the life of Harry Stuart Thompson because I have found some evidence that he was involved with at least a couple of other very interesting publishing events. They are "off topic" so I will not mention them any further.

One little anecdote to finish on. Way back in 1989, I attended an Ormond McGill seminar here in England. I wanted to ask him about the contents of his 'Psychic Magic' booklets, as I had never heard of anyone actually doing most of the stunts described therein. To my surprise, he hadn't done any of them - not even contact mindreading, which I had been doing for about 15 years. When I showed my surprise, he said, "You don't have to do a thing in order to write about it."

'Erdnase' told Smith that he was a reformed card cheat and the book was touted as being an expose of card cheating methods. But that was a ruse to sell it. He didn't have to actually be a card cheat in order to write about it. Thanxyou Mr McGill, you taught me a lesson.

Peter Zenner

**lybrary** | 07/29/15 08:33 AM | link | filter

*Roger M. wrote:* Smith recalled thinking that Erdnase was between 40 and 45 years old.

That is incorrect. Gardner's note says: "He was ABOUT 40, —not over 45." Smith does not put a lower limit as he does on the upper side. This leaves room for somebody quite a bit younger.
one need not have done something to write about it. But it is very difficult to write well and accurately about something one knows nothing about.

Unlike many of the psychic stunts which one must spend time filling in the gaps to make work, 
erdnase seems pretty complete - both technically but more importantly when it comes to understanding the psychology and management of advantage play.

you cannot compare satori's work on contact mindreading, a primer that can teach someone how to actually perform these techniques, to mcgill's, which describe the techniques. and then there are the many performance tips in the former that can only have come from real world experience.

In short, there are concepts in Erdnase that one would more than likely need real world first hand experience to know about, let alone be able to communicate. So unless we can tie this person to cheating, or intimately knowing a cheat for whom he wrote, the case remains far from closed.

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Roger M. wrote:

Roger M. wrote: Smith recalled thinking that Erdnase was between 40 and 45 years old.

That is incorrect. Gardner's note says: "He was ABOUT 40, —not over 45."
Smith does not put a lower limit as he does on the upper side.

Sorry Chris, yes ... that's the actual quote as per Smith's recall of Erdnase's age. You'll note I didn't put that item in any quotes in my list, thus wasn't implying that Smith spoke those specific words.

However, I'll have to disagree that my note was "incorrect". You have chosen to interpret the information Smith provided in a unique fashion (as folks often do if their candidate doesn't match Smith's recollections), however I will remain attached to the working note that Mr. Erdnase was likely between 40 and 45 years of age. Obviously this does allow for Erdnase to be a few years younger, or a few years older, but I can't see how anything noted about Erdnase's age allows for him to be "quite a bit younger" than 40 years old.
person chooses to attach to the phrase "quite a bit".

I choose not to include anything in my list related to the exchange between Smith and Gardner as it related to specific names simply because, taken in its totality, Gardner repeatedly prompted Smith about the name, leaving very little room for Smith to volunteer any information as a result of a direct memory. The data is there in detail for folks who are interested though, and my list was not intended to be comprehensive in terms of making sure I touched on every single topic Gardner and Smith engaged in discussion on.

Richard Kaufman | 07/29/15 10:42 AM | link | filter

This part of Smith's wording is to be doubted:

"Smith recalled that Erdnase was a small man of slight build, with blonde hair, 5'10" at the tallest."

5 foot 10 inches tall would not have been considered a "small man of slight build" at that height in 1902. It is not considered "a small man of slight build" even today.

Roger M. | 07/29/15 11:52 AM | link | filter

I should have clarified that anything I didn't put in quotes wasn't a direct quote.

Richard, my bullet point was a combination of a couple of different comments Smith made to Gardner.
The first was a complete statement that Erdnase was a small man of slight build.
The second was a back-and-forth between Smith and Gardner related to Gardners prompting on appearance and height.

Smith made a few references to height, ultimately stating that he could not resolve in his head that Erdnase would have been any taller than 5'10".

Smith did not state definitively at any point that Erdnase was 5'10" tall, only that he could not visualize Erdnase being any taller than 5'10".
Of course it must be kept in mind that this was in response to Gardner's repeated efforts to get Smith to consider that Erdnase may have been 6'3" tall, which may have resulted in Smith attempting to appease Gardner as best he could ... but still nowhere near 6'3".

However, I agree with Richard that, taken together, the two comments don't correlate...
(btw, my list was only intended to provide examples of Smith's totality of memory, please don't take it as intending to be the gospel of Smiths recall to Gardner in its totality ... for that you will need make your own reference to the Gardner/Smith Correspondence).

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**Edward Finck** | 07/29/15 12:10 PM | [link] | [filter]

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* This part of Smith's wording is to be doubted:

"Smith recalled that Erdnase was a small man of slight build, with blonde hair, 5'10" at the tallest."

5 foot 10 inches tall would not have been considered a "small man of slight build" at that height in 1902. It is not considered "a small man of slight build" even today.

The 5' 10" was just a typo. Gardner quoted Smith as saying:

"Andrews was a very small man of slight build. Not over 5' 6""

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**Marty Demarest** | 07/29/15 12:19 PM | [link] | [filter]

I think the wholesale dismissal of M. D. Smith's recollections is a mistake. He is the only person we know to have met Erdnase and lived to tell the tale. According to Gardner's notes from that first meeting, Smith remembered Erdnase. Moreover, he was very sharp and quite clear about what he remembered and didn't remember clearly.

It is also worth noting that we do not have evidence that would lead us to discredit Smith's reliability. Indeed, an examination of his work and his career show a person with a very acute visual sense, capable of accurately grasping, retaining and recreating visual images. I can find no evidence of duplicity on Smith's part in his career. Gardner said Smith was sharp, and Smith's own letters confirm it. I would be curious to know if anyone else has found evidence of Smith being unreliable--especially with regard to visual cues.

Even though everything Smith said in his initial interview with Gardner comes to us second hand (and is thus not a primary source), we have confirmation for some of it in primary sources (Smith's subsequent letters to Gardner). Gardner is also pretty clear about what information Smith volunteered and what was prompted and how. So, even
One of the first questions Gardner asked was the obvious one: Do you remember his name? Guided only by that question, Smith answered, "Something with a W." That was his clean, unprompted answer when first asked the question. Gardner immediately began to distort it. However, leaving that aside, "Something with a W" came purely from Smith at the beginning of his recollections.

This is an important topic, because Smith's testimony is unique. For a well-reasoned examination of why Smith's testimony is questionable, Tom Sawyer addresses that in his most recent blog post. (And congratulations, Tom, on your Erdnase blog's anniversary!) He brings up Hurt McDermott’s dismissal of Smith. As a former investigative journalist, I personally find McDermott’s analysis misinformed and cherry-picked. There's a practical reason why witnesses play a major role in solving crimes, and it can't be academically dismissed. But, from a common-sense and logical-analytical perspective, Tom questions the evidence very well.

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**Roger M.** | 07/29/15 01:11 PM | link | filter

_Zenner wrote:_

Now I don't expect the above to convince the naysayers on this forum.

I haven’t seen a single "naysayer" related to your candidate Peter.

I have only seen posters repeatedly comment to you that you have not convinced them of Thompson’s legitimacy as a result of any of the evidence you’ve presented in support of your candidate.

I have also seen some folks comment that your leaps of faith seem excessive in some cases.

It’s probably important to clarify the difference between a "naysayer", and a series of knowledgeable posters stating repeatedly that, in their opinion, your candidate fails to meet the litmus test.

That Thompson isn’t being taken as a serious candidate by most (if not all) posters in this thread does suggest that you have to provide more evidence in support of his candidacy, if indeed having Thompson taken seriously as a candidate is your goal. I’m unclear on what repeating the same unconvincing information over and over again might accomplish ... perhaps you feel that it will bolster Thompson as a candidate.

I suspect though, it actually works against Thompson as a candidate.
Marty Demarest wrote: There's a practical reason why witnesses play a major role in solving crimes, and it can't be academically dismissed.

Yes it can.

Smith's testimony may be flawed. But it's the best thing we've got, and it almost certainly is good enough for what we are trying to do with it [the standard of proof for a criminal conviction should be much higher than for saying someone is or is not Erdnase]. If we don't take advantage of this evidence, there's no point in even trying, since everything else is even weaker.

Jonathan Townsend | 07/29/15 01:29 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: ...If we don't take advantage of this evidence, there's no point in even trying, since everything else is even weaker.

The evidence being the printer, documents of the time, writing of the time...

Lybrary | 07/29/15 01:53 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: If we don't take advantage of this evidence, there's no point in even trying, since everything else is even weaker.

I disagree. Our prime and really only hard evidence is the book itself. The copyright form and now the bankruptcy files are secondary evidence not directly related to Erdnase but coming close enough that they are really useful. Everything else is of much weaker quality.

Therefore for me the linguistic fingerprint is the only real evidence we have to confirm somebody beyond a reasonable doubt. Erdnase has a unique voice. He is not some average bland writer. He writes passionately, is quite sure of himself and eloquent. I have read a lot in my life, but there is only one other person that comes even close to sounding like Erdnase.

The Smith recollections may or may not be true, or partly true (I have written my nuanced opinion of what I believe and why, and what I do not believe and why earlier.)

All other circumstantial evidence is even below the Smith recollections. The best the circumstantial evidence can do is show that we can't rule somebody out.
Chris, I generally agree with you as to the primacy of the book as evidence. But the book is not just the author's style. There's a whole lot of content there, too--including the author's own admission that he produced the book in live collaboration with M. D. Smith. This was confirmed by Smith.

The book itself is the creation of more than one person, and we have the testimony of one of those people.

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**lybrary** | 07/29/15 02:59 PM | link | filter

Marty, I agree. The book is our primary evidence. Everything we can directly derive from it is where we should focus our attention on. But the linguistic aspect has been largely ignored and yet it is really the brightest light we have to find Erdnase.

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**Bill Mullins** | 07/29/15 03:05 PM | link | filter

"Everything else" is a little hyperbolic. But the Smith recollections are important and shouldn't be discounted, and are far more relevant than Thompson's career of selling ink, or the convoluted steps to convert Gallaway's brother's name into "S. W. Erdnase".

*Jonathan Townsend wrote:*

*Bill Mullins wrote: ...If we don't take advantage of this evidence, there's no point in even trying, since everything else is even weaker.*

The evidence being the printer, documents of the time, writing of the time...

Except these don't describe the author specifically, as does Smith's testimony.

*lybrary wrote: Therefore for me the linguistic fingerprint is the only real evidence we have to confirm somebody beyond a reasonable doubt.*

Fingerprints are different in that they are presumed to be unique to each individual. We can't specify a "linguistic fingerprint" to that level of accuracy. Consider: **Donald Foster**, who is probably the most famous linguistic fingerprinter, claimed that a particular Elizabethan poem had been written by Shakespeare, based on its literary characteristics. Another scholar later identified it as having been written by John Ford, and even Foster came around to that position.
California papers also wrote *Expert*), but I see no reason to (as yet) believe that they can confirm one.

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**lybrary | 07/29/15 03:12 PM | link | filter**

*Bill Mullins wrote:* But the Smith recollections are important and shouldn’t be discounted, and are far more relevant than Thompson’s career of selling ink, or the convoluted steps to convert Gallaway’s brother’s name into "S. W. Erdnase".

And that is why I neither discount Smith’s recollections, nor rank circumstantial evidence higher than the believable part of what we know from Smith.

Yes, the linguistic fingerprint is not a slam dunk either, but perhaps you can tell us what other ‘fingerprint’ we have that is better than linguistics? There were hundreds of card cheats around. Showing that somebody had the goods is weaker than a strong match linguistically in my opinion.

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**Bill Mullins | 07/29/15 03:17 PM | link | filter**

*lybrary wrote:* But the linguistic aspect has been largely ignored and yet it is really the brightest light we have to find Erdnase.

Except for Busby/Whaley’s investigation in TMWWE, and Wiseman/Holmes’s study in Genii 2/2011, neither of which (unfortunately) revealed the author.

Yes, the linguistic fingerprint is not a slam dunk either, but perhaps you can tell us what other ‘fingerprint’ we have that is better than linguistics? There were hundreds of card cheats around. Showing that somebody had the goods is weaker than a strong match linguistically in my opinion.

I don’t have one to offer (I wish I did). And this is one of the reasons why I have said, more than once, that short of a smoking gun, it is very unlikely we will ever identify the author of the book.

But if you can come up with a card cheat who seems to write like Erdnase, I would find him to be very interesting (more so than a person who is not a card cheat, who writes like Erdnase).

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**lybrary | 07/29/15 03:29 PM | link | filter**
(unfortunately) revealed the author.

I don’t consider anybody reading a book (including myself) and then drawing comparisons a linguistic fingerprint. Hurt McDermott did a very detailed linguistic comparison, and others of our community have also offered their opinions on various linguistic aspects, but that can hardly be called a linguistic fingerprint. I think stylometry has its problems, but the Wiseman/Holmes study did not cover any of the new candidates, so can hardly be used for this discussion. But I would welcome if they did expand their study.

*Bill Mullins wrote:* But if you can come up with a card cheat who seems to write like Erdnase, I would find him to be very interesting (more so than a person who is not a card cheat, who writes like Erdnase).

What about somebody who writes like Erdnase, had a first edition and can be placed at the right time to have actually made the book order at McKinney? Neither of these things can be said about anybody else but Gallaway.

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 07/29/15 04:11 PM | link | filter

_Marty Demarest wrote:* I think the wholesale dismissal of M. D. Smith’s recollections is a mistake. He is the only person we know to have met Erdnase ...

how well did the illustrator describe the author - the cheat - the performer - the magician?

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**Roger M.** | 07/29/15 05:15 PM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote:

_Marty Demarest wrote:* I think the wholesale dismissal of M. D. Smith’s recollections is a mistake. He is the only person we know to have met Erdnase ...

how well did the illustrator describe the author - the cheat - the performer - the magician?

Smith described in the detailed list above, and to the best of his ability both the author, and the cheat.

_Not once_ did Smith relate anything at all to Gardner directly related to Erdnase talking
Based strictly on the content of Smiths conversations with Gardner, Erdnase had nothing to do with either magic, or with performance.

The book itself tells us that magic and/or performance were indeed present in some capacity, but Erdnase himself never mentions it to Smith.

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**Bill Mullins** | **07/29/15 05:26 PM** | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Zenner wrote: 1. The author was a magician. Self evident. 61% of the book is technique and the other 39% consists of tricks using those techniques. Arguments that someone else wrote the 'Legerdemain' section are voided by several passages in the 'Artifice' section which I have already posted.

At various times, I have come down on either side of the argument. You can make a case that Erdnase was a gambler or a magician. In support of him coming from a gambling rather than a conjuring background:

1. The title of the book refers to the gambler's Card Table, not to the stage of the conjuror.

2. Only 17% of the book is tricks (pp 171-205). The Legerdemain section is pp 125 - 205 (only 40% of the book), and much of the material nominally in the legerdemain section is also useful at the gaming table (shifts, palms, peeks, false shuffles and shuffle controls, etc.) The book is about card table artifice with a little conjuring thrown in because "the enthusiast [an advantage player] will not rest until every slight in the calendar [including conjuring sleights] has been fully mastered." That this is true is borne out by people whose background is advantage play going on to learn conjuring at some level (Giorgio, Rod the Hop, Forte).

3. The book is written for the gambling and not the conjuring audience. The preface makes this clear; it is for "lovers of card games". P. 127 shows he is teaching "the card-table expert" conjuror's tricks, not the other way around.

4. A magician would have known how to spell "Charlier pass".

5. He speaks several times of his experience at the card table, but never of personally performing magic.
   a. p 10 "A varied experience has impressed us..."
   b. p. 10 - 11 "our own early knowledge was acquired..."
   c. p 14 "cold school of experience ... we bucked the tiger ... our education progressed through close application and constant study of the game."
   d. p 73 He has taught his methods to other players: "certain players we have
His knowledge of conjuring comes from "the exhibitions and literature", not from his own performances.

6. The only author he mentions by name (Hoyle) wrote of card games and not conjuring.

7. He says that conjurors always call a shift a "pass" (p 128), but he himself refers to them as "shifts", thus declaring himself a gambler rather than a conjuror.

8. He told Smith he was a retired card shark.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 07/29/15 06:10 PM | link | filter

To Marty Demarest: Thanks for the comments and the link. You are the only one I know of to comment favorably on the one-year bit, even though I made a big deal of it on the blog.

--Tom

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**Richard Kaufman** | 07/29/15 06:23 PM | link | filter

Is it necessary to state that eye-witness identification of criminal suspects has repeatedly been proven unreliable and sent many thousands of innocent people to jail? M.D. Smith's "eye-witness" recollections, so many decades after the fact, may be reliable, or completely unreliable.

The only way we'll know if they're reliable is if we actually find "Erdnase" and can compare nuts to nuts.

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**Pete McCabe** | 07/29/15 06:29 PM | link | filter

If Erdnase had been a magician we would know his name by now. Magicians are no good at keeping secrets.

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**lybrary** | 07/29/15 06:31 PM | link | filter

For those who want to read about age estimation go here [http://www.psychologicabelgica.com/arti ... 334/pb.aq/](http://www.psychologicabelgica.com/arti ... 334/pb.aq/)

My understanding of this is that the error margins and confidence intervals in results of scientific studies on age estimation are generally larger than some interpret the
Zenner wrote:

2. The author was known to the people behind *The Sphinx*. Self-evident. When the book was first mentioned there, in September, 1902, no comment was made about the name 'Erdnase'. A peculiar name like that, with no track record as an author, and no comment? They had to know who he was. (We now know that 'E.C. Andrews' had a contract with McKinney dated August, 1902, so September was the earliest issue that the book could have been mentioned.)

While I think it possible that the owners of the Sphinx may have known the author of the book, I don't think the first mention in September makes this "self-evident". The statement in that issue was made (I assume) by the editor, William Hilliar (his final issue as editor, I believe) and it simply says: "A recent book on gambling tricks has been published by S. W. Erdnase, under the title "The Expert at the Card Table." It contains a chapter on legerdemain."

The fact that no comment is made about the author/publisher's name hardly implies that the writer of those sentences knew who it was. I think few people initially questioned the author's name as a pseudonym. It is a plausible foreign sounding name and only becomes suspect when one begins looking for others with that name (or reads it backwards). I would say that the writer of this two sentence statement (presumably Hilliar) believes the book to be about gambling, not magic, and no editorial comment is given about the contents or the author. It doesn't say the book is good, bad, revolutionary, by a friend or a stranger. It is simply a statement of fact. It doesn't even tell interested readers how to obtain a copy. My guess is that Hilliar probably did not know who wrote the book, as he almost certainly would have eventually told someone, especially during his many years writing a gossip column about magicians for *The Billboard*. My guess is also that the book had only just come to his attention and the news of it just filled the two sentence space he had at the bottom of that page.

The book does not get advertised in *The Sphinx* until two months later, in the November issue. Presumably, it took the Vernelos (owners and publishers of the Sphinx) till then to track down copies for sale.

If "E. C. Andrews" only contract with McKinney was in August 1902, then we can rule him out as the author, since the book was printed and available for sale no later than
me, since it’s first issue is dated March 15, 1902, at least a week after the book came off the presses in Chicago, the very city where the Sphinx was also published. If the author was an intimate of the publishers of the Sphinx, surely he would have welcomed earlier mention and advertising of the book there. The non-mention of the book for such a long period after it was available for sale is one of many reasons I don’t believe the author was an active member of the magic community at the time of the book’s publication.

Marty Demarest | 07/29/15 08:43 PM | link | filter

I can’t help myself, I have to pick a nit:

Bill Mullins wrote: 4. A magician would have known how to spell "Charlier pass".

c.f. "The Acrobatic Jacks": "(Open pack with left thumb bookwise, ready for the "Charlier Shift"..."

Bill Mullins wrote: 6. The only author he mentions by name (Hoyle) wrote of card games and not conjuring.

c.f. Methods for Determining a Card Thought Of. D.: "This cunning and absolutely unfathomable stratagem must have been devised by an individual of truly Machiavelian subtlety."

Yes, technically "Machiavelian" is a term (and misspelled), not a name. But still. He wrote.

EDIT: And as Dick Hatch pointed out to me in an email, the author also mentions the name S. W. Erdnase, who wrote about card games and conjuring...

Marty Demarest | 07/29/15 09:26 PM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote: Not once did Smith relate anything at all to Gardner directly related to Erdnase talking about magic, or the performance of magic.

Based strictly on the content of Smith’s conversations with Gardner, Erdnase had nothing to do with either magic, or with performance.

I believe you are mistaken, Roger. According to Martin Gardner’s notes from his first meeting with Smith: "He remembers Andrews showing him some card tricks, and..."
Also from Gardner's notes of his initial interview with M.D. Smith:

"He [Erdnase] had a small board, like a chessboard, with green baize on it, and Smith thinks he remembers a small ridge about half-inch high around edges. Placed it on table. Did the card tricks on it, and used it as base for posing the pictures. Board about 2 feet square."

Q: What do you call a self-professed card cheating expert who demonstrates his skill by whipping out a close-up mat and performing card tricks?

A: A magician.

Marty Demarest wrote: According to Martin Gardner's notes from his first meeting with Smith: "He remembers Andrews showing him some card tricks, and complaining that the cold made his fingers stiff."

You are absolutely correct Marty, I shouldn't post from my desk at work, with my Gardner/Smith book sitting at home!

However i might suggest that, for an artist knowing nothing about card cheats or the sleights they used in the practice of their craft, the demonstration of a second deal, or a bottom deal ... might indeed be called a "card trick" by somebody completely uninitiated, even though it was a gambling sleight being demonstrated by a card cheat.

Or perhaps not ... but it is a valid consideration.

Marty Demarest wrote: I can't help myself, I have to pick a nit:

Bill Mullins wrote: 4. A magician would have known how to spell "Charlier pass".

c.f. "The Acrobatic Jacks": "(Open pack with left thumb bookwise, ready for the "Charlier Shift"...)"
c.f. Methods for Determining a Card Thought Of. D.: "This cunning and absolutely unfathomable stratagem must have been devised by an individual of truly Machiavelian subtlety."

Yes, technically "Machiavelian" is a term (and misspelled), not a name. But still. He wrote.

EDIT: And as Dick Hatch pointed out to me in an email, the author also mentions the name S. W. Erdnase, who wrote about card games and conjuring...

Got me! Zenner will be pleased to know that I'm no longer infallible.

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**Richard Hatch** | 07/29/15 11:46 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Marty Demarest wrote:* Also from Gardner's notes of his initial interview with M.D. Smith:

"He [Erdnase] had a small board, like a chessboard, with green baize on it, and Smith thinks he remembers a small ridge about half-inch high around edges. Placed it on table. Did the card tricks on it, and used it as base for posing the pictures. Board about 2 feet square."

Q: What do you call a self-professed card cheating expert who demonstrates his skill by whipping out a close-up mat and performing card tricks?

A: A magician.

As pointed out in TMWWE, the board can apparently be seen in several of the drawings, particularly Fig. 16. That same figure argues against the "traced from photos" theory some champion, since the front edge of the board runs parallel to the front edge of the deck, but the side edge does not, and it should, if both the board and the deck are rectangular, as one would expect.

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**lybrary** | 07/29/15 11:52 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

"Estimating for Printers" is available to view free of charge here
[http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/51623703](http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/51623703)

I would be interested to hear your opinion about Gallaway sounding like Erdnase or not.
Here’s a thought regarding the transformation (i.e., color change) usually attributed to Houdini:

Erdnase describes 8 transformations, 6 using two hands and 2 using just one hand. He only credits himself with two of them, the sixth two handed method (“Now we introduce another "homemade" article and consequently unknown up to the present. We think it very pretty.”) and the second one handed transformation (“The following process is another of our innovations...”). Surely if he had (as Peter Zenner seems to want us to believe) invented the one attributed by others to Houdini and then shown it to Houdini, he would not have been shy about claiming it as his own in his own book, even though it had been published shortly before him by Selbit (with credit to Houdini). Whether Houdini invented it or possibly showed it to Erdnase is another question, but I think we can be fairly sure that Erdnase did not invent it, since he did not claim to have done so.

While on this topic of the author's original creations, he does not take any credit or even apparent pride in his description of "The Card and Handkerchief", though Peter Zenner would have us believe he also invented it (that claim apparently based on an earlier published reference to the trick having made the rounds in Chicago). In fact, I cannot find the author claiming any originality in the trick section, other than the formula he gives for determining the locations of cards in a pre-arranged deck ("...we believe the rules here given for determining the card at any number given, and the number of any card called for, are the first ever formulated for a fifty-two card deck.")

Roger M. | 07/30/15 12:30 AM | link | filter

Chris, I see what you mean by hearing Erdnase in the intro, it certainly seems more than just a similar style. Indeed it would be at the least a very similar style.

I see additional similarity in the somewhat frequent use of scare quotes, something Erdnase definitely used often.

It's kind of a silly aside, but I noted how much the illustrations of blank pages look identical to playing cards.

Galloway certainly appears to know his printing business. That he began at 14 becomes apparent. His printing knowledge seems profound (at least to me, who knows very little about printing).

His depth of knowledge as relates to the craft of printing, and the ability to put that printing knowledge into book form does make me wonder still how he would ever have the time to live the backstory, and then write EATCT?
the book, there is a shift towards normal technical writing, although with occasional forays back into a similar writing style as Erdnase demonstrated.

I suspect one would have to look at a cross section of technical books of the day in order to determine if this type of rather sassy and descriptive writing was commonplace enough to render this just a coincidence.

All things said, I don't believe it's enough to promote Gallaway to Erdnase and declare "search over"... however it does (IMO) raise Gallaway higher as a candidate. It still seems that E.S.A., M.F.A., and W.E.S. are candidates with more raw data supporting them, and it would be good to see more evidence supporting Gallaway discovered and brought forward.

Marty Demarest | 07/30/15 12:34 AM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote: However i might suggest that, for an artist knowing nothing about card cheats or the sleights they used in the practice of their craft, the demonstration of a second deal, or a bottom deal ... might indeed be called a "card trick" by somebody completely uninitiated, even though it was a gambling sleight being demonstrated by a card cheat.

You'd think Smith would have learned better, after doing all those drawings.

In all seriousness, though, you are quite right, Roger, and you poke your finger in the softest part of Gardner's notes: There's a lot of ambiguity as to what some of Smith's answers mean. What is the relationship with Dalrymple? Which name is being discussed? What is a trick? etc.

I think it's up to researchers to examine all the possibilities, and not become wedded to one interpretation. Because we honestly don't know what Smith exactly meant about many things.

Richard Hatch wrote: In fact, I cannot find the author claiming any originality in the trick section, other than the formula he gives for determining the locations of cards in a pre-arranged deck (...we believe the rules here given for determining the card at any number given, and the number of any card called for, are the first ever formulated for a fifty-two card deck.)

Erdnase also takes credit for his patter and presentations, especially "The Exclusive Coterie" and "The Divining Rod." He also uses his original system of blind overhand shuffles in "A Mind-Reading Trick." (Though he doesn't point out the system's
Interestingly, those blind overhand shuffles are a technical link between the two sections of the book. It shows Erdnase employing some of his original techniques for card cheating to accomplish a magic effect.

EDITS: Cannot type.

**Richard Hatch** | 07/30/15 12:37 AM | link | filter

For those wanting to take a look at some of the interesting raw "evidence" from the McKinney bankruptcy files without reading through hundreds of pages in search of interesting stuff (it's all interesting to some of us!), here's a link to the page with the one handwritten mention of "E. ? Andrews", with the middle initial appearing to be a B overwritten by a C to my eye. The name is 10th from the bottom and shows that a debit of $3 was contracted by McKinney in Chicago for "Goods sold and delivered" in August 1902:

http://askalexander.org/display/66804/M... resource/9

**Library** | 07/30/15 12:47 AM | link | filter

Roger, a couple of additional items to consider:

- Keep in mind that "Estimating for Printers" was written 25 years after EATCT and is dealing with a completely different subject matter. When one factors this in, the similarity becomes even more striking and surprising.

- The fact that Gallaway founded the school of print estimators and wrote the first thorough and authoritative book on print estimating is quite a parallel to what he did with EATCT. I think this speaks to him exhibiting exceptional abilities. While excellence in one field does not necessarily translate to another field, I think one can say that Gallaway was the type of fellow who one could imagine doing pioneering work in a field outside of the print world. I am right now researching another aspect of his life that looks quite remarkable, too. Can't say much more right now but I think it will further underscore the exceptional person he must have been.

- Regarding your question if he had enough time to acquire the skills, I did some research. In 1880 workers in industry typically worked 10 hours a day for 6 days a week, and only had a handful of holidays. However, consider that Gallaway was not married until 1901. While he certainly had less spare time than we have these days, I think as a bachelor even with a 10 hour workday there is enough time to practice each day to become a master over the course of say 20 years.
Richard Hatch wrote: .....with the middle initial appearing to be a B overwritten by a C to my eye.

I agree. The only other place on the sheet that the little complete circle (located inside the "C") seems to appear is in a capital "B".

Marty Demarest | 07/30/15 12:55 AM | link | filter

Caslon!

Acorns!

Cover Typeface!

Those last two examples are from another printing firm. A firm that used the acorns and that typeface on cover matter. Maybe the binders of the book?

Lybrary | 07/30/15 12:58 AM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote: Galloway certainly appears to know his printing business. That he began at 14 becomes apparent. His printing knowledge seems profound (at least to me, who knows very little about printing).

I fully agree here. Gallaway has a remarkable understanding of every aspect of printing from paper, ink, composition, type and typesetting, bindery, the overall process, ... he even knows all the shipping and mailing options. He exhibits the same thoroughness Erdnase exhibits for card table artifice.

Roger M. | 07/30/15 01:03 AM | link | filter

Chris, there is no getting away from the fact that the similarity of introductions is very compelling.

Your last couple of posts open the door to ponder if perhaps Mr. Erdnase was indeed simply a "remarkable man", one who could master anything he put his mind to.

As I noted in an earlier post, EATCT is a complete system of cheating and deportment, both physical and mental ... hitherto almost completely unseen in terms of its completeness. 
I have long felt that it would take a man of extraordinary ability to create the work demonstrated in EATCT and create that work from scratch.
I notice Gallaway’s signature on p. 4 looks nothing like the handwriting on the Erdnase copyright application.

Whether Houdini invented it or possibly showed it to Erdnase is another question, but I think we can be fairly sure that Erdnase did not invent it, since he did not claim to have done so.

It would seem uncharacteristic of Houdini to have invented it without obsessing over it and attacking Erdnase for neglecting to give him due credit.

Hi All,

One of the fascinating things about a lot of the discussion on this thread is that it appears difficult, if not impossible, to find any two people whose views on the subject are congruent, or even nearly so.

Two people might contend that M.F. Andrews was Erdnase, but then it seems unlikely that both will agree on the facts and the reasoning that they use to reach that conclusion.

I don’t rely a whole lot on Marshall D. Smith’s recollections, but then there are others who apparently believe that Smith’s recollections should be used as a sort of checklist in order to determine a person’s likelihood of being Erdnase.

Be that as it may, if you cannot make a good case for a candidate without mentioning Marshall D. Smith’s recollections, I suspect that you are probably very far away from a convincing case.

I suppose that another area where some people may have different views has to do with the Adelphia-met-Erdnase concept. According to *The Man Who Was Erdnase* (page 152), Hugh Johnston indicated that Erdnase was tall.

It seems that if you mostly accept Smith’s recollections of Erdnase’s physical appearance, you may need to junk what Hugh Johnston said.

At least at the moment, I like Hugh as a witness better than I like Smith as a witness.
I notice Gallaway's signature on p. 4 looks nothing like the handwriting on the Erdnase copyright application.

Per two copyright analysts I have consulted with, you can't really make that statement from a signature alone. Having said that, the simple explanation is that he didn't fill it out. I have a copy of the copyright application of his "Estimating for Printers" from 1927. From that application it is pretty clear he didn't fill it out either, because his signature was written with a different pen - or different pen pressure - than the rest of the form.

I learned that in the copyright office there is a lot of transcribing going on. Applications, cards for the catalog and other entries were copied by clerks at the copyright office.

Also keep in mind that Gallaway was in 1902 already 20 years in the print industry. By then he didn't hold an entry position. You can also see that in the outstanding wage claim for him in the bankruptcy files. He gets more than others. He clearly held a higher position than most employees in the company. Perhaps he was directly under James or Patrick McKinney. Filling out forms and other mundane tasks he probably delegated.

Whether Houdini invented it or possibly showed it to Erdnase is another question, but I think we can be fairly sure that Erdnase did not invent it, since he did not claim to have done so.

It would seem uncharacteristic of Houdini to have invented it without obsessing over it and attacking Erdnase for neglecting to give him due credit.

Exactly. As I have previously noted, Selbit did not say that Houdini invented that move. He wrote, "For the knowledge of the movement I am indebted to my friend Mr. Harry Houdini, the celebrated "king of handcuffs," who is an extremely clever card
Houdini showed Selbit a move that he had learned from somebody else!

The same goes for the shuffle described in the August, 1901, edition of *Mahatma*. Walter G. Peterkin (‘Hal Merton’) claimed that the first two passes were of his own invention but did not say who invented the third. It is quite possible that Harry Thompson showed him the 'pass' before including it in his own book. (‘The Blind Shuffle for Securing Selected Card’)

'Erdnase' wrote "We betray no confidences in publishing this book, having only ourselves to thank for what we know." He wasn't exposing other people's material, only his own. Maybe the fact that his material was being published in 1901 prompted him to put his own book out?

I have been giving some thought to the question "Why did he publish the book under the name 'S.W. Erdnase' and not 'S.W. Erdnace'?" He had obviously been using the name 'E.C. Andrews' in his business dealings with McKinney (and probably Smith), so why not publish the book under that name? Perhaps he was going to and then thought that there might be repercussions as it was somebody else's name. Maybe the change to a reversal of that name was a last minute decision and he told the printer to change it to "S.W. Erdnace" - and the 'Erdnase' spelling was just an error.

Just a thought.

Peter Zenner

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**Zenner | 07/30/15 06:40 AM** | link | filter

*Richard Hatch wrote:* If "E. C. Andrews" only contract with McKinney was in August 1902, then we can rule him out as the author, since the book was printed and available for sale no later than March 8, 1902, when two deposit copies were received at the U.S. Copyright Office. Why the book could not have been mentioned earlier in *The Sphinx* is a mystery to me, since it’s first issue is dated March 15, 1902, at least a week after the book came off the presses in Chicago, the very city where the Sphinx was also published. If the author was an intimate of the publishers of the Sphinx, surely he would have welcomed earlier mention and advertising of the book there. The non-mention of the book for such a long period after it was available for sale is one of many reasons I don't believe the author was an active member of the magic community at the time of the book's publication.

But Richard, the contract between "E.C. Andrews" and McKinney arranged in August,
did) and we can’t know that the book was available for sale in March. A few proof copies would have been run off, as I believe they normally are, before the main run is authorised. A couple of these would have been used for the copyright application and a couple for proofreading, and whatever.

Just because a few proof copies were in use does not mean that the book was on general sale before August, 1902!

Peter Zenner

Roger M. wrote: Chris, there is no getting away from the fact that the similarity of introductions is very compelling.

Your last couple of posts open the door to ponder if perhaps Mr. Erdnase was indeed simply a "remarkable man", one who could master anything he put his mind to.

As I noted in an earlier post, EATCT is a complete system of cheating and deportment, both physical and mental ... hitherto almost completely unseen in terms of its completeness.
I have long felt that it would take a man of extraordinary ability to create the work demonstrated in EATCT and create that work from scratch.

Certainly an interesting concept.

I wouldn’t go so far as to say ‘anything’, but everything we know he was interested in he became an expert in and did pioneering work.

This just in: I located a short article written by Edward Gallaway in 1906. This is much closer to the publishing date of EATCT. Here an excerpt from that article:

"In sickness, in sorrow, in the most doleful days of dejection, or in the most gloomy seasons of the calendar, the reading of a good book is the sweetest solace and the surest refuge . . . A book produces a delightful abstraction from the cares and sorrows of this world. By the magic illusion of a fascinating author we are transported from the couch of anguish, or the gripe of melancholy, to Milton's Paradise or the Elysium of Virgil."
So we have him use "vanish into thin air", "magic illusion", and "subterfuge". Anybody doubt he read lots of magic books?

I also hope that folks will not anymore give me a hard time when I state Gallaway was a book lover and obviously loved to read.

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**Bill Mullins** | 07/30/15 10:02 AM | link | filter

The [1906 article](#) you quote seems to be plagiarized from Joseph Dennie’s *The Lay Preacher*, written about a century before. Or at least, an unattributed quotation.

Given that these words are Dennie’s and not Gallaway's, I don't see how they add to the case that Gallaway wrote like Erdnase.

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**Edward Finck** | 07/30/15 11:57 AM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote*: The [1906 article](#) you quote seems to be plagiarized from Joseph Dennie’s *The Lay Preacher*, written about a century before. Or at least, an unattributed quotation.

Given that these words are Dennie’s and not Gallaway’s, I don't see how they add to the case that Gallaway wrote like Erdnase.

Please notice that the passage (which is not a "short article" but an entry in Lodge minutes) was in quotes and probably Gallaway read this into the minutes from another source and thereby wasn’t a plagiarist. But to those present it seems clear that he wasn’t the author of those words.

Tangentially, there are those that also accuse Erdnase of plagiarism because of very similar passages used in gambling books that were published prior to 1902.

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**Bill Mullins** | 07/30/15 12:11 PM | link | filter

*Edward Finck wrote*: Tangentially, there are those that also accuse Erdnase of plagiarism because of very similar passages used in gambling books that were published prior to 1902.

Can you elaborate? I know of cases where later gambling writers copied from Erdnase, but not where Erdnase copied from previous writers.
Bill Mullins wrote: The 1906 article you quote seems to be plagiarized from Joseph Dennie's *The Lay Preacher*, written about a century before. Or at least, an unattributed quotation.

Given that these words are Dennie's and not Gallaway's, I don't see how they add to the case that Gallaway wrote like Erdnase.

I stand corrected. Didn’t see the quotes. Gallaway is quoting Dennie.

Richard Hatch | 07/30/15 12:55 PM | link | filter

Here's the case for Gallaway as I currently understand it:

The author presumably had a copy of his own book in his own library.
Gallaway had a copy of the book in his library.

The author had contact with McKinney.
Gallaway had contact with McKinney.

The author was capable of writing and publishing a book.
Gallaway was capable of writing and publishing a book.

His last name has a W in it, as recalled by Smith.

Both are at the "scene of the crime".

That's how I seen things at present. So Gallaway is definitely a person of interest!

That doesn't mean he was Erdnase, but one certainly can't rule him out yet. Among a great many other things, what remains to be shown is whether he likely had the technical skills needed by the author of the book, i.e., the knowledge of sleight of hand. If we can determine what other books on gambling and magic he had in his library, that would be a great step forward, I think...

In that regard, Milton Franklin Andrews is the only one we have who is known to have had the requisite knowledge. Alas, he requires that we discount Smith's recollection almost entirely, plus the lack of writing skill implied by his confession letters makes bringing in an "editor" (Gallaway?) necessary.

Edward Finck | 07/30/15 01:35 PM | link | filter

Here is the previously promised scan of that old photo from 20 odd years ago. Show's
I tried to upload it directly but it gave me an error stating that the "board attachment quota has been reached." I'm too old to understand what that means.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B34k6S ... sp=sharing

Lybrary | 07/30/15 01:46 PM | link | filter

I wonder if that folder still exists. Might tell us what he asked Gallaway's daughter-in-law.

Edward Finck | 07/30/15 02:37 PM | link | filter

Lybrary wrote: I wonder if that folder still exists. Might tell us what he asked Gallaway's daughter-in-law.

A lot of Jay's things got lost over time. He showed me files at about this same time (on another subject) that were never found again by anyone! I stupidly did not take pictures of the other file and now it's gone.

His collection wasn't perfectly organized.

Tom Sawyer | 07/30/15 03:52 PM | link | filter

Well, at the very least, that seems to confirm (in my mind, at least), that Jay believed that Edward Galloway was involved in the book in some important way.

However, in view of the fact that Jay at some time believed that Gallaway bound the book, that by itself does not go further than that (again, in my mind). After all, Jay knew that Marshall D. Smith was not the author, but he included Smith in the notes.

--Tom

Edward Finck | 07/30/15 04:13 PM | link | filter

Tom Sawyer wrote: Well, at the very least, that seems to confirm (in my mind, at least), that Jay believed that Edward Galloway was involved in the book in some important way.

However, in view of the fact that Jay at some time believed that Gallaway bound the book, that by itself does not go further than that (again, in my mind). After all, Jay knew that Marshall D. Smith was not the author, but
--Tom

My interpretation of it is that it was Jay's way of puzzling out why Erdnase used E. and S. when Jay's (new) candidate was initialed M. F.

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**magicam** | 07/30/15 06:19 PM | link | filter

*Zenner wrote:*

> **Richard Hatch wrote:** If "E. C. Andrews" only contract with McKinney was in August 1902, then we can rule him out as the author, since the book was printed and available for sale no later than March 8, 1902, when two deposit copies were received at the U.S. Copyright Office. …

But Richard, the contract between "E.C. Andrews" and McKinney arranged in August, 1902, was for "Goods sold and delivered". We don't know what happened between March and August. We can only assume that McKinney printed the book (he probably did) and we can't know that the book was available for sale in March. A few proof copies would have been run off, as I believe they normally are, before the main run is authorised. A couple of these would have been used for the copyright application and a couple for proofreading, and whatever. Just because a few proof copies were in use does not mean that the book was on general sale before August, 1902! …

Peter, I can't speak to the timing of the public sale of Erdnase's book, but if the LOC received two copies in March 1902 bound in the same manner as other 1st edition copies, then it's likely that all copies (or at least a good portion of the print run) were bound at the same time. Generally speaking, if done, final text proofing was at the galley stage (if there was one) or in the course of press make-ready. Though there are certainly well-known exceptions of trial bindings, typically copies were not “finally” bound for proofing purposes. Without more, “goods sold and delivered” sounds like a supplier of sorts; in any case, IMO it seems to clearly indicate that E. C[B]. Andrews sold something to McKinney for which the latter owed the former some money. If McKinney owed Andrews this money for sales of TEATCT, then “goods sold and delivered” seems an awkward way of describing this debt. Perhaps it will be found that Andrews was in the printing business, selling the kinds of things that McKinney would use.

Some years back I floated the idea that the deep price cut in TEATCT was related to McKinney's BK, as the timing of these events seemed compelling. But if a stock of TEATCT was not listed as a McKinney asset, such theory seems considerably (and
Bill Mullins wrote:

Edward Finck wrote: Tangentially, there are those that also accuse Erdnase of plagiarism because of very similar passages used in gambling books that were published prior to 1902.

Can you elaborate? I know of cases where later gambling writers copied from Erdnase, but not where Erdnase copied from previous writers.

Bill, FWIW I have also been told the same thing (from a source I’d consider very reliable on this topic), and was given the name of one of the pre-1902 books as an example. But as this information was provided during private discussion, I don’t think it’s mine to publicize.

lybrary | 07/30/15 07:18 PM | link | filter

magicam wrote: Without more, “goods sold and delivered” sounds like a supplier of sorts; in any case, IMO it seems to clearly indicate that E. C[B]. Andrews sold something to McKinney for which the latter owed the former some money. If McKinney owed Andrews this money for sales of TEATCT, then “goods sold and delivered” seems an awkward way of describing this debt. Perhaps it will be found that Andrews was in the printing business, selling the kinds of things that McKinney would use.

That is exactly the way I read that portion of the bankruptcy files. Andrews is a supplier of some sort of one of the many things a printer needs to run his business, not an owner of a book that gets paid for sales of the book.

Bill Mullins | 07/30/15 09:00 PM | link | filter

Earlier, Peter Zenner had said that E. C. Andrews had graduated from college in 1901, and worked for Ruxton Ink along Thompson. Ruxton shows up as a creditor on the very next page.

Why would E. C. Andrews, presumably a fairly junior employee, being so young, be listed separately as a creditor from his employer? Is this the same E. C. Andrews?

Richard Hatch | 07/30/15 09:07 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: Earlier, Peter Zenner had said that E. C. Andrews had graduated from college in 1901, and worked for Ruxton Ink along Thompson. Ruxton shows up as a creditor on the very next page.
young, be listed separately as a creditor from his employer? Is this the same E. C. Andrews?

I believe that Peter Zenner's claim is that this is Harry Thompson, dealing with McKinney using E. C. Andrews as his alias. Seems like a stretch to me... Wasn't Frank Thompson's name supposed to show up in the file somewhere?

Richard Kaufman | 07/30/15 10:16 PM | link | filter

I believe the books that need to be thoroughly vetted for possible plagiarism are Sacks' Sleight of Hand, New Era Card Magic, Modern Magic and sequels prior to 1902. There's another book that slips my mind at the moment.

Bill Mullins | 07/30/15 10:24 PM | link | filter

Ortiz, Busby/Whaley, Jason England, and others have identified tricks and sleights in Erdnase that were previously published by Sachs, Hoffmann, Roterberg, etc. But I'm not familiar with any claims that Erdnase plagiarized them.

Richard Hatch | 07/30/15 11:39 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: Ortiz, Busby/Whaley, Jason England, and others have identified tricks and sleights in Erdnase that were previously published by Sachs, Hoffmann, Roterberg, etc. But I'm not familiar with any claims that Erdnase plagiarized them.


Whaley backs off from this claim in his 2008 essay on the topic of Erdnase, Loose Ends and Dead Ends, published by Geno Munari. Apparently both books use the term "hypocritical cant" but that expression is hardly grounds for an accusation of plagiarism, as Whaley notes.

Tom Sawyer | 07/31/15 12:23 AM | link | filter

A phrase which was discussed on another thread (but with several people from this thread taking part) is "unflinching audacity." The phrase was used by Professor Hoffmann in More Magic. As Jonathan Townsend pointed out, the phrase had been used in a number of places pre-1902.
Zenner wrote:
The same goes for the shuffle described in the August, 1901, edition of *Mahatma*. Walter G. Peterkin ('Hal Merton') claimed that the first two passes were of his own invention but did not say who invented the third. It is quite possible that Harry Thompson showed him the 'pass' before including it in his own book. ('The Blind Shuffle for Securing Selected Card')

Are you suggesting that Merton's third pass is the same as Erdnase's "Blind Shuffle for Securing Selected Card"? Because they aren't. Merton, after a single round of overhand shuffling, leaves the card on top. Erdnase uses a shuffle to a jog, then another shuffle, and leaves the card on the bottom of the pack so it may be bottom palmed.

And the idea that, since Merton didn't claim it, it could be Harry's, doesn't have much to support it.

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**Bob Coyne** | 07/31/15 08:33 AM | link | filter

*lybrary* wrote: "Estimating for Printers" is available to view free of charge here [http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/51623703](http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/51623703)

I would be interested to hear your opinion about Gallaway sounding like Erdnase or not.

Thanks for making this available!

One small (probably inconsequential) thing I noticed when reading a few pages of Gallaway is the use of the term "stock" as in the card/paper stock used in printing. It occurred to me that Erdnase uses the term "stock" extensively in a related but somewhat different context, for a group of playing cards ("to retain the top stock" in false shuffles). It would be interesting to know if the term "stock" was commonly used in other books on card technique or if that's original with Erdnase.

If original with him, then the choice of that term is a small piece of evidence on the side of Erdnase being familiar with printing (which Gallaway obviously was). This would counterbalance the "divining rod" trick with its mining associations that point in a similar manner to WE Sanders.

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**lybrary** | 07/31/15 08:51 AM | link | filter

Bob, I did a quick check. The term stock as in 'top stock' or 'bottom stock' does not appear in Roterberg's "New Era Card Tricks", but it does appear in "How Gamblers
Bob Coyne wrote:
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Here is Bart Whaley says in Encyclopedic Dictionary of Magic about the term "stock":

"Originally the cant of British card players by 1584 (Scot, as also the earliest citation in the OED/2; 1612 Rid; 1674 Cotton; 1721 Neve; 1763 Dean). Later that of American card players by (1857 Green; 1891 Quinn). Among these card players (the honest sort) the word had the quite benign meaning of the cards remaining in the undealt portion of the deck, that is, what today would also be called the talon. Thence adapted by American card sharps in its above nefarious sense by 1865 (Evans, 20, as "top stock"; 1894 J.N. Maskelyne; 1902 Erdnase; 1912 Quinn; and 1944 MacDougall)."

magicam wrote:  Peter, I can’t speak to the timing of the public sale of Erdnase’s book, but if the LOC received two copies in March 1902 bound in the same manner as other 1st edition copies, then it’s likely that all copies (or at least a good portion of the print run) were bound at the same time. Generally speaking, if done, final text proofing was at the galley stage (if there was one) or in the course of press make-ready. Though there are certainly well-known exceptions of trial bindings, typically copies were not “finally” bound for proofing purposes.

Where does it say anywhere that the books sent for the copyright application were bound?

Without more, “goods sold and delivered” sounds like a supplier of sorts; in any case, IMO it seems to clearly indicate that E. C[B]. Andrews sold something to McKinney for which the latter owed the former some money. If McKinney owed Andrews this money for sales of TEATCT, then “goods sold and delivered” seems an awkward way of describing this debt. Perhaps it will be found that Andrews was in the printing business, selling the kinds of things that McKinney would use.
from McKinney? McKinney would then owe Andrews his percentage as per their contract agreed in August, 1902.

Some years back I floated the idea that the deep price cut in TEATCT was related to McKinney’s BK, as the timing of these events seemed compelling. But if a stock of TEATCT was not listed as a McKinney asset, such theory seems considerably (and perhaps fatally) weakened.

If you look on page 340 of the Bankruptcy Files, you will see that Drake had due to him “2000 printed covers, 7½" x 10" - S 3 colors” Were these for a Drake edition of The Expert? His 1905 edition was green with red and black printing; I make that 3 colours. Perhaps the price cut was to unload some of those 2000 books when they had been printed?

Peter Zenner

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**Zenner | 07/31/15 09:49 AM | link | filter**

Bill Mullins wrote: Are you suggesting that Merton’s third pass is the same as Erdnase’s "Blind Shuffle for Securing Selected Card"? Because they aren’t. Merton, after a single round of overhand shuffling, leaves the card on top. Erdnase uses a shuffle to a jog, then another shuffle, and leaves the card on the bottom of the pack so it may be bottom palmed.

And the idea that, since Merton didn’t claim it, it could be Harry’s, doesn’t have much to support it.

Hello again Bill. I got the following from the March, 1995, *Linking Ring* --

Dick Williams (author of Lights! Cameras! Magic!) wrote an article for this journal called "A Magic Whodunit" (Dec. '92) describing his research on a "Shuffle Pass" or "Mahatma Pass." Dick had concluded that the pass substitute belonged to either David Devant or Victor Farelli. Steve Burton wrote to say that "The shuffle control you refer to was first published in *The Expert at the Card Table* by S.W. Erdnase in 1902 (Feb. '93 issue).

Several weeks ago, Mr. Williams was reading the two-volume reprint of *The Mahatma* magic magazine and let out a shout. He writes: "In the August, 1901 edition of *Mahatma* (on new pagination, page 495) I found 'Three New Passes' written by Hal Merton (stage name of Walter G. Peterkin, pro stage magician who edited *Mahatma* 1900-1901. He left magic to become a
This beats Erdnase by a year. Mr. Peterkin states that the three passes "have never before appeared in print."

Thanks for writing, Dick. This control was the favorite of Matt Schlien [sic!] and is still the main one used by his son, Chuck.

You sort it out.

Peter Zenner

Richard Hatch | 07/31/15 10:32 AM | link | filter

Zenner wrote:

magicam wrote: Peter, I can’t speak to the timing of the public sale of Erdnase’s book, but if the LOC received two copies in March 1902 bound in the same manner as other 1st edition copies, then it’s likely that all copies (or at least a good portion of the print run) were bound at the same time. Generally speaking, if done, final text proofing was at the galley stage (if there was one) or in the course of press make-ready. Though there are certainly well-known exceptions of trial bindings, typically copies were not “finally” bound for proofing purposes.

Where does it say anywhere that the books sent for the copyright application were bound?

Having examined the surviving deposit copy at the Library of Congress, I can attest to the fact that the binding is indistinguishable from the other first edition copies I have examined (green cloth with gilt letters).

Bill Mullins | 07/31/15 11:25 AM | link | filter

Zenner wrote: Hello again Bill. I got the following from the March, 1995, Linking Ring --

[lots of stuff]

You sort it out.

Peter Zenner
I am looking for some feedback on the following quantitative contemplation: how likely is it to find somebody with a first edition of EATCT who was a male adult in 1901?

The population of the US in 1901 was about 80 million. That means about 40 million males. Removing children and seniors I get 20 million.

How many first editions were printed? Electroplates typically hold up to print runs of 30,000. That is our upper limit. Richard Hatch tracked more than 100 first editions. That is our lower limit. From the bankruptcy files I see McKinney printing 6000 copies of a book on photography for Drake. From this I get that McKinney probably didn’t print more than 10,000 EATCT.

If we now assume that all these 10,000 were actually sold, which is highly unlikely, we would get 10k/20000k = 1/2000. Meaning the chance to find somebody with a first edition of EATCT would be less than 1/2000 if I look at adult males.

Do you agree?

^^^ Chris, electros were appreciably more expensive to create than stereos, so if plates were created for the first edition, I’d suspect that the latter were used. As an aside, both electro and stereo plates are quite durable (the former comparatively more durable), and if they were used, handled, cleaned and stored with care, they’d show little to no wear even after 30,000 impressions. It was the rough handling, etc., that limited their lives.

I think the max estimate of 10,000 copies for the first edition print run is way too much. My guess would be an absolute max of 2,000 copies, but probably more like 1,000 or perhaps even only 500. I doubt the market back then could have absorbed a ton of copies (especially in light of the apparent paucity of widespread advertising for TEATCT prior to Drake's reprint). Had anywhere near 10,000 copies been printed, it seems highly unlikely that Drake would have issued a reprint only 3 years later.

Clay, I agree with you. The likelihood is probably closer to 1/10000, but I am trying to establish a safe upper bound. I will later use these safe upper bounds to estimate how
The numbers you are asking about would be relevant for the question "What are the odds a randomly selected adult male in 1902 would own a copy of Erdnase?"

But Gallaway isn't random -- the only reason we care about him at all is that he owned a copy. The odds are 1/1 that he owned one.

^^^ Bill, I get the gist, but I'm not sure statisticians would agree with your odds analysis. But following on your oddsmaking question, I'd rephrase it thus:

What are the odds that an adult male who (i) apparently had an interest in gambling books, (ii) worked for the printer who printed a gambling book at the time such book was printed, and (iii) possibly worked directly on the production of such book, would come to own such a book?

Bill, the question I am asking is how likely is it to find somebody that looks like Erdnase, given the specific set of evidence we have for any candidate, but isn't. This will tell you how sure we can be about a particular candidate.

Edward Finck wrote:

lybrary wrote: From the bankruptcy files it is pretty clear that James McKinney did not have an in-house bindery and outsourced such work. This was the norm back then for print shops. Typesetting and printing go together well, but binding is a different beast and was usually handled by separate companies who specialized in it.

Actually McKinney was both a printer and a book-binder and when he dissolved into bankruptcy he immediately reformed in 1903 as McKinney and Gallaway (with McKinney's son Patrick onboard too) and they too were book-binders. It's likely that some assets where surreptitiously moved from McKinney and Co. and put in McKinney and Gallaway but there doesn't seem to be solid evidence of that.
manufacturers delivered the equipment but held liens on it until it was fully paid for). But the equipment was in the possession of the Chicago Book Binding Company at the time of the bankruptcy, not McKinney and Gallaway. McKinney owned ~$22000 in stock in Chicago Book Binding Company. So this looks very much like the surreptitious movement of equipment alluded to above.

Jonathan Townsend | 07/31/15 03:13 PM | link | filter

magicam wrote: ^^^ Bill, I get the gist, but I’m not sure statisticians would agree with your odds analysis. But following on your oddsmaking question, I’d rephrase it thus:
... would come to own such a book?

Hey the guys down the block had these remaindered - free with a pack of marked cards - want one? They don’t have autographed copies but it’s a fun read.

Bill Mullins | 07/31/15 03:28 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: Bill, the question I am asking is how likely is it to find somebody that looks like Erdnase, given the specific set of evidence we have for any candidate, but isn’t.

I think I understand what you are trying to do. I just don’t think it is useful, because you are applying the analysis to someone who already fulfills the criteria.

Gallaway is interesting because he is at the intersection of two sets: Employees of McKinney, and Owners of 1st edition copies. I think you are saying it is likely he is Erdnase because it is so unlikely that a person would be in both of those sets. But we don’t know how unlikely it is.

We know who (some of) other employees of McKinney are from the bankruptcy files, but we don’t know if any of them had copies of the book. But my guess is that it is far more likely that an employee of the company would have owned one, than any random adult male elsewhere in the U.S.

We don’t have any thing like a list of original owners of 1st edition copies of the book, so we can’t correlate in the other direction back to "which of them were tied to McKinney?" If there were 1000 1st edition copies, how many of them were owned by McKinney employees?

If the sets <employees of McKinney> and <owners of 1st edition copies> were completely uncorrelated with each other, then figuring out the odds as you are trying
of correlation, so any output of the analysis has a huge error bar that cannot be estimated.

I think Bayesian Analysis is the mathematical tool that is used to figure out these problems. Now if only there were an expert statistician who was interested in Erdnase . . .

**Library** | 07/31/15 03:42 PM | link | filter

Bill, I suggest you wait for my analysis. Arguing about what you think I may do and critique me on that is silly.

**Edward Finck** | 07/31/15 03:45 PM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:* If there were 1000 1st edition copies, how many of them were owned by McKinney employees?

Most employees of a printing firm who might want a copy from a job would probably get an overrun copy and not part of the 1000 ordered by the customer. This sort of thing happens all the time.

Does anyone know if the Gallaway/ Marshall copy has any annotations or notes of any kind, like what might possibly be found in the Author's personal copy?

**Bill Mullins** | 07/31/15 03:49 PM | link | filter

*magicam wrote:* I think the max estimate of 10,000 copies for the first edition print run is way too much. My guess would be an absolute max of 2,000 copies, but probably more like 1,000 or perhaps even only 500. I doubt the market back then could have absorbed a ton of copies (especially in light of the apparent paucity of widespread advertising for TEATCT prior to Drake’s reprint).

But as these things go, it seems to be fairly common. Copies come up for sale all the time. Richard Hatch has said he knows of 100 or so copies extant.

Compare this to Ritter's Combined Treatise on Draw Poker. When I was working on Ritter’s biography, I tried to do a census on how many copies are around. I could identify fewer than 10. Yet the book was much more heavily advertised upon publication than was Erdnase.
Bill, I suggest you wait for my analysis. Arguing about what you think I may do and critique me on that is silly.

Fair enough

Chris, you seem to be calculating odds based on someone having *The Expert* at the time of its publication.

How do you know that the Gallaway copy was owned by him in 1902? Do you know that he didn’t purchase it while browsing a used bookstore in 1918? During what time span did Gallaway use that bookplate?

I've examined the Gallaway copy at the CARC, and I didn't notice any inscription of a date or any indication of its provenance other than the bookplate.

EDIT: Just as a counter-example, Del Adelphia's first edition of *The Expert*, in Mike Caveney's Egyptian Hall Museum, has the name "Adelphia" written inside in the handwriting that Adelphia used until ca. 1904 (possibly around when he changed the spelling of his first name and withdrew somewhat from magic). So it's extremely likely that Del Adelphia acquired his copy of *The Expert* shortly after its publication.

Bill Mullins wrote:

I think the max estimate of 10,000 copies for the first edition print run is way too much. My guess would be an absolute max of 2,000 copies, but probably more like 1,000 or perhaps even only 500. I doubt the market back then could have absorbed a ton of copies (especially in light of the apparent paucity of widespread advertising for TEATCT prior to Drake's reprint).

But as these things go, it seems to be fairly common. Copies come up for sale all the time. Richard Hatch has said he knows of 100 or so copies extant. ...

Which would suggest an 80% mortality/attrition for a print run of 500, and 90% for a print run of 1,000. My guess could be dead wrong, but consider one of Peter Zenner's posts wherein he notes that the McKinney BK docs state that Drake -- a much larger publisher than Erdnase -- was owed 2,000 tri-color covers. I guess one could argue that this quantity was only a part of a more substantial run, but I tend to doubt it.
making large sales), why think that Erdnase would print more than that? In any case, if Erdnase paid for the printing and binding of upwards of 10,000 copies, then he probably didn't need the money as he claims.

Marty Demarest wrote: Also from Gardner's notes of his initial interview with M.D. Smith:

"He [Erdnase] had a small board, like a chessboard, with green baize on it, and Smith thinks he remembers a small ridge about half-inch high around edges. Placed it on table. Did the card tricks on it, and used it as base for posing the pictures. Board about 2 feet square."

Q: What do you call a self-professed card cheating expert who demonstrates his skill by whipping out a close-up mat and performing card tricks?

A: A magician.

Marty, if Smith’s recollections of the ridge at the board’s perimeter are accurate, then that’s no magician’s close-up mat – at least I’ve never seen or heard of one with ridges. On the other hand (and trying to make sense of Smith’s recollection), perhaps a ridged mat would be handy for card games where a strong jostle might spill the card deck on the floor – like in a train. Hard to know if the reference to “2 feet square” means a board measuring 2 feet by 2 feet, or one with 2 sq. feet of playing area (about 17 inches by 17 inches). I wonder if the mats described by Smith were sold in either legitimate stores (for recreational card players who travelled) or gambling houses.

Random thoughts …

Peter Zenner mentions that the McKinney BK docs show McKinney owing some printing work to Drake. Perhaps it’s been noted before, but this existing business relationship may explain how Drake came to reprint TEATCT – McKinney introduced Erdnase to Drake – and thus may add credence to Drake’s purported statement that Erdnase’s real surname was Andrews.

Chris Wasshuber wrote: Erdnase uses noun phrases which are extremely common in German. As a native German speaker I would go so far as to say that these noun phrases and compound nouns are quintessential German. ... I am therefore convinced that the author’s first language was German.

This quote came from your website’s discussion of Roterberg’s possible connection to
answer is “because he was a part-time cheat and didn’t want to expose himself,” is that realistic given that he lived (apparently) full-time in Chicago (census check anyone?)? If so, over time wouldn’t he become known in Chicago as a cheat and run out of marks?

Zenner wrote:

magicam wrote: … I can’t speak to the timing of the public sale of Erdnase’s book, but if the LOC received two copies in March 1902 bound in the same manner as other 1st edition copies, then … [emphasis added for this quote]

Where does it say anywhere that the books sent for the copyright application were bound?

Peter, it always helps to read for understanding, but the fact that LOC’s copy of the first edition looks like all other copies is (I think) fairly common knowledge, even for people on the Erdnase periphery like me. I’m reasonably sure it’s been discussed in the core Erdnase literature (and very likely mentioned more than a few times in this -- admittedly very long! -- thread), and perhaps naively would expect a vociferous proponent of a particular author identity to know such basics.

Zenner wrote: If you look on page 340 of the Bankruptcy Files, you will see that Drake had due to him “2000 printed covers, 7½” x 10” - S 3 colors” Were these for a Drake edition of The Expert? His 1905 edition was green with red and black printing; I make that 3 colours. Perhaps the price cut was to unload some of those 2000 books when they had been printed?

Trying to “read for understanding” here … You seem to be suggesting the possibility that in late 1902/early 1903, Drake (1) somehow obtained the rights to TEATCT (or pirated it?), (2) decided to reprint TEATCT in the form of 2,000 paperbacks, (3) decided to erroneously date the title page 1905 (or provide no date at all), and (4) slashed the price for those 2,000 copies in order to “unload” some of them – all during a period of time when there were (apparently) a comparatively large quantity of 1st editions remaining for sale (through McKinney or other outlets). I’d guess that such a possibility is remote …

Jeff Pierce Magic | 07/31/15 04:30 PM | link | filter

Not to change the subject but back to the title page for a moment. There’s a technique in journalism called the inverted pyramid. Basically its a style of writing the most
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inverted_pyramid

It’s not meant to be taken literally as writing in an inverted pyramid but as I look at the title page, the pyramid does seem to follow the technique of top down journalism.

Could the author of EATCT have been at least familiar with journalism techniques?

Jeff Pierce

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Marty Demarest | 07/31/15 04:43 PM | link | filter

magicam wrote: Marty, if Smith’s recollections of the ridge at the board’s perimeter are accurate, then that’s no magician’s close-up mat – at least I’ve never seen or heard of one with ridges. On the other hand (and trying to make sense of Smith’s recollection), perhaps a ridged mat would be handy for card games where a strong jostle might spill the card deck on the floor – like in a train. Hard to know if the reference to “2 feet square” means a board measuring 2 feet by 2 feet, or one with 2 sq. feet of playing area (about 17 inches by 17 inches). I wonder if the mats described by Smith were sold in either legitimate stores (for recreational card players who travelled) or gambling houses.

I don’t know much about the history of close up mats, but I’m enough of a mountain boy to know that ridges go both up and down, which doesn’t help us sort out Gardner’s note.

Fortunately, Smith’s drawings are clearer. Figures 5 and 6 depict the same move from two angles. Fig. 5 depicts the move as seen by a spectator, and shows the ridge closest to the performer to be flat, with nothing extending above the board’s surface. (An inch-and-a-half ridge extending upward would make the board look like a tray.) But Fig. 6, the reverse angle from the performer’s perspective, shows a ridged contour along the board’s edge. So it appears to me as though the ridged edge extended down from the surface, not up from it.

A raised ridge would also hinder Erdnase’s preferred palm-replacement, which requires sliding the deck off the edge of the table. (A move he says requires as much practice as the palm itself, so having a conducive practice surface would make sense.)

Interestingly, the corner of the mat is depicted in Fig. 16. It’s rounded, which implies some above-average attention to the woodworking.
Busby/Whaley speculated that the table might have been a "train table", held on the knees of opposing players on a train. Tabman made some of these based on his interpretation of the Gardner/Smith notes. I couldn’t find an illustration of one in the 1909/1910 H. C. Evans Catalog, but on page 47 they do advertise

Best Shuffling Boards thin covered with Best Billiard Cloth.... $2.00

Wonder if that is what it was, a "shuffling board"? Here’s a link to that page: http://rwatts.cdyn.com/download/Evans%2 ... log/47.pdf

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Marty Demarest wrote: Chris, you seem to be calculating odds based on someone having The Expert at the time of its publication.

No, that is not what I am calculating. I only limit the age of the person to own the first edition, not when he may have acquired it, because as you rightly note, we don’t know when Gallaway has acquired his. (I mean I know, because I know he is Erdnase, but others might not know that)

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magicam wrote:

Chris Wasshuber wrote: Erdnase uses noun phrases which are extremely common in German. As a native German speaker I would go so far as to say that these noun phrases and compound nouns are quintessential German. … I am therefore convinced that the author’s first language was German.

This quote came from your website’s discussion of Roterberg’s possible connection to TEATCT. Was Gallaway’s native language German?

I have dropped my German immigrant theory a while ago since the linguist report identified that there is no German or any other foreign trace to be found.

Gallaway's native language was English. His mother was Irish, his father traces back to Scotland. But growing up in Delphos, OH, he was exposed to German culture and language. His younger sister married a son of German immigrants. The mother of the wife of his older brother was German. And his own wife Rose had parents that came
Richard Hatch wrote: Busby/Whaley speculated that the table might have been a "train table", held on the knees of opposing players on a train. Tabman made some of these based on his interpretation of the Gardner/Smith notes. I couldn't find an illustration of one in the 1909/1910 H. C. Evans Catalog, but on page 47 they do advertise

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Maskelyne's *Sharps and Flats* (1894) reproduces an anonymous catalog page (probably from Will & Finck) describing "SHUFFLING BOARDS, very thin iron, broadcloth cover . . . $3.00"

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Edward Finck | 07/31/15 06:54 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote:

Richard Hatch wrote: Busby/Whaley speculated that the table might have been a "train table", held on the knees of opposing players on a train. Tabman made some of these based on his interpretation of the Gardner/Smith notes. I couldn't find an illustration of one in the 1909/1910 H. C. Evans Catalog, but on page 47 they do advertise

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Maskelyne's *Sharps and Flats* (1894) reproduces an anonymous catalog page (probably from Will & Finck) describing "SHUFFLING BOARDS, very thin iron, broadcloth cover . . . $3.00"

A shuffling board was used in Faro and could sometimes be gaffed to add cards. I believe they were usually rectangular and not square like what Erdnase had. They also wouldn't have had a ridge on them.
Bob Coyne wrote: One small (probably inconsequential) thing I noticed when reading a few pages of Gallaway is the use of the term "stock" as in the card/paper stock used in printing. It occurred to me that Erdnase uses the term "stock" extensively in a related but somewhat different context, for a group of playing cards ("to retain the top stock" in false shuffles). It would be interesting to know if the term "stock" was commonly used in other books on card technique or if that's original with Erdnase.

If original with him, then the choice of that term is a small piece of evidence on the side of Erdnase being familiar with printing (which Gallaway obviously was). This would counterbalance the "divining rod" trick with its mining associations that point in a similar manner to WE Sanders.

That's a great point! Speaking of literary fingerprints, Erdnase has a lot of sophisticated fun with language:

S.W. Erdnase wrote: "The right hand holds the wrong card..." p. 151.

"Several cards are removed entirely from the pack, but retained in the memory..." p. 116.

"The dealer can gather up the cards with a great deal of judgment..." p. 82

"The Longitudinal Shift.--This shift, for which we have to thank no one, is given a very long name, but the reader who is interested sufficiently to practice the process, will find it a very short shift..." p. 130

"In the average game where the players keep their hands, and arms also, on the table..." p. 111

"...space of time..." p. 144

"...a few repetitions of the same formula enables one to stock and talk at the same time." p. 74

I'm not aware of any other examples of Erdnase playing with the word "stock," however. (Though he mentions the "stock exchange," it is not in conjunction with a packet switch.) If Gallaway wrote The Expert at the Card Table, he missed an obvious pun
mam | 07/31/15 07:36 PM | link | filter

I now have a PDF of *How to price job printing properly* by Edward Gallaway (1929) that is mentioned earlier in this thread. I have yet to find anything about it that sticks out, but here are the first few pages:

https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... ice-01.jpg
https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... ice-02.jpg
https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... ice-03.jpg

I've also just started doing some algorithmic work to compare textual features of Gallaway, Roterberg, Sachs, Hoffmann etc. but have yet to come up with anything useful or out of the ordinary. N-grams in the range 3 to 20 words (excluding stop words, punctuation, etc.) on *The Expert at the Card Table* on one hand, and *New Era Card Tricks* or *How Gamblers Win* on the other hand, does not show any phrases of those word lengths that are identical, except a bunch of very generic ones.

These are just some initial steps though, I think more robust comparison algorithms might prove more useful or interesting. (For example, there is one called SpotSigs that specifically tries to identify near-duplicate content.)

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Roger M. | 07/31/15 07:57 PM | link | filter

*lybrary wrote:*

Gallaway’s native language was English. ..........But growing up in Delphos, OH.................

A small bit of trivia unrelated to the search.

In the field of amateur astronomy, there is a book so beloved that, when it was out of print it traded for hundreds of dollars (if you could find a copy).

The author was Leslie Peltier, from *Delphos, Ohio* - and his story was one of life on the Ohio farm, with his small, private observatory in his back yard, in the time before electricity (which didn't arrive in some parts of Ohio farm country until the 30's)
The book is called "Starlight Nights - The Adventure of a Star Gazer". It's one of the finest books I've ever read.
Peltier was an amateur astronomer who made deep space discoveries from his back yard that rival the work of professional astronomers.
Peltier is today considered to be the greatest amateur astronomer of all time.

http://www.amazon.ca/Starlight-Nights-T ... 0933346948
touchstone to a simpler time in America.

Interesting that Chris is proposing another author from Delphos, Ohio, and another beloved book in its field, in this case cheating at playing cards.

Roger, that is fascinating. Probably it’s the water they drank

As I have already earlier eluded to "Estimating for Printers" looks like it is equally ground breaking in print estimating as EATCT was for card artifice. I am still actively researching this aspect of the book.

Edward Finck wrote: A shuffling board was used in Faro and could sometimes be gaffed to add cards. I believe they were usually rectangular and not square like what Erdnase had. They also wouldn’t have had a ridge

If this were "two feet square" and had only billiard cloth with no layout painted, with the walnut rims, it sounds like what Smith described and is consistent with the pictures in the book.
bookplate?

For that matter, how do we know that the Gallaway that owned the book that showed up in the 1950s was the same Gallaway that worked for McKinney ca. 1902? It’s certainly possible, even likely, but the 1940 Chicago Census shows multiple people named Edward Gallaway/Galloway.

Marty Demarest wrote: How do you know that the Gallaway copy was owned by him in 1902? Do you know that he didn’t purchase it while browsing a used bookstore in 1918? During what time span did Gallaway use that bookplate?

For that matter, how do we know that the Gallaway that owned the book that showed up in the 1950s was the same Gallaway that worked for McKinney ca. 1902? It’s certainly possible, even likely, but the 1940 Chicago Census shows multiple people named Edward Gallaway/Galloway.

The bookplate matches a number of things we know about Gallaway. First the correct spelling of his name is with an ’a’ Gallaway, not Galloway, even though in some places his name is spelled with an ’o’. He himself always spells it with an ’a’. We know that he initiated a library committee at the Excelsior OddFellow Lodge in 1906, consistent with his job in the print industry as well as using bookplates. There is only one Edward Gallaway/Galloway in that lodge and from his obituary we know it is the one who worked for McKinney. Also the fact that Jay Marshall was in contact with the Gallaway family would support that it was him who put that bookplate in and not somebody else.

Which other Edward Gallaways are you referring to? I guess you mean one born 1914, Edward Gallaway, identified as African American. Any others?

lybrary wrote: The bookplate matches a number of things we know about Gallaway. First the correct spelling of his name is with an ’a’ Gallaway, not Galloway, even though in some places his name is spelled with an ’o’. He himself always spells it with an ’a’.

This only proves how the Gallaway of the bookplate spelled his name.
We know that he initiated a library committee at the Excelsior OddFellow Lodge in 1906, consistent with his job in the print industry as well as using bookplates. There is only one Edward Gallaway/Galloway in that lodge and from his obituary we know it is the one who worked for McKinney.

Proves only what is confirmed in the obit - that McKinney's Gallaway was an Odd Fellow.

Also the fact that Jay Marshall was in contact with the Gallaway family would support that it was him who put that bookplate in and not somebody else.

Marshall found a book with a bookplate bearing the name of Edward Gallaway. From the notes in TMWWE, he found descendants/family of *a* Edward Gallaway, who worked for McKinney. Perhaps they confirmed that their family member collected gambling books, but it only looks like they confirmed that their family member worked at McKinney. If they made that link, it is not clear from what was reported in the book.

Like I said before, I tend to think it was the same guy. I'm just curious if there is information I'm not aware that confirms it.

Which other Edward Gallaways are you referring to? I guess you mean one born 1914, Edward Gallaway, identified as African American. Any others?

I am _not_ presuming that the Census spelled things correctly -- I've seen too many errors that they have made to believe they are 100% accurate (your own genealogy of Peter Edward shows the census misspelled his last name in 1870 as "Fallonay" and his first name in 1880 as "Etta").

So, the 1940 Census has
Edward M Galloway b 1867
Edward W Galloway b 1882
Edward R Galloway b 1900
Edward Galloway b 1912
Edward L Galloway b 1914
Edward Gallaway b 1914
Edward Galloway b 1915

all from Chicago or Cook County. Add to this list "our" Edward Gallaway who had been dead for 10 years and add as many other Gallaways as you find in City Directories or other directories.
Bill, your post points up one or more problems with the very vague information surrounding the acquisition of the Gallaway copy by Jay Marshall, and how difficult it is to sift out what actually happened based on information from *The Man Who Was Erdnase*. That book talks about (page 390, note 14) William C. Griffiths giving the book to Jay, but the information on how Griffiths got the book is not exactly a rounded account. It’s interesting (I guess) that the dealer "had been holding" certain books for Rufus Steele, but surely there were many other facts that would have been more germane.

I wonder why Griffiths came up with the idea of giving the book to Jay. One tends to assume that Griffiths must have known that Jay was looking into Gallaway's possible connection with the book, but to me that does not appear to be such a sound assumption.

--Tom Sawyer

*lybrary* | 08/01/15 06:23 AM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:* I am _not_ presuming that the Census spelled things correctly -- I've seen too many errors that they have made to believe they are 100% accurate (your own genealogy of Peter Edward shows the census misspelled his last name in 1870 as "Fallonay" and his first name in 1880 as "Etta").

So, the 1940 Census has
Edward M Galloway b 1867
Edward W Galloway b 1882
Edward R Galloway b 1900
Edward Galloway b 1912
Edward L Galloway b 1914
Edward Gallaway b 1914
Edward Galloway b 1915

all from Chicago or Cook County. Add to this list "our" Edward Gallaway who had been dead for 10 years, plus possibly others I’ve found in City Directories, etc., and there are any number of people who could be the Gallaway behind the bookplate.

There are lots of problems with this. First it is not MY genealogy. It is the one shown on the Adkins family tree to which we have contributed. Turns out that our Peter
know that he spells it Gallaway. The ones you list are all with an 'o' except the one born 1914. You would have to show that these are all spelling errors and that their real names are with an 'a'. Otherwise why would they write it on their bookplate with an 'a'.

For Peter Edward Gallaway we also have a good reason why his books are being sold. He died in 1930.

Keep in mind that Jay Marshall was in contact with the daughter-in-law of Peter Edward Gallaway. Imagine how that conversation started. Jay only had a book with the bookplate. He would certainly mention this and find out if he had the right family. I would expect them in some way confirming that he had found the right family.

Bottom line is that we have a lot of mutually confirming information that the Peter Edward Gallaway we have found in the census is the same Edward Gallaway from the obituary, the same we find in the OddFellow doing his library thing asking people to donate their books, who is the same employed at McKinney, the same whose family Jay Marshall tracked down, and who owned the three books we now know he had in his library based on the bookplate.

Lots of things are possible. It is possible that the census is consistently wrong. It is possible that this is all a hoax and there never was an Edward Gallaway. It is possible that the bookplate is a forgery and somebody wanted to have fun with Jay Marshall. All kinds of possibilities. But unless you have data that calls any of the mutually reinforcing data we have about Edward Gallaway into question I will maintain that Peter Edward Gallaway is the one in the bankruptcy files, who owned the EATCT with the bookplate, who sounds like Erdnase and thus is very much, more than any other, Erdnase.

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Roger M. | 08/01/15 11:04 AM | [link] | [filter]

*lybrary wrote:* I will maintain that Peter Edward Gallaway is the one in the bankruptcy files, who owned the EATCT with the bookplate, who sounds like Erdnase and thus is very much, more than any other, Erdnase.

That seems a fairly scant list of credentials to declare "Erdnase found".

Gallaway seems to be still firmly rooted in the *interesting candidate* category.

I applaude Chris's willingness to engage in discussion regarding his candidate, and hope it continues with an open mind.
Roger, I will at a later time share my quantitative analysis, but just to offer one point for consideration. The fact that we can firmly link Gallaway to McKinney is a huge point that we can’t say about anybody else. How many people do you think had a business relationship with McKinney in 1901? 100? 200? 300? Whatever your number is it means Erdnase must be among them. Gallaway is also among them. My own number for this is no more than 300. So this fact alone means that Gallaway is one out of 300 who could potentially be Erdnase.

As a comparison take for example WE Sanders. What do we know about him? Well we know he was an adult male who played cards. My guess for the number of adult male who played cards in the US is about 5 million. What else do we know about him that allows us to narrow it down statistically? We don't even know he was in Chicago at the right time let alone had any business with McKinney. He doesn't sound anything like Erdnase, which is a big point against him.

A similar situation is for E.S. Andrews. Again, he has been linked to card play which makes him one out of 5 million. Everything else we know is too weak to allow us to establish any statistical confidence.

When I compare 300 against 5 million I see a big difference. The evidence for Gallaway is statistically speaking much more significant than all the other things we know about all the other candidates. I will post more thoughts along this line later.

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Bob Coyne | 08/01/15 12:09 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote:
As a comparison take for example WE Sanders. What do we know about him? Well we know he was an adult male who played cards. My guess for the number of adult male who played cards in the US is about 5 million. What else do we know about him that allows us to narrow it down statistically? We don't even know he was in Chicago at the right time let alone had any business with McKinney. He doesn't sound anything like Erdnase, which is a big point against him.

There are many strong connections with Sanders. First off, Sanders not only played cards but wrote down a magic trick! And he brought several boxes of playing cards with him on a packing list for a trip. Not to mention the Erdnase/earth-nose/mining connection, the history of playing around with anagrams, interest in dialectical speech patterns, and several other strong links.

And I *totally* disagree that Sanders sounds nothing like Erdnase. Unlike Galloway his writing style and word choice is very similar to Erdnase. To me this is one of the
Erdnase: he coolly proposes to "MAKE GOOD" by transforming the wrong card
Sanders: Has "MADE GOOD" at the bar, where he shines

Erdnase: It is almost AN AXIOM that a novice will win his first stake.
Sanders: this latter is AN AXIOM in mining during this period of development, and should be invariably followed where possible.

Erdnase: it may enable the skilled in deception to take A POST-GRADUATE COURSE in the highest and most artistic branches of his vocation
Sanders: during the following year he took A POST-GRADUATE COURSE in Civil Engineering

Erdnase: the average card player
Sanders: the average mining engineer

Erdnase: The first described is AN EXCELLENT ONE for retaining either the top or bottom stock...
Erdnase: The position is AN EXCELLENT ONE for ordinary dealing, and should never be changed.
Sanders: this joint is without doubt AN EXCELLENT ONE when, and only when, ....

Erdnase: DESCRIBING with detail and illustration EVERY KNOWN expedient, manoeuvre and stratagem of the expert card handler
Sanders: the mines operated under these methods PRESENT EVERY KNOWN characteristic of lode formation.

Erdnase: LITTLE OR NO skill is required, BUT a practiced hand can locate and bring the cards to the top
Sanders: large excavations may be supported with LITTLE OR NO timbering, BUT usually...

Erdnase: various METHODS OF LOCATING AND PRODUCING selected cards
Sanders: the METHODS OF LOCATING AND ALIGNING the sets are those used for...

Erdnase: An expert can run the whole deck WITH THE UTMOST rapidity
Sanders: huge timbers that have been framed WITH THE UTMOST precision

Erdnase: though this method IS now BY FAR THE MORE prevalent among men who play for money
Sanders: this station, while requiring more excavating to construct, IS BY FAR THE MOST economical in the end
Erdnase: the BEST AND SIMPLEST METHODS of accomplishing the sleights
Sanders: probably the SIMPLEST METHOD OF aligning the side plates of inclined-shaft sets
Sanders: being the SIMPLEST AND CHEAPEST METHOD OF framing

Erdnase: if requested to determine from what single artifice THE GREATEST ADVANTAGE is derived we would unhesitatingly decide...
Sanders: the plan above described may be of THE GREATEST ADVANTAGE in blocking-out the ores for purposes of description and localization; and it may be employed with great benefit in connection with...

** Both OFFER a TREATISE and stress the IMPORTANCE of DETAILS **

Erdnase: A TREATISE on the Science and Art of Manipulating Cards
Erdnase: the sum of our present knowledge is PROFFERED THIS IN VOLUME
Erdnase: IMPORTANCE of DETAILS [full section heading]

Sanders: it has appeared worth while to make the present COLLECTION WHICH IS OFFERED not as a complete TREATISE on the subject, but rather as a series of essays which go fully into many IMPORTANT DETAILS

** Both justify the use of CERTAIN TERMS AND SYMBOLS for THE SAKE OF BREVITY **

Erdnase: Many of the methods of card manipulation explained in this work originated with us, and we have, in describing the various processes and conditions, used CERTAIN TERMS for the SAKE OF BREVITY, to DESIGNATE the particular matters referred to.
Sanders: for the SAKE OF BREVITY in description, CERTAIN SYMBOLS letters or figures, are employed to DESIGNATE the various mine workings, as follows:
Sanders: they are thus marked, CERTAIN SYMBOLS may be discarded for the SAKE OF BREVITY, and only such as are essential to the DESCRIPTION of the working be employed.

** Both take time to describe the relevance of the illustrations **

Erdnase: Therefore the writer has expended much time and care in illustrating many manoeuvres that at first may seem unimportant, but all of which are essential to the curriculum of artistic card handling.
Sanders: in the figures drawn to illustrate the article, sizes of timber most frequently used have been arbitrarily taken for convenience. The figures giving dimensions are working drawings showing the methods of framing, as explained, and can easily be
Erdnase: IT IS NOT OUR PURPOSE TO DESCRIBE the various kinds of apparatus, or prepared or mechanical cards, that play so great a part in the professional conjurer’s startling exhibitions.

Sanders: IT IS NOT THE PROVINCE OF THIS ARTICLE TO TOUCH UPON methods of mining in use above ground, whether by hydraulic mining, or other processes, but rather to deal with the support of underground excavations by the use of timbers, and the details of mining therewith connected. NOR IS IT INTENDED TO ...

Bob, and how does the anagram thing allow us to narrow it down statistically? How do we know that Erdnase derived his name through an anagram?

Your list of word similarities look to me very average, but I may be wrong. Have you done a rigorous linguistic analysis? I think we need to get away from point lists and apply some numbers as well as have specialists handle things like linguistics. I would love to see a forensic linguistic analysis that compares Sanders with Erdnase. Then you would actually have real evidence.

Sanders was also intrigued by African-American culture. He mentions this interest in a diary entry before attending Columbia University in the fall of 1881. Some of Sanders’ satirical compositions contain 19th century Negro dialect. The similarity of those writings with the satirical piece about the colored bathroom attendant in the introduction of *The Expert* is intriguing. I haven’t read any of Sanders’ technical writings, so the similarities in certain phrases that Bob pointed out are also fascinating. If Sanders is not Erdnase, isn’t it an amazing coincidence that both of these men wrote African-American dialect in a satirical context?

Could it be that this was popular during that time?

The problem with listing individual similarities is that the more written material one has available the more similarities one will find. But it is not a statement about the quality of the similarities. Therefore you need to do a rigorous statistical and linguistic
Roger M. | 08/01/15 01:57 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: So this fact alone means that Gallaway is one out of 300 who could potentially be Erdnase.

Although I think this is your strongest avenue for investigation, I’m not sure I agree with your summation.

Indeed, Mr. Erdnase would potentially be among the 300 (I’ll use your number), but Gallaway was just an employee of McKinney, so what you’re saying about Gallaway could be said about any one of the 30 or so employees McKinney had. And even then those 30 weren’t customers, they were employees of a printing firm that probably printed hundreds of different books. It would be expected that employees of such a firm might have copies of the books they printed at work, sitting on shelves in their home libraries.

We have no idea how many of those employees had first editions of EATCT ... it’s entirely possible that Erdnase gave every single employee of McKinney a first edition copy as a token of thanks.

Having said that, I do believe you have a potentially fruitful, and previously untapped avenue of research here.

lybrary | 08/01/15 02:08 PM | link | filter

Roger, I agree, potentially every one of the 30 employees had a copy. That is the worst case scenario. I don’t think it is likely but as my analysis will show - eventually - even under such a worst case scenario Gallaway is still orders of magnitudes more likely than anybody else we have.

lybrary | 08/01/15 03:41 PM | link | filter

Bob Coyne wrote: First off, Sanders not only played cards but wrote down a magic trick!

Let me demonstrate on this one apparent point for Sanders, that it doesn’t help you to make his case stronger.

Ok, so we can say Sanders knew this one trick. But we don’t know if Erdnase knew it. Maybe he wasn’t interested in that kind of magic. So we can’t argue that this is evidence in favor for Sanders. If this trick would be in EATCT you would have evidence
matching that profile.

We can also not say that Sanders knew magic on the level that would allow one to argue that he had the knowledge to write the legerdemain section. If you could show that Sanders had a few relevant magic books in his library then you could make the case for his knowledge of magic. Still a leap of faith, but one that would have some support.

In the end, so interesting a fact like this is, it is not one that allows you to strengthen the case for Sanders if you apply rigor to your argument. Of course, you could simply emotionally feel that this proves Sanders is Erdnase, but I hope we can rise above feelings and apply science.

Bob Coyne | 08/01/15 04:14 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: The problem with listing individual similarities is that the more written material one has available the more similarities one will find. But it is not a statement about the quality of the similarities. Therefore you need to do a rigorous statistical and linguistic analysis.

I disagree again! Statistical linguistic analysis is just another tool. Ultimately any such analysis is based on intuitions about what features matter (lexical n-grams, syntactic patterns, sentence length, use of idioms, etc) and their relative weights. And if the statistical analysis comes up with results that are obviously wrong, you go back to the drawing board and find features and weights that work better. Intuition trumps statistics.

Also, consider the error rates in the statistical-based processes used in machine translation or in automatic speech recognition or even spelling correction. Human beings can do a much better job of understanding what a person is saying or translating between languages they know -- and guess what, they do that without any so-called "rigorous" analysis.

So ultimately it comes down to your own ear. Examples are a good way to refine those intuitions. They're not proof, but the examples I culled are pretty compelling evidence to me.

Bob Coyne | 08/01/15 04:34 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote:

Bob Coyne wrote: First off, Sanders not only played cards but
Let me demonstrate on this one apparent point for Sanders, that it doesn't help you to make his case stronger.

Ok, so we can say Sanders knew this one trick. But we don't know if Erdnase knew it. Maybe he wasn't interested in that kind of magic. So we can't argue that this is evidence in favor for Sanders. If this trick would be in EATCT you would have evidence that would allow you to improve the case for Sanders. You would then estimate how many people might have known that trick and this would reduce the number of people matching that profile.

We can also not say that Sanders knew magic on the level that would allow one to argue that he had the knowledge to write the legerdemain section. If you could show that Sanders had a few relevant magic books in his library then you could make the case for his knowledge of magic. Still a leap of faith, but one that would have some support.

In the end, so interesting a fact like this is, it is not one that allows you to strengthen the case for Sanders if you apply rigor to your argument. Of course, you could simply emotionally feel that this proves Sanders is Erdnase, but I hope we can rise above feelings and apply science.

Surely knowing mutus nomen dedit cocis is evidence of an interest/knowledge in magic. And surely an interest in magic is correlated with writing magic–related books (people who arent interested/knowledgable in a topic don't tend to write books on it). So, all things being equal, Sanders is more likely than a randomly chosen person to have written Erdnase. That's not a leap of faith but just basic probabilities. Is that enough rigor for you?

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Bob Coyne | 08/01/15 04:49 PM | link | filter

Leonard Hevia wrote: Sanders was also intrigued by African-American culture. He mentions this interest in a diary entry before attending Columbia University in the fall of 1881. Some of Sanders' satirical compositions contain 19th century Negro dialect. The similarity of those writings with the satirical piece about the colored bathroom attendant in the introduction of The Expert is intriguing. I haven't read any of Sanders' technical writings, so the similarities in certain phrases that Bob pointed out are also fascinating. If Sanders is not Erdnase, isn't it an amazing coincidence that both of these men wrote African-American dialect in a satirical context?
mines class reunion he satirizes various speech patterns.

"It sufficeth to say that only the innate and in(co)herent modesty of the objective subject of this "story of a life" prevents the Class Historian (officially when writing of Billy Sanders) from dealing in higher superlatives than these hereinafter detailed, specified and contained, to wit: lie air young an' beautifullest an' fair; he hez carroty face an' a freckled hair; he seems pure an' nobil ez he kin bebut, nixkumarouse, Bill, yer kaint fule me! He hez wondrous grace in hiz nether pegs, when he pir-hoo-ettes on hiz rear hind legs: an' he thinks he's sum with hiz hullabaloo; but he kaint fule meknow him throo an' throo! He hez tears in hiz eyes when he talks uv him; what he sez uv him, sure it ain't so slim; but I sez ter him, with hiz reinekaboo, naow yer kaint fule meso yer jess gaow tew! An' ter h'ar him talk uv ther pace he's set; an' uv what he's done, fer he's braggin' yet; what a bad man he, an' so Woolly! Gee! but I know yer, Bill, an' yer kaint fule me!"

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Bob Coyne wrote:

lybrary wrote: The problem with listing individual similarities is that the more written material one has available the more similarities one will find. But it is not a statement about the quality of the similarities. Therefore you need to do a rigorous statistical and linguistic analysis.

I disagree again! Statistical linguistic analysis is just another tool. Ultimately any such analysis is based on intuitions about what features matter (lexical n-grams, syntactic patterns, sentence length, use of idioms, etc) and their relative weights. And if the statistical analysis comes up with results that are obviously wrong, you go back to the drawing board and find features and weights that work better. Intuition trumps statistics.

Also, consider the error rates in the statistical-based processes used in machine translation or in automatic speech recognition or even spelling correction. Human beings can do a much better job of understanding what a person is saying or translating between languages they know -- and guess what, they do that without any so-called "rigorous" analysis.

So ultimately it comes down to your own ear. Examples are a good way to refine those intuitions. They're not proof, but the examples I culled are pretty compelling evidence to me.

And that is why I let an expert do the analysis. Somebody who does this professionally.
right person? I am certainly not. I recognize that. But I also know that looking for a couple of similar phrases is not the right way to go about this.

Bob Coyne wrote: Surely knowing mutus nomen dedit cocis is evidence of an interest/knowledge in magic. And surely an interest in magic is correlated with writing magic-related books (people who are not interested/knowledgable in a topic don’t tend to write books on it). So, all things being equal, Sanders is more likely than a randomly chosen person to have written Erdnase. That’s not a leap of faith but just basic probabilities. Is that enough rigor for you?

My guess is that the correlation of knowing mutus nomen dedit cocis with authoring books on magic is so small that while you are correct in principle it would not make any practical difference in the numbers. But I encourage you to actually try to quantify this rather than just make a rhetorical argument.

Bob Coyne wrote: And that is why I let an expert do the analysis. Somebody who does this professionally every day. Somebody who frequently testifies about such matters in court. I agree, the tools by themselves mean little. You need somebody who can apply them. Are you the right person? I am certainly not. I recognize that. But I also know that looking for a couple of similar phrases is not the right way to go about this.

If you have no sense of this yourself, then perhaps choosing and asking an "expert" is a good way to decide what you believe. But I wouldn’t trust someone else’s judgements above my own, although I would welcome any insights anyone provided. Probably most people on this forum have a stronger sense of Erdnase and his writing style than any so-called expert. It really comes down to spending time with the texts and having an ear for language.

Bob Coyne wrote: But I wouldn’t trust someone else’s judgements above my own...

You must be a universally educated man. I guess you never had to go to the doctor or have your car fixed by a mechanic.
lybrary wrote:

Bob Coyne wrote: Surely knowing mutus nomen dedit cocis is evidence of an interest/knowledge in magic. And surely an interest in magic is correlated with writing magic-related books (people who aren't interested/knowledgable in a topic don't tend to write books on it). So, all things being equal, Sanders is more likely than a randomly chosen person to have written Erdnase. That's not a leap of faith but just basic probabilities. Is that enough rigor for you?

My guess is that the correlation of knowing mutus nomen dedit cocis with authoring books on magic is so small that while you are correct in principle it would not make any practical difference in the numbers. But I encourage you to actually try to quantify this rather than just make a rhetorical argument.

Let's assume 20% of the population shows some serious interest in magic and can perform some tricks. Assume also that all writers of magic books know some tricks (almost true by definition unless they're ghost writing). So that means a person knowing at least one trick (e.g. Sanders) is five times more likely to have written a magic book (including EATCT) than a random person. So, while it's not anywhere near proof that he wrote EATCT, but it adds substantial weight to the overall evidence.

____________________
lybrary | 08/01/15 07:03 PM | link | filter

Bob Coyne wrote: Let's assume 20% of the population shows some serious interest in magic and can perform some tricks. Assume also that all writers of magic books know some tricks (almost true by definition unless they're ghost writing). So that means a person knowing at least one trick (e.g. Sanders) is five times more likely to have written a magic book (including EATCT) than a random person. So, while it's not anywhere near proof that he wrote EATCT, but it adds substantial weight to the overall evidence.

Well, if you feel your numbers hold up then Sanders went from one of 5 million to one in 1 million. What else can you quantify?

____________________
Bob Coyne | 08/01/15 07:12 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote:

Bob Coyne wrote: But I wouldn't trust someone else's judgements
You must be a universally educated man. I guess you never had to go to the doctor or have your car fixed by a mechanic.

Those are completely different. Medicine and car mechanics are specialized skills. Recognizing a style in language or recognizing someone's speaking voice is something we all can do (though some better than others). It isn't an issue of education except in areas where specialized language is at play (though I think all of us here are much more expert on the technical (magic-related) aspects of the text than any outside forensic linguistics person you might be having look at it). It's mostly an issue of spending time with the texts and having an ear for language.

One area where some specific expertise can usefully come in to play is in recognizing the historical drift of the language (i.e. comparison with other texts of the era). So I'd be interested in hearing if your person has anything to say in that area. Though, even there, it's something anyone can investigate on their own -- there are lots of circa 1900 texts out there...nothing like the barriers to fixing a car or doing surgery! Anyway, I think the similarity between Sanders' and Erdnase's voice comes through loud and clear as the examples I compiled show. And remember, this is all in response to your saying there was no similarity between Erdnase and Sanders in writing style -- that's something I find utterly wrong.

Bob, how much of a mining expert are you? After all you are comparing a magic/gambling book with a book on mining.

BTW, I don't agree that a linguist needs to be a specialist in the subject matter. These are two very different things. One has to do with the content, the other with how it is expressed in language. A bit like form and function. We are not asking the linguist if that move really makes sense in that context. We are asking questions about the language only.

You can have a different conversation on the content and there knowledge about gambling and magic is of course key.

While all of us do use language and we all have some degree of understanding about it, there are experts who know a ton more about it.
Assume also that all writers of magic books know some tricks (almost true by definition unless they’re ghost writing). So that means a person knowing at least one trick (e.g. Sanders) is five times more likely to have written a magic book (including EATCT) than a random person. So, while it’s not anywhere near proof that he wrote EATCT, but it adds substantial weight to the overall evidence.

Well, if you feel your numbers hold up then Sanders went from one of 5 million to one in 1 million. What else can you quantify?

I don’t think it’s possible to quantify this sort of thing. The error bars are way too big, given that it’s not clear what factors matter and how much weight to give them. So it’s a false rigor, and to my thinking not a profitable way to think about it. But I’ll be interested in reading your analysis when you have it.

Bob Coyne wrote: I don’t think it’s possible to quantify this sort of thing. The error bars are way too big, given that it’s not clear what factors matter and how much weight to give them. So it’s a false rigor, and to my thinking not a profitable way to think about it. But I’ll be interested in reading your analysis when you have it.

That is because the evidence for Sanders is weak. Gallaway’s is of very different quality. As I have just shown above, the number of people doing business with McKinney in 1901 is quite bounded - a few hundred. Erdnase must be among them. Therefore the significance of being able to show that somebody had a business relationship with McKinney at the right time allows one to make fairly accurate quantitative statements.

Bob Coyne | 08/01/15 07:45 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: Bob, how much of a mining expert are you? After all you are comparing a magic/gambling book with a book on mining.

BTW, I don’t agree that a linguist needs to be a specialist in the subject matter. These are two very different things. One has to do with the content, the other with how it is expressed in language. A bit like form and function. We are not asking the linguist if that move really makes sense in that context. We are asking questions about the language only.
While all of us do use language and we all have some degree of understanding about it, there are experts who know a ton more about it.

It helps to know the subject matter, and style and content aren't totally separate. But Sanders' writings including his mining text isn't all that complicated for a layman to read. Though I'm sure familiarity with the domain would help isolate idiosyncracies of his personal style, etc.

I also don't know what you mean by knowing a ton more about language. You mean it's historical evolution? The rules of syntax? the lexical semantic ambiguities? The ways that machine learning models are used in stylometry? I personally know quite a bit about much of that, but that really doesn’t come into play in hearing an author's voice. For that, what matters most is not generalized knowledge of linguistics or computational or statistical models, but spending time with the text itself and having an ear for language. But to each their own...

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**Bob Coyne** | 08/01/15 08:35 PM | link | filter

**Marty Demarest wrote:**

That's a great point! Speaking of literary fingerprints, Erdnase has a lot of sophisticated fun with language:

_S.W. Erdnase wrote:_ "The right hand holds the wrong card..." p. 151.

"Several cards are removed entirely from the pack, but retained in the memory..." p. 116.

"The dealer can gather up the cards with a great deal of judgment..." p. 82

"The Longitudinal Shift.--This shift, for which we have to thank no one, is given a very long name, but the reader who is interested sufficiently to practice the process, will find it a very short shift..." p. 130

"In the average game where the players keep their hands, and arms also, on the table..." p. 111

"...space of time..." p. 144
Yes, and Sanders has lots of fun with language too! As I remember, you pointed out in your article a very clever/nice pun he made on "shift" of a different sort. Here’s a pun he makes on "shell" (for a classmate who worked on "artillery shells" which Sanders puns into "shell game") in his 25th reunion writing. Also nice that it includes a gambling theme.

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Come, Johnson, cease your naughty ways,
Make simple faro, poker plays
Or roulette e’en, but stop this craze
For playin’ the "Shell game."
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However, Johnson, when I learn
The shell game played by your concern
Is not the western game I yearn
To see played on the square,
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Bob Coyne wrote: I also don’t know what you mean by knowing a ton more about language. You mean it's historical evolution? The rules of syntax? the lexical semantic ambiguities? The ways that machine learning models are used in stylometry?

Experience, knowing the tools and how to use them, and understanding how to interpret the results makes a huge difference. An expert in this field has compared many other pieces of text before. He understands when to use what tools and how to make sure the results are not garbage.

When you gave your list of matching phrases I didn't see you apply any kind of domain knowledge. You simply found some phrases that were used in both books. How are you applying your understanding of magic and gambling?

I am not so good with languages as you seem to be, but can you tell me what significance for example a phrase like SIMPLEST METHOD OF has? To me this looks like it could appear anywhere. How does that make Sanders like Erdnase?

Roger M. wrote: It may also be important to know who the various experts you contracted were Chris, and have an understanding of their credentials?
understand who the various expert sources you’ve used to arrive at your conclusion actually were.

It’s difficult to accept "anonymous" expert opinion as authoritative, at least in my own experience.

Anybody who has read my "Hunt for Erdnase" ebook [http://www.lybrary.com/the-hunt-for-erd ... 73843.html](http://www.lybrary.com/the-hunt-for-erd ... 73843.html) will know who my forensic linguist is. Once I write up my research on Gallaway he will again appear with his report on a comparison of Erdnase and Gallaway. So I am not keeping him a secret, but I am not waving his name in the air either. Anybody who is truly interested can check him out.

Chris--I would be interested to know what your linguistics expert has to say about a comparison between *The Expert* and Sanders' works on mining and other compositions. Would you be prepared to accept the results?

Bob Coyne 08/01/15 11:01 PM | link | filter

*lybrary* wrote:

Experience, knowing the tools and how to use them, and understanding how to interpret the results makes a huge difference. An expert in this field has compared many other pieces of text before. He understands when to use what tools and how to make sure the results are not garbage.

Ultimately you have to look at the results and decide if they’re convincing to you or not. You can’t offload that task and have any confidence in what someone tells you since the only important result is whether there’s a noticeable stylistic similarity. Of course, like many things, this is a judgement call. But I find the list of correspondences I gave (and other commonalities in their writing such as imitating dialectical speech patterns) as a strong piece of evidence in favor of Sanders.

When you gave your list of matching phrases I didn't see you apply any kind of domain knowledge. You simply found some phrases that were used in both books. How are you applying your understanding of magic and gambling?
person you meet reminds you of someone else you know well. Domain knowledge is much less important, but still potentially useful. And as I said, I think historical background knowledge (particularly of literary conventions and styles) is also useful.

One example of domain-specific knowledge coming into play is a question I posted here just a little while ago whether Erdnase's use of the word "stock" (as a group of cards to retain in false shuffling etc) was potentially influenced by printing terminology for "stock" (as in paper stock). So that question (answered by people in this list, with gambling-related references in earlier works) touched on domain-specific terminology and usage patterns.

Jack Shalom | 08/02/15 12:49 AM | link | filter

If Sanders is not Erdnase, isn’t it an amazing coincidence that both of these men wrote African-American dialect in a satirical context?

No. The minstrel show at this time had been the major form of popular entertainment across all parts of America for almost 75 years, and was full of that kind of thing. It would be more like two authors today both referencing a catchphrase from The Simpsons.

Bill Mullins | 08/02/15 01:30 AM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: For Peter Edward Gallaway we also have a good reason why his books are being sold. He died in 1930.

If his books were being sold in 1931, I'd agree. But at this late date, I tend to think it works against him (at least, compared to anyone who may have been alive at some date after 1931). Why would his collection be held together as a group for 25 years for Griffiths to get it?

Keep in mind that Jay Marshall was in contact with the daughter-in-law of Peter Edward Gallaway. Imagine how that conversation started. Jay only had a book with the bookplate. He would certainly mention this and find out if he had the right family. I would expect them in some way confirming that he had found the right family.

I have no way of knowing, but I’d guess that Jay found the daughter-in-law, Ethel, through Edw.'s obit. If the conversation had gone like this, it would be completely consistent with what we know about Gallaway:

Jay: I found this book with the bookplate of Edward Gallaway. It’s a gambling book. Do you know anything about it?

Ethel: Well, my father-in-law's name was Ed Gallaway. I don't know anything about gambling books – we got rid of his stuff over 20 years ago – but he worked in the...
for Bentley Murray.
Jay: okay, thanks.

All that we know about Gallaway from Jay’s conversation with Ethel is his employment history. Nothing about the conversation as described in TMWWE confirms that Bookplate Edward was McKinney Edward. Look at the footnotes – the passage saying that he worked for McKinney is sourced to the conversation with Ethel. The passage saying he collected gambling books is not; it comes from a letter from Marshall to Gardner a day earlier (describing the books and Griffiths) than the letter describing the conversation with Ethel.

Given the way TMWWE jumps to conclusions, it’s difficult to know, but I think that if Ethel had said anything that tied her father to gambling or the books, Jay would have made sufficient note of it that it would be more clearly brought out in the book. Remember, Jay was a collector/packrat, and he almost certainly would have chased after books. The fact that he doesn’t specifically record details about books makes me think that there weren’t any to record, and that Ethel knew nothing about gambling books. I think the idea that Bookplate Edward is McKinney Edward is a conclusion that either Marshall, Gardner, or Busby/Whaley (depending on who wrote that particular passage) jumped to. I think the passage is carefully written to lead the reader to believe it is all a consistent set of facts, although it may not be. I don’t think it is wrong to say that Bookplate Edward was McKinney Edward, but I do think that the evidence doesn’t prove it.

Bottom line is that we have a lot of mutually confirming information that the Peter Edward Gallaway we have found in the census is the same Edward Gallaway from the obituary, agreed

the same we find in the OddFellow doing his library thing asking people to donate their books, who is the same employed at McKinney, the same whose family Jay Marshall tracked down, Agreed, agreed, and agreed

and who owned the three books we now know he had in his library based on the bookplate.

Don’t agree that the facts as we know them support this particular conclusion. [And 3 books? I know of Erdnase and the 1700 "History of Works"; what is the 3rd? Unless you are saying "gambling books" means at least two, one more than Erdnase.] If we knew that there was only one Edward Gallaway in the Chicago area between
play. (and making a list of "Galloways" doesn't really confirm that) So...

You and I agree on the existence of one Edward Gallaway (b 1914) who probably wasn't much of a book collector, given the socioeconomic status of most black laborers at the time. But there was also:

Edward Gallaway b 1912 in the 1930 census
Edward Gallaway b 1852 died 1912 in Chicago (ancestry.com, Cook County death index)
Edward Gallaway who ran for Cook County commissioner in 1918 (Google Books, newspapers.com)
Edward Gallaway of Great Britain or Ireland who was naturalized in Chicago in 1892
Edward M. Gallaway who married Clara Ballard in Cook County in 1893

Some of these may be the same guy, but there are enough of them to show that Peter Edward was not the only Gallaway to whom the bookplate could have referred.

But like I've said already, I do think that Peter Edward and Bookplate Gallaway were the same person. I'm just open to the possibility that they weren't.

Another thing – the genealogy you've linked to says that Peter Edward was active as a printer when he was in his early teens. I don't think that particular listing for Edward Gallaway refers to the one who worked for McKinney (although it is an amazing coincidence that this guy was also a printer). The reason is, Chicago Voter Registration lists for 1890 and 1892 are online at ancestry.com. They list Ed Gallaway, born in Ohio, as only having lived in Illinois for 4 and 6 years, respectively. So he didn't live in Chicago at the time of the 1882 directory listing. Which makes sense, since it would be highly unusual for a directory to list a 13 year old as head of a household. Another reason is the Delphos Weekly Herald of June 1 1882 shows Ed Gallaway listed in a class of German students, not working as a printer in Chicago.

The fact that we can firmly link Gallaway to McKinney is a huge point that we can't say about anybody else.

?? We can link Frederick Drake to McKinney. Drake published other conjuring and gambling books. We can link Samuel Jamieson to McKinney. He went on to publish a magic book (Fun With Magic) and gambling books (Jack Pots, and Tom Custer's Luck and Other Poker Stories).

Let me demonstrate on this one apparent point for Sanders, that it doesn't help you to make his case stronger.
magic. So we can't argue that this is evidence in favor for Sanders. If this trick would be in EATCT you would have evidence that would allow you to improve the case for Sanders.

Chris, both you and Peter Zenner have taken points that most people would count as an obvious "match" and discounted them, and it's tempting to say that you are doing so because they don't apply to your candidate.

OF COURSE a person who knows magic with playing cards (like Sanders) has a point in their favor compared to someone for whom that can't be shown – a third of the book is about card magic. (and while Mutus Nomen isn't referenced in Erdnase, another sleight-free mental divining trick is: A Row of Ten Cards) OF COURSE a person who hung out in gambling halls (like Sanders did at the Silver Bow Club) has a point in their favor compared to someone for whom that can't be shown. OF COURSE a person who played cards socially (as Sanders played whist) has a point in their favor compared to someone for whom that can't be shown.

the number of people doing business with McKinney in 1901 is quite bounded - a few hundred. Erdnase must be among them. Therefore the significance of being able to show that somebody had a business relationship with McKinney at the right time allows one to make fairly accurate quantitative statements.

Why do you assume Erdnase had a first-hand relationship with McKinney? When I need a service, I often use a referral from someone else I know. I recently needed a tree cut down, and the guy who cuts my grass referred me to a friend of his. Maybe McKinney only had 200-300 business associates, but each of them had 200-300 more. There's no reason to assert that Erdnase knew McKinney first hand.

[and notice I went over 24 hours without posting about Erdnase. my therapist says I'm getting better.]

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Leonard Hevia wrote:
Chris--I would be interested to know what your linguistics expert has to say about a comparison between The Expert and Sanders’ works on mining and other compositions. Would you be prepared to accept the results?

I am always prepared to accept the results. I go where the facts lead me, not where rumors like "it was an Andrews" point. You should read my "Hunt for Erdnase". I dropped my German immigrant theory based on the forensic linguist's report.
money I am more than happy to ask him for an analysis of Sanders. Or better yet, have somebody else contact him and ask for one so that I am not accused of influencing the results in any way.

I actually think we should do that for every candidate we have a good amount of text to analyze. For me the linguistic fingerprint is the strongest evidence one can present absent of any documentary evidence. Apparently nobody in the Sanders camp feels strongly enough about him to have offered a real linguistic analysis to this date.

Bill Mullins wrote: ?? We can link Frederick Drake to McKinney. Drake published other conjuring and gambling books. We can link Samuel Jamieson to McKinney. He went on to publish a magic book (Fun With Magic) and gambling books (Jack Pots, and Tom Custer's Luck and Other Poker Stories).

I think these would all be good candidates to check out. If you find further evidence that supports them such as that they sound like Erdnase or owned a first edition EATCT then you would have a really strong case to make. Such is the power of the bankruptcy files. BTW, "Fun with Magic" is not really a magic book. It is a book about simple science experiments you can do in your kitchen. I have it OCRed if you want to do a linguistic analysis http://www.lybrary.com/fun-with-magic-p-734685.html

Bill Mullins wrote: OF COURSE a person who knows magic with playing cards (like Sanders) has a point in their favor compared to someone for whom that can't be shown – a third of the book is about card magic. (and while Mutus Nomen isn't referenced in Erdnase, another sleight-free mental divining trick is: A Row of Ten Cards) OF COURSE a person who hung out in gambling halls (like Sanders did at the Silver Bow Club) has a point in their favor compared to someone for whom that can't be shown. OF COURSE a person who played cards socially (as Sanders played whist) has a point in their favor compared to someone for whom that can't be shown.

I don't disagree but these points in case for Sanders do not lend themselves to a quantitative evaluation. All I am trying to do is to get away from lists of points in favor, to a more nuanced view where we compare relative strengths of evidence. Doing this with a statistical analysis is one first step.
who cuts my grass referred me to a friend of his. Maybe McKinney only had 200-300 business associates, but each of them had 200-300 more. There's no reason to assert that Erdnase knew McKinney first hand. I assume it because it is the most likely. OCCAM'S razor. Of course it is possible that he used a front-man, but you would then have to apply a proper likelihood to that possibility and split your analysis into two branches and evaluate each one. At this point I am taking what is most likely. Same with the critique: "Couldn't everybody at McKinney have received a first edition of EATCT?" Yes it is possible but again not particularly likely. Once you think about what is the most likely and what is the most straight forward explanation you can derive meaningful numbers. At least I would hope you are not blind to looking at evidence from different angles and through different lenses. You seem to demand an open mind on other facts, too.

Zenner | 08/02/15 07:55 AM | link | filter

Richard Hatch wrote:

Bill Mullins wrote: Earlier, Peter Zenner had said that E. C. Andrews had graduated from college in 1901, and worked for Ruxton Ink along Thompson. Ruxton shows up as a creditor on the very next page.

Why would E. C. Andrews, presumably a fairly junior employee, being so young, be listed separately as a creditor from his employer? Is this the same E. C. Andrews?

I believe that Peter Zenner's claim is that this is Harry Thompson, dealing with McKinney using E. C. Andrews as his alias. Seems like a stretch to me... Wasn't Frank Thompson's name supposed to show up in the file somewhere?

That's correct, Richard. I said in my very first post on the subject that E[mory] C[obb] Andrews was the new boy in the Ruxton office. Harry worked for Ruxton's and I suggested that he took his pseudonym from E.C. Andrews.

I was hoping/half expecting Harry's brother Frank to show up as a former employee of McKinney. That was not to be. I was also hoping/half expecting Ruxton's to show up as a supplier to McKinney. Thे were.

What I was not expecting was E.C. ANDREWS to show up in that file. Imagine my delight when he appeared.
not to the office lad.

If you still can't get your head around Harry Stuart Thompson being Erdnase then just put it down to it being another one of Bill's "fascinating coincidences" and move on.

Peter Zenner

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Brad Henderson | 08/02/15 09:10 AM | link | filter

knowing a card trick is NOT proof of an interest in magic. It is proof that one knows a card trick.

as any working magician will tell you, almost everybody knows (or thinks they know) A card trick. That doesn't mean they have any interest in magic per se.

And card tricks like mutus nomen are exactly the kinds of trick people know. In fact, I see at least 2 non magicians each year attempt a version of it to this day.

It's one of those tricks that's 'out there' and I don't think one should read anything into it as far as an interest in magic is concerned.

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Bill Mullins | 08/02/15 10:39 AM | link | filter

Zenner wrote:

Richard Hatch wrote:

Bill Mullins wrote:
Why would E. C. Andrews, presumably a fairly junior employee, being so young, be listed separately as a creditor from his employer? Is this the same E. C. Andrews?

I believe that Peter Zenner's claim is that this is Harry Thompson, dealing with McKinney using E. C. Andrews as his alias. Seems like a stretch to me... Wasn't Frank Thompson's name supposed to show up in the file somewhere?

That's correct, Richard. I said in my very first post on the subject that E[emory] C[obb] Andrews was the new boy in the Ruxton office. Harry worked for Ruxton's and I suggested that he took his pseudonym from E.C. Andrews.
glad you are making that clear. This means that McKinney would see him in his Thompson persona when they were buying ink from Ruxton, and in his Andrews persona when arranging to print his book, and didn’t notice the similarity.

This is as easy to believe that Lois Lane never caught on that Clark Kent and Superman were the same guy.

**Bill Mullins** | 08/02/15 10:54 AM | link | filter

*lybrary wrote:*

*Bill Mullins wrote: ?? We can link Frederick Drake to McKinney. Drake published other conjuring and gambling books. We can link Samuel Jamieson to McKinney. He went on to publish a magic book (Fun With Magic) and gambling books (Jack Pots, and Tom Custer's Luck and Other Poker Stories).*

BTW, "Fun with Magic" is not really a magic book. It is a book about simple science experiments you can do in your kitchen. I have it OCRed if you want to do a linguistic analysis [http://www.lybrary.com/fun-with-magic-p-734685.html](http://www.lybrary.com/fun-with-magic-p-734685.html)

I stand corrected on that. But there are at least four books related to gambling that Jamieson published.

And, offline, you mentioned that Gallaway having studied German is relevant to the "Erdnase" = a German nickname theory. Which had gone right by me.

**Bob Coyne** | 08/02/15 11:41 AM | link | filter

*Brad Henderson wrote: knowing a card trick is NOT proof of an interest in magic. It is proof that one knows a card trick.*

It’s not proof but evidence, and that’s what matters here. Also, writing down the formula/key to a trick (as Sanders did) is evidence of a high level of interest.

**lybrary** | 08/02/15 11:45 AM | link | filter

Bill found Edward Gallaway mentioned 4 times in the Delphos Herald. Thanks for sharing those with me. They provide new information and confirming support for two things addressed earlier:
confirms that he was a bright and ambitious person which I tend to believe matches Erdnase’s character traits. But before anybody screams, this is of course not proof of anything and I will not put it on any list. It just fits the story line in my mind.

2) Another one mentions that he attended a German class in the last year of his Middle School. It appears that he learned German as a foreign language, which makes the Erdnase “Earth Nose” nickname or ethnic slur theory rise to the top in my mind. At the very least Gallaway might have settled for Erdnase because of its German ring, regardless of how he came up with it. It is of course also possible that his teacher or his classmates gave him the nickname Erdnase.

Not related to what Bill found, but something I discovered with respect to a possible Dalrymple connection is that both the Dalrymple and Gallaway/Galloway families trace back to Scotland to the same region. There is historical political wrangling between the Earl of Galloway and the Dalrymple family you can read about here https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wigtown_Burghs_(UK_Parliament_constituency)

Again not proof, but at least it opens the possibility that the Gallaway and Dalrymple families are connected somewhere.

Re a few posts back . . .

Brad, regarding W.E. Sanders’s interest (or lack thereof) in magic, it is hard to disagree with most of what you said in your most recent post in this thread. Logically, the Mutus Nomen trick does not add up to much. It is similar to the evidence that Edwin Sumner Andrews played cards, which we know from the "Pippins" article.

On the other hand, there are a few reasons why I actually like that type of evidence in a case like the Sanders case.

First, it has a sort of symbiotic relationship with some of the other evidence relating to Sanders, like the fact that both Sanders and Del Adelphia were closely connected with Montana. Another related fact has to do with Sanders’s comments in a journal (I think when he was a boy), relating to a magic performance he had seen, and his being able to figure out the secrets. This was mentioned in Marty Demarest's Montana article.

Then, of course, I apply a kind of “iceberg reasoning,” to the effect that if we see these manifestations, there must be ten times that much similar stuff that we don’t have evidence of.
For example, we sort of assume that McKinney printed the book, based *principally* on the very weak fact that his name and address appear multiple times on the copyright application.

This is NOT the way you would want to prove that in the real world.

Marty Demarest went into that McKinney issue in much more depth on this thread a few days ago, in a post which unfortunately was probably missed by a lot of people because of the flood of recent posts on this thread.

Once you are through analyzing the Mutus Nomen part of the case, it is a small part of the W.E. Sanders case, but to me it is a very helpful to the Sanders case. I actually have one or two other thoughts on the Mutus Nomen situation, but I think these are my main points about it.

One other thing about it -- whether one likes the Mutus Nomen bit or not, to me it is a colorful and fun fact in the realm of Erdnase facts, factoids, and pseudo-facts in which much of the information is rather dry.

Anyway, the above is not to say anything about the strength or weakness of the W.E. Sanders case overall -- it's mainly to discuss one way of looking at certain kinds of evidence.

--Tom

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**Brad Henderson** | 08/02/15 01:18 PM | link | filter

Tom, I worry you may have taken the intent of my post a little beyond what was intended. I too think the mutus nomen reference is very interesting. I just don't think from that ALONE we can posit a larger interest in magic as a whole. THAT is the conclusion that I think may be over reaching ESPECIALLY given then fact that mutus nomen is one of those perennial tricks that lots of non magicians know.

to bob, that we only have one notation of one trick undermines the conclusion he would have a high interest. If he had a high interest we would likely have seen more notes and scribbles about magic tricks.

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**Bob Coyne** | 08/02/15 02:08 PM | link | filter

*Brad Henderson wrote:* to bob, that we only have one notation of one trick
He had high enough interest to write it down. That’s the point I’m making. That indicates a level of interest that is higher than most people and as a result makes him much more likely to have written the book than a person chosen at random.

Regarding seeing more notes and scribbles, that depends on how much of his notes and notebooks are actually still available. Marty wrote that whole sections were removed. But, in any case, I think it is very significant that the notes we have contain a) the key to the nomen mutus trick and b) a packing list that included decks of playing cards and c) mention in his diaries of figuring out the tricks in a magic show that he saw!

btw, it would be useful if his notebooks were available in digital form for all to see. Has anyone thought of doing that?

Digressing for just a moment...

I’m curious how anagram fans – at least those who believe the author considered the reversal (or rearrangement) of his name an effective strategy for masking his identity – reconcile this notion with the author’s apparent intelligence. Even David Ben’s otherwise excellent Magicol piece hit this snag (ref. “He also decided to write the book under a pseudonym... so that he could maintain his job with his employer, and the cover it provided him to cheat in games.”)

Cold logic dictates that the author [assuming there was only one] was either 1) an Andrews who wanted to be known (and make a bit of mischief in the process), or 2) someone without that name who intended to lead the curious down a rabbit hole. Either is equally plausible... but what makes no sense is someone with a triple-digit IQ attempting to preserve anonymity by reversing their last name. That this is such a fundamental (if not mundane) proposition makes it no less a powerful argument against one or two of the top contenders...

R. Eltsohj

Bob. it only proves he had an interest in THAT card trick. You will need much more to convince people he had an interest in magic as a whole.

Bob Covne
trick. You will need much more to convince people he had an interest in magic as a whole.

Yeah, but they're correlated. If you're interested in a particular trick (enough to write it down) then you're much more likely to be interested in magic as a whole than a random person. As I said, it's not a black and white (proof) issue; instead the fact that he has shown interest in one trick boosts the likelihood that he's interested in others. Also, given that his diaries mention seeing a magic performance and figuring out the tricks, we have additional evidence in his interest in magic. Again, none of this is proof on its own, but it all adds to the weight of the evidence.

JHostler wrote: Digressing for just a moment...

I'm curious how anagram fans – at least those who believe the author considered the reversal (or rearrangement) of his name an effective strategy for masking his identity – reconcile this notion with the author's apparent intelligence. Even David Ben's otherwise excellent Magicol piece hit this snag (ref. “He also decided to write the book under a pseudonym... so that he could maintain his job with his employer, and the cover it provided him to cheat in games.”)

Cold logic dictates that the author [assuming there was only one] was either 1) an Andrews who wanted to be known (and make a bit of mischief in the process), or 2) someone without that name who intended to lead the curious down a rabbit hole. Either is equally plausible... but what makes no sense is someone with a triple-digit IQ attempting to preserve anonymity by reversing their last name. That this is such a fundamental (if not mundane) proposition makes it no less a powerful argument against one or two of the top contenders...

R. Eltsohj

I totally agree. Erdnase is way more sophisticated, intelligent and eclectic to simply reverse his name if it was E.S. Andrews. That is the biggest strike against an E.S. Andrews.

I have embarked on a little research project for which I would love to find colleagues to collaborate with. In 1890 C. C. Bombaugh wrote "Gleanings for the curious from the Harvest-Fields of Literature". This is available online or as a cheap Dover paperback edited by Martin Gardner. This is a book about puns, word plays, palindromes, and
which may apply to one or another candidate to result in Erdnase. Anybody who wants to join me in exploring this please email me, or we may start a separate thread just for it.

Bill Mullins | 08/02/15 06:37 PM | link | filter

When Chris Wasshuber first proposed Edward Gallaway as Erdnase, he said, "He sounds just like Erdnase." Roger M. said "the similarity of introductions is very compelling." How something sounds to a reader is very subjective - Whaley/Busby said that MFA sounded like Erdnase, but I don't see it.

There are some elements of a written work that can be objectively measured, however, and computational linguists use stylometry to attribute works to authors by counting the relative frequency of words and phrases within works. These techniques are particularly applied to common functional words, rather than specific technical terms that may be directly related to the subject of a book or essay.

Below are some comparisons of the relative use of several functional "building block" words and phrases that could be expected to be similarly used in works of different subjects, like card table expertise vs. print job estimating. The counts are from digital copies of the books, and are subject to the vagaries of OCR. But the scans seem to be pretty accurate, and even if specific counts may not be 100% accurate, the trends noted should be.

Erdnase never addresses his reader directly. The word "You" only appears in patter instructions when the performer is giving the spectator instructions in the Card Tricks section, and not anywhere in the text where he is addressing the reader. Gallaway does use "You" to refer to the reader, several times (the list below is far from exhaustive):
- p. 3 "it is important that you read every word"
- "The book tells you nothing"
- "It . . . gives you the cost of the job"
- "you can never hope to be a good estimator until you have mastered"
- p. 5 "If you are not sufficiently interested"
- p. 34 "unless you have the patience and perservenance"

On the other hand, Erdnase often refers in the third person to "the reader". (See pp 12, 16, 20 (twice), 25, 30, 29, 70, 77, 130, 141, 157.) Gallaway doesn't use this formation much; I find it only once, on p 4 in the introduction.

Erdnase uses "your" only in quotation and in patter. Gallaway uses it often in giving direction.
the moment of cutting."
p. 111 "and the palmed cards remain in the dealer's possession but for the moment."
Gallaway uses only the more common "only for":
p. 117 "Proposals are only for work according to the original specifications."

Erdnase uses three different ways to express "that is to say" or "namely": "that is" (pp. 9, 11, 19, 29, 26, 70 (2), 71, 90, 113, 119), "i.e.," (pp. 29, 33, 55, 76, 110, 116, 178, 179, 182, 204), and "viz." (pp. 9, 30, 179, 184). Gallaway, otoh, uses them thusly: "that is" (pp. 6(2), 7, 9, 11, 19, 23, 24), "i.e.," (pp. 44), and "viz." (11, 36, 53, 59). So, relatively speaking, Gallaway dislikes "i.e.," compared to Erdnase.

There is an idiosyncratic sentence structure used by Erdnase that has stuck out to me as a reader ever since I first encountered the book:
[Erdnase][transitive verb] "no" [object].
p. 3 "writer uses no sophistry"
p. 14 "We betray no confidences"
p. 14 "We . . . censure no one"

A more regular construction might have been "writer does not use any sophistry", "We do not betray any confidences", and "We . . . do not censure any one."

I don't see any sentences similarly constructed in the Gallaway book.

Erdnase refers to himself as "the writer" more often than he calls himself "the author" (2 times vs once), while Gallaway calls himself "the author" three times, but never "the writer."

There are some similarities in usage. Both authors refer to themselves in the editorial "we". Neither seems to be a big fan of contractions. Except for quotations and patter, Erdnase only uses two (p. 79 "Lightning don't strike" and p. 116 "We don't think many"). I don't see any (so far) in Gallaway's book. Both writers use the Oxford Comma.

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**Pete McCabe** | 08/02/15 07:01 PM | [link] | [filter]

I recall reading that a census survey showed no one named Erdnase was living in the US during the period in question. Has anyone looked at other countries? Could Erdnase have been an old-country name, changed upon arrival, or a friend or relative?

Unrelated second question: Do we know where Sanders might have seen the Mutus Nomen trick under that name? How many places was it in print at the time?
simply reverse his name if it was E.S. Andrews. That is the biggest strike against an E.S. Andrews.

The problem with this line of argument is that it presumes that Erdnase wanted to completely disappear for all time, something that we have absolutely no evidence he actually wanted to do.

There is every possibility that Erdnase simply wanted a bit of "anonymity for convenience".

Perhaps it was to protect him from the Comstock Laws, or perhaps he simply wanted the authors name written on the cover such that he could say "nope, it's not me" to anybody who asked.

Even though the complete disappearance from view is his current status, nothing indicates that such an outcome was his intent or even his actual desire.

It may be a bit to casual to say Erdnase reversed "Andrews", or perhaps jumbled up "Sanders" on something as flippant as a whim ... but I've never thought his intent was anything so drastic as to vanish completely for all time, if indeed it was his intent to vanish at all.

JHostler | 08/02/15 07:31 PM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote:

lybrary wrote: Erdnase is way more sophisticated, intelligent and eclectic to simply reverse his name if it was E.S. Andrews. That is the biggest strike against an E.S. Andrews.

The problem with this line of argument is that it presumes that Erdnase wanted to completely disappear for all time, something that we have absolutely no evidence he actually wanted to do.

There is every possibility, and indeed more than a few folks simply think that Erdnase wanted some "anonymity for convenience".

The problem with that line of argument is that it's just as easy (and much more fail-safe) to completely fabricate a name than to tinker with the arrangement of letters. A person seeking any degree of legitimate anonymity simply wouldn't risk it. Forget Erdnase, we could just as easily be looking for Bat Masterson who, incidentally, was 1) a rabid gambler, 2) familiar with Faro, 3) a professional writer, 4) imagesensitive, and 5) accepted a new professional gig in 1902.
different name he might be on the short list of popular candidates...

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**Leonard Hevia** | 08/02/15 07:45 PM | link | filter

_Pete McCabe wrote:_ Unrelated second question: Do we know where Sanders might have seen the Mutus Nomen trick under that name? How many places was it in print at the time?

It's in Chapter 3 of Hoffmann's *Modern Magic* titled "The Pairs Re-paired."

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**Brad Henderson** | 08/02/15 07:53 PM | link | filter

Pete. card tricks seem to be a viral phenomenon. They get shown and passed around.

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**Bob Coyne** | 08/02/15 07:58 PM | link | filter

_Leonard Hevia wrote:_

_Pete McCabe wrote:_ Unrelated second question: Do we know where Sanders might have seen the Mutus Nomen trick under that name? How many places was it in print at the time?

It’s in Chapter 3 of Hoffmann's *Modern Magic* titled "The Pairs Re-paired."

Marty points out (in his Montana’s Conjurers, Con Men, and Card Cheats article) that Sanders lists the order as "Mutis Nomen Dedit Cocis" rather than "Mutis Dedit Nomen Cocis"...which is how Modern Magic orders it. He also mentions that two books of the era (The Secret Out and Amateur Amusements) contain both the Mutus Nomen ordering and the star puzzle (which is on the same Sanders notebook page).

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/02/15 08:44 PM | link | filter

_Pete McCabe wrote:_ I recall reading that a census survey showed no one named Erdnase was living in the US during the period in question. Has anyone looked at other countries? Could Erdnase have been an old-country name, changed upon arrival, or a friend or relative?

I’ve checked foreign genealogical databases and foreign newspaper archives. Not as exhaustively as I have American ones (they don’t exist in the same depth, and I don’t have access to as many), but I’ve never found any evidence of a real person with that name.
Re "Mutus Nomen," I don’t place a lot of importance on the sequence that Sanders arrived at, since it appears that he kind of pieced the thing back together. So I think it is only marginally more likely that he learned it from a source that had the sequence he arrived showed. Also, as Brad indicates, he could have picked it up from a friend.

Richard Kaufman | 08/02/15 09:07 PM | link | filter

If Bill Mullins can’t find a person with the name "Erdnase," then no one has ever had that real last name!

20514 | 08/02/15 10:09 PM | link | filter

Guest wrote: Hello everyone,

Some time ago I began to study The Annotated Erdnase which I found quite fascinating. However, I soon delayed my study of Erdnase and began reading the Card College volumes.

Now I’m ready to resume my study of "The Expert". My question is how does one properly study Erdnase? Should I start with the Legerdemain section or Card Table Artifice?

Are there certain moves that are best studied from other sources? Are there sleights that are too inferior? Any help would be greatly appreciated!

Roberto

I think you made a wise decision by reading through Card College before studying Erdnase.

I personally had to study both Royal Road and Card College before having even the vaguest understanding of what the author in Expert at the Card table was trying to convey in terms of technique.

Somewhere near the epilogue of the book, the author mentions his intent to somewhat flummox his readers in order to weed-out those whom are not as committed to learning the closely guarded artifice’s during his time (early 1900’s), which in itself can become frustrating, as the reader is left solely to his own personal interpretation as to how to un-puzzle Erdnase’s work.

As far as moves that are better off being learned from other sources is concerned, I strongly believe the somewhat unorthodox Erdnase grip for the bottom deal would
But as far as demonstrating the base deal for laymen is concerned with the Erdnase grip, it should pass with flying colors.

Richard Kaufman | 08/02/15 11:46 PM | link | filter

Gene Maze used the Erdnase Grip exclusively for all his Bottom Deal work. I saw him perform for lay people many times and no one even noticed the position of his second finger. How (not) surprising.

Card players would likely find it unusual, however.

Zenner | 08/03/15 06:58 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: Now, I see you mean that Thompson actually used the Andrews identity in his business dealings with McKinney, and it wasn't just a source for his pseudonym. I'm glad you are making that clear.

I have tried to make everything as clear as I can. It is you who are deliberately obfuscating the issue in your attempts to discredit Harry S. Thompson as a candidate.

This means that McKinney would see him in his Thompson persona when they were buying ink from Ruxton, and in his Andrews persona when arranging to print his book, and didn't notice the similarity.

Somebody at McKinney's obviously knew that E.C. Andrews was Harry Thompson. The business arrangements with Ruxton and Andrews were obviously being kept separate. It would have been too easy for me if I think Thompson had shown up in the files, but he didn't. All I have to do now is to find out who it was, if possible.

For all I know, it could have been Ed Gallaway!

Someone mentioned that the Introduction to the Gallaway book used different language to that of the rest of the book. What if Ed got someone else to write his Introduction for him? That often happens. Maybe "Erdnase", whoever he was, wrote that Introduction?

More investigations. I think that I will start with the fact that both Ed and Harry were freemasons.

Peter Zenner
Zenner wrote: I have tried to make everything as clear as I can. It is you who are deliberately obfuscating the issue in your attempts to discredit Harry S. Thompson as a candidate.

I don't believe Thompson was Erdnase. But I am not trying to obfuscate anything.

More investigations. I think that I will start with the fact that both Ed and Harry were freemasons.

I am not a Freemason, and know nothing of Masonic lore. Is there anything in Expert that supports the idea that the author was a Mason (or a member of any other fraternal/religious organization)?

Jonathan Townsend | 08/03/15 11:44 AM | link | filter

Zenner wrote:

Bill Mullins wrote: ... with the fact that both Ed and Harry were freemasons.

Where is this fact established?

Richard Hatch | 08/03/15 11:55 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: Is there anything in Expert that supports the idea that the author was a Mason (or a member of any other fraternal/religious organization)?

My understanding is that Masons are prohibited from gambling as "immoral behavior". Of course, that could be used to argue either that the author was not a Mason or that it gave him an additional reason to hide his true identity.

For what it's worth, James McKinney was also a Freemason, a member of Humboldt Park Lodge no. 813.

Tom Sawyer | 08/03/15 11:04 PM | link | filter

I notice that Ike Morgan is mentioned in the bankruptcy file, on page 572 of the library version. I would think this was probably the same Ike Morgan who illustrated Jack Pots (Chicago, 1900), by Eugene Edwards (which is viewable on the Hathi Trust Digital Library website).
Morgan illustrated a number of books that were published by Jamieson Higgins, a company that is in some way tied up with McKinney (McKinney was an investor in J-H, according to a Publisher’s Weekly article mentioned upthread). He was also a cartoonist. Here is a bookplate he designed.

Offline, Richard Hatch has pointed out that Morgan, like Dalrymple, was an illustrator for newspapers in Chicago and NY.

Richard Hatch wrote:

Bill Mullins wrote: Is there anything in Expert that supports the idea that the author was a Mason (or a member of any other fraternal/religious organization)?

My understanding is that Masons are prohibited from gambling as "immoral behavior". Of course, that could be used to argue either that the author was not a Mason or that it gave him an additional reason to hide his true identity.

I have no idea whether or not Masons are prohibited from gambling, but, as I hope that you have realised by now, I don’t believe that ‘Erdnase’ was a gambler. He was a magician who had studied books which explained the methods of card cheats and come up with some of his own FOR USE IN CARD TRICKS.

The "reformed gambler", "ex-card cheat" persona was a ruse to sell a book. Why was the book sold under the title The Expert at the Card Table, rather than Artifice Ruse and Subterfuge at the Card Table? Because it sounded less technical and more likely to appeal to those people who thought they might benefit financially by purchasing the book?

For what it's worth, James McKinney was also a Freemason, a member of Humboldt Park Lodge no. 813.

Harry "attained the degree of Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret, 32°" in Scottish Rite Masonry, as did Dr. A.M. Wilson.

Peter Zenner
"Erdnase," then no one has ever had that real last name!

Remember that business in the June 1908 issue of *The Caledonian*? On page 115, there was an account of a banquet of the Canadian Club of New York, held at the Hotel Astor on May 14. Among the attendees (p. 117) was S. W. Erdnose.

A search on the Internet revealed a dog show - Croatia, Varazdin Int. 24.05.2009. The Judge was Szuzanna Balog Erdnose. S. B. Erdnose? 😂

Perhaps 'Erdnase' was a misprint for 'Erdnose' and the author was Croatian?

Just another stir to keep the pot boiling

Peter Zenner

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**lybrary** | 08/04/15 08:04 AM | link | filter

Some anagramatical musings involving Edward Gallaway:

If you ask me S.W. Erdnase has a lot of Edward in it. To be more precise, S.W. Erdnase has the word Edward in it if we allow the d to be used twice. What remains is 'ness'. Meaning Edward-ness (as in highness). The French might pronounce it as Edwarness, leaving out the trailing d of Edward.

On the title page we find the lines:

WITH OVER ONE HUNDRED
DRAWINGS FROM LIFE

Taking the last ED from hundred and the first DRAW from drawings, reversing the DRAW to WARD and combining it with ED gives us EDWARD. There is also the name Gallaway on the title page, but not as nice and neatly as Edward.

---

**Brad Henderson** | 08/04/15 09:08 AM | link | filter

there is far too much information about the approach to cheating at the table that a magician simply would not know. The approach for performing and the approach for cheating are diametrically opposed, and if you look at most magicians who claim to be cheats you can see just by their demeanor that they have no idea what they are talking about - from experience.

magicians show off, cheaters hide.
someone who was primarily a magician.

**Brad Henderson | 08/04/15 09:10 AM | link | filter**

where are Thompson's other published tricks? there is no good reason for thompson to not have published in other places, like with his buddies at the Sphinx, if he wanted to share, which if we wrote a book he clearly did.

let's compare those tricks to those in erdnase. where and what are they?

**Richard Hatch | 08/04/15 11:13 AM | link | filter**

Regarding Ed Gallaway: Since he had and kept a copy of Erdnase in his library, isn't it possible that the similarities between his 1927 book and The Expert are a result of his having read and been influenced by Erdnase, rather than his being Erdnase? Certainly Erdnase has influenced other readers, why not Gallaway?

**Bill Mullins | 08/04/15 12:34 PM | link | filter**

*Zenner wrote:* Remember that business in the June 1908 issue of *The Caledonian*?

Link

A search on the Internet revealed a dog show - Croatia, Varazdin Int. 24.05.2009. The Judge was Szuzanna Balog Erdnose. S. B. Erdnose?

Perhaps 'Erdnase' was a misprint for 'Erdnose' and the author was Croatian?

Probably not a misprint, since it shows up as handwritten on the copyright application.
But congratulations on finding another instance of the name being used.

I don't believe that 'Erdnase' was a gambler. He was a magician who had studied books which explained the methods of card cheats.

I know that some of the moves (palms, false deals, shifts, etc.) in *Expert* were mentioned in previous books. But "explained"? I don't think so. I can't think of _any_ examples of cheating sleights and moves described in *Expert* having been previously
and come up with some of his own FOR USE IN CARD TRICKS.

What magic tricks would you use the Erdnase System of Cull Shuffling in? Or the Erdnase system of Stock Shuffling? Were these tricks commonly performed before 1902? (or after, for that matter?)

These moves are used by magicians if they want to show how a gambler cheats -- but was that a mode of performance back then?

I doubt he wanted to use the Erdnase Shift One Hand (p 99) in Card Tricks. It is impractical, and the only tricks I know of in which it is used were designed specifically to accommodate this sleight (or to show off to other magicians the mastery of the sleight by the creator).

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**Edward Finck** | 08/04/15 02:07 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

_Zenner wrote:_ Why was the book sold under the title _The Expert at the Card Table_, rather than _Artifice Ruse and Subterfuge at the Card Table_? Because it sounded less technical and more likely to appeal to those people who thought they might benefit financially by purchasing the book?

Actually that is incorrect. Any librarian in the world will tell you the title of the book comes from the title page by definition. Not the cover or binding. The book was properly copyrighted as Atifice Ruse and Subterfuge, it's actual title. It was Drake who changed the name, perhaps by error when advertising the book a few years later as The Expert At the Card Table. This name stuck but is not the proper name of the book. There is no evidence whatsoever that Erdnase sold the book under the later assumed title.

Reasonable people can disagree as to the level of Erdnase's skill as a professional advantage player but very few (or none) who have thoroughly read and studied the book would draw the conclusion that he was just a card magician. There is far too much detail that is not relevant to card magic.

As an aside, do you have any evidence of Thompson playing faro? Erdnase was clearly a faro player so if you can demonstrate that Thompson was too it could strengthen your case.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 08/04/15 02:32 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

The famous "first advertisement" (1902) calls it _The Expert at the Card Table_. So does
Richard Hatch wrote: Regarding Ed Gallaway: Since he had and kept a copy of Erdnase in his library, isn't it possible that the similarities between his 1927 book and The Expert are a result of his having read and been influenced by Erdnase, rather than his being Erdnase? Certainly Erdnase has influenced other readers, why not Gallaway?

Richard, I think it is highly unlikely for somebody like Gallaway, who must have been involved with the production of hundreds if not thousands of books, that he decided to copy EATCT. EATCT is certainly groundbreaking in its contents. But I don't think it has pioneered any publishing norms to make it worth copying.

Bill Mullins wrote: On the other hand, Erdnase often refers in the third person to "the reader". (See pp 12, 16, 20 (twice), 25, 30, 29, 70, 77, 130, 141, 157.) Gallaway doesn't use this formation much; I find it only once, on p 4 in the introduction.

It is used however quite a bit more in How to price job printing properly:

https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... ice-03.jpg

e.g. "the printer", "the idealist", "the compiler" (referring to himself)

As well as in Problems in estimating:

https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... ing-01.jpg

e.g. "the student"

This is my announced quantitative analysis. It is my first attempt putting some numbers behind some of the evidence that gets mentioned in lists. It is my first stab and I welcome critique, comments, and suggestions to make it better. I think it is very important for us to quantify evidence otherwise we will have a much harder time to move this discussion forward. Before you get hung up on specific numbers, I am mostly interested in orders of magnitudes. (Some of the arguments you will remember from my earlier posts, but they are refined and put into a bigger context here.)
I will develop two cases for Gallaway. One which I feel is likely and one a worst case scenario. We know Erdnase ordered the printing of his book at McKinney in 1901. Based on the bankruptcy files which reveals the size of McKinney’s business my estimate is that McKinney had business contact with no more than 300 people during 1901. I think it is likely to assume Erdnase did directly deal with McKinney. But for the worst case we assume that Erdnase used a front-man. That means we square 300 to get 90k (90,000). This means we assume that everyone of those 300 business contacts had 300 other business contacts which could be Erdnase. We also have 32 employees which we have to keep separate, because they are a special group of people for which different circumstances apply. So we have 300+32 for the likely scenario and 90k+32 for the worst case.

We can also safely assume Erdnase had a first edition of EATCT. (Yes there is the possibility that Erdnase got disgusted with his writing and banished the book from his library, but this is an estimate where outlandish possibilities do not matter.) I assume that there were no more than 10,000 first editions printed. I think this is a safe assumption. Most likely only 2000-3000 were printed because we know Drake started to reprint pretty soon after EATCT appears. In 1902 there were 80 million people in the US. Limiting to males we get 40 million and further limiting to adult males we get 20 million. From this I get 10k/20M = 1/2000. On average there is one copy of EATCT for every 2000 male adults. I do not specify when somebody acquired the book. In reality the number of people in the denominator above is much higher because we are not looking at one year only but at a couple of decades which means there are many more people who could have acquired a first edition. But again, for my argument I will leave it at 1/2000 to be on the safe side.

We can now combine these two numbers. For the likely case we expect 300/2000 = 0.15 people to have a first edition of EATCT. For the worst case we have 90000/2000 = 45 people to have a first edition of EATCT. Employees we have to treat differently, because they are more likely to have a copy, because they might have been involved with its production, or they may have seen it at their workplace and picked up a copy. For the likely case assuming about 10% of employees to have a copy is a pretty sound assumption. This would give us 3 people and thus in total 3.15 people for the likely case. In the worst case I will assume that everybody of the 32 employees received a copy. Unlikely but it is the worst case. This gives us for the worst case 45+32 = 77 people.

So at this point we expect 3.15 people, which I round to 3 people, for the likely case and 77 people for the worst case to meet the requirements for Erdnase assuming evidence that applies to Gallaway.

We also know that M.D. Smith remembered Erdnase's real name had a 'W'
What do these numbers mean? These numbers are the numbers of people we expect to meet the same things we know about Gallaway. In the likely case with 0.3 people it means that once we have found one such person (Edward Gallaway) it is quite unlikely to find a second such person. In other words, we can be reasonably sure we have found Erdnase.

E. S. ANDREWS

I will now attempt a similar analysis for E.S. Andrews. I must say I am not a specialist on this candidate. Others can fill in my gaps and develop this further, but it serves as comparison.

We know E.S. Andrews is in Chicago at the right time. He has not been linked to McKinney, but we know he is in town. In 1901 there were 2 million people in Chicago/Cook County according to the US census. Reducing this to male gives 1 million and reducing to adult male gives us 500,000 people. We also know he played cards. I have no good number for a ratio of card players to non card players but I will assume a 1/5 ratio. So out of 5 people I assume 1 is a card player. This reduces the numbers for E.S. Andrews to 100,000. Andrews also has a 'W' in his name which means we can reduce the number by a factor 10 and we get 10,000. That is as low as I can get the number for E.S. Andrews.

Now compare 10,000 people who we expect to match the E.S. Andrews profile and 0.3 people (or 7.7 people in the worst case) who we expect to match the Edward Gallaway profile. Both profiles match Erdnase. There are 3-4 orders of magnitude difference. That is significant. It means Gallaway is much more likely Erdnase than any other candidate, because the numbers are even higher for other favorite candidates. This is part of the reason why I am so convinced about Gallaway. This analysis does not even include the similarity in literary voice or any other points that fit the picture.

[One other comment which I wanted to make for a long time. A lot of evidence that gets mentioned here is non-evidence. For example, it is pretty obvious that everybody ‘needs the money’. Any candidate can be shown to need the money. And if we should ever find any candidate who is obviously filthy rich then clearly it was a sarcastic comment. Since any candidate can somehow be shown to need the money it is no evidence whatsoever. Same with reasons to stay anonymous. Anybody writing a book like EATCT has enough reason to stay anonymous. And therefore again not evidence at all if you have some 'good' reason why a candidate needed to stay anonymous. Once you throw out all this non-evidence and quantify what is left a much clearer picture emerges.]
I conducted a similar "analysis" for Edwin S. Andrews (the train agent) a few years ago and pretty much convinced myself that he was the author, but I was handicapped by the assumption that the author's name was likely "E. S. Andrews" (a popular assumption until recently!). I used census statistics to estimate how many people in the US had the last name Andrews, how many males had names beginning with E, how many had middle initials S and how many of those were likely to be in Chicago at the time. Making what I thought were reasonable assumptions, I came up with the number one or less (I probably posted that reasoning in this forum years ago...). Case closed! Of course, if we throw out the idea that the author was named "E. S. Andrews", then such an analysis becomes pretty worthless!

If I understand your statistics, Chris, the estimated chances for an adult male in the USA in 1902 owning a copy of EATCT are no greater than 1/2000 (and probably much smaller). It follows (I think) that the odds of an adult male in the USA in 1902 owning 2 copies are (1/2000)x(1/2000)=1/4,000,000. If we apply those odds to the population of Cook County (2 million) we get an expectation of only half a person in Chicago in 1902 owning 2 copies of the book. Ed Vernello owned at least 2 copies in 1902, since he took the trouble to advertise it in the The Sphinx in November 1902, unlikely to be something he would have done had he only had one copy. In fact, he likely a dozen or more copies, to justify his effort in advertising it. What are the odds of that? Do I think Vernello was the author? No. A person of interest, who may have known the author? Sure!

Here's an even more statistically unlikely individual: He was in Chicago, knew about copyright law, possessed multiple first edition copies, as well as copies of Roterberg's book (which we know the author had studied) and Selbit's Magician's Handbook (which had the color change attributed to Houdini that was also in Erdnase) and he had very direct dealings with McKinney, as detailed in the bankruptcy papers. Statistically, he has to be the author, right? Personally, I don't think so (though I bet he knew who was), but statistically speaking, Frederick J. Drake has to be the guy by this line of reasoning!

Incidentally, Drake advertised Selbit's book on the back cover of the very first issue of the Sphinx, which had his full page ad, as did the next two issues (after that he went to a quarter page ad). Drake also advertised (elsewhere) Cobb's Jack Henderson Down East which was illustrated by Marshall D. Smith. What are the odds of that?

While I find such statistical analyses interesting, I do not find them convincing.

**magicam** | 08/04/15 09:10 PM | link | filter

Okay, Chris, I'll be the first to admit my ignorance: I find the methodology and analysis incomprehensible.
Richard Hatch wrote: If I understand your statistics, Chris, the estimated chances for an adult male in the USA in 1902 owning a copy of EATCT are no greater than 1/2000 (and probably much smaller). It follows (I think) that the odds of an adult male in the USA in 1902 owning 2 copies are (1/2000) x (1/2000) = 1/4,000,000. If we apply those odds to the population of Cook County (2 million) we get an expectation of only half a person in Chicago in 1902 owning 2 copies of the book. Ed Vernello owned at least 2 copies in 1902, since he took the trouble to advertise it in The Sphinx in November 1902, unlikely to be something he would have done had he only had one copy. In fact, he likely a dozen or more copies, to justify his effort in advertising it. What are the odds of that? Do I think Vernello was the author? No. A person of interest, who may have known the author? Sure!

Richard, maybe I didn’t make this clear enough in my analysis. I am not primarily calculating the statistically expected chance to find somebody like Gallaway. I am calculating the statistically expected chance to find Erdnase. In order for your case of two copies of EATCT to work you would have to tell us why Erdnase had to have two copies and not only one. My analysis basically is for anybody with one or more EATCT, because the chance to owning two copies, as you correctly calculated, is much smaller and thus we can basically ignore it. You can of course include it, but it would only change the third decimal somewhere so it does not matter.

The problem with your earlier E.S. Andrews analysis was a similar one. We can’t assume that Erdnase had that name. There is really no evidence for it. However, all the evidence I am using must also apply for Erdnase. He certainly ordered his book printed at McKinney and he most likely had one or more first editions. Perhaps the only questionable bit is the 'W' in the name, but both Andrews and Gallaway have that so it cancels in the direct comparison.

__lybrary__ | 08/04/15 09:25 PM | [link] | [filter]

_magicam wrote_: Okay, Chris, I’ll be the first to admit my ignorance: I find the methodology and analysis incomprehensible.

Clay, if you ask specific questions maybe I can clarify.

__Jack Shalom__ | 08/04/15 09:59 PM | [link] | [filter]

Now compare 10,000 people who we expect to match the E.S. Andrews profile and 0.3 people (or 7.7 people in the worst case) who we expect to match the Edward Gallaway profile. Both profiles match Erdnase. There are 3-4 orders of magnitude difference
only on criteria which are biased towards your candidate. Had you picked other
criteria, such as the likelihood of someone’s name being a complete anagram of S.W.
Erdnase, the results would have ended up very differently.

I love following this Erdnase discussion, and in particular how heated people get about
their own candidates. Always a lively discussion. However, as a mathematician, this is
the first time I think I have something important to add to the debate. So here we go.

Chris,
Richard’s calculations are NOT correct, as the events of owning a copy of Erdnase are
NOT independent. That's a dangerous assumption. Unfortunately it's one that many
people make. At least one person has been imprisoned due to this type of
mathematical misunderstanding.

The probability of somebody who owns a copy of Erdnase owning a second copy could
be likely quite higher than the probability of a random American owning just one
copy. At any rate, assuming that they're the same is probably not a good idea.

Let’s go a little further. The odds of a magician or somebody interested in gambling (or
somebody working at the printing company) owning a copy of Erdnase is of course
higher than the odds of just some random person owning one, these numbers being
conjured are far less meaningful than one might think. Richard’s example of Drake
brings up a similar point.

In particular, it's probably not a good idea to cherry-pick what you want to test AFTER
you've decided on your answer. This is like rationalizing after the fat.

Chris, this is not to say if you have the right guy or not. I really don't know. But what
Richard said was right. This type of post-hoc probabilistic analysis is at best
unconvincing and at worst (as Jack points outs) can be very misleading and close one's
eyes to data that points in another direction.

Hope this helps,
Derrick

Derrick, thanks for the clarification, much appreciated! It is, of course, obvious (once
it has been pointed out!) that the odds of someone owning a second copy (given they
already have a first copy) are greater than the odds of a random individual owning a
Chicago and the early distributors (Vernello, H. C. Evans, Atlas, Roterberg, et alia) were all based there. Although all did a mail order business, I’d guess point of purchase sales of such a title were greater initially, so we’d expect to see a higher probability of first edition copies centered around Chicago.

I do think that Chris' reasoning, applied to Drake, makes him a better candidate than Gallaway if you ignore Smith’s recollection that the name had a "w" in it. But we also have to ignore Smith's prompted (but enthusiastic and unwaiving) endorsement of the name Andrews and his belief that the author had been honest with him. Smith also did not believe that the author, whom he met in a cheap hotel room, was from Chicago, which would eliminate Gallaway and several others (arguably including E. S. Andrews, the train agent, though he had only just moved back to Chicago after several years absence, which would explain the payment by check on a newly opened account, as recalled by Smith).

**Richard Hatch wrote:** Smith also did not believe that the author, whom he met in a cheap hotel room, was from Chicago, which would eliminate Gallaway and several others ...

Gallaway grew up in Delphos, OH. He was there at least until 14, but from the information Bill Mullins found he may have been there for longer and only came to Chicago later. It seems Gallaway initially worked at the Delphos Herald. Exactly for how long I don’t know. But I think that would make him accent wise not somebody from Chicago.

Regarding Drake, do we have proof that he owned a first edition? He had the plates and he reprinted it, but I don’t remember we have a proof that he owned one, which would then confirm my analysis.

**Jack Shalom wrote:** Chris, your methodological fallacy here is that you have constructed a profile based only on criteria which are biased towards your candidate. Had you picked other criteria, such as the likelihood of someone’s name being a complete anagram of S.W. Erdnase, the results would have ended up very differently.

Not true. I thought about that. But we have no information if Erdnase came up with his name through an anagram, through backward spelling, from a German nickname or ethnic slur, or in some other way that we cannot anymore understand. Given that Gallaway was an honor student in his German class and the fact that he grew up in Delphos which was founded by Germans I think the explanation that Erdnase came...
Richard Hatch wrote: Derrick, thanks for the clarification, much appreciated! It is, of course, obvious (once it has been pointed out!) that the odds of someone owning a second copy (given they already have a first copy) are greater than the odds of a random individual owning a copy.

It still does not change my analysis. My numbers are valid for anybody owning one or more first editions. The numbers would not change.

Richard Hatch wrote: I would also argue that the odds of owning a copy are much higher in the Chicago area than randomly nationwide. After all, it was published (we think!) in Chicago and the early distributors (Vernello, H. C. Evans, Atlas, Roterberg, et alia) were all based there. Although all did a mail order business, I’d guess point of purchase sales of such a title were greater initially, so we’d expect to see a higher probability of first edition copies centered around Chicago.

That is actually a valid critique. So let’s run the numbers. We know nationwide we have 20 million male adults. In the Chicago area we have 500k male adults. So a better guess is something in that range. So let’s take 2 million male adults rather than 20 million as our group of possible buyers. This makes the ratio 1/200. It increases the likely scenario to 0.4 people rather than 0.3. As you can see it doesn’t change the conclusion a whole lot.

Factoring in that magicians and gamblers are more likely to purchase the book makes no sense unless you want to argue that the people using McKinney as printer were mostly magicians and gamblers, which they were not.

Richard Hatch wrote: Smith also did not believe that the author, whom he met in a cheap hotel room, was from Chicago, which would eliminate Gallaway and several others ...

Gallaway grew up in Delphos, OH. He was there at least until 14, but from the information Bill Mullins found he may have been there for longer and only came to Chicago later. It seems Gallaway initially worked at the Delphos Herald. Exactly for how long I don’t know. But I think that would make him accent wise not somebody from Chicago.
the plates and he reprinted it, but I don’t remember we have a proof that he owned one, which would then confirm my analysis.

Smith believed the author was not from Chicago and thought he was likely from the East Coast, possibly New York. We are not told why he thought this. I do not assume it was from his accent. It could just as easily (and to me more likely) have been from something related in conversation. The fact that they met in a cheap hotel room where the author was apparently staying probably also led Smith to believe he had not been in town long, which was corroborated by the newly opened checking account from which Smith was paid.

Drake owned multiple first edition copies, since he began advertising them sometime in 1903 (presumably after April 1903, since he did not include them in his ads of "Books for Magicians" in Mahatma’s April issue) and continued to advertise first edition copies until he issued his own reprint in 1905. I’m guessing he had several hundred copies, otherwise it likely would not have been worth his while to handle them. Keep in mind that Drake had McKinney print 6,000 copies of a book on photography, so he was used to selling books in large numbers.

Keeping in mind that I don’t think Drake was Erdnase (though I suspect he knew who was), and just playing devil’s advocate, if Drake were Erdnase, it would explain using McKinney as the printer (since Drake was using McKinney at that time), it would explain why he had first edition copies to sell, it would explain how he obtained the printing plates (he’d already paid for them!), it would explain why he didn’t need to have the copyright transferred (since he already owned it). It can be argued that Drake had an interest in magic, without being a part of the magic community (which fits my profile of the author), since he published books by Roterberg, Downs, Hilliar, Robert-Houdin (a book on card cheating, no less!), and others as part of his line, which seems unlikely for someone with no interest in magic, since it is such a niche market (and his advertising in trade publications such as Sphinx and Mahatma supports this). He might have chosen not to have his imprint on the first edition due to the Comstock laws and might not have wanted his name on a book written by someone with obvious experience in gambling... This might also explain his family’s reluctance to give out information about the author. His possible connection to Marshall Smith (via the Jack Henderson book he sold) helps his candidacy, too (what other candidate is a known publisher of the book, who dealt with McKinney, was familiar with Roterberg and Selbit’s works, and was familiar with Smith’s work?).

Chris, when you run your statistics on Drake (using the information outlined above), where does he stand in comparison to Gallaway?
Richard Hatch wrote: I do think that Chris' reasoning, applied to Drake, makes him a better candidate than Gallaway if you ignore Smith's recollection that the name had a "w" in it.

Perhaps Drake was rhotacistic. He would have pronounced his name "Fwedewick Dwake", which could account for the W.

But we also have to ignore Smith's prompted (but enthusiastic and unwaivering) endorsement of the name Andrews

As well as the statements of Sprong and Rullman, and possibly someone at Drake that Vernon spoke to. Note the people making these statements were contemporaries of Erdnase; Sprong even lived in the same city and would have been motivated to find the author.

Bill Mullins wrote:

Richard Hatch wrote: But we also have to ignore Smith's prompted (but enthusiastic and unwaivering) endorsement of the name Andrews

As well as the statements of Sprong and Rullman, and possibly someone at Drake that Vernon spoke to. Note the people making these statements were contemporaries of Erdnase; Sprong even lived in the same city and would have been motivated to find the author.

70+ years of searching for an Andrews has not yielded any really good candidate. All the evidence for an 'Andrews' is very questionable, hearsay, or tainted. It is my believe that this focus on an Andrews has done much harm in finding the true Erdnase.

Richard Hatch wrote: Smith believed the author was not from Chicago and thought he was likely from the East Coast, possibly New York. We are not told why he thought this. I do not assume it was from his accent. It could just as easily (and to me more likely) have been from something related in conversation. The fact that they met in a cheap hotel room where the author was apparently staying probably also led Smith to believe he had not been in town long, which was corroborated by the newly opened checking account from which Smith was paid.
match Smith's recollection. While I don't think these things would rule out Edward Gallaway, an explanation for these discrepancies could be Edward's brother Alexander August. I think it is possible that Edward is the writer and Alexander the demonstrator who met with Smith. Alexander is 7 years older than Edward and would therefore fit the age description of Smith perfectly. Alexander never lived in Chicago and would therefore fit the 'not from Chicago' requirements. Alexander moves around quite a bit and his occupation is listed as contractor and paint salesman in the census. To me this matches the profile of an active gambler much better than somebody living in the same area for a long time. It could also explain the 'we' in parts of EATCT. Having a bigger brother myself I know that I was introduced to a lot of things via my brother. So I think it is plausible that Alexander was the real advantage card player who showed his little brother the moves, which he practiced but maybe never used under fire. Together they decided to write the book. Edward, being a printer and the intellectual of the family, wrote and produced it. Alexander, being the card shark, demonstrated the moves to Smith. A team also explains the need for a pseudonym. They were embedded in a German culture which explains Earth-Nose (Erdnase). S. W. are the initials of the first names of their parents Sarah and William. (Perhaps 'earth' and 'nose' refers to each one - their individual nicknames.)

Richard Hatch wrote: Drake owned multiple first edition copies, since he began advertising them sometime in 1903 (presumably after April 1903, since he did not include them in his ads of "Books for Magicians" in Mahatma's April issue) and continued to advertise first edition copies until he issued his own reprint in 1905. I'm guessing he had several hundred copies, otherwise it likely would not have been worth his while to handle them. Keep in mind that Drake had McKinney print 6,000 copies of a book on photography, so he was used to selling books in large numbers.

Keeping in mind that I don't think Drake was Erdnase (though I suspect he knew who was), and just playing devil's advocate, if Drake were Erdnase, it would explain using McKinney as the printer (since Drake was using McKinney at that time), it would explain why he had first edition copies to sell, it would explain how he obtained the printing plates (he'd already paid for them!), it would explain why he didn't need to have the copyright transferred (since he already owned it). It can be argued that Drake had an interest in magic, without being a part of the magic community (which fits my profile of the author), since he published books by Roterberg, Downs, Hilliar, Robert-Houdin (a book on card cheating, no less!), and others as part of his line, which seems unlikely for someone with no interest in magic, since it is such a niche market (and his advertising in trade publications such as Sphinx and Mahatma supports this). He might have
reluctance to give out information about the author. His possible connection to Marshall Smith (via the Jack Henderson book he sold) helps his candidacy, too (what other candidate is a known publisher of the book, who dealt with McKinney, was familiar with Rotenberg and Selbit's works, and was familiar with Smith's work?).

Chris, when you run your statistics on Drake (using the information outlined above), where does he stand in comparison to Gallaway?

Of course, Drake the publishing company owned first editions, because they acquired them. However the question is if Drake the author had one on his shelf. And for that we have no proof. Do we even know if Drake wrote any books? The same argument could be made for one of the McKinney's (James or Patrick). They obviously had business contact with themselves, and since they printed it, they 'owned' a copy. But that is a fallacy. We are looking for an author not a corporation. You would therefore have to show evidence that any of these personally owned a first edition. Neither has a 'W' in their name. And thus you can't make the same case you can make for Gallaway. Don't forget that there are other strong factors for Gallaway. The 'sounds like' evidence hasn't been factored in. We have a very plausible explanation for S.W. Erdnase via the German nickname or ethnic slur theory. None of this is true for Drake or McKinney. Therefore the case for Gallaway is not only sound from a probabilistic point of view, it also explains the major pieces we know apply to Erdnase. The only two points which I cannot yet proof is a connection to Dalrymple (no candidate can do this) and a connection to card play or gambling. Everything else matches and there is nothing that is an obvious mismatch like we have with MFA.

lybrary wrote: It still does not change my analysis. My numbers are valid for anybody owning one or more first editions. The numbers would not change...

In my field, we employ rough quants like this to score people - essentially to narrow the field for a deeper dive into qualitative information. The same type of analysis could also put my favorite candidate, Bat Masterson (yes - mostly joking... but just mostly), on the short list. However, it is safe to say that only a "smoking gun" or OVERWHELMING circumstantial evidence can resolve the Erdnase case with any certainty. So unless these stats can be used to isolate a very small, name-specific, high-probability pool of candidates to the exclusion of all others (as opposed to asserting that just one "may be the guy"), they really don't lead anywhere.
Zenner wrote: I don't believe that 'Erdnase' was a gambler. He was a magician who had studied books which explained the methods of card cheats

These moves are used by magicians if they want to show how a gambler cheats -- but was that a mode of performance back then?

"Mr. Harry S. Thompson, whose picture occupies our first page this month, is a commercial traveler living in Chicago, when at home. He is interested in magic more from the ethical and literary standpoint than from the operative side, as he does not give entertainments of any kind, although he often mystifies his brother 'knights of the grip' with his skill in pure sleight of hand. Mr. Thompson has one of the largest and most practical collections of books, newspaper and magazine articles on magic extant, as there are no remotely related subjects included for the sake of having a big collection. It was largely due to the aid and advice of Mr. Thompson (afforded M. Inez & Co.) that the Sphinx was kept alive after its desertion by W. J. Hilliar, and it was Mr. Thompson that induced Dr. Wilson to take up the editorial work, which finally resulted in removing the paper to Kansas City. Mr. Thompson joined the Society of American Magicians early in its organization and was soon appointed the western representative of the society and entrusted with the power and authority of conferring the secret work upon those in his territory who could not get to New York to receive it. Very few men not in the profession enjoy as large an acquaintance among the leading professional magicians as does Mr. Thompson, and they all speak highly of him as a friend and of his hospitality as a host." (Dr A.M. Wilson, Sphinx, December, 1905)

Bill Mullins wrote: I doubt he wanted to use the Erdnase Shift One Hand (p 99) in Card Tricks. It is impractical, and the only tricks I know of in which it is used were designed specifically to accommodate this sleight (or to show off to other magicians the mastery of the sleight by the creator).

I repeat - "He does not give entertainments of any kind, although he often mystifies his brother "knights of the grip" with his skill in pure sleight of hand"

Peter Zenner

Richard Hatch wrote: Keeping in mind that I don't think Drake was Erdnase (though I suspect he knew who was)

It was interesting to note a couple of addresses in the McKinney Bankruptcy Files. Frederick J. Drake's business was at 356 Dearborn Street and Harry S. Thompson was
I also suspect that Drake knew Erdnase

Peter Zenner

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**Jack Shalom** | 08/05/15 07:50 AM | link | filter

*lybrary wrote:*

*Richard Hatch wrote:*

*Jack Shalom wrote:* Chris, your methodological fallacy here is that you have constructed a profile based only on criteria which are biased towards your candidate. Had you picked other criteria, such as the likelihood of someone's name being a complete anagram of S.W. Erdnase, the results would have ended up very differently.

Not true. I thought about that. But we have no information if Erdnase came up with his name through an anagram, through backward spelling, from a German nickname or ethnic slur, or in some other way that we cannot anymore understand. Given that Gallaway was an honor student in his German class and the fact that he grew up in Delphos which was founded by Germans I think the explanation that Erdnase came from a German nickname given to him is as valid and as likely as an anagram.

Chris, it doesn’t matter the specific criteria that are chosen. The point remains--by making a selection this way, after the fact, and excluding certain outcomes, you are excluding the probability of those outcomes, and thus biasing the overall result.

For example, let’s say I have randomly chosen an object to put in my pocket, and I ask you to guess what it is. It is small and red. You do an analysis of small and red objects in the population and decide, ah, it must be a red rubber ball, because seventy percent of small red objects are red rubber balls. But your analysis is incomplete if you discover that there is also a 75% chance to believe that the object is worth over $1000. Then there is a much likelier chance that the object is, say, a ruby ring.

In the same way, even if there is only a 50% chance that Erdnase is an anagram, if you throw out that possibility, you are biasing the results.

When it comes to questions of probability and statistics it really is important to have...
Jack Shalom wrote: Chris, it doesn’t the matter the specific criteria that are chosen. The point remains--by making a selection this way, after the fact, and excluding certain outcomes, you are excluding the probability of those outcomes, and thus biasing the overall result.

For example, let’s say I have randomly chosen an object to put in my pocket, and I ask you to guess what it is. It is small and red. You do an analysis of small and red objects in the population and decide, ah, it must be a red rubber ball, because eighty percent of small red objects are red rubber balls. But your analysis is incomplete if you discover that there is also a 50% chance to believe that the object is worth over $1000. Then there is a much likelier chance that the object is a ruby ring.

In the same way, even if there is only a 50% chance that Erdnase is an anagram, if you throw out that possibility, you are biasing the results.

When it comes to questions of probability and statistics it really is important to have expert mathematical advice. It is an area of mathematics where frustratingly the intuitive answer and approach is not always the correct one, and can be full of pitfalls.

Jack, then please add the evidence you want to add to your candidate and make a similar analysis for whoever you favor. I would love to see this. That is the reason I posted a concrete analysis. Rather than give us generalities take a candidate, take the evidence, and then reason quantitatively about it.

Just to take your example of the name theories, and demonstrate that it doesn’t allow any narrowing down. I will collapse the name theories a bit, because a reverse spelling is a special form of an anagram:

- anagram (ex: E.S. Andrews, W.E. Sanders)
- German nickname (ex: Edward Gallaway)
- unknown logic not yet discovered

Do we have any information that makes one or the other more likely? Not really, at least no hard evidence that would allow us to exclude any of these theories or make strong cases for anyone with the exclusion of others. In favor of the E.S. Andrews reverse spelling one could name the shaky 'Andrews' indications we have. In favor of the German nickname theory we can say that this nickname is in use in Germany and the word has been used since the 19th century. It also sounds very German. In favor of
then let's say they are equally likely with 1/3. How does this now make say W.E. Sanders more likely than Gallaway? It doesn't.

I am not here to pound on my chest, but if you are only marginally familiar with my background you will understand that I am more than capable to make such an analysis.

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**Jack Shalom** | 08/05/15 08:28 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Chris, again, I am talking about methodology, not content.

But even agreeing that the case for an anagram is 33% (which personally, I think is a wild underestimate--I think it's at least 50%, probably more, but no matter), it already lowers the probability you've stated for Galloway. And that's just one omitted fact.

I don't pretend to know which facts are most distinguishing; I have no expertise in Erdnase. What I am saying is, though, is that there are other distinguishing features which have a non-negligible probability of identifying Erdnase. Without a consensus of Erdnase scholars assigning probability values to those qualifiers, and taking them into account, your analysis will be necessarily flawed.

BTW, I edited the post that you quoted. As quoted, my figures do not make a ruby more likely than a red rubber ball--but it does lower the chance of it being a red rubber ball. The corrected hypotheses make a ruby ring more likely.

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 08/05/15 08:32 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

How difficult was it to obtain a copy of the book in 1902 in Chicago?

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**Lybrary** | 08/05/15 08:40 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Jack Shalom* wrote: But even agreeing that the case for an anagram is 33% (which personally, I think is a wild underestimate--I think it's at least 50%, probably more, but no matter), it already lowers the probability you've stated for Galloway. And that's just one omitted fact.

How so? Can you explain this? If 1/3 probability is assigned to the anagram case and 1/3 to the nickname theory and 1/3 to 'we don't know', why does this make Gallaway less likely than Sanders? Please explain.

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 08/05/15 09:03 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)
What percent of pseudonyms used at the time were anagrams? Have a look here: 
http://www.trussel.com/books/aka.htm 

Tom Gilbert | 08/05/15 11:00 AM | link | filter

A few pages back there was some talk about Erdnase and whether he wanted to be unknown for a period or forever. He has seemingly done a great job so far. I guess for me I wonder what story he used to keep his secrecy. Not sure I buy the people could be after me take. It appears from other posts, his identity was somewhat known, but even after his death, whenever that was, it wasn't for conversation. I would suspect that some people that knew him outlived him and kept his secret. Pete McCabe thought probably Vernon knew, and possibly Persi knows. Surely someone to this day has the passed down info, but still considers it "top secret."

It seems his talk about being a card handler is accepted, but he also writes well on performing some of the magic in the book. Could there have been 3 people involved? A magician, a gambler, and a writer to give them one voice? It would seem a magic writer could do a good job with both. If you look at some of the magicians over the last bunch of decades many have "claimed" to have been mechanics previously, but no gamblers have claimed to be magicians.

I have no horses in the race. I do think a lot of the arguments for particular candidates come from really stretched conjecture.

By the way, I did a US search for the name Erdnase. It appears S. W. Erdnase is alive and living in Sarasota, FL.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/05/15 11:24 AM | link | filter

Tom Gilbert wrote: ... It appears from other posts, his identity was somewhat known...

Where is this established? Our history of that time (Billy Robinson passing himself as Chinese, Houdini about Robert-Houdin, folks badgering Hofzinser's wife - the Keller levitation...) is not so great about accurate provenance.

SWE
RDN
ASE
Hi All,

At the moment, based on this morning's posts, it appears to me that there are at least four specific things of interest going on in this thread:

1. The Wasshuber-Hostler-Shalom discussion, which I realize is just a subset of the larger discussion of the approach suggested by Chris.

2. Peter Zenner's posts.


4. Tom Gilbert's post.

At least for now, the only thing I want to say anything about here is Peter's comments about Ruxton and Drake having similar addresses.

The address one frequently sees for Drake during this period is 352-356 Dearborn. This was in the Morton Building, just north of Harrison.

The 357 Dearborn address would place Ruxton in the Ellsworth Building, directly across the street from Drake. That's interesting, but even more interesting is the fact that the Ellsworth Building faced on both Dearborn and Plymouth Place.

That's not directly across the street from McKinney, but it is diagonally across the street. In other words, the two buildings are almost on top of each other. (This is what I consider a "fun fact," with little, if any, significance.)

Caveat: The streets and addresses of Chicago during that era are often hard to figure out for various reasons. I am "quite certain" of the foregoing, but there is a chance that I may have something wrong.

--Tom Sawyer

Jonathan, my comment was based on previous posts. In a couple it was thought that he was known by the editors of Sphinx magazine. There was also a post pages back stating that he might have been known by a number of the well posted magi of the time.
That Drake and Ruxton were close neighbors in Chicago shouldn't be in the least bit surprising. The printing industry was concentrated in the area. Many of McKinney's creditors were close by, on Dearborn, Plymouth, Harrison, etc.

This section of the city was called printer's row. Nothing unusual for them to be that close together.

Hi All,

Well, of course it is reasonable that McKinney would patronize people in his neighborhood, and I did not mean to imply that I was surprised by that. But Drake and Ruxton were extraordinarily close, especially Ruxton.

As I said, I don't think it means much (if anything) in the case of Ruxton. As to Drake, the proximity may have more significance.

A couple of weeks ago, I posted (on my Erdnase blog) part of a bird's-eye view of that area, showing the relative locations of Drake and McKinney. The post was called, "The locations of James McKinney & Co., Frederick J. Drake & Co., and the Bartl Hotel (later the State Hotel)." I don't know how many of you have seen that, but if you have not, you might want to look at it.

--Tom Sawyer

And while we are exploring German connections, James McKinney was married to Emma Metzinger. Both of her parents were born in Germany.

Peter Z -- you've said that Thompson fiddled with gambling sleights so he could use
I guess I'm getting confused. If he didn't perform, why do you say he inserted gambling sleights into tricks? Are you saying that there was no need for the gambling sleights he invented to use in card tricks to be actually USEFUL since he didn't perform?

And as far as not performing, don't you think the insights he offers about performing magic tricks in the Legerdemain and Card Tricks section show that he had great experience performing in front of people (either as a gambler at a card table, or a magician in front of an audience -- pick one)?

And you said he "studied books which explained the methods of card cheats". Which books? Whose explanation of the Bottom Deal did he study? Who else before him suggested that the bottom deal and the second deal should come from the same grip? Where in the literature before 1902 is there a Euchre Stock?

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**Brad Jeffers | 08/05/15 05:34 PM | link | filter**

lybrary wrote: 1 - anagram (ex: E.S. Andrews, W.E. Sanders)
2 - German nickname (ex: Edward Gallaway)
3 - unknown logic not yet discovered
... let's say they are equally likely with 1/3. How does this now make say W.E. Sanders more likely than Gallaway? It doesn't.

Doesn't it?

Set 1 contains all people in the U.S. whose name is an anagram of S.W. Erdnase. I cannot know exactly what this number is, but intuitively, I will state that it is very small.

Set 2 contains all people in the U.S. who are Germans, or of German decent, or who can be shown to have had a friend, relative or neighbor who was German or of German decent. Not to mention people who studied German in school or people who knew people who studied German in School.

You get the drift.

I cannot know exactly what this number is, but intuitively, I will state that it is (in comparison to the number in set 1) very large.

Set 3 contains all people in the U.S. I cannot know exactly what this number is, but intuitively, I will state that is 76,212,168.
Set 1 contains but a handful of people, set 2 contains tens of thousands of people and set 3 contains everyone.

So if we say that each set is equally likely, then 1/3rd of the time, a candidate from set 1 will be Erdnase, 1/3rd of the time a candidate from set 2 will be Erdnase, and 1/3rd of the time a candidate from set 3 will be Erdnase.

Since each set is assigned an equal value, then if your candidate is in the set that contains the fewest number of people, he will have the higher probability of being Erdnase.

That would be set 1, the anagram set.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/05/15 06:42 PM | link | filter

the set of all (make up a good one here) would be even smaller. but so what?

It would help to link the printer to the writer to the binder to the folks in the neighborhood who would have learned the material.

Jack Shalom | 08/05/15 07:30 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote:

Jack Shalom wrote: But even agreeing that the case for an anagram is 33% (which personally, I think is a wild underestimate--I think it's at least 50%, probably more, but no matter), it already lowers the probability you've stated for Galloway. And that's just one omitted fact.

How so? Can you explain this? If 1/3 probability is assigned to the anagram case and 1/3 to the nickname theory and 1/3 to 'we don't know', why does this make Gallaway less likely than Sanders? Please explain.

I didn't say it makes it less likely than Sanders; it makes Galloway less likely than it did before including that qualifier.

But again, your assignment of 1/3 probability for all three theories is just that--your assignment. Some knowledgeable others (not me, but perhaps in this thread) might have quite a different assignment, say 50%, 30%, 20%. And again this is just on this issue. There's all the Smith testimony and so on. For example, some (not I) might
Tom Sawyer wrote: Hi All,

Well, of course it is reasonable that McKinney would patronize people in his neighborhood, and I did not mean to imply that I was surprised by that. But Drake and Ruxton were extraordinarily close, especially Ruxton.

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--Tom Sawyer

Here's a top down version of your map with Edward Gallaway's and Philip Ruxton's locations added:

https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... inters.jpg

It uses a 1901 Rand McNally map. We know Gallaway's location because we know his address in 1927, a street and number that have not change to the present day. But that is only because it's after the 1909/1911 major renumbering of Chicago streets. Translating old and new street numbers can be done through this document.

(Here are the same locations over a present day Google map: https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?...C-ZIV1Z_JQ)

As have already been pointed out, all of them were very close to each other, as were most printers in Chicago at the time. Today there is even a park in Gallaway's old block named Printers' Row Park.

Tom, how did you place McKinney at the white arrows in your map? What I could find in the bankruptcy files is the address 73-75 South Plymouth Court (presently 511 South Plymouth Court) but only for sure in 1903, so they may have moved at some point.

It's still in the same block anyway, and all of the people we're looking at are literally in the next block from each other.
the set of all (make up a good one here) would be even smaller. but so what?

What Brad said.

If the set that made up that "good one" were a set that, like an anagram, a goodly number of Erdnase scholars thought was relevant, then being very small it would be a very useful identifier.

For example, if say, we knew that Erdnase was 7 feet tall, and there was only one 7 foot man living in Chicago at the time, it would be pretty much a slam dunk.

Now let's say we are only 50% sure of the 7 foot statement. Then we would only be 50% sure of our 7 foot man, but we would be much much less sure about any one particular individual shorter than that.

Concerning mam's recent post and question:

The Rand McNally map linked-to shows McKinney as a little south of Van Buren, but I place him a little south of an imaginary horizontal line extending west from the south edge of Congress Street as it runs almost from the coast. The Morton Building (of Drake) and the Ellsworth Building (of Ruxton) are each just one-building (or so) north of Harrison, while that map shows them around mid-block.

As I recall, I originally figured out McKinney's location fairly well by an arduous process of correlating his address with the corresponding addresses of one or two known buildings on the other side of the street. This was sort of a major topic on an earlier blog I ran, called "S.W. Erdnase: 20 Years Later."

Still, there were various uncertainties, as I recall.

Bill Mullins later (actually quite soon) very kindly provided me with an image of a Sanborn fire-insurance map from a slightly later period (when the street was known as Plymouth Court). That map shows with great clarity that the 73-75 Plymouth address was a little south of Congress (that is, south of where Congress would have been if it had continued straight west from the coastal area). At the time, Congress did not cross Plymouth.
Tom Sawyer wrote: The Rand McNally map linked-to shows McKinney as a little south of Van Buren, but I place him a little south of an imaginary horizontal line extending west from the south edge of Congress Street as it runs almost from the coast. The Morton Building (of Drake) and the Ellsworth Building (of Ruxton) are each just one-building (or so) north of Harrison, while that map shows them around mid-block.

Yes, both buildings are second to southernmost towards Harrison, but how were Drake placed in Morton and Ruxton in Ellsworth to begin with? Their addresses do not seem to match the locations of those buildings. I figure you are infinitely better informed on this, but I’m just curious.

Tom Sawyer wrote: As I recall, I originally figured out McKinney’s location fairly well by an arduous process of correlating his address with the corresponding addresses of one or two known buildings on the other side of the street. This was sort of a major topic on an earlier blog I ran, called “S.W. Erdnase: 20 Years Later.”

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Would love to read some of this, have you saved the contents in any form?

Hi mam,

The bankruptcy file shows 357 Dearborn St. for Philip Ruxton (shown "Phillip"), and on Google Books it is simple to find that address in connection with Philip Ruxton, Inc., or the like.

As for that address being that of the Ellsworth Building:
Regarding Drake, it is well established that during that period (starting in or around February 1902), they were located at 352-356 Dearborn. See the following:

**The Publishers' Weekly**

This link shows that the 356 Dearborn St. address was an address of the Morton Building:

**The Railroad Telegrapher**

Thanks for your interest in the related material I had on an earlier blog. I don’t know whether I will ever post that material again on the internet (though I have access to all of it). But I think a lot of it will probably be appearing in my forthcoming book on the S.W. Erdnase authorship controversy. But I have tried to leave out a lot of the detail. I might post a little extract on my current blog. (P.S. I went ahead and did that.)

--Tom Sawyer

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**mam** | 08/06/15 12:25 AM | link | filter

Tom, thank you so much for these additional resources and links, and especially for reposting some of your old material. Really appreciate it

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**mam** | 08/06/15 12:36 AM | link | filter

Here’s another angle, by the way:

What work has been done in trying to track Erdnase through known casinos, poker joints, saloons etc.? Could one assume that he frequented such places? Somewhere the gambling skills must have been practiced a lot, did that all happen in private settings?

Came to think of this when reading bits and pieces of Rand, McNally & Co.'s *Bird's-Eye Views and Guide to Chicago*, basically a travel guide at 300+ pages that lists a lot of entertainment venues and similar. The word *casino* caught my eye at page 83 but this long ago the word seems to have been connected not to gambling foremost, but rather minstrel shows, music hall, "wax-work" 😃.

So, what poker places did Erdnase frequent? Or is this question already investigated at depth and I simply don't know about it?
mam wrote: Here's another angle, by the way:

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So, what poker places did Erdnase frequent? Or is this question already investigated at depth and I simply don't know about it?

Thanks for the link to this wonderful book on Chicago. I think a lot of card play and gambling took place in Clubs. There is an entire section describing clubs in this book and it mentions "card-rooms". For one club it says: "This is strictly a family club, and its regulations in regard to gambling and drinking are unusually stringent." Which means that gambling was the norm for other clubs.

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**lybrary** | 08/06/15 07:07 AM | [link] [filter]

*Jack Shalom wrote:* But again, your assignment of 1/3 probability for all three theories is just that--your assignment. Some knowledgeable others (not me, but perhaps in this thread) might have quite a different assignment, say 50%, 30%, 20%. And again this is just on this issue. There's all the Smith testimony and so on.

Based on the list of literary pseudonyms Jonathan shared with us it looks like the anagram cases are at best a few percent if not a lot less. If you have some other data that suggests otherwise please share.

*Jack Shalom wrote:* For example, some (not I) might weigh the "W" remembrance more for Sanders than Galloway, and so on. Each of these qualifiers has an effect.

Last time I checked Sanders doesn't have a 'W' in its name. But more importantly, why would one weigh that more for one candidate than for another? Those who have a W in their name can claim that evidence for their case. Those that don't can't. Not sure.
? W.E. Sanders

"Weigh more" means, in this case, that there may be a higher probability that Smith’s statement was the result of one kind of name than another. I think one could certainly argue that a person is more likely to remember the first letter of a person’s name than one in the middle.

Zenner | 08/06/15 07:21 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: Peter Z -- you’ve said that Thompson fiddled with gambling sleights so he could use them in card tricks. I said that the sleights he claims in the book aren’t relevant to card tricks, and you respond (twice!) that he didn't do card tricks in public.

Are you deliberately being obtuse? It certainly seems so. He was not a professional performer; he just did tricks for his friends.

I guess I’m getting confused. If he didn’t perform, why do you say he inserted gambling sleights into tricks?

To show off his skills to his fellow "knights of the grip"?

Are you saying that there was no need for the gambling sleights he invented to use in card tricks to be actually USEFUL since he didn't perform?

I repeat. He was not a professional performer; he just did tricks for his friends.

And as far as not performing, don’t you think the insights he offers about performing magic tricks in the Legerdemain and Card Tricks section show that he had great experience performing in front of people (either as a gambler at a card table, or a magician in front of an audience -- pick one)?

I don't have to pick one of yours; there is a third. He was not a professional gambler and he was not a professional magician - he was a hobbyist who liked to do a few tricks for his friends.

The man wrote a book about his skills, which he obviously didn’t want the general public to associate with him. He had a place in society/see every edition of the Chicago
need me to list some? Historically speaking, Messrs Vernon & Marlo would fall into that category wouldn't they? A silhouette cutter and a mechanic if I remember correctly?

And you said he "studied books which explained the methods of card cheats". Which books?

"The whole category", to me, means everything that had been published. Have you actually READ The Expert at the Card Table? Have you actually READ my previous postings? Harry S. Thompson had the fourth biggest library of magic books in America!

Whose explanation of the Bottom Deal did he study? Who else before him suggested that the bottom deal and the second deal should come from the same grip? Where in the literature before 1902 is there a Euchre Stock?

You are talking technical now. I can't help you. Card tricks and sleights bore me; I am only here because of the mystery surrounding the authorship of the book. You had better ask some of those amateur magicians whose sole delight is flicking cards about and who never do public shows. Erdnase was not the only one.

Peter Zenner

Jack Shalom | 08/06/15 07:32 AM | link | filter

Based on the list of literary pseudonyms Jonathan shared with us it looks like the anagram cases are at best a few percent if not a lot less. If you have some other data that suggests otherwise please share.

Jonathan’s list tells us a lot of things about a lot of different kinds of people. It tells us very little about the possible strategies of magician/gamblers with a love of fooling people who may or may not be trying to hide their identities.

lybrary | 08/06/15 07:43 AM | link | filter

Jack Shalom wrote: ? W.E. Sanders

"Weigh more" means, in this case, that there may be a higher probability that Smith’s statement was the result of one kind of name than another. I think one could certainly argue that a person is more likely to remember
the Gardner-Smith correspondence: "Before I mentioned Andrews as the name, he said that Erdnase didn't sound right, and he recalled it as a name with a W." Clearly they are talking about surnames. No W in Sanders.

But your idea of judging which name might be more conducive to remembering the W is interesting. In Gallaway the W is stressed. In Andrews it is not. Gallaway should therefore be more likely the name than Andrews based on this consideration.

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Bob Coyne | 08/06/15 08:30 AM | link | filter

**lybrary wrote:**

*Jack Shalom wrote:* But again, your assignment of 1/3 probability for all three theories is just that—your assignment. Some knowledgeable others (not me, but perhaps in this thread) might have quite a different assignment, say 50%, 30%, 20%. And again this is just on this issue. There's all the Smith testimony and so on.

Based on the list of literary pseudonyms Jonathan shared with us it looks like the anagram cases are at best a few percent if not a lot less. If you have some other data that suggests otherwise please share.

We know almost for sure that s.w. erdnase is intentionally a backward-spelled name. So the relevant question really would be what percentage of books with obviously anagrammatic or backward-spelled authors resolve to the author's REAL name versus some other third-party name? In the case of es andrews or we sanders, we get the author himself. In the case of gallaway you need to find some other connection to explain why the author chose a seemingly random name (es andrews). Maybe the EC (or EB) Andrews on the mckinney bankruptcy files is a clue to that. But it seems strange for gallaway to have done that, and I would take it as much less likely than for we sanders or es andrews etc who are just scrambling up their own names.

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Jonathan Townsend | 08/06/15 08:32 AM | link | filter

"We know almost for sure that s.w. erdnase [sic] is intentionally a backward-spelled name." which may or may not have anything to do with any real person of the time or the author.

? looking at literature of the time - what percent of items were published using pseudonyms constructed author names as anagrams of the actual author?
to the latter for Hoffmann we'd have a process to reverse to get the real author of the
Erdnase text? This is where the lightbulbs go on and folks ask "but what about the
strings Lewis and Louis" as if that were a key to the puzzle. More Lewis Caroll than
not.

**lybrary** | 08/06/15 08:45 AM | link | filter

*Bob Coyne wrote:* We know almost for sure that s.w. erdnase is intentionally
a backward-spelled name.

Based on what? Because somebody, told someone, that he thinks it was so, and none of
this could ever be verified? Totally disagree with your 'almost for sure' qualifier. It is at
best one of several other plausible theories.

**Bob Coyne** | 08/06/15 08:50 AM | link | filter

*llybrary wrote:*

*Bob Coyne wrote:* We know almost for sure that s.w. erdnase is
intentionally a backward-spelled name.

Based on what? Because somebody, told someone, that he thinks it was so,
and none of this could ever be verified? Totally disagree with your 'almost
for sure' qualifier. It is at best one of several other plausible theories.

Based on pure likelihood looking at names. Very very few (if any?) will have that
property. So if you find a name with that property (it spells another name backwards)
and the source name is extremely unusual (sounds fake), I really don't think there's
any other conclusion to draw.

**lybrary** | 08/06/15 09:12 AM | link | filter

*Bob Coyne wrote:* based on pure likelihood looking at names. Very very few
(if any?) will have that property. So if you find a name with that property
(it spells another name backwards) and the source name is extremely
unusual (sounds fake), I really don't think there's any other conclusion to
draw.

It is simply a coincidence that a German nickname with the initials of his parents S.
W. can be read backwards to give another name.

I have also documented here before that the nickname and term 'Erdnase' is not that
German books in the 19th century. So it was in use from the time Gallaway was born.

Erd-Nase is not an unusual form of a German name. There are many such names like Roter-Berg, Gruen-Baum, Gold-Stein, even Wass-Huber is a modified combination of two German words. Nothing unusual with the name Erdnase. Perhaps to English speakers.

Or let's take this into the derogatory 'nicknames' we have in German. There is 'Schlitz-Auge' (uses another facial part the eye) or 'Hosen-Scheisser'. Nothing at all unusual about a German nickname Erd-Nase.

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**Bill Mullins | 08/06/15 10:00 AM | link | filter**

*mam wrote:* What work has been done in trying to track Erdnase through known casinos, poker joints, saloons etc.? Could one assume that he frequented such places?

I have looked at dozens (maybe hundreds?) of newspaper articles about gambling in the 1890s. When I do, I am always open to the possibility that some clue about Erdnase may show up. So far, I’ve never found anything that has been helpful.

Such suggestions are always welcome, but often they turn out to be extraordinarily difficult to do anything about. Like "has anyone checked the Sphinx subscribers list?" -- the question assumes that there is a Sphinx subscribers list. And to my knowledge, there isn’t.

While I disagree with Chris W.’s conclusions, I commend him for going out and getting the raw data. It has been suggested several times previously in the forum "check out McKinney bankruptcy records". The hard part was getting them -- once they were available, it was easy to check them out.

So, if you know of any records that pertain to casinos, poker joints, saloons, etc., let us know. And they don’t necessarily have to be digitized and online. Once I’ve known about records in an archive, I’ve occasionally been able to get copies scanned and sent to me (for small requests).

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**Bill Mullins | 08/06/15 10:07 AM | link | filter**

*lybrary wrote:* Based on the list of literary pseudonyms Jonathan shared with us it looks like the anagram cases are at best a few percent if not a lot less. If you have some other data that suggests otherwise please share.
sounding pseudonyms (Nitram Rendrag, Hercat, Retlaw Yensid, R. Sid Spocane II, etc.), the percentage of them that can be shown to be an anagram/reversal is much higher.

Jack Shalom wrote: For example, some (not I) might weigh the "W" remembrance more for Sanders than Galloway, and so on. Each of these qualifiers has an effect.

Last time I checked Sanders doesn't have a 'W' in its name.

Pretty sure he was talking about the 'W' in Sanders's first name (Wilbur).

Jack Shalom | 08/06/15 10:15 AM | link | filter

Again, and I'll shut up after this, because I've stated my point:

Chris, your methodology relies entirely on your judgment of what is or isn't important. I am not saying your judgments are wrong. I don't have anywhere near the knowledge of the posters in this thread. But doing the kind of probability analysis you are doing in this way gives a false sense of objectivity; this kind of post hoc analysis is merely re-stating the assumptions that you are trying to prove in the first place. The assumptions may all be true--but you are gaining no new information, you are merely re-stating your assumptions. It doesn't make your case stronger.

Brad Henderson | 08/06/15 10:47 AM | link | filter

Zenner,

it is true that Marlo was a mechanic and not a professional performer - and his material reflects that. Vernon did have experience as a performer but more importantly, was a rare example of a magician and human being. To compare someone unknown to someone who likely would have excelled in any field he took on is a false comparison.

Have you ever watched an armateur magician, Mr Zenner? I don't think you have. I think you are however comfortable making assumptions about a group of people you know nothing about.

Magicians are terrible at keeping secrets.
Further, amateur performers do not generally spend their lives performing. They focus on technique and their own pleasure. The content in EATCT reveals an author who knows more than technique and their own pleasure. He understands performance at the card table on a deep level. The advice herein attracted Vernon and magicians precisely because it was advice that was NOT the advice of the amateur magician.

not an amateur

**lybrary** | 08/06/15 11:39 AM | [link] | [filter]

*Bill Mullins wrote:* The vast majority of the list linked to by Jonathan was "normal sounding" names. But S. W. Erdnase isn't particularly normal sounding.

To a German speaker it is completely normal sounding. Gallaway was embedded in German culture and was speaking German well enough to have received an honorable mention. For him the name sounded just fine. Judging from our perspective and what we think is normal today is wrong. We have to judge from Erdnase's point of view.

**lybrary** | 08/06/15 11:50 AM | [link] | [filter]

*Jack Shalom wrote:* Chris, your methodology relies entirely on your judgment of what is or isn't important. I am not saying your judgments are wrong. I don't have anywhere near the knowledge of the posters in this thread. But doing the kind of probability analysis you are doing in this way gives a false sense of objectivity; this kind of post hoc analysis is merely re-stating the assumptions that you are trying to prove in the first place. The assumptions may all be true--but you are gaining no new information, you are merely re-stating your assumptions. It doesn't make your case stronger.

Jack, then you have not read my analysis. "Entirely my judgement"? So the number of people in Chicago at that time is my judgement? Look up the census statistics. The number of people McKinney did business with? Read the bankruptcy files. The number of employees? Read the bankruptcy files. The number of first editions printed? Read the bankruptcy files and know a bit about the book trade back then. The ratio of names with a 'W'? I am sure you can also count names in lists of names. No judgement on my part. Yes, you can use somewhat different numbers here and there, but the outcome, which is 4 orders of magnitude difference between E.S. Andrews and Edward Gallaway is not subject to some changes in the numbers or inclusion of a few other points in favor of your favorite candidate. To overcome 4 orders of magnitude
I am simply looking at facts and am trying to quantify them. I believe that looking at the evidence through a quantitative lens gives us new insight, allows us to gain a new perspective. I am not saying that my analysis is all we should be looking at. But our discussion so far has been void of any quantitative considerations, which is an error. I will accept that some evidence can't be quantified and has to be factored in differently. But that doesn't mean that we should ignore any quantitative analysis, particularly if the difference is 4 orders of magnitudes.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/06/15 12:53 PM | link | filter

Let's imagine a local guy wrote a book on a hot topic and used a local printer to self-publish and an anagram as author name. How well do you think that would work? Back then how well did pen names work? How long did it tend to take before actual author names got around? Garden path. No leadership required. Maybe once there was even an Andrews in on the joke or at the other end of the joke - but that need not relate to the author.

Likelihood that a book got around to the local book guys ... pretty good.

Bill Mullins | 08/06/15 12:57 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote:

Bill Mullins wrote: The vast majority of the list linked to by Jonathan was "normal sounding" names. But S. W. Erdnase isn't particularly normal sounding.

To a German speaker it is completely normal sounding. Gallaway was embedded in German culture and was speaking German well enough to have received an honorable mention. For him the name sounded just fine. Judging from our perspective and what we think is normal today is wrong. We have to judge from Erdnase's point of view.

"Embedded in German culture"? I think you are jumping to a conclusion here. By the same logic, I am embedded in German culture. I took 3 years of German in high school, and got A's. The city I live in went from a cotton-mill town of 10000 to a center for technology because Wernher von Braun's WWII rocket team arrived in 1951. They founded the local symphony orchestra, the astronomy society, and were involved in the growth of the local university, art museum and botanical gardens. (A recent book describes their arrival and influences.) The main Lutheran church in Huntsville had German language services for a long time. I have German native neighbors, and eat at German restaurants from time to time. I am embedded in German culture, and
Bill Mullins wrote: "Embedded in German culture"? I think you are jumping to a conclusion here. By the same logic, I am embedded in German culture. I took 3 years of German in high school, and got A’s. The city I live in went from a cotton-mill town of 10000 to a center for technology because Wernher von Braun’s WWII rocket team arrived in 1951. They founded the local symphony orchestra, the astronomy society, and were involved in the growth of the local university, art museum and botanical gardens. (A recent book describes their arrival and influences.) The main Lutheran church in Huntsville had German language services for a long time. I have German native neighbors, and eat at German restaurants from time to time. I am embedded in German culture, and "Erdnase" sounds weird to me.

Bill, no offense but this is a labored rebuttal. There is a huge difference between Delphos in 1880 and the place you grew up. The prevalence of German culture back then in Delphos was hugely different to your own experience. Have your siblings married into German families? Edward Gallaway’s have. If you read the history of Delphos you see two primary cultures merging, the German and Irish. Historical accounts are full of German references, German businesses, German’s who impacted and shaped Delphos in multiple ways. Edward was baptized at St. John’s and attended St. John’s school which was founded and run by German catholics. This was certainly completely different to your brushes with German culture.

Tom Sawyer | 08/06/15 02:12 PM | link | filter

Jonathan makes a good point about the intrinsic "gossip interest" that the pen name may have had. "Hey, we’re printing a book on cheating at cards, and the guy is using a strange-sounding pen-name. He came up with the name such and such a way."

Among magicians, such information could well have spread like wildfire. That does not mean we would have much evidence of it today.

I believe someone not long ago on this thread may have said something like, "No one was concerned about his real name in the early days, because everyone knew what it was."

I hate to go directly to a mundane thought, but maybe all this this is an argument that the author’s real name was Andrews -- because that is the most boring explanation, and the one to be most likely forgotten, and now lost to us.
Yes, we still have what Drake's son is said to have told Sprong. As far as I know, we don't know where this Drake got his information (maybe via non-authoritative water-cooler chat), or exactly what he told Sprong. But it is consistent with the foregoing three paragraphs.

--Tom

**Bob Coyne** | 08/06/15 02:32 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*lybrary wrote:*

Bob Coyne wrote: based on pure likelihood looking at names. Very very few (if any?) will have that property. So if you find a name with that property (it spells another name backwards) and the source name is extremely unusual (sounds fake), I really don't think there's any other conclusion to draw.

It is simply a coincidence that a German nickname with the initials of his parents S. W. can be read backwards to give another name.

I have also documented here before that the nickname and term 'Erdnase' is not that uncommon in Germany, Switzerland and Austria. Google the plural form Erdnasen and you will see. Lots of people using it as nickname. We also have it appear in German books in the 19th century. So it was in use from the time Gallaway was born.

Sure it's possible it's a coincidence. But it's very unlikely. Hardly any nicknames or names will spell out a name backwards. So if you find an unknown/strange/contrived sounding name that spells to a common name backwards, it's a very good bet that it was intentionally chosen with the backwards spelling in mind.

Even assuming erdnase was his german nickname or had some other significance to him (like it might have to we sanders as a mining engineer), it strains plausibility that he decided to prepend his parents initials for some reason (why?) and just out of chance the result happened to be a common-sounding real name backwards. Whether e.s. andrews is the author's name or an anagram of the author's name or had some other significance is a different matter, but it seems like sure thing that it was done deliberately and can't be ignored.

**Bill Mullins** | 08/06/15 02:41 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Peter -- rather than go back, point by point, I'll just summarize:
You've suggested that he was familiar with gambling sleights because he "studied books which explained the methods of card cheats", even though the writer describing his book collection said "there are no remotely related subjects included for the sake of having a big collection." That is, he didn't have gambling books. Your explanation for how he came to use "S. W. Erdnase" is weak at best. (If he didn't work for Ruxton by 1902, how would he know E. C. Andrews? And if he did work for them that early [no evidence for that has been offered], why would he risk his job and the McKinney/Ruxton business relationship by engaging McKinney on the side under false pretenses?)

For all these reasons I don't think Thompson is the guy. You do, which is fine, but I think your conversations on the thread would be much more collegial if you at least admitted that there are some holes in your theory. [and yes, some of the same criticisms apply to Sanders, E. S. Andrews, M. F. Andrews, and the others who have been proposed]

And, as Brad has said, Vernon was a magic performer professionally. He worked at the Kit Kat club in the mid 1930s, and did his Harlequin act at Radio City Music Hall. He performed many times on TV. And Marlo (a machinist, not a mechanic) also did public paid performances --- he was a demonstrator at the Treasure Chest in Chicago for a while.

Bill Mullins | 08/06/15 02:43 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: Bill, no offense

None taken. It's not like you've said I'm being deliberately obtuse, or anything.

Brad Jeffers | 08/06/15 04:00 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: It is simply a coincidence that a German nickname with the initials of his parents S. W. can be read backwards to give another name.

What a coincidence!
Please apply some of that statistical analysis to derive the chance of this particular coincidence happening.

What are the odds of any other German nickname, when spelled backward, forming a common American name?

Schlitz-Auge would be E.G.Uaztilhcs, or utilizing the parental initials, S.W. Eguaztilhcs
Ressiehcsnesoh

Lets not limit it to just nicknames, but also include any German word of seven letters or more. It really should be nine letters, but we will make the concession that two of the letters come from a source outside of the word (as with the parental initials).

*lybrary* wrote: ...the outcome, which is 4 orders of magnitude difference between E.S. Andrews and Edward Gallaway ...To overcome 4 orders of magnitude you would need very strong additional evidence ...that doesn't mean that we should ignore any quantitative analysis, particularly if the difference is 4 orders of magnitudes.

I don't really see exactly where the 4 orders of magnitude comes from, but if in fact, through quantitative analysis it can be shown that one candidate has a 4 times greater chance to be Erdnase than another, the chance that they are not Erdnase remains virtually equal.

*** I just posted this and see that Bob Coyne beat me to the punch with regards to the questioning of the backwards German nickname coincidence. ***

**Richard Hatch** | 08/06/15 04:04 PM | link | filter

*lybrary* wrote:
I have also documented here before that the nickname and term 'Erdnase' is not that uncommon in Germany, Switzerland and Austria. Google the plural form Erdnasen and you will see. Lots of people using it as nickname. We also have it appear in German books in the 19th century. So it was in use from the time Gallaway was born.

Erd-Nase is not an unusual form of a German name. There are many such names like Roter-Berg, Gruen-Baum, Gold-Stein, even Wass-Huber is a modified combination of two German words. Nothing unusual with the name Erdnase. Perhaps to English speakers.

Or let's take this into the derogatory 'nicknames' we have in German. There is 'Schlitz-Auge' (uses another facial part the eye) or 'Hosen-Scheisser'. Nothing at all unusual about a German nickname Erd-Nase.

Chris, I defer to your greater knowledge of German as a native speaker, but would you quantify your claim that the term "Erdnase" is "not that uncommon"? A google book search on the plural form "Erdnasen" of the many German language documents and formulations of Erdnase, no hits were found, but it was found in the book 'Die 1000"...
candidates under discussion. I don’t think you can claim that this was a common term at the place or time period under discussion. In contrast, the term “Erdnüssen” (= peanuts) occurs more than 100 times during that same time period, and I would argue that it is not all that common a term either (how many times a day does one use it?).

And while the form of the name is not unusual, the name itself is unusual, there being no examples known of its use as a proper name prior to 1902. Your conjecture that the term might have been used as a nickname and known to Gallaway is just that, conjecture. There is absolutely no evidence that I can find that this was the case. I encourage you to continue looking, but I am doubtful that you will find any evidence for it. In the absence of such evidence, I really don’t think this conjecture helps establish Gallaway’s candidacy.

**Roger M.** | 08/06/15 04:41 PM | link | filter

Here’s how I interpret the recent few weeks of posts.

Peter has made a case that has not achieved a single “convert” to his belief that Thompson be taken seriously as a candidate - let alone Peter stating point-blank that Thompson is Erdnase.

It would seems that, absent any new evidence Peter can bring forward, Thompson is currently not considered a candidate for Erdnase by anybody except Peter.

Chris has achieved the commendable undertaking of introducing a “new” candidate, and has had most of the regular posters to this thread accept this new candidate (Gallaway) as to be taken seriously as an addition to the somewhat short list of long established candidates.

It seems that most folks here are temporarily put-off by repeated statements from any poster which state **Erdnase found**, especially if it’s further implied that there’s a lack of intelligence on the part of the doubters for ... well, doubting.

The case for any given candidate is actually weakened each and every time a major leap of faith, or blatant conjecture is presented as an unassailable fact, such that it seems counterproductive to make leaps or conjecture on this sort of grand scale ... rather candidates individual cases seem most to benefit from sticking with a slow and steady discussion of new information as it’s brought forward.

This current flurry of posts, and ongoing detailed discussion related to the search for Erdnase is most enjoyable indeed.
comes from, but if in fact, through quantitative analysis it can be shown that one candidate has a 4 times greater chance to be Erdnase than another, the chance that they are not Erdnase remains virtually equal.

Brad, clearly you don’t understand what 'order of magnitude' means. An order of magnitude is a factor 10. That means 4 orders of magnitude is a factor 10,000. In my analysis I showed that from statistical calculations we expect to find 10,000 people like E.S. Andrews, but less than 1 like Edward Gallaway. That is a ratio of > 10,000 and thus four orders of magnitude. And before you get hung up on 'less than one' this is a statistical calculation. Even if the expected value is less than 1 we can still find one, or two, or three folks like it. It just becomes less likely.

Brad Jeffers wrote:

lybrary wrote: It is simply a coincidence that a German nickname with the initials of his parents S. W. can be read backwards to give another name.

What a coincidence!
Please apply some of that statistical analysis to derive the chance of this particular coincidence happening.

What are the odds of any other German nickname, when spelled backward, forming a common American name?

Schlitz-Auge would be E.G.Uaztilhcs, or utilizing the parental initials, S.W. Eguaztilhcs

Hosen-Scheisser would be R.E. Ssiehcsnesoh, or utilizing the parental initials, S.W. Ressiehcsnesoh

Lets not limit it to just nicknames, but also include any German word of seven letters or more. It really should be nine letters, but we will make the concession that two of the letters come from a source outside of the word (as with the parental initials).

And what would that tell us? Nothing. Knowing the probability of having a German name spell backwards another name means nothing here. All we need to show is that the nickname Erdnase is a plausible choice for somebody who speaks German. It clearly is. I will give more info on that below in another post.
Hardly any nicknames or names will spell out a name backwards. So if you find an unknown/strange/contrived sounding name that spells to a common name backwards, it’s a very good bet that it was intentionally chosen with the backwards spelling in mind.

Even assuming erdnase was his german nickname or had some other significance to him (like it might have to we sanders as a mining engineer), it strains plausibility that he decided to prepend his parents initials for some reason (why?) and just out of chance the result happened to be a common-sounding real name backwards. Whether e.s. andrews is the author's name or an anagram of the author's name or had some other significance is a different matter, but it seems like sure thing that it was done deliberately and can't be ignored.

Except it isn't unlikely for somebody who spoke German since childhood. My candidate has nothing to do with an Andrews, and thus my case does not require any backward spelling. Therefore how likely or unlikely it is to spell a name backwards does not factor into my case. It doesn’t matter.

You ask why he choose to use his parents initials? Probably to honor them. It was Edward who gave the information for the death notice when his mother died, even though she lived with her daughter. Both Edward and August went back to Delphos when their father died. Clearly the kids did not forget their parents. I think many folks have great respect for their parents and honoring them in a small way and using their initials doesn’t strike me as something outlandish.

Richard Hatch wrote:

lybrary wrote:
I have also documented here before that the nickname and term 'Erdnase' is not that uncommon in Germany, Switzerland and Austria. Google the plural form Erdnasen and you will see. Lots of people using it as nickname. We also have it appear in German books in the 19th century. So it was in use from the time Gallaway was born.

Erd-Nase is not an unusual form of a German name. There are many such names like Roter-Berg, Gruen-Baum, Gold-Stein, even Wass-Huber is a modified combination of two German words. Nothing unusual with the name Erdnase. Perhaps to
German. There is ‘Schlitz-Auge’ (uses another facial part the eye) or ‘Hosen-Scheisser’. Nothing at all unusual about a German nickname Erd-Nase.

Chris, I defer to your greater knowledge of German as a native speaker, but would you quantify your claim that the term "Erdnase" is "not that uncommon"? A google book search on the plural form "Erdnasen" of the many German language documents scanned from prior to 1902 comes up with only two examples, one in a book from 1881 and another in a book from 1841. Both books apparently only use the term once each and both seem to be pretty obscure titles, unlikely to have been seen by any of the candidates under discussion. I don't think you can claim that this was a common term at the place or time period under discussion. In contrast, the term "Erdnüsse" (= peanuts) occurs more than 100 times during that same time period, and I would argue that it is not all that common a term either (how many times a day does one use it?).

And while the form of the name is not unusual, the name itself is unusual, there being no examples known of its use as a proper name prior to 1902. Your conjecture that the term might have been used as a nickname and known to Gallaway is just that, conjecture. There is absolutely no evidence that I can find that this was the case. I encourage you to continue looking, but I am doubtful that you will find any evidence for it. In the absence of such evidence, I really don't think this conjecture helps establish Gallaway's candidacy.

Richard, let me try to address this in more depth. First of all, a nickname does not need to be some commonly used term. A nickname is usually some unique made up name or combination of words to describe a person, often describing some unique trait of that person. You would therefore not necessarily expect to find such a nickname being used in literature.

However, finding it used simply establishes that the term was used and existed. That is all we need. We do not need to have it commonly used or frequently used. I have now tracked three occurrences of the term Erdnase or Erdnasen in German books in the 19th century. Here is the last one I found. A magazine from 1860. Look at entry 103. It uses it in the singular Erd-Nase. [https://books.google.de/books?id=ZyRbAA ... ft&f=false](https://books.google.de/books?id=ZyRbAA ... ft&f=false)

Also consider two other quite similar German words: Landzunge (land tongue) and Mooshaende (moss hands). Landzunge is remarkable since it almost exactly mirrors Erdnase. Zunge is tongue, another facial part. And the term describes a geographical feature like Erdnase which can mean foothills. And Mooshaende is sometimes used in
a term like Erdnase is not unusual in the sense that I need to scratch my head and think about how strange it is as a term or as a possible nickname.

The use you can see of Erdnase as nickname today on the Internet is another clear indication that it makes for a proper nickname for kids who play a lot in the dirt, dig things up, etc. So Erdnase makes for a perfectly fine, proper, and believable nickname. If I remember this correctly then Marty Demarest commented that his grandmother (also tracing back to Germany) said that Erdnase sounds like a nickname. So clearly it is not just me. It does not sound strange to German speakers.

Also consider that Erdnase as nickname does not require any transformation. It is used exactly as it is. But for all other name theories we need a transformation, be it an anagram or a reverse spelling. Adding a transformation is a complication that should make it less likely. Erdnase is not an anagram of a German nickname. It simply is the nickname. I think OCCAM would like that.

In summary, having contemplated the various theories and possibilities I feel that the German nickname theory is a really good fit for somebody like Gallaway. I actually feel it is a better explanation than the reverse spelling for E.S. Andrews for reasons of easy discoverability. Also from other literary pseudonyms we see that reverse spellings or anagrams are actually rarely used.

Richard Hatch | 08/06/15 05:49 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote:

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Also consider two other quite similar German words: Landzunge (land tongue) and Mooshaende (moss hands). Landzunge is remarkable since it almost exactly mirrors Erdnase. Zunge is tongue, another facial part. And the term describes a geographical feature like Erdnase which can mean foothills. And Mooshaende is sometimes used in combination with Erdnasen as in "Erdnasen und Mooshaende". With this I want to show that a term like Erdnase is not unusual in the sense that I need to scratch my head and think about how strange it is as a term or as a possible nickname.
need a transformation, be it an anagram or a reverse spelling. Adding a transformation is a complication that should make it less likely. Erdnase is not an anagram of a German nickname. It simply is the nickname. I think OCCAM would like that.

Chris, unless I am mistaken, the footnote usage you just cited is simply a literal translation of a foreign expression: Shiri-itu, meaning foothills, literally "Earth-Nose". Such a usage (in a footnote to an academic journal from 1860) hardly convinces one that it was likely to have been the nickname of a student in Ohio. Could it have been used as a nickname? Sure. Was it likely to have been used as a nickname in Ohio in the 1880s? I don't think Occam would think so! I do think Occam would have a hard time dismissing the simple backwards reading of "E. S. Andrews" as a mere coincidence.

Richard, why do you not think Erd-Nase is a proper nickname for somebody who frequently digs up the ground and gets dirt in his face?

Again, the usage in literature is simply to prevent somebody saying the term did not exist back then. The term existed early enough.

Richard Hatch | 08/06/15 06:10 PM | link | filter

lybrarywrote: Richard, why do you not think Erd-Nase is a proper nickname for somebody who frequently digs up the ground and gets dirt in his face?

Chris, I don't have a problem with it as a possible nickname. I just think you are fantasizing about Gallaway's childhood in order to explain the pseudonym. Had you found a connection to him with an Andrews family (or should one turn up in the future), I suspect that would (will) figure into your explanation. It is rationalizing "after the fact" in order to get Gallaway to fit. That doesn't mean he couldn't have had that nickname. David Alexander speculated about the same thing for his mining engineer, who had also studied German (as well as Latin, I believe, and benefited from a private education at Philips Exeter Academy and later Columbia. Traits conjectured from the language used in TEATC by your forensic analyst and not shared by Gallaway). "Earth-Nose" makes sense for a mining engineer who studied German. Is it convincing? Absent documentation that he had actually had such a nickname, I don't find it convincing. Interesting, fun, but not convincing. Personally, I find it far more likely that the name "S. W. Erdnase" on a book published in Chicago in 1902 was crafted from the name "E. S. Andrews" (without knowing why) than that it was cobbled together from a conjectured German nickname to which two initials were added. The latter seems like a coincidence to me, the former seems deliberate.
Richard, since we don’t know how Erdnase derived his name we all are guessing. At this point nobody knows what it really was. We all are making plausible cases for our candidates. Since Erdnase is used as nickname it is perfectly plausible for somebody with a solid German background to have received it. Do I know it? No, but all I am establishing is plausibility. Just as you with E.S. Andrews. Do we know it is a reverse spelling that created the name? No. But with somebody like E.S. Andrews it is plausible.

Of course, such plausibility reasoning comes after you look at the evidence. It doesn’t come a priory. When I started to look at Gallaway his German background was not that solid. Then Bill Mullins found Gallaway the German honor student. The German nickname theory becomes a lot more plausible. I don’t think it is unreasonable to think that his teacher or one of his classmates gave him Erdnase as a nickname. It is plausible.

Adding two initials is normal to form a full name. M.D. Smith was mentioned on the title page with two initials. Both brothers had two first names giving them two initials. His father had two first names giving him two initials. Many names had two initials attached to them. Nothing unusual. Honoring his parents in that way is plausible.

In summary a plausible case. And that is all we need since we have no further information what it really was. We will all disagree on what is more likely but in the end neither of us knows. So plausibility is all we can achieve. And that much I have achieved with the nickname theory for Gallaway.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/06/15 09:30 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: ... since we don’t know how Erdnase derived his name ...

That’s what motivated the related questions about pseudonyms. Were reverse names used often? How long before actual names published? This to get to some guess at the likelihood of using that strategy. For counterexamples: Lewis Carroll was not Angelo Lewis who was kind of Professor Louis Hoffmann but everyone knew that the Dodgson was writing as Carroll. Similar for Sam Clemons writing as Mark Twain. And none of them seem to be reverse spellings or anagrams for some other author.

mam | 08/06/15 11:10 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: Thanks for the link to this wonderful book on Chicago. I think a lot of card play and gambling took place in Clubs. There is an entire
gambling was the norm for other clubs.

I've started plotting out all clubs from this book on a Google map, if anyone is interested in helping out with that, let me know. It involves looking at an address and figuring out if the street names and/or numbers have changed (which I have reference material for) and then adding a marker on a present day map. There is no specific goal to this other than getting an overview of clubs in Chicago around the time Erdnase wrote his book. But who knows, maybe he did play poker at any of them which could provide a lead, especially if in the vicinity of known important locations such as Bartl's Hotel.

Here is an important passage from a letter M.D. Smith sent to Gardner which is one of the reasons we can't trust Smith on his Andrews recollections:

"Now this Milton Franklin Andrews stuff. "Milton" doesn't mean a thing. The "Franklin" sounds like something I have heard before. It may be imagination. I have a good one at times. The owner of that flat bldg. was a Dr. Franklin Hall. He shot himself the other day. Big story in papers, probably due to his being married to a countess. It may be his name that's buzzing in my mind."

So essentially Smith admits that his recollection of names is easily overlayed by recent events and that associating certain names with certain events is shaky. Consider that Andrews is not a particularly rare name. There is also a first name Andrew which is extremely similar. Will have Smith heard the name Andrews or Andrew in a different context in the 45 years between meeting Erdnase and the Gardner interview? Very likely. Add to this that it was not something Smith remembered himself but was a name Gardner introduced. We have no comparison of his reaction to other names. If Gardner would have asked and probed other names it would have been different.

Also keep in mind that Smith was eager to help Gardner. He wanted him to find Erdnase. Research has shown that witnesses who are eager to help are the ones most unreliable. The most reliable eye witnesses are those who are not that emotionally involved.

From all of Smith's recollections his 'confirmation' of the name Andrews is the one that is most troublesome. I don't believe it at all.

Chris, I read that passage very differently than you do apparently. I see it as...
first name(s) or initials, but he can’t. Franklin sounds familiar, but probably because it was recently in the news. Also, he is referring here only to first names. There is no question in his mind about whether the man he met gave his last name as Andrews. True, he did not come up with it on his own, but once Gardner suggested it, he confirmed it enthusiastically and never waivered on it. He and Gardner thereafter refer to the author as "Andrews". As an example of Smith’s memory on names being good, he told Gardner he had illustrated a book called HIS SISTER. While he didn’t recall the author’s name (unlike Erdnase, he was unlikely to have ever met her, since the book was about the sister of Jesus and the drawings not "done from life"!). But he did recall the name of the publisher. Gardner transcribed it phonetically as "Wynona" but was unable to identify the book. It is much easier now with technology, here’s a copy online, the publisher of this 1904 book illustrated by Smith is "Winona Publishing Company" of Chicago. 

http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100594482

I’d say that demonstrates quite a good memory more than 40 years after the fact. A careful reading of the Gardner-Smith correspondence shows that he is very careful to distinguish between what he thinks and what he knows. A very real possibility is that he knew the author only as "Mr. Andrews". It was a much more formal time and their relationship was strictly a business one. He would have seen the name/initials on the check he received, but quite possibly only then (In fact, in one letter he tells Gardner that he wished he had kept the check for this very reason!).

Incidentally, I do agree with you that when he told Gardner he didn’t recognize the name "Erdnase" as he thought the name had a "W" in it, he was almost certainly referring to the last name, not first or middle names. But I don’t think he would misrecall "Gallaway" as "Andrews". They are quite different!

Bob Coyne | 08/07/15 01:20 AM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: Except it isn’t unlikely for somebody who spoke German since childhood. My candidate has nothing to do with an Andrews, and thus my case does not require any backward spelling. Therefore how likely or unlikely it is to spell a name backwards does not factor into my case. It doesn’t matter.

So one has to believe not only that Gallaway adopted a german word as a pen name for some reason (that you can only speculate about, unlike Sanders more plausible connection to erdnase/earthnose being a mining engineer), but *also* that out of all the possible pen names (including german ones) he happened to pick one that spells backwards to a common english language name. It’s extremely unlikely that an author’s name will spell backwards to a real name purely by chance. So if you find one that does (especially when it’s so contrived and strange sounding like SW Erdnase),
As I recall, I originally figured out McKinney’s location fairly well by an arduous process of correlating his address with the corresponding addresses of one or two known buildings on the other side of the street. This was sort of a major topic on an earlier blog I ran, called “S.W. Erdnase: 20 Years Later.”

Still, there were various uncertainties, as I recall.

Bill Mullins later (actually quite soon) very kindly provided me with an image of a Sanborn fire-insurance map from a slightly later period (when the street was known as Plymouth Court). That map shows with great clarity that the 73-75 Plymouth address was a little south of Congress (that is, south of where Congress would have been if it had continued straight west from the coastal area). At the time, Congress did not cross Plymouth.

Today, Congress Parkway is much wider than the old Congress Street, and it crosses Plymouth Court.

Tom, do you think it would be possible for me to look at that Sanborn map? Also, would love some comment on the following:

The 1911 street name/number change document calls the Plymouth Court 73-75 building "Bentley Murray". Here is a photo of that building, identified by that it says "Bentley, Murray & Co." on one of its windows, but also by this source.

The third building counting from the Bentley building in the photo is the Peterson building, identified by that it says so on the side, if you look to the uppermost right. The present day Peterson building is identified by that it also says so on the front, which can be seen on Google Streetview (01, 02).

The conclusion is that McKinney was located in a building no longer around but that stood exactly in between the present day parking lot and the lower of the two Congress Parkway halves, since that one did not exist back then:

https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... cation.png

Do you consider all of the above correct? I know that you have already come to the same conclusion through other methods, but I just wanted to provide some additional confirmation that we know exactly where McKinney was located.
Bob Coyne wrote: So if you find one that does (especially when it's so contrived and strange sounding like SW Erdnase), then all signs point to there being a reason (not a coincidence).

Bob, you can repeat this a thousand times, but the nickname Erdnase does not sound strange to somebody who speaks German. It is not any stranger than Mooshaende or other nicknames like Weltverdruss. You gotta get over this.

lybrary | 08/07/15 08:44 AM | link | filter

If you do read German I highly recommend you read the Wikipedia article on Spitznamen (nicknames in German) https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spitzname

Among other things it says: "Grundsätzlich beeindrucken Spitznamen umso mehr, wenn sie nicht nur treffend, sondern auch ausgefallen sind." It states that nicknames are more appropriate if not only fitting but also rare and unusual. It continues: "Es sei dagegen „sicherlich die eleganteste Lösung“, einen Spitznamen „maßschneidernd neu zu erfinden“. Which means it is the most elegant solution to invent a new nickname that perfectly fits the person.

This echoes what I wrote earlier. Don’t expect to find nicknames used in books. Most nicknames are unique to the person who receives it. Often combinations and creations which may not necessarily be in use somewhere else. With the nickname Erdnase we are in luck, because we have evidence that it is being used as nickname today. I keep repeating myself, but it is important to understand that Erdnase makes for a completely plausible German nickname. We therefore have to accept it as one very good explanation for the author name. A nickname is after all a NAME.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/07/15 10:13 AM | link | filter

Are there other German nicknames used as author names in books published in the US in that time range?

Bill Mullins | 08/07/15 11:37 AM | link | filter

mam wrote: Tom, do you think it would be possible for me to look at that Sanborn map?

PM me your email address and I will send it to you.

Bill Mullins | 08/07/15 12:28 PM | link | filter
Bob Coyne wrote: So if you find one that does (especially when it’s so contrived and strange sounding like SW Erdnase), then all signs point to there being a reason (not a coincidence).

Bob, you can repeat this a thousand times, but the nickname Erdnase does not sound strange to somebody who speaks German.

It does sound strange to a native English speaker (as Gallaway was, and as his readership would be). And I attempted to say earlier that I think you overestimate the amount he was embedded in German culture. We know that he took (at least) a junior high level class in German, and had neighbors who were born in Germany. You’ve pointed out that he went to St Johns, a parish established by Germans. But the pastor when he was born and was growing up was Aloysius Hoeffel, who was French by birth.

Yes, Delphos had a large German immigrant population, but the typical European 19th century immigrant worked very hard to become American (as opposed to the stereotypes of some current immigrant groups). From a 1906 history of the town: "To the liberal views held by Father Bredeick [founder of St. Johns Parish in Delphos] can also be ascribed much of the success of Delphos. Instead of holding the views that we would expect of one direct from the old country, he adopted the broadest and most liberal American views. He encouraged those of other nationalities to settle and intermingle with his people ... He wanted all classes and creeds to commingle." Doesn’t sound like a town trying to embed a German culture to me.

My reviews of the Delphos papers of the time when Edward was growing up makes it appear much like any other small American town of the era -- the only major German influence I see is a number of German surnames. No indications that the community held onto their German heritage the way that Acadians/Cajuns in Maine/Louisiana held onto their French heritage, or the way Texas Germans held onto their heritage.

You have said, upthread that elements of the case you are making for Gallaway are "plausible". I don’t deny that. It is possible that Gallaway thought so much of Germans that he picked a German word to use as a pseudonym. But you aren’t offering Gallaway as a possible candidate, you are saying "this is the guy". And for that, the elements shouldn’t be just plausible, they have to be probable. And I don’t see the elements of the case you are making for Gallaway as being probable.

Bill, my reference to culture was mainly with respect to language. Father Bredeick the founder and main land owner you mentioned was German. St. John's taught German to their pupils. Many people there were first generation immigrants from Germany or
hear a typical Viennese slang anymore). If they held on to their German culture in
genral and ate lots of Sauerkraut and danced in their Lederhosen is not important.
But they definitely spoke a lot of German. Kids learned it, thus a German nickname is
neither strange nor contrived. I can literally hear somebody shout: "Du kleine Erdnase,
was grabst du da schon wieder aus?"

I personally think the German nickname theory is not only probably but very likely,
but I will not force my conviction on to you. If it is plausible for you I am already very
happy

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**Tom Sawyer** | 08/07/15 02:07 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Hi mam,

First, congratulations on locating that University of Illinois at Chicago image. Based
on the information in your post, and on what I know about the 73-75 Plymouth Place
building (McKinney's location), that image pretty much has to portray the building
(though obviously the photograph was taken many years later). An 1899 article in *The
Inland Printer* said that the structure's dimensions were 50 by 80, and that it was a six-
story building. This is the first image I have seen of that building.

Bill Mullins has replied to the first part of your email. It was Bill who confirmed and
refined the location of McKinney's about four years ago, especially with regard to the
streets as they existed in the early 1900s.

Concerning the present day, I think you are saying that some part of the building was
between the parking lot and the parkway (since there does not appear to be much
room between them). I agree with that. Without using calipers, I tend to think that the
building overlapped the parking lot completely (or nearly so), and that it protruded a
little into what is now the street, maybe covering the area that has the right-turn
arrow.

Once again, nice going regarding locating the photograph.

--Tom Sawyer

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**mam** | 08/07/15 04:22 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*lybrary* wrote: Thanks for the link to this wonderful book on Chicago. I think
a lot of card play and gambling took place in Clubs. There is an entire
section describing clubs in this book and it mentions "card-rooms". For one
Here's another similar book, that also has a club section, mostly overlapping with the McNally list:
https://archive.org/details/artisticguidetoc00chiciala

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*mam* | 08/07/15 04:41 PM | link | filter

_Tom Sawyer wrote:_ Hi mam,

First, congratulations on locating that University of Illinois at Chicago image. Based on the information in your post, and on what I know about the 73-75 Plymouth Place building (McKinney’s location), that image pretty much has to portray the building (though obviously the photograph was taken many years later). An 1899 article in _The Inland Printer_ said that the structure’s dimensions were 50 by 80, and that it was a six-story building. This is the first image I have seen of that building.

Bill Mullins has replied to the first part of your email. It was Bill who confirmed and refined the location of McKinney’s about four years ago, especially with regard to the streets as they existed in the early 1900s.

Concerning the present day, I think you are saying that some part of the building was between the parking lot and the parkway (since there does not appear to be much room between them). I agree with that. Without using calipers, I tend to think that the building overlapped the parking lot completely (or nearly so), and that it protruded a little into what is now the street, maybe covering the area that has the right-turn arrow.

Once again, nice going regarding locating the photograph.

--Tom Sawyer

Thanks for the additional info, I’ve plotted out a 50 by 80 feet building on this map: https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid= ...

After all, it seems like the building covered the current parking lot exactly.

(Click "Satellite" in the lower left to see the actual parking lot.)

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_Tom Sawyer_ | 08/07/15 06:44 PM | link | filter

An Illinois report on taxation (from the mid-1890s) says 50 by 100 for the address, and I think that is probably correct for 1900.
lybrary wrote: Bill, my reference to culture was mainly with respect to language. Father Bredeick the founder and main land owner you mentioned was German. St. John’s taught German to their pupils. Many people there were first generation immigrants from Germany or children of those immigrants. That means many people there spoke German. You would probably hear it spoken on the street, just as I hear Russian, Turkish and various forms of Slavic languages when I walk through Vienna (actually you barely hear a typical Viennese slang anymore). If they held on to their German culture in general and ate lots of Sauerkraut and danced in their Lederhosen is not important. But they definitely spoke a lot of German. Kids learned it, thus a German nickname is neither strange nor contrived. I can literally hear somebody shout: "Du kleine Erdnase, was grabst du da schon wieder aus?"

I personally think the German nickname theory is not only probably but very likely, but I will not force my conviction on to you. If it is plausible for you I am already very happy

Being German, having studied it and seeing the debate turn toward German bits (again), I jump at my first chance in years to contribute something useful (hopefully) or at least to unload some of my thoughts, musings and convictions into this most interesting thread.

I applaud Chris Wasshuber for his efforts in exploring new directions by conducting primary research and by applying fresh and rigorous thinking. From what I have read so far I feel his candidate Gallaway ranks well among the other top two or three today, neither way above nor way below them.

Yet I disagree with Chris and others on the assessment of how convincing or even self-evident hidden meanings in anagrams or text passages actually are. To me, they are factoids, in the sense that they do not really help us identify Erdnase now. They cannot stand their own ground because they only "work" in a given, predetermined context. Only in retrospect, once we have found him for certain, we will thus be able to see to what degree these possible hints were actually deliberately chosen by the author, I'm afraid. Some examples and observations will follow.

1. On a general note, language is incredibly versatile - and so is any small group of letters. Thus, a lot of "meaning" can be generated from almost any decent word or name by shifting some letters around, adding or dropping others, etc. In general, this proves nothing but the versatility of words and the alphabet. To illustrate, here are
Criss Angel = Caring Less
David Copperfield = Prop Fiddle Advice
Phil Goldstein = Shielding Plot
Pit Hartling = A Light Print
Richard Kaufman = Human Card Fakir
Derek Lever = Revered Elk
Harry Lorayne = Harry-Only Era
David Regal = A Drag Devil
Siegfried & Roy = Fireside Orgy
Jon Racherbaumer = Am Rehab Conjurer / Macabre Hen Juror
S.W. Erdnase = A Nerd Sews / News Reads / Wands Seer / Sends Ware / Draw Sense

Some are fun, some may "draw sense" or even have a ring of truth in them in relation to the real person behind the name; yet I am sure that all of them are purely accidental.

2. As for the word ERDNASE, its six different letters unfortunately rank among the ten most used ones in the English language (ETAOINSHRD) and even among the top eight in German (ENISRATD), allowing for many variations and speculations. Only the "W" is much less common and may thus be a more relevant clue IF there is a connection between the pseudonym and the man behind it.

3. As an aside: Among the possible German variations of ERDNASE I find ANDERS oder ANDERES interesting, as these mean "something / someone other or different". (But, in line with the above, I am not implying any intended meaning here.)

4. The same degree of randomness applies if you are looking for even smaller snippets here and there:
"OddFellows" would end with WS.
"Edward" begins and ends with ERD.
"Alexander" carries at least ERDNAXE within himself.
"New Era Card Tricks" contains TRACK ERDNASE.
etc.

5. Turning toward the famous "Embracing the whole calendar..." triangular section of the title page, any "proof" of authorship taken out of that context becomes even more shaky in my view. The reason: Those nine lines with 41 words and 211 letters include every letter of the alphabet at least once, except for "q" and "z" (so we can at least rule out finding Hofzinser or Tamariz there). Considering this, it is not the least surprising to identify traces of any candidate that you want to find there. Proof: I checked ten random names for fun and found them all, including Harry Houdini, Harry Lorayne, Karl Fulves and Jon Racherbaumer. Both Ed Marlo and Charlier were actually hiding in line one. But my favorite so far: Just look at DETAIL in line three and EVERY
forty pages ago upthread. Seek, and ye shall find...

6. Back to Erdnase and its German meanings.
Yes, I can attest that Erdnase is a German word and I am sure every German would read or identify it as such.
But I would also guess that >90% would neither have heard the word before nor have a clear idea about its meaning. Why? Because it is a widely unfamiliar and obnoxious word.
a) I consider myself well-read, but in decades of reading thousands of books and magazines I had never ever encountered the word before discovering our S. W. Erdnase (yup, that’s only n=1).
b) From the many German compound words beginning with Erd- (like Erdäpfel, Erdatmosphäre, Erdgas, Erdnuss, Erdreich, Erdrutsch, Erdumlaufbahn etc.), Erdnase seems to be among the rarest ones (together with its topographical opposite, Erdfall). The word is actually so rare it is not even listed in current editions of the German language bible, "Der Duden," and also not in the "Knaur".
c) Having run some search queries myself I think Erdnase is probably the noun or name with the fewest hits I have ever gotten in any online search. Yes, there are a few, but even among those I have found some that refer to the topographical "earth nose," (see below) and some to a cute nickname for dogs and others for kids sticking their noses into the soil and getting dirty in their faces.
d) Much better known German synonyms for a dirt-digging rascal or "mudlark" would be Schmutzfink or Dreckspatz, for example (in literal translation: mud sparrows or dirt finches). They may have been around for hundreds of years; I certainly would have bought these terms as "common", but not Erdnase.
e) In my view, none of these words would actually qualify as nicknames in the sense of labels permanently applied to a person (like Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson - don't ask me why he just crossed my mind) and used to identify him or her precisely; their use is clearly context-based, not universal. I could probably imagine a mother calling out "Get out of the mud and come into the house now, you little dirty Erdnase!", but not "Erdnase, come down for dinner, please!" Thus, it also seems rather unlikely to me that someone would remember a descriptive, contextual and non-personal label like Erdnase or Mudlark as their "personal childhood nickname" and put it to good use for hiding their identity.

7. If you think the above is a stronger point for the topographical "earth noses" miners may be dealing with, behold. Again, there are very few hits in an online search. I have also checked with several mining dictionaries online (not from 1900 or older though), and none of them carried this word nor any other special word with Erd-. And even though the word Nase (nose) has several meanings in other contexts, the "Duden" lexicon does not offer one referring to hills or piles of earth. Besides, wouldn't miners be more concerned with digging holes (Erdfall) than with piling up the soil?
meaning are legitimate - they are real words and have apparently been used in that specific context sometime somewhere - but also highly improbable to be of significance due to their rareness (at least from today's perspective) and context-based, impersonal meaning. (Happy to discuss this further in German with you, Chris!)

9. As for the dispute about probabilistic approaches, I think it would simply be great to get Persi Diaconis involved at this point. I am sure he could come up with a both flawless and elegant method for determining the current chance of each candidate being the real Erdnase within less than seven riffle shuffles!

10. Overall, I feel the gaps between knowing MUTUS DEDIT and being Erdnase or between owning a copy and having written the book are still huge (much wider than my crappy pinkie break).

Enough for now - this took me about a day. Back to my backseat, lurking on, anticipating more discoveries!

Jan Isenbart

Bob Coyne | 08/07/15 08:35 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote:

Bob Coyne wrote: So if you find one that does (especially when it's so contrived and strange sounding like SW Erdnase), then all signs point to there being a reason (not a coincidence).

Bob, you can repeat this a thousand times, but the nickname Erdnase does not sound strange to somebody who speaks German. It is not any stranger than Mooshaende or other nicknames like Weltverdruss. You gotta get over this.

As Bill Mullins points out, the name sounds strange to English speakers. And the author surely knew that. That's all that matters. He wasn't publishing the book in Germany.

Also, you haven't answered the key point -- that it's exceedingly rare for a word of that length to spell out a common name backwards (even if you relax the constraint by allowing prepended parental initials). This reduces the likelihood of that happening by chance. It would be different if there was evidence that his nickname was actually Erdnase (or something close to it), but all you've established is that it's possible he had that nickname backwards. So it's still debatable whether (or not)
The author, whoever he was, did need money, because his wife wanted a new dress.

And what prevents the author from choosing a pseudonym that sounds ok in German and strange in English? Is there some kind of rule that you are not allowed to write a book in English with a German sounding name? Roterberg is just as German sounding as Erdnase. We know Erdnase read Roterberg's New Era Card Tricks. Perhaps he tried to emulate it not just in terms of what he wrote on the title page, which is in several ways similar to New Era Card Tricks, but also in the name he chose. Maybe he thought the book will sell better with a German sounding author name, you know, more authoritative, more knowledgeable.
the prepended SW part with it's own likelihood), there's then the long odds that the whole thing coincidentally happens to spell out ES Andrews. That's a lot to buy into. Unless there is evidence to the contrary, it's so much more likely that SW Erdnase was derived from ES Andrews. Many names (especially if you allow initials) can spell out something that's pronounceable backwards, along with examples of authors doing exactly that: martin garder =&gt; redrag nitram, tibbles =&gt; selbit, etc. So this takes no great leap of faith or invocation of longshot coincidences.

A. Roterberg =&gt; G.R.E. Bretora (Yes a surname that exists. You may google it and find Nakh Bretora.)

Ro. Giobbi =&gt; I.B. Boigor (Another surname that exists. Google to find Benjamin Boigor.)
E. Giobbi =&gt; I.B. Boige (as in Ann Boige)

Astor =&gt; Rotsa (yes, again a surname as in Ani Rotsa. Google is your friend.)

B. Lang =&gt; G. Nalb (and again a surname that exists)

P. Anders =&gt; S. Rednap (and again a surname that exists)

M. Anders =&gt; S. Rednam
E.M. Anders =&gt; S. Redname
F. Anders =&gt; S. Rednaf

H.T. Ims =&gt; Smith (the most common surname)
H.T. Imse =&gt; E. Smith
H.T. Imsee =&gt; E.E. Smith (Imsee is actually a small lake in Austria. I also like to take a bath 'im See' which explains my nickname Imsee, but my real name is NOT Smith

What are the odds?! I found these in 5 minutes. Imagine I do this for 5 hours. (Now I need a rednap).

In general (not addressing Gallaway), I am one of those who does not see a lot of intrinsic difficulties in "Erdnase" as a nickname.

Whether the nickname theory is as valid as an anagram or quasi-anagram theory, I
If a candidate has the real name E.S. Andrews, or Wes Anders, that is ordinarily going to be a key part of a proposed case.

But I do believe that the best arguments in favor of the author's name being Andrews stem *in significant part* from what Smith said, and from what Sprong said, and maybe to some degree from what Rullman said -- and not from the solitary fact of, "Hey, we managed to reverse part of S.W. Erdnase and arrived at Andrews!"

**Bob Coyne** | 08/08/15 01:26 AM | [link] [filter]

*lybrary wrote: A. Roterberg -> G.R.E. Bretora (Yes a surname that exists. You may google it and find Nakh Bretora.)*

Ro. Giobbi -> I.B. Boigor (Another surname that exists. Google to find Benjamin Boigor.)

Astor -> Rotsa (yes, again a surname as in Ani Rotsa. Google is your friend.)

B. Lang => G. Nalb (and again a surname)

What are the odds?! I found these in 5 minutes. Imagine I do this for 5 hours.

Ok, let's try to be quantitative and data-driven. Here are 33 reversed spellings culled from the 100 most common US surnames (keeping those with 7 or more letters).

nosnhoj, smailliw, nosredna, noskcaj, nospmoht, zenitram, nosnibor, zeugirdor, zednanreh, zelaznog, llehctim, strebor, spillihp, llebpmac, sdrawde, snilloc, travets, zehcnas, nosdrahcir, nosretep, zerimar, srednas, ttenneb, nosredneh, nameloc, sniknej, nosrettap, notgnihsaw, snommis, selaznog, rednaxela, llessur, niffirg,

I don't see any names in there. It is very rare for a name of any significant length to spell backwards to another name. If you add a couple initials, you've greatly relaxed the constraints. But even with that, it's still extremely difficult to construct common names of moderate length (none of your reversed names are common and most are quite short). But it does make it quite a bit easier to construct some pronounceable yet fake/contrived/foreign names (whether real or not) similar to sw erdnase. For example: LL Essurna from AN Russell, or NA Melocca from AC Coleman. Your examples fit into that category. And even assuming those existed as real names, they would be so obscure in the US in 1900 that it would be pretty obvious that they were just reversals of the author's real name.
to find a meaningful derived name. Plus the form and number of those initials can be varied. Your example of Ro. Giobbi (first two letters vs initials) is a good example of modifying the constraints in a plausible way to do that. Or you could just pick a single initial if that worked out better. Or going to three initials as you did with Rotenberg (though that’s more of a stretch and suspicious). It’s interesting to note that both Gallaway and Sanders used their full first names in the work they published under their own names. Using initials seems to me to be a clue that something’s afoot when paired with backwards spelling in the author’s name.

Also, interestingly, one name from the list above, popped out at me: nosnibor (robinson backwards) which is pronounceable on its own. And not surprisingly a quick google search reveals people using that as a pen name. And as someone on this thread pointed out a while ago, the same is true of book titles (Samuel Butler’s Erewhon being an example). If you see a nonsense or weird sounding name or word and it has a common name/word as its backwards spelling, it’s likely that the backwards spelling is the real one.

Tom Sawyer wrote: An Illinois report on taxation (from the mid-1890s) says 50 by 100 for the address, and I think that is probably correct for 1902.

Yes, 100 makes more sense as it makes it as deep as the other (still existing) buildings on the block.

Zig Zagger wrote: Yes, I can attest that Erdnase is a German word and I am sure every German would read or identify it as such. But I would also guess that >90% would neither have heard the word before nor have a clear idea about its meaning. Why? Because it is a widely unfamiliar and obnoxious word.

I can confirm that. I’ve never stumbled upon this word anywhere else by chance.

Bob Coyne wrote: (none of your reversed names are common and most are quite short)

Bob, you make no sense. Smith is probably the MOST COMMON surname. H.T. Imsee — F. E. Smith
reversal to a surname is so unique and unlikely that this explains it, is ridiculous. On top of it, it does not factor into the nickname theory. If a German nickname reverses to a common surname or not, does not change the viability of the nickname theory.

If we relax the requirement to an anagram one could fill a book with examples. All this shows is what Jan Isenbart has tried to point out - the flexibility of arranging characters is remarkable. In and of itself it doesn’t mean anything.

If you really need more examples here is one that can even be a palindrom:

S.M. Adams -> S.M. Adams (Adams by the way is also a German surname, not only an English one)
S.M. Adami -> I.M. Adams

You may also want to check out the wikipedia article on pen names. You are hell bent on arguing a name reversal is common and thus a likely explanation for Erdnase being Andrews. Check this list https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_pen_names Reversal isn’t a common theme among pen names. Bottom line, the reversal theory is NOT a particularly likely scenario for Erdnase in general. Of course, if you have a candidate like E.S. Andrews then it is a perfectly good explanation. But the reverse logic does not apply. It does not mean that this proves or suggests it was an Andrews.

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lybrary | 08/08/15 06:51 AM | link | filter

Denis Behr wrote:

Zig Zagger wrote: Yes, I can attest that Erdnase is a German word and I am sure every German would read or identify it as such. But I would also guess that >90% would neither have heard the word before nor have a clear idea about its meaning. Why? Because it is a widely unfamiliar and obnoxious word.

I can confirm that. I’ve never stumbled upon this word anywhere else by chance.

Most people will not have heard most nicknames, because that is the very nature of them. (Read the Wikipedia article on Spitznamen.) They are personal, created for a particular person, and not common names which are widely used. No surprise that people will be unfamiliar with Erdnase.

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Bob Coyne | 08/08/15 08:51 AM | link | filter
most are quite short)

Bob, you make no sense. Smith is probably the MOST COMMON surname.
H.T. Imsee -> E.E. Smith

You seem to disregard what I actually said. Of course smith (like andrews) is common! That's the point of listing the 100 most common names and seeing if any produced real sounding names when reversed. Imsee isn't common and doesn't sound like a name (it's in the same class as erdnase). Smith is also very short (as I said, I removed the ones shorter than andrews)...It gets harder to find something even pronounceable as as the name gets longer.

If you see something very strange sounding name like HT Imsee that spells backwards to something common like EE Smith, you can either conclude a) that the author's last name is Smith (extremely common) and the author realized it could be spelled backwards into something pronounceable as a name (Imsee) by tacking on some initials or b) you can believe that the person had some private meaning for Imsee (or that it's an obscure foreign name/word), and the author chose it among all the other obscure foreign words/names and it coincidentally just happened to spell out Smith backwards (by adding initials). The likelihood of scenario (a) is boosted by the millions of Smiths and the relative ease of getting something pronounceable by reversing it and the likelihood of scenario (b) is reduced by the dearth of Imsee's and the low chance of getting a common name via reversal.

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Bob Coyne wrote: Of course smith (like andrews) is common! That's the point of listing the 100 most common names and seeing if any produced real sounding names when reversed. Imsee isn't common and doesn't sound like a name (it's in the same class as erdnase).

Thank you for making my case. We are talking about Erdnase here. Not the general reversability of German names into English surnames. BTW, Imsee is both a real name and a believable nickname 'im See' (meaning in the lake).

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Who knows what Morris Martin's at 100 Adams Street in Chicago is? Apparently gambling took place there around or before 1896.
That was when the street was called Third Avenue. I had the length (depth) wrong. I probably got the 80 feet from a post a long time ago by Bill Mullins, wherein he stated that the **height** of the building was 80 feet.

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**Bob Coyne** | 08/08/15 07:30 PM | link | filter

*lybrary wrote:*

*Bob Coyne wrote:* Of course smith (like andrews) is common!
That’s the point of listing the 100 most common names and seeing if any produced real sounding names when reversed.
Imsee isn't common and doesn’t sound like a name (it’s in the same class as erdnase).

Thank you for making my case. We are talking about Erdnase here. Not the general reversability of German names into English surnames. BTW, Imsee is both a real name and a believable nickname 'im See' (meaning in the lake).

The online US census database containing 150K different names doesn’t have Imsee. So I stick to my assertion that it doesn’t sound like a name and/or is very rare...which is effectively the same thing for these purposes (low likelihood of it being an author’s real name given that it spells out a common names backwards with the added initials). It is just like Erdnase in that respect.

http://www.pbs.org/pov/thesweetestsound/popindex.php

The general principle (which applies to SW Erdnase, HT Imsee, and all the others you constructed) is that if you see an author or title or fictional character with a very unusual or strange-sounding name that happens to be reversed spelling of something very common, then it’s very likely that the unusual word/name was used as a stand-in for the other. We have several examples of that: selbit, rendrag, nosnibor, erewhon. Another example is the sorcerer in Fantasia called Yensid (disney spelled backwards). And there’s always the Olram subtlety.

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**Bill Marquardt** | 08/08/15 08:06 PM | link | filter

Examples of "nameplay":

Oprah created Harpo Productions

Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz created Desilu Productions
word play on "E.S and R.E.W.S." but I cannot make real sense of it other than my concocted theory earlier that the E.W. could refer to Erich Weiss.

What truly amazes me is that Erdnase was able to actually hide his true identity, not only within his own lifetime but afterward. It is not impossible, but it seems unlikely, that no one else was aware of his true identity. It is very rare indeed for such a secret to remain as such. Why has everyone who knew kept quiet? D. B. Cooper comes to mind, so I guess there is more than one example.

And, for what it is worth, there was a man named Edward Arness who lived in Iowa from 1856 to 1919. I know nothing about him other than that, but given that the name Edward was often abbreviated as Edw. in those days, his name could be written as "Edw. Arness," which is another anagram of "S. W. Erdnase." I believe this sort of coincidence could be found ad infinitum if one researches all possibilities.

Maybe we should just be happy to let it remain a mystery, but what would be the fun in that?

Richard Hatch | 08/08/15 08:06 PM | link | filter

Just taking the "HT Imsee" example: did Chris construct it by taking a German expression, "Im See" and adding two meaningful initials (those of his parents, Hans and Teresa?) and end up with a pseudonym that just happened to reverse to a common American name, "E. E. Smith", or did he start with the latter and notice that meaning could be imposed on the reversal? My guess is the latter, and that is also my guess in the case of S. W. Erdnase. I could well be wrong in both cases, of course.

Richard Hatch | 08/08/15 08:15 PM | link | filter

Bill Marquardt wrote:
It would not surprise me that "E. S. Andrews" was a word play on "E.S and R.E.W.S." but I cannot make real sense of it other than my concocted theory earlier that the E.W. could refer to Erich Weiss.

I believe David Alexander's deconstruction of the title page to arrive at the author's "true" name (W. E. Sanders, according to Alexander) involved reversing a line of the title page: "RUSE AND SUBTERFUGE" and noting that if we eliminate all but the first and last letter of "Subterfuge" We get "E...S AND RUSE". He argued that this was the author's "ARTIFICE", a false persona Sanders created and used in meeting with the printer, illustrator, etc. to help hide true his identity. Certainly an ingenious theory.
I believe David Alexander's deconstruction of the title page to arrive at the author's "true" name (W. E. Sanders, according to Alexander) involved reversing a line of the title page: "RUSE AND SUBTERFUGE" and noting that if we eliminate all but the first and last letter of "Subterfuge" We get "E...S AND RUSE". He argued that this was the author's "ARTIFICE", a false persona Sanders created and used in meeting with the printer, illustrator, etc. to help hide true his identity. Certainly an ingenious theory.

Alexander's theory is fascinating Richard but I don't remember reading about eliminating the word "Subterfuge" in David's Genii article. Perhaps Alexander shared that with you via private correspondence? David noted that the words "at" and "the" looked really tiny compared to the font size of the other letters in the title page of the first edition. Tiny enough to discard when reading the title page backwards:

ARTIFICE, RUSE, AND SUBTERFUGE at the CARDTABLE read backwards: CARDTABLE SUBTERFUGE, AND RUSE ARTIFICE.

Andrews artifice. I also believe that Erdnase wanted to be followed and left this clue on the title page. It's one explanation for the reason why this book has two titles.

Richard Hatch | 08/08/15 11:23 PM | link | filter

Leonard Hevia wrote: Alexander's theory is fascinating Richard but I don't remember reading about eliminating the word "Subterfuge" in David's Genii article. Perhaps Alexander shared that with you via private correspondence?

Thanks, Leo, I think you're right about David Alexander's theory and I don't think he invoked the first and last letters of "subterfuge". I think others before him had pointed out the "E...S And Ruse" reversal of the second line. It may even be in the Busby/Whaley book. The "Andrews=And Ruse" idea is not certainly not new but nonetheless intriguing.

mam | 08/09/15 01:53 AM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: Who knows what Morris Martin's at 100 Adams Street in Chicago is? Apparently gambling took place there around or before 1896.

Morris Martin was a very prominent con man in Chicago at the time, he is mentioned at a few places in this book. I have not yet figured out exactly where 100 Adams Street was located, because renumbering documents are contradictory, but it most certainly
and "The Store" (half-gangster Michael C. McDonald's empire – "the grandest, gaudiest, and most brazen twenty-four-hour gambling place in the Midwest"). See this map where I've added a Gambling layer that I will start to fill in with known joints, I have a list to begin with.

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**mam** | 08/09/15 02:07 AM | link | filter

It seems by the way that where Edward Gallaway later had his office, was part of one of the major red-light districts in Chicago at the time: 
http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory..../6341.html

Wow, look at these vice maps I found:  http://www.artifacting.com/historic-vic ... f-chicago/

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**lybrary** | 08/09/15 06:27 AM | link | filter

Gallaway certainly seems to be located close to the gambling action. Another book that looks very promising for background reading is "Chicago by Gaslight" 
http://www.amazon.com/Chicago-Gaslight- ... XS7XQZVZ8F  It covers the period from 1880-1920.

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**mam** | 08/09/15 08:08 AM | link | filter

By the way, I don't think Erdnase gambled at the social, reputable membership clubs. Any kind of artifice, ruse and subterfuge at the card table in one of these would probably mean being expelled, and getting a bad reputation in circles you would rather stay in, why go down that path? Especially if there are a hundred rough saloons to do your dirty deeds in.

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**Brad Jeffers** | 08/09/15 03:12 PM | link | filter

*mam wrote*: By the way, I don't think Erdnase gambled at the social, reputable membership clubs. Any kind of artifice, ruse and subterfuge at the card table in one of these would probably mean being expelled ... Why go down that path, especially if there are a hundred rough saloons to do your dirty deeds in.

And just what do you think would happen if he were to be caught cheating at Hell's Half Acre or The Bucket of Blood.
Hi All,

A fair amount of discussion in this thread has related to the reversal of names. Regarding S.W. Erdnase, one of the concepts is that, at least in magic, the reversal of names is not infrequent. However, I am not certain of the utility of such discussions, since (from what I have seen) they tend to focus upon the reversal of surnames.

In the S.W. Erdnase case, you are not really dealing with a surname. You are dealing with “SWERDNASE,” or with “ESANDREWS.” This concept had been alluded to at least a couple of times, but I have not seen it explored meaningfully by anyone. Instead, it seems that people are inclined to look principally at surnames.

Again, I am not saying that this has been ignored. For instance, Chris Wasshuber, in his analysis of the name “Smith,” plainly appreciates the importance of this concept, because he did not simply say, “Reverse SMITH and you get HTIMS, so Smith is unreversible.”

Bob Coyne also alludes to the adding of letters.

Yet when I consider examples of magicians who have reversed their names to create pen names or stage names, I see none off hand that fit the pattern of two initials and a surname, reversing perfectly into two initials and a surname. Put simply, this means that (in the case of S.W. Erdnase) you add two letters (“S” and “W”) in order to get “Esandrews,” but you also have to DROP two letters to arrive at "Andrews."

This has long seemed to me to be a major weakness in the argument that the author's real name must be Andrews.

If you can get past Smith, Sprong, and Rullman, it appears to me that the name-reversal argument is quite far from having been proven. If you can't get past Smith, Sprong, and Rullman -- well, I guess you are sure the author's name is Andrews.

--Tom Sawyer

Brad Jeffers wrote:

By the way, I don't think Erdnase gambled at the...
Why go down that path, especially if there are a hundred rough saloons to do your dirty deeds in.

And just what do you think would happen if he were to be caught cheating at Hell's Half Acre or The Bucket of Blood. Better to face possible expulsion from the Washington Park Club than to face the wrath of Blubber Bob Gray or Dago Frank Lewis.

Yes, you are right about that, it was a flaw in my reasoning. If we instead were to assume he did not cheat at that kind of place, but at the same time assume he did cheat, then he must have done so elsewhere. Then there are not that many places left except just those membership clubs. And clubs with tradition also tend to keep a tidy membership roll and save it forever, hmm...

Bill Mullins | 08/09/15 04:44 PM | link | filter

Brad Jeffers wrote:

mam wrote: By the way, I don't think Erdnase gambled at the social, reputable membership clubs. Any kind of artifice, ruse and subterfuge at the card table in one of these would probably mean being expelled...

Why go down that path, especially if there are a hundred rough saloons to do your dirty deeds in.

And just what do you think would happen if he were to be caught cheating at Hell's Half Acre or The Bucket of Blood. Better to face possible expulsion from the Washington Park Club than to face the wrath of Blubber Bob Gray or Dago Frank Lewis.

But he may have worked for Blubber Bob, or Dago Frank.

Roger M. | 08/09/15 04:45 PM | link | filter

mam wrote: And clubs with tradition also tend to keep a tidy membership roll and save it forever, hmm...

This is a most interesting angle.

A book like Prus's Road Hustler demonstrates the many different types of gentlemen's clubs and venues scufflers tend to ply their trade.
himself?

That Mr. Erdnase might be a member in good standing of one (or more) of these establishments in Chicago could be considered extremely logical.

Based on the deep thinking demonstrated throughout his book, Erdnase would have the concept of not burning a game very well thought out, and therefore comfortable in the same game (or games) for months, if not years.

mam | 08/09/15 06:32 PM | link | filter

On the other hand, finding documentation of any of the candidates being member of any of the clubs wouldn't really prove anything. There were clubs. They had members.

lybrary | 08/09/15 07:04 PM | link | filter

I both agree and disagree here. Yes, knowing that one of the candidates was a member at certain clubs would not prove anything, unless there is a card players club. But knowing who else was member could allow us to better understand the connections and friendships a candidate had.

For example, we know that Edward Gallaway was a member of the OddFellows. I know that he joined them in summer of 1902. I am now trying to get the full membership roster of his lodge, Excelsior no. 22, to see who else was member there. This could explain parts of what we know about EATCT, where it was advertised and sold. Imagine for example - and that is purely hypothetical - that Vernelo was also member of the Excelsior lodge. That could then explain why EATCT appears advertised in the Sphinx later in 1902. As a self-published author Erdnase has to try to market and sell his book. He needs to find ways to sell the print run he paid for.

It is these connections which could be very helpful to explain certain things known to us.

Brad Jeffers | 08/09/15 09:18 PM | link | filter

Bill Marquardt wrote: D. B. Cooper comes to mind

Speaking of which ... Would you believe me if I told you that I have uncovered an edition of The Expert At The Card Table which is signed and inscribed by the author, and which at one time belonged to the hijacker D.B. Cooper?
But it’s true.

**Lybrary** | 08/09/15 09:40 PM | link | filter

*Brad Jeffers wrote:*

*Bill Marquardt wrote: D. B. Cooper comes to mind*

Speaking of which ...
Would you believe me if I told you that I have uncovered an edition of *The Expert At The Card Table* which is signed and inscribed by the author, and which at one time belonged to the hijacker D.B. Cooper?

Of course you wouldn’t.

But it’s true.

Brad, so you are saying you have a handwriting sample of Erdnase?

**Bill Marquardt** | 08/10/15 12:25 AM | link | filter

*Brad Jeffers wrote:*

*Bill Marquardt wrote: D. B. Cooper comes to mind*

Speaking of which ...
Would you believe me if I told you that I have uncovered an edition of *The Expert At The Card Table* which is signed and inscribed by the author, and which at one time belonged to the hijacker D.B. Cooper?

Of course you wouldn’t.

But it’s true. 😊

I will take your word for it.

My first encounter with EATCT was a mail order copy of an early paperback edition that I purchased for $3.00 circa 1961. Many years later it ended up in a box in an outside storage shed and was chewed to pieces by mice. I threw away the remains without much concern as I knew the book was readily available. I recently saw a similar edition offered at a generous price on eBay, nothing that would have made me rich had I still owned a copy to sell, but I am disgusted that I let my copy go into
mam | 08/10/15 03:07 AM | link | filter

I found this book from 1888 that has membership lists of a number of clubs in Chicago. A quick scan says Gallaway, Drake, McKinney or Ruxton are none of them members of any of those clubs. But feel free to look closer at the lists.

Joe Pecore | 08/10/15 07:24 AM | link | filter

Everybody take a well deserved break from researching and relax to the jazz styling of the Janek Gwizdala Band playing the song "Erdnase"

Check out Janek (amatuer magician and bassist) Gwizdala's other songs on his album "Theatre By The Sea" https://janekgwizdala.bandcamp.com/album/theatre-by-the-sea, which includes other magical one like "Fooling Houdini", "The Goshman", and "Chicago Opener".

Bob Coyne | 08/10/15 08:34 AM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: This is my announced quantitative analysis. It is my first attempt putting some numbers behind some of the evidence that gets mentioned in lists. It is my first stab and I welcome critique, comments, and suggestions to make it better.
directly (or possibly indirectly) in a business relationship with mckinney to print the book. However, I don’t understand why Gallaway would count as a business relationship of the sort that matters. Is it just because he’s listed as a creditor on the bankruptcy files? It seems likely that’s just because he was an employee and was owed money for back pay or some other reason related to his role as an employee as opposed to that being evidence that he was a customer (as erdnase would have been). At a minimum the relatively likelihood of those two scenarios (being a creditor as a customer vs as an employee or in some other way) must be taken into account in your calculations. It’s the same reason you can reduce/eliminate the likelihood of others on the creditors list (eg cook county, dexter folding company, etc etc). The key question isn’t whether someone was a in a business relationship but whether they were in a business relationship because they were a customer as an author to get the book printed.

Bob Coyne wrote:

*lybrary wrote:* This is my announced quantitative analysis. It is my first attempt putting some numbers behind some of the evidence that gets mentioned in lists. It is my first stab and I welcome critique, comments, and suggestions to make it better.

Chris, there’s something I don’t understand about your reasoning on this. Your starting assumptions (which seemed valid to me) were that erdnase was engaged directly (or possibly indirectly) in a business relationship with mckinney to print the book. However, I don’t understand why Gallaway would count as a business relationship of the sort that matters. Is it just because he’s listed as a creditor on the bankruptcy files? It seems likely that’s just because he was an employee and was owed money for back pay or some other reason related to his role as an employee as opposed to that being evidence that he was a customer (as erdnase would have been). At a minimum the relatively likelihood of those two scenarios (being a creditor as a customer vs as an employee or in some other way) must be taken into account in your calculations. It’s the same reason you can reduce/eliminate the likelihood of others on the creditors list (eg cook county, dexter folding company, etc etc). The key question isn’t whether someone was a creditor but whether they were a creditor because they were a customer as an author to get the book printed.

Bob, I am simply taking a group of people of which Erdnase must be member of. This is of course an upper bound, and there are probably several ones which could be ruled out. But clearly, being an employee as Gallaway was, gives you all the opportunity to have your book printed at your workplace. Keep in mind that Gallaway wasn’t some lowly printing laborer. He was 20 years in the business, advanced quickly through the
rungs of his profession and must have held a higher position at McKinney. We see this from his wage as well as from other sources of information who show that he was a clever, ambitious, and successful person.

Brad Jeffers | 08/10/15 08:03 PM | link | filter

Bill Marquardt wrote:

Brad Jeffers wrote:

Bill Marquardt wrote: D. B. Cooper comes to mind

Speaking of which ... Would you believe me if I told you that I have uncovered an edition of *The Expert At The Card Table* which is signed and inscribed by the author, and which at one time belonged to the hijacker D.B. Cooper?

Of course you wouldn't.

But it's true.

I will take your word for it.

Don't just take my word for it Bill, it's true.

Let me explain ...

It is inscribed ...

"To Bill Gossett ~ Remember Gamblers Never Gamble ~ Michael MacDougall"

William Gossett is believed by many to be the legendary D.B. Cooper.

Therefore when I say I have an edition of *The Expert At The Card Table* that is signed and inscribed by the author and which at one time belonged to the hijacker D.B. Cooper, you can believe it!
Bill Marquardt | 08/10/15 11:37 PM | link | filter

@Brad

Very cool.

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Pete McCabe | 08/11/15 03:04 AM | link | filter

https://xkcd.com/1400/

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lybrary | 08/11/15 06:58 PM | link | filter

Bob Coyne wrote:

lybrary wrote:
As a comparison take for example WE Sanders. What do we know about him? Well we know he was an adult male who played cards. My guess for the number of adult male who played cards in the US is about 5 million. What else do we know about him that allows us to narrow it down statistically? We don't even know he was in Chicago at the right time let alone had any business with McKinney. He doesn't sound anything like Erdnase, which is a big point against him.

There are many strong connections with Sanders. First off, Sanders not only played cards but wrote down a magic trick! And he brought several boxes of playing cards with him on a packing list for a trip. Not to mention the Erdnase/earth-nose/mining connection, the history of playing around with anagrams, interest in dialectical speech patterns, and several other strong links.

And I *totally* disagree that Sanders sounds nothing like Erdnase. Unlike Galloway his writing style and word choice is very similar to Erdnase. To me this is one of the strongest of the many pieces of evidence for Sanders. Here's a sampling (i posted many of these sometime ago in this same thread):

Erdnase: he coolly proposes to "MAKE GOOD" by transforming the wrong card
Sanders: Has "MADE GOOD" at the bar, where he shines

Erdnase: It is almost AN AXIOM that a novice will win his first stake.
Erdnase: it may enable the skilled in deception to take a POST-GRADUATE COURSE in the highest and most artistic branches of his vocation
Sanders: during the following year he took a POST-GRADUATE COURSE in Civil Engineering

Erdnase: the average card player
Sanders: the average mining engineer

Erdnase: The first described is an EXCELLENT ONE for retaining either the top or bottom stock...
Erdnase: The position is an EXCELLENT ONE for ordinary dealing, and should never be changed.
Sanders: this joint is without doubt an EXCELLENT ONE when, and only when, ....

Erdnase: describing with detail and illustration EVERY KNOWN expedient, manoeuvre and strategm of the expert card handler
Sanders: the mines operated under these methods PRESENT EVERY KNOWN characteristic of lode formation.

Erdnase: LITTLE OR NO skill is required, BUT a practiced hand can locate and bring the cards to the top
Sanders: large excavations may be supported with LITTLE OR NO timbering, BUT usually...

Erdnase: various METHODS OF LOCATING AND PRODUCING selected cards
Sanders: the METHODS OF LOCATING AND ALIGNING the sets are those used for...

Erdnase: An expert can run the whole deck WITH THE UTMOST rapidity
Sanders: huge timbers that have been framed WITH THE UTMOST precision

Erdnase: though this method IS now BY FAR THE MORE prevalent among men who play for money
Sanders: this station, while requiring more excavating to construct, IS BY FAR THE MOST economical in the end

Erdnase: we shall describe several of the BEST METHODS known for
Sanders: probably the SIMPLEST METHOD OF aligning the side plates of inclined-shaft sets
Sanders: being the SIMPLEST AND CHEAPEST METHOD OF framing

Erdnase: if requested to determine from what single artifice THE GREATEST ADVANTAGE is derived we would unhesitatingly decide...
Sanders: the plan above described may be of THE GREATEST ADVANTAGE in blocking-out the ores for purposes of description and localization; and it may be employed with great benefit in connection with...

** Both OFFER a TREATISE and stress the IMPORTANCE of DETAILS **

Erdnase: A TREATISE on the Science and Art of Manipulating Cards
Erdnase: the sum of our present knowledge is PROFFERED THIS IN VOLUME
Erdnase: IMPORTANCE of DETAILS [full section heading]

Sanders: it has appeared worth while to make the present COLLECTION WHICH IS OFFERED not as a complete TREATISE on the subject, but rather as a series of essays which go fully into many IMPORTANT DETAILS

** Both justify the use of CERTAIN TERMS AND SYMBOLS for THE SAKE OF BREVITY **

Erdnase: Many of the methods of card manipulation explained in this work originated with us, and we have, in describing the various processes and conditions, used CERTAIN TERMS for the SAKE OF BREVITY, to DESIGNATE the particular matters referred to.
Sanders: for the SAKE OF BREVITY in description, CERTAIN SYMBOLS letters or figures, are employed to DESIGNATE the various mine workings, as follows:
Sanders: they are thus marked, CERTAIN SYMBOLS may be discarded for the SAKE OF BREVITY, and only such as are essential to the DESCRIPTION of the working be employed.

** Both take time to describe the relevance of the illustrations **

Erdnase: Therefore the writer has expended much time and care in illustrating many manoeuvres that at first may seem unimportant, but all of which are essential to the curriculum of artistic card handling.
as explained, and can easily be applied to frames and timbers of any desired dimensions.

** Both give disclaimers, describing the author's intentions and the limitations of what is covered **

Erdnase: IT IS NOT OUR PURPOSE TO DESCRIBE the various kinds of apparatus, or prepared or mechanical cards, that play so great a part in the professional conjurer's startling exhibitions.

Sanders: IT IS NOT THE PROVINCE OF THIS ARTICLE TO TOUCH UPON methods of mining in use above ground, whether by hydraulic mining, or other processes, but rather to deal with the support of underground excavations by the use of timbers, and the details of mining therewith connected. NOR IS IT INTENDED TO ...

There are more than 130 unique four-word strings matching between 'Estimating for Printers' and 'Expert at the Card Table'. Many appear multiple times in both books

A
• a great deal of
• a manner that the
• a matter of fact
• and as a rule
• and bottom of the
• and it is this
• and so on these
• and so on until
• and there is no
• an inch of space
• another form of the
• any of the other
• a part of the
• are essential to the
• are found in the
• as a matter of
• attention to the fact
• at the bottom of
• at the same time
• at the top and
• at top bottom and

B
• be made in the
• both sides of the
• by the use of
C
• cards can be readily
• can be done in
• can be obtained from
• color of the ink
• could be so imposed
• counting the number of
D
• during the process of
E
• end for end and
F
• first and so on
• for all practical purposes
• for the purpose of
• from right to left
H
• his knowledge of the
I
• in about the same
• in addition to the
• inch at the side
• in such a manner
• in the direction of
• in the same manner
• in this particular case
• is not the same
• is one of the
• is placed on the
• is placed on top
• is quite possible to
• is ready for the
• is taken off the
• is the fact that
• is the process of
• it can be done
• it is an excellent
• it is desired to
• it is impossible to
• it is necessary to
• it is well to
• it will be seen

M
• manner in which the
• matter of fact the
• merely to show the
• more or less than

N
• number of points to

O
• of course it is
• of course it must
• of the face of
• of the first and
• of the lower one
• of the most important
• of the nature of
• one of the most
• one of the very
• one side and the
• on the other side
• on top of the

P
• particular attention to the
• placed on top of

Q
• quite possible to get

R
• relative positions of the

S
• same result can be
• should be made in
• so on until all
• so that it will
• such a manner that

T
• than the number of
• that are to be
• that it is the
• that it can be
• that it will be
• the back of the
• the color of the
• the face of the
• the face with the
• the first and so
• the most favorable conditions
• the nature of the
• the number of points
• the performance of the
• the pressure of the
• the process is very
• the purpose of this
• there are no more
• the relative positions of
• the same manner as
• the same result can
• the stock must be
• the time required for
• the top and bottom
• the top of the
• the value of the
• the width of the
• to a great extent
• to ascertain the number
• to determine the number
• to go through the
• top and bottom of
• top of the first
• to the back of
• to the fact that
• to the number of
U
• used in connection with
W
• where there is a
• which are essential to
• which will be the
• will be seen that
• with the exception of
• would be required to
• would have to be
• would indicate that the
Jonathan Townsend | 08/15 07:10 PM | link | filter

Chris, how does that match of strings compare to findings from/between other texts of the time?

Bob Coyne | 08/15 07:22 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote:
There are more than 130 unique four-word strings matching between 'Estimating for Printers' and 'Expert at the Card Table'. Many appear multiple times in both books

(...) Who still doubts that these are the same authors?

I do A large number of those are too short or generic (eg "a part of the" or "any of the other" "color of the ink" etc) to indicate anything much. Also, sometimes inexact matches that retain some higher level syntactic idiom can be more convincing even though they won't show up on an automatically generated exact match list of this type. Do you have a list of ones that actually sound characteristic of Erdnase to you? I started looking through Estimating for Printers and did run across some language that reminded me of Erdnase, but some other language seemed quite different. So I think it's worth investigating. It takes a while to get familiar with an author's voice. Automated lists is no substitute for that, though i think it can be a useful tool.

lybrary | 08/15 07:35 PM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote: Chris, how does that match of strings compare to findings from/between other texts of the time?

Jonathan, each such comparison, which includes other aspects, too, not just longest substring matches, costs $900. If you are able to raise the funds I am happy to have as many books analyzed as you want.

Bob Coyne | 08/15 07:46 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: Bob, I am simply taking a group of people of which Erdnase must be member of. This is of course an upper bound, and there are probably several ones which could be ruled out. But clearly, being an employee as Gallaway was, gives you all the opportunity to have your book printed at your workplace. Keep in mind that Gallaway wasn't some lowly
at McKinney. We see this from his wage as well as from other sources of information who show that he was a clever, ambitious, and successful person.

It seems to me that anybody who lived in or visited Chicago would have the opportunity to get the book printed by McKinney. I don't see why it is much more likely for an employee to print a book there than any other person in the vicinity. It's hard to know what Gallaway's name on the creditors list means given that he was an employee and could be owed money for any number of reasons. His name on the list increases his likelihood vs a random person but not nearly enough to count him for sure in the estimated 300 people doing business directly with McKinney that year.

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**Bill Mullins | 08/15 07:47 PM | link | filter**

If MS Word's word count is to be believed, EATCT has something like 50,000 words. So it's got something like 49,997 four-word strings. (No idea how many of them are unique). The Gallaway book looks to be about half as big, so it's probably got something like 25,000 words. Take any two books of comparable sizes, and they are bound to have a number of four-word strings in common.

Without some controls, and comparisons to other pairs of books of similar sizes, there's no way to draw any conclusions. Ideally, you'd need accurate word counts on both books and several other books of similar sizes for comparisons. You'd need to build an array of every four-word phrase in each book. Sort the phrases alphabetically so you can easily compare one book to another. If you find that comparing a random 50k word book with a random 25k word book (or whatever the numbers are) yields between 100 and 150 matches, then the comparison between Erdnase and Gallaway shows that there isn't anything unusual about how similar they are (by this metric). If, on the other hand, you usually get something like 50 - 100 matches, then maybe you are on to something. But to say that there are 130 four-word phrases in common, without some comparison to other books, doesn't tell us anything.

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**Bill Mullins | 08/15 07:56 PM | link | filter**

*lybrary wrote:*

*Jonathan Townsend wrote:* Chris, how does that match of strings compare to findings from/between other texts of the time?

Jonathan, each such comparison, which includes other aspects, too, not just longest substring matches, costs $900. If you are able to raise the funds I am happy to have as many books analyzed as you want.
Of the first four phrases on Chris’s list, two of them show up with some regularity in other books as well:

Richard Hatch | 08/11/15 08:24 PM | link | filter

Bob Coyne wrote: It’s hard to know what gallaway’s name on the creditors list means given that he was an employee and could be owed money for any number of reasons. His name on the list increases his likelihood vs a random person but not nearly enough to count him for sure in the estimated 300 people doing business directly with mckinney that year.

The money McKinney owed Gallaway is specifically identified as "wages". The checks McKinney issued to his employees on Friday, December 19, 1902 bounced.

Bill Mullins wrote: If MS Word’s word count is to be believed, EATCT has something like 50,000 words. So it’s got something like 49,997 four-word strings. (no idea how many of them are unique). The Gallaway book looks to be about half as big, so it’s probably got something like 25,000 words.

Without some controls, and comparisons to other pairs of books of similar sizes, there’s no way to draw any conclusions. Ideally, you’d need accurate word counts on both books and several other books of similar sizes for comparisons. You’d need to build an array of every four-word phrase in...
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Bill, not according to the expert who did the analysis. The substring match was only one thing he looked at, but according to him, it is one very significant metric. I would assume he knows what he is talking about. Another thing he looked at was the common lexicon. Here is what he writes:

"the common lexicon and the high number of four word phrases suggests a strong possibility of identity of authorship"

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**Bill Mullins wrote:** Of the first four phrases on Chris's list, two of them show up with some regularity in other books as well

Which means two of the four you picked at random are quite significant. Based on your sample we can assume that perhaps 50% or about 60-70 are uncommon. I don't want to bore you with another statistical analysis, but 130 matches many of which are used repeatedly is highly significant. The WE Sanders camp should raise the money for an analysis for Sanders. Then you would have an argument to stand on. Right now it is you against an expert who does this all the time. I believe the expert if you don't mind

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**Jonathan Townsend wrote:** Significance and confidence. How many four word fragment matches is "normal" and what are the odds that a finding is due to chance alone.

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**Jonathan Townsend wrote:** Significance and confidence. How many four word fragment matches is "normal" and what are the odds that a finding is due to chance alone.

Jonathan, as I wrote, this is only one metric the expert used to come to his conclusions. It is not as simple as looking at a number and saying it is high or low.
mostly three word phrases several of which don't even match exactly.

**DChung | 08/11/15 09:26 PM | link | filter**

*library wrote:* Jonathan, each such comparison, which includes other aspects, too, not just longest substring matches, costs $900. If you are able to raise the funds I am happy to have as many books analyzed as you want.

I hope those other metrics are pretty good, because otherwise you are seriously getting ripped off.

Here's one I found online written in C++ [http://www.siafoo.net/snippet/380](http://www.siafoo.net/snippet/380)

Ok, it's pretty terrible code, but if you know just a little C++, you can easily tweak it to get what you need, and Simply making sure to set limits on the size of the substrings to check should be enough to make the thing run quickly enough.

That being said, if anybody does want to pay $900, I can easily find some poor student (or just some bored programmer) to write the program from scratch for you, and that's for a program that will match any two inputs you throw a it.

Also, I feel the need to point out that I am unconvinced by Chris's analysis. Bill's point of comparing other books is absolutely important. You can't draw conclusions by just running "experiments" on your own candidate. This seems to be a crucial mistake that Chris isn't the only one guilty of on this thread. I've seen it throughout the long conversation and I imagine many of those same people will likely dismiss what I have to say about the matter as it doesn't bolster their case.

If I found Erdnase's DNA and showed that it matched AT LEAST 99% with someone alive today, that could sound convincing that I've found a descendent or relative. BUT if you know your biology, all humans share 99.5% of their DNA, so it actually means absolutely nothing. If you're going to convince somebody that a particular characteristic is DISTINGUISHING, then you have to show that it's NOT a common trait. Otherwise, the only person you're convincing is yourself.

Best,
Derrick

P.S. Chris, it's possible that you do have more convincing evidence about this given by your expert. All I have to judge on is what you've shared here, and in my eyes, that evidence is wholly unsatisfactory. Also you seem to be bandying the word significant around quite a bit. From what's been written on this board, I can see nothing to suggest
DChung wrote: Also, I feel the need to point out that I am unconvinced by Chris's analysis. Bill's point of comparing other books is absolutely important. You can't draw conclusions by just running "experiments" on your own candidate. This seems to be a crucial mistake that Chris isn't the only one guilty of on this thread. I've seen it throughout the long conversation and I imagine many of those same people will likely dismiss what I have to say about the matter as it doesn't bolster their case.

Except you are forgetting that the expert has made such comparisons many times before and thus is very well aware of what is to be expected and what not. That is exactly why I have hired an expert. I myself, just as you and probably everybody else here, does not know what is significant and what is not. The forensic linguist says it is significant.

But I will wait for your analysis of a dozen other books since you believe it is so easy. I have put up my own money for my candidate. Now I want to see those who are quick with criticism, which is based on zero experience in forensic linguistics, to put their money where their mouth is. I am more than happy to compare the linguistic fingerprint of Gallaway against any other candidate.

Bill Mullins | 08/15 09:34 PM | link | filter

I'm not "against" the expert. I'm simply saying that the statement that "130 matches in works of this size is significant" can't be evaluated except in comparison to how many matches one would expect from comparing other similar works. Otherwise we are accepting an "argument from authority" (without even knowing who the authority is), which is the same as accepting Pratt's statement that Erdnase was MFA.

The only way I can interpret what your expert is saying is that 130 is higher than one would expect if the two works were not written by the same person. But how much would one expect? If one would only expect 125 to be in common, that's not all that significant. If one would expect 20 or 30, this would be very significant. So what is the threshold? And how is it determined? That's the thing about analysis --- it should be repeatable. Given your expert's assumptions and methodology, anyone should be able to repeat what he has done, and come to the same conclusion. We don't know his assumptions, and we only know part of his methodology.

I agree that a common lexicon would be significant. That was the basis of my post of a few days ago, where I looked at words/phrases that appear regularly in either Erdnase or Gallaway, but not in the other. I showed that there are several lexemes that are
Based on your sample we can assume that perhaps 50% or about 60-70 are uncommon.

No, we can't. Because we don't know if the other two appear in other works as well. I simply observed that two of the phrases were significantly more common than the other two, and surmised that they must appear in more places. I didn't say (and cannot say) that the two scarcer phrases appear only in Erdnase and Gallaway, or that they are "uncommon". Further, my sample isn't random (it was simply the first four in alphabetical order, and the alphabet isn't normally distributed and represented in English), so you can't say that two out of four applies to the whole list.

**lybrary | 08/11/15 09:39 PM | link | filter**

Bill, you want to reduce the knowledge of an expert to a number. That will not work. I suggest you read one of the textbooks on forensic linguistics:

http://www.lybrary.com/forensic-linguistics ... 04427.html

The analysis for Gallaway was prepared by Dr. Olsson.

**Bob Coyne | 08/11/15 09:43 PM | link | filter**

*lybrary wrote:*

*Jonathan Townsend wrote:* Significance and confidence. How many four word fragment matches is "normal" and what are the odds that a finding is due to chance alone.

Jonathan, as I wrote, this is only one metric the expert used to come to his conclusions. It is not as simple as looking at a number and saying it is high or low.

I offered the data as comparison to what Bob Coyne put up for Sanders which are mostly three word phrases several of which don't even match exactly.

Matching exactly isn't the issue, It's how characteristic the phrases are. Also, the examples I gave weren't mostly three word phrases. Instead they were sentences and other longer phrases where Erdnase and Sanders actually sound very much alike (to me at least -- everyone can judge for themselves).

As couple examples of larger patterns that don't match word-for-word but ring out much more than generic four word phrases like "a part of the" in your list:
to.
Sanders: for the SAKE OF BREVITY in description, CERTAIN SYMBOLS letters or figures, are employed to DESIGNATE the VARIOUS mine workings, as follows:

Erdnase: It is an excellent manner of holding the deck for the true shuffle, and SHOULD BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO ON ALL OCCASIONS.
Sanders: this latter is an axiom in mining during this period of development, and SHOULD BE INVARIABLY FOLLOWED WHERE POSSIBLE.

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**Lybrary** | 08/11/15 09:50 PM | link | filter

> Bob Coyne wrote: Erdnase: It is an excellent manner of holding the deck for the true shuffle, and SHOULD BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO ON ALL OCCASIONS.
Sanders: this latter is an axiom in mining during this period of development, and SHOULD BE INVARIABLY FOLLOWED WHERE POSSIBLE.

Do you mean this seriously? Or are you kidding? It is neither a match nor does it mean the same.

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**DChung** | 08/11/15 10:28 PM | link | filter

Chris,

My statement was based on the evidence provided here on this forum. You may have plenty of solid evidence from John Olsson but it has NOT been presented here.

Also, I'm really just responding because you are using "bad math" to try and support your case. Avoid that, and I won't feel the need to chime in at all. I'd recommend Darrell Huff's "How to Lie with Statistics" as something to read before jumping to conclusions with any statistical data you have.

I DID say that finding common substrings between two texts is relatively easy to do. That is all. I have no idea what other analysis was done, but I imagine that has to be where the meat is. I just found it strange that what you presented was the substring analysis, because certainly without comparison to other books that evidence is weak and incomplete. I trust that the other evidence is stronger, but you haven't shared it here.

Now it could be that any other book compared to Erdnase has FAR less similarities, but that's something that has to be checked. Now it's again likely that your expert
And I've got no candidate, so I'll keep my 900 bucks. Just saying that as an interested impartial observer, from what I've read on this forum, I'm not convinced.

Derrick

Bob Coyne | 08/11/15 10:34 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote:

*Bob Coyne wrote:* Erdnase: It is an excellent manner of holding the deck for the true shuffle, and SHOULD BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO ON ALL OCCASIONS.

Sanders: this latter is an axiom in mining during this period of development, and SHOULD BE INVARIABLY FOLLOWED WHERE POSSIBLE.

Do you mean this seriously? Or are you kidding? It is neither a match nor does it mean the same.

Of course! You seem to be stuck on the concept of direct matches versus similarity, particularly in voice/style. Are you a native English speaker?

"Should be" = "should be"
"strictly adhered to" = "followed" (hint "strictly" is an adverb, modifying the head words "adhere to" which is synonymous with to "follow")
"on all occasions" and "where possible" are both modifiers removing limits on when the adhering/following should take place. The fact that the action is qualified is part of the similarity.

Of course I could also mention how "is an axiom" in Sanders here also echoes Erdnase elsewhere with "It is almost AN AXIOM that a novice"

And since you seem to have had such trouble with this one I'll map out the other one for you:

Erdnase: we have, in DESCRIBING the various processes and conditions, used CERTAIN TERMS for the SAKE OF BREVITY, to DESIGNATE the PARTICULAR matters referred to.

Sanders: for the SAKE OF BREVITY in DESCRIPTION, CERTAIN SYMBOLS letters or figures, are employed to DESIGNATE the VARIOUS mine workings, as follows:
the context of the illustrations and their utility)
"for the sake of brevity" = "for the sake of brevity"

In both cases the authors JUSTIFY (that word isn't there...but it's ok, that’s just part of how the authors attitude/voice coming through implicitly) the use of specific terms and symbols in the illustrations of the books they wrote.

..and there are many more.

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**lybrary** | 08/11/15 10:44 PM | link | filter

*DChung wrote:* Chris,

My statement was based on the evidence provided here on this forum. You may have plenty of solid evidence from John Olsson but it has NOT been presented here.

Also, I’m really just responding because you are using "bad math" to try and support your case. Avoid that, and I won’t feel the need to chime in at all. I’d recommend Darrell Huff’s "How to Lie with Statistics" as something to read before jumping to conclusions with any statistical data you have.

I DID say that finding common substrings between two texts is relatively easy to do. That is all. I have no idea what other analysis was done, but I imagine that has to be where the meat is. I just found it strange that what you presented was the substring analysis, because certainly without comparison to other books that evidence is weak and incomplete. I trust that the other evidence is stronger, but you haven’t shared it here.

Now it could be that any other book compared to Erdnase has FAR less similarities, but that’s something that has to be checked. Now it’s again likely that your expert checked this or knows the numbers, but it’s not something you shared here. I’m curious whether the people who’ve bought your book feel differently from me.

And I’ve got no candidate, so I’ll keep my 900 bucks. Just saying that as an interested impartial observer, from what I’ve read on this forum, I’m not convinced.

Derrick

Derrick, it is very easy to shoot from the rafters and just throw out generalities like
Edward Gallaway, which says: "the common lexicon and the high number of four word phrases suggests a strong possibility of identity of authorship". For me that weighs heavily for Gallaway. At this point there is no other linguist expert opinion suggesting as strong an identity as this one for any other candidate. I am waiting for any other expert opinions on other candidates.

DChung | 08/11/15 11:31 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote:
Derrick, it is very easy to shoot from the rafters and just throw out generalities like 'bad math' or 'lie with statistics'. You also said it is easy to write a similar analysis software, but you can't back up your claim. I have put up an expert opinion in favor of Edward Gallaway, which says: "the common lexicon and the high number of four word phrases suggests a strong possibility of identity of authorship". For me that weighs heavily for Gallaway. At this point there is no other linguist expert opinion suggesting as strong an identity as this one for any other candidate. I am waiting for any other expert opinions on other candidates.

No, I said it's easy to write a common substring algorithm. And the link I gave is code that does pretty much that, which took 2 minutes to find on google. That sounds pretty damn easy to me.

I don't claim to be able to do anything beyond that. In fact, my point was you NEVER told us what other analysis was done. Again, all I can do is speak about the evidence you've shared here, which is weak and sloppy.

As for bad math, I've laid out reasons why the evidence you provided aren't convincing and given you a reference to better understand the mistakes that people often make when dealing with statistics. Note that the title of the book was just for marketing sake. It really is a good introduction and shows various ways that data can be misinterpreted either deliberately or not.

And has anybody else gone to a linguistic expert to look for such an opinion? By your own account, the answer is no. I thank you for sharing this new tidbit, but what does "strong" possibility mean especially in the absence of having done this analysis with other candidates? Does that mean that 1% of writers write this way, or that that he puts the odds of him being the one at 10% or 25%.

In any case, you don't get to win the argument just because other people haven't run the test yet.
Bolt is the fastest runner in the world because nobody raced with him. He's the fastest
When and if the other candidates are tested and come out as worse matches than yours, then there might be something stronger to say. Until then, all you have is your vague statement of "a strong possibility" which certainly isn't the same as an emphatic "That's the guy."

Derrick

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**lybrary** | 08/11/15 11:42 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*DChung wrote:* I don't claim to be able to do anything beyond that.

That is the general problem with your argument. Once you are able to do more I am happy to continue the discussion.

___

**Bill Mullins** | 08/12/15 12:02 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*lybrary wrote:* Bill, you want to reduce the knowledge of an expert to a number. That will not work.

With all due respect, you are who has reduced it to a number -- 130. What I want is a set of numbers, an accepted process to get to them, and comparisons to other numbers that show how the Erdnase/Gallaway numbers are of significance.

I appreciate that you've named your expert. Now I can read up on some of his previous work to understand how he comes to his conclusions.

BTW, you said: "For me the linguistic fingerprint is the strongest evidence one can present absent of any documentary evidence."

John Olsson, your expert, said: "Nobody has yet demonstrated the existence of such a thing as a linguistic fingerprint; how then can people write about it in this unexamined, regurgitated way, as though it were an established fact of forensic life?"


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**lybrary** | 08/12/15 12:15 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Bill Mullins wrote:*

*lybrary wrote:* Bill, you want to reduce the knowledge of an expert to a number. That will not work.
want is a set of numbers, an accepted process to get to them, and comparisons to other numbers that show how the Erdnase/Gallaway numbers are of significance.

I appreciate that you've named your expert. Now I can read up on some of his previous work to understand how he comes to his conclusions.

Bill, I offered the data because I was hoping it would be of interest. Apparently it was not interesting and some got confused by the data. Why is nobody else willing to offer a similar analysis for some other book or candidate?

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**mam** | 08/12/15 05:01 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

If anyone wants any word sequence comparison between two texts, I already wrote a script for that. It looks at n-grams in a selected range (e.g. four words or more) in both texts. The default is to skip results with too many stop words (such as "of", "a", and other very common and generic ones) but it does not have to. I'll put the script on GitHub when I'm not on such a shaky connection. But in any case, just send me the text files and I'll do the comparison. This is by no means a proper linguistic analysis, I wrote it just to see if I could find any common relatively unique sentences in both Erdnase and Gallaway. The results from that is in this thread a few pages back.

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**DChung** | 08/12/15 07:50 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*lybrary wrote:*

*DChung wrote:* I don't claim to be able to do anything beyond that.

That is the general problem with your argument. Once you are able to do more I am happy to continue the discussion.

I don't think you understand my argument at all then. So let me reiterate one last time. The evidence you've presented here is weak, and certainly not supported by the data (at least not from what's been posted here. That's it. Not sure how my ability to a forensic linguistic analysis has any effect on the strength of the data that you presented. Again, I'm just talking about what you've given here, not what you have stowed away or in your $30 ebook.

But as you haven't properly addressed a single one of the issues I've brought up regarding the problems with your mathematical analysis, then I'm not sure what else we have to talk about. Moreover you completely sidestepped my question about what
actually discussing the merits of the evidence, in which case further discussion is probably pointless anyway.

Derrick

P.S. I don't think anybody was confused by the data so much as your analysis of it. We all get that there are lots of four-word matches. It's just that you haven't given enough context for us to decide whether the two texts are actually similar or that perhaps any two instructional texts are equally similar for example. Again, perhaps your linguist has done such an analysis, but it hasn't been presented here, and I've certainly got no reason to just take your word for it.

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**lybrary** | 08/12/15 08:12 AM | [link] | [filter]

*DChung wrote:* P.S. I don't think anybody was confused by the data so much as your analysis of it. We all get that there are lots of four-word matches. It's just that you haven't given enough context for us to decide whether the two texts are actually similar or that perhaps any two instructional texts are equally similar for example. Again, perhaps your linguist has done such an analysis, but it hasn't been presented here, and I've certainly got no reason to just take your word for it.

Reading the books in question would be a good start. Apparently you haven't even done that. Dr. Olsson has. I am sure that factored into his expert opinion.

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**Joe Pecore** | 08/12/15 08:22 AM | [link] | [filter]

*mam wrote:* If anyone wants any word sequence comparison between two texts, I already wrote a script for that. It looks at n-grams in a selected range (e.g. four words or more) in both texts. The default is to skip results with too many stop words (such as "of", "a", and other very common and generic ones) but it does not have to. I'll put the script on GitHub when I'm not on such a shaky connection. But in any case, just send me the text files and I'll do the comparison. This is by no means a proper linguistic analysis, I wrote it just to see if I could find any common relatively unique sentences in both Erdnase and Gallaway. The results from that is in this thread a few pages back.

Very nice. I downloaded and tried to get [http://evllabs.com/jgaap/w/index.php/Main_Page](http://evllabs.com/jgaap/w/index.php/Main_Page) running, but I think it's having trouble parsing the PDF files I have for Erdnase, Sanders, and Gallaway. I thought maybe someone else would like to take a shot at it though.
Joe Pecore wrote: I downloaded and tried to get http://evllabs.com/jgaap/w/index.php/Main_Page running, but I think it's having trouble parsing the PDF files I have for Erdnase, Sanders, and Gallaway. I thought maybe someone else would like to take a shot at it though.

I don't have the PDFs for Sanders or Gallaway, but you or anybody else might want to just try and convert them to text yourself before inputting it in as it seems JGAAP may only limited conversion capabilities. Perhaps one of the online pdf to txt converters like this one: http://www.zamzar.com/convert/pdf-to-txt/ will do the job.

Derrick

Lybrary | 08/12/15 10:22 AM | link | filter

I have discovered that Edward Gallaway not only lectured about printing and print estimating in front of students but also in front of executives of the printing industry - classes with about 60 people in session. You don't get to do this unless you are considered a leader in your profession. Edward Gallaway was an intellectual titan, founding the school of print estimating, lecturing there for years, and writing the first authoritative and comprehensive textbook on print estimating. These are all parallels to Erdnase's work. If you add that both books were published in the same fashion and that the linguistics are a close match then the picture is becoming quite clear.

Joe Pecore | 08/12/15 11:13 AM | link | filter

DChung wrote:

Joe Pecore wrote: I downloaded and tried to get http://evllabs.com/jgaap/w/index.php/Main_Page running, but I think it's having trouble parsing the PDF files I have for Erdnase, Sanders, and Gallaway. I thought maybe someone else would like to take a shot at it though.

I don't have the PDFs for Sanders or Gallaway, but you or anybody else might want to just try and convert them to text yourself before inputting it in as it seems JGAAP may only limited conversion capabilities. Perhaps one of the online pdf to txt converters like this one: http://www.zamzar.com/convert/pdf-to-txt/ will do the job.

Derrick
Joe Pecore wrote:

That was going to be my next try (I have a program that will do it). Just need to find the time. The JGAAP is interesting, but it might take someone with more time and knowledge to fully understand all the ways to use it.

Perhaps somebody with experience? Somebody who has done this type of analysis before? Oh, yeah that would make a lot of sense. Somebody like Dr. Olsson. What a new and novel thought!

But he is expensive

From looking at the user's guide, it looks like what would be needed is many more examples of text from each author. Not sure if comparing one example from each is enough to really be useful.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/12/15 12:39 PM | link | filter

http://www.aicbt.com/authorship-attribution-software/

To argue for novel methods use - probably a good idea to demonstrate the utility and accuracy of the methods on known text. Consider some texts by Angelo Lewis as himself vs as Hoffmann - similar for Charles Dodgson as Lewis Carroll. Or Stephen King as himself vs his other pen names. How well do the tools work?
Carlo Morpurgo | 08/12/15 01:20 PM | link | filter

I also wrote a simple code using Mathematica in order to find the common 4-word sequences. I have the .txt version of EATCT, I just need any other book to compare it to. Honestly, it does not need to be by Sanders...Any technical book from that period could work just fine, in fact how about a magic book? Shoot one in pdf form, or even better in text form.

Joe Pecore | 08/12/15 01:27 PM | link | filter

Carlo Morpurgo wrote: I also wrote a simple code using Mathematica in order to find the common 4-word sequences. I have the .txt version of EATCT, I just need any other book to compare it to. Honestly, it does not need to be by Sanders...Any technical book from that period could work just fine, in fact how about a magic book? Shoot one in pdf form, or even better in text form.

Here are a bunch on Google Books: http://geniimagazine.com/magicpedia/Cat ...ogle_Books

You should be able to click through to Google and download any in Epub or PDF.

Sanders is there too https://books.google.com/books/about/Mi ... jBhjAATxwC

Richard Stokes | 08/12/15 02:49 PM | link | filter

Coincidentally, I was about to make favourable comments about John Olsson two weeks ago but decided against doing so as I thought it might divert the debate. Chris Wasshuber has certainly hired the right person.

I have Olsson’s fascinating book Word Crime : Solving Crime through Forensic Linguistics (2009). Olsson is a genuine expert in this field. After reading his careful analysis of cases he has been involved in, I must admit that I am impressed by his thinking.

A woman is found dead from asphyxiation hanging from a cable tie in her garage. She has left a suicide note. But is this note genuine? Has she been murdered by her husband? (Read Olsson’s book to find out!)

Another chapter of Olsson’s book looks at the Da Vinci Code. Did Dan Brown
And plagiarism isn’t simply the blatant copying of someone else’s words (although this is how we might first visualise it). The plagiarist will try to disguise their theft by replacing key words. According to Olsson, these new substitute words tend to be second-line ‘left-overs’, statistically less likely to occur than their originals.

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Library | 08/15 03:26 PM | link | filter

Richard, thanks. The purpose to hire an expert like Olsson is not so that you have somebody to run a software for you and tell you the result. The purpose is to have somebody who brings his own intellect, understanding, experience and expertise to the table. Somebody you can ask a question, bounce ideas of and learn from. I have spent in total about 2 hours on the phone with him and exchanged about 100 emails. My take away is that he is supremely qualified to help us figure this out and identify Erdnase.

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Bill Mullins | 08/15 03:57 PM | link | filter

I think many of us who have been critical of his results as you have presented them would be more than willing to reevaluate our positions if you supplied some of what he must have told you throughout the emails and phone calls. Why is 130 matches significant?

And if you don’t want to go farther because you plan on publishing it as a part of an ebook or some other project, that’s a fair response. But in other places (like the book Stokes refers to), he not only gives conclusions, but says why he arrived at them. And that’s what’s missing here.

I shouldn’t speak for others, but I’ve invested so much time and effort (and money) into the topics of this thread not because I expect to eventually find out who Erdnase was, but because the process is interesting. Give us some process.

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Library | 08/15 04:45 PM | link | filter

My preferred outlet for further details is my weekly newsletter. But ultimately all details will be published in my book on Gallaway being Erdnase. I am still in the
In the meantime I will continue to share bits and pieces as I see fit here on this entertaining thread.

Carlo Morpurgo | 08/12/15 09:04 PM | link | filter

I ran the code that identifies common 4,5,6...n-word sequences between two text files. I used Erdnase's book against The Art of Magic. Not surprisingly there are many many 4-word sequences in common, but also many 5,6...-word sequences, and even entire paragraphs...maybe this was already a known fact, but I did not know it. There seem to be 4 longer paragraphs in common (either identical, or 99% so).

1. EATCT p. 28/AOM p. 40 "so that the first finger......about the middle"

2. EATCT p. 86/AOM p. 122 "Seize the deck.......slightly close the left hand with the palmed cards" (after "To palm..." the paragraphs are identical, before that they are 99% identical)

3. EATCT p. 39/AOM p 131: "Seize the deck....square up."

4. EATCT p. 166/AOM p.78: "thumb across top....toward the spectator"

Regarding the sequence count, I can offer a list of 868 5-word sequences shared by these books. Granted that both of these books are about magic, and that some of these common sequences appear as part of longer common sentences. I eliminated duplicates, but not the very few ones that are only differing by a comma or a period. I also did not eliminate common sequences that are part of longer ones - my guess is that there would still be a lot of common sequences.

I uploaded the list here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3Wpud ... BsaWc/view
I did not go through the whole list, but one of the sequences is particular: "Cheap cards are clumsy and".

I am not reaching any conclusions, just stating some facts. It would be interesting to compare EATCT with other books.

Carlo Morpurgo | 08/12/15 10:10 PM | link | filter

and here are the 2030 4-word sequences in common:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3Wpu ... VIPS25BTDA
Carlo,

Possibly what needs to be compared are not word sequences regarding technique, but rather those regarding deportment or thoughts on how and when to use a sleight.

I am not sure how many other authors cover these skills from the gambler's point of view. Certainly there are those from the magician's.

This may reflect the true "voice" of the author.

lybrary | 08/13/15 06:27 AM | link | filter

Carlo, a couple of suggestions:

1) "The Art of Magic" has roughly 120,000 words. That is about 5x more than "Estimating for Printers." Perhaps take only the first 25000 words or so.

2) Take a non-magic and non-gambling book.

3) Take a book from roughly the same time period 1927.

4) Remove doubles which are only different due to capitalization or punctuation.

5) My understanding is that you have to stop your comparison at sentence boundaries. You seem to be doing comparisons across sentence boundaries.

mam | 08/13/15 06:52 AM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: Carlo, a couple of suggestions:

1) "The Art of Magic" has roughly 120,000 words. That is about 5x more than "Estimating for Printers." Perhaps take only the first 25000 words or so.

2) Take a non-magic and non-gambling book.

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Why does "Estimating for printers" have anything to do with a comparison between EATCT and Art of Magic?
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2) Take a non-magic and non-gambling book.

3) Take a book from roughly the same time period 1927.

Why does "Estimating for printers" have anything to do with a comparison between EATCT and Art of Magic?

Because some want to check how significant the number of 4-word matches is between Estimating for Printers and EATCT. You would have to compare to a similar book. But maybe I am misunderstanding Carlo's intention. Maybe his goal is something entirely different.

Sure I thought about this and initially that is exactly what I was going to do. But I then thought that the structure of the narrative would have been ruined. In my opinion what counts is the relative size, and the ratio is still the same, roughly 1/2. Assuming a certain uniformity I suspect that the expected value of the occurrences when taking half of the pages of each book would be obtained by dividing by 4.

2) Take a non-magic and non-gambling book.

Yes I mentioned that, on the other hand, what if our suspect was a magician and only wrote books about magic? I'd be happy to run the program for other non gambling books from the time period.

3) Take a book from roughly the same time period 1927.

I don't get this. Wasn't EATCT published in 1902? Even if it weren't frankly I think that
I mentioned this, the number of those occurrences seems rather irrelevant.

5) My understanding is that you have to stop your comparison at sentence boundaries. You seem to be doing comparisons across sentence boundaries.

Yes, but again, I am not sure how relevant those occurrences are..... Anyway this is just a small exercise which I put together in half a day, just to see an example. I did choose Art of Magic on purpose, since I once had some "suspicions". Speaking of which, I am interested to know what people think of those 4 long paragraphs appearing verbatim in both books.....

lybrary | 08/13/15 07:54 AM | link | filter

Carlo, your text selection depends on what you want to achieve. If your goal is to establish a comparison between the 4-word matches I posted, you would have to use a book somewhat comparable to Estimating for Printers. If however your goal is simply to compare other books then of course you can compare other books. But a magic or gambling book will show more matches purely because the subject is the same not because the authors are the same. Also books from around 1902 will generally match better because of common phraseology popular at that time. This again would not indicate the same author but simply the same period. So if you want to start to compare and argue about significance of number of matches you have to compare apples to apples and oranges to oranges.

Carlo Morpurgo | 08/13/15 08:05 AM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: Carlo, your text selection depends on what you want to achieve. If your goal is to establish a comparison between the 4-word matches I posted, you would have to use a book somewhat comparable to Estimating for Printers. If however your goal is simply to compare other books then of course you can compare other books. But a magic or gambling book will show more matches purely because the subject is the same not because the authors are the same. Also books from around 1902 will generally match better because of common phraseology popular at that time. This again would not indicate the same author but simply the same period. So if you want to start to compare and argue about significance of number of matches you have to compare apples to apples and oranges to oranges.
by some of the results.

**Bill Mullins** | 08/13/15 08:30 AM | link | filter

It’s funny how, with 50,000 source words and over a century to look at them, we can't figure out who Erdnase was, but you can spot M.ark L.ewis after only a few posts.

**lybrary** | 08/13/15 08:53 AM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:* It's funny how, with 50,000 source words and over a century to look at them, we can't figure out who Erdnase was, but you can spot M.ark L.ewis after only a few posts.

I totally agree. And that is why I am happy that more people start to analyze the text. I believe there is a lot more that can be found from a careful analysis of the text.

**Jack Shalom** | 08/13/15 10:20 AM | link | filter

The paragraph matches of which Carlo points out clearly cannot be accidental or coincidental; there are only two possible explanations for matching paragraphs of such a technical nature:

1) Downs/Hilliard are Erdnase.

2) They deliberately cribbed the descriptions from Erdnase.

While 2) is probably more likely than 1), would it be possible for any of the participants here to briefly reiterate the case for/against the above?

edited to appease the grammar gods.

**John M. Dale** | 08/13/15 12:40 PM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:* It’s funny how, with 50,000 source words and over a century to look at them, we can't figure out who Erdnase was, but you can spot M.ark L.ewis after only a few posts.

You’re not implying that ML is currently lurking around here are you? Certainly not as a "performer"? Surely, since he is psychic, he would know he'd (he'll?) be found out.

But, I’m not psychic, so my questions my be nonsense.
Jonathan Townsend | 08/13/15 12:50 PM | link | filter

Project: using suspect and known ML writings to support the phrase matching hypothesis for claims of authorship.

Obvious by inspection?

Chris, how do you feel about using the ML/P posts as a test case? Derrick, Joe, Bill, mam, Bob - what do you think?

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lybrary | 08/13/15 04:01 PM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote: Chris, how do you feel about using the ML/P posts as a test case? Derrick, Joe, Bill, mam, Bob - what do you think?

I don't think forum posts are good test cases for our situation. Formal textbook writing is quite different to the colloquial writing on a forum. I am also not a linguist who is looking for a project. I already have enough projects on my table.

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Jonathan Townsend | 08/13/15 04:16 PM | link | filter

@Chris, not asking you to perform any analysis. This is about making an argument for authorship based upon statistics derived by comparing texts. Others have found some tools for use and jumped in to apply themselves - trying to see what kind compare/meaning processes are available. We could use the Declaration of Independence - say against Thomas Paine's writing and Thomas Jefferson's writing. The idea is to show an example of methods in use to obtain a meaningful result. In this case an ML detector.

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Bill Mullins | 08/13/15 04:45 PM | link | filter

Chris -- you've made much of Gallaway owning a 1st edition copy of EATCT in bolstering your case for him. The more I think about it, the less important I find it to be. Here's why:

You've assumed a printing (lower bound) of 2000 copies. Gallaway owned one of them (and we are assuming he was an original owner, not someone who bought a copy second hand). That means that there are 1999 other people who also owned a copy. If we assume that Erdnase owned a 1st edition copy, doesn't that imply that the chances of Gallaway = Erdnase based on ownership are only 1 in 2000?
case, for this reason:

I believe that it is more likely than not that a person with Erdnase's expertise with a deck of cards would have had a job that is more conducive to developing that skill than a "trade" such as printing. Gambler, salesman on the road, saloon keeper, something like that. Printing seems too "square" for the man I envision Erdnase to be.

And back to the "original owner" issue. Who else besides Gallaway and Adrian Plate should we suspect were original owners of 1st edition copies? I'm asking about individuals who would have owned a copy, not dealers who would have owned them for resale. Hoffmann wrote about the book as soon as 1903 in correspondence, so I suppose he must have had one. Hilliar received what may have been a review copy. Jessel's 1905 bibliography mentioned a 1st edition copy, and his collection that ended up in the Bodleian Library included one, so he must have been an early buyer.

**Brad Henderson** | 08/13/15 05:05 PM | link | filter

why would the author necessarily have a copy of his own book, especially if his goal were to sell them?

**lybrary** | 08/13/15 05:24 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: Chris -- you've made much of Gallaway owning a 1st edition copy of EATCT in bolstering your case for him. The more I think about it, the less important I find it to be. Here's why:

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combine it with the other things we know about Erdnase/Gallaway you can further reduce that number. For example the 'W' in the name. That means the 2000 owners of the book will shrink down to 200 owners, because less than 10% have a W in their surname. Etc. I don't want to repeat my entire calculation, but I agree with that one piece of it, which you have addressed.

Who those 2000 or 200, or even less if we factor in McKinney, are we don't know. We know a few like Adrian Plate, but the majority of them we don't know. But we don't have to for a statistical calculation. For such a calculation you are not attempting to identify anybody specific, you are asking how many do we expect there to be who all meet these requirements which apply to Erdnase.

Bill Mullins wrote: You've also presumed that since Gallaway worked for McKinney, this makes him more likely than a random person to have been Erdnase, based on the logic that Erdnase knew McKinney before hiring him to print the book. Again, I don't think this helps his case, for this reason:

   I believe that it is more likely than not that a person with Erdnase's expertise with a deck of cards would have had a job that is more conducive to developing that skill than a "trade" such as printing. Gambler, salesman on the road, saloon keeper, something like that. Printing seems too "square" for the man I envision Erdnase to be.

No, I have not assumed that Gallaway is more likely because he worked for McKinney. He is simply among the group of people who had contact with McKinney so that they were in the position to order the book to be printed, which I have assumed to be 330 people (300 customers/suppliers and 30 employees).

I do agree with you that somebody working in a trade would have a harder time to practice. But it is not an awfully difficult hurdle to overcome. How many people hold two and three jobs today? There was enough time after work to practice. We also know that Gallaway worked at several different companies. I also have found information that before working at McKinney he started a company with two other partners. So he moves from one company to another, starts his own, takes employment, ... All of this tells me these were volatile times. Gallaway could have been unemployed for a portion of his formative years which would provide a lot of practicing time. But even without unemployment it is certainly not impossible to achieve mastery like Erdnase had.

One other comment regarding the earlier discussion on German culture and language use. I am reading the book "Chicago by Gaslight" which describes Chicago during 1880-1920. You may be surprised to learn that Chicago had several German newspapers and there were public addresses by speakers in German addressing thousands of assembled people in Chicago in parks. This means the German language
was present on the streets. A German name like Erdnase would therefore hardly be unusual. I think your assumptions about the German language back then are incorrect.

Brad Jeffers | 08/13/15 05:38 PM | link | filter

Brad Henderson wrote: Why would the author necessarily have a copy of his own book, especially if his goal were to sell them?

Brad, Don't you own a copy of The Dance?
I know that if I were ever to have a book published, I would certainly keep a copy for myself. I think it would be a rare case to find a writer who would not do so.

mam | 08/13/15 09:19 PM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote: Project: using suspect and known ML writings to support the phrase matching hypothesis for claims of authorship.

Obvious by inspection?

Chris, how do you feel about using the ML/P posts as a test case? Derrick, Joe, Bill, mam, Bob - what do you think?

What/who is ML/P?

Tom Sawyer | 08/13/15 10:09 PM | link | filter

I think S.W. Erdnase very likely owned multiple copies of the book, initially. Ten years later, though, I would think the chances would be more like 50-50, or even less. Erdnase strikes me as having been mobile. People in general, and perhaps mobile people especially, have a lot of opportunities for forgetting things, leaving things behind, losing things, selling things, and giving things away.

Nonetheless, I tend to think this is the best argument that can now be made for Gallaway, namely: there would be no reason for Gallaway to own the book if he did not write it.

A problem there is that there are other good reasons why Gallaway would have owned a copy, the main one being that he was (apparently) interested in gambling (see The Man Who Was Erdnase, pages 57 and 390). (I suppose that could be turned into a weak argument in support of Gallaway, but I don't see it that way.)
Brad Jeffers | 08/13/15 10:23 PM | link | filter

*mam wrote:* What/who is ML/P?

That would be ... *Mark Lewis / performer*

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* Mr. Lewis is here with my permission

And yet, if I were to type in his name (without the spaces) it will be auto-censored ... *Mark Lewis / performer*

See.

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lybrary | 08/13/15 10:32 PM | link | filter

*Tom Sawyer wrote:* Nonetheless, I tend to think this is the best argument that can now be made for Gallaway, namely: there would be no reason for Gallaway to own the book if he did not write it.

Plus a good number of other strong arguments for him:

- linguistic match
- had contact with McKinney to make the order for the book
- W in the surname
- matches description given by Smith
- his other self-published book mimics several aspects of EATCT
- his other book matches EATCT in terms of ground breaking importance on the subject
- plausible theory for the name S.W. Erdnase

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*mam* | 08/13/15 10:42 PM | link | filter

*Brad Jeffers wrote:*

*mam wrote:* What/who is ML/P?

That would be ... *Mark Lewis / performer*

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* Mr. Lewis is here with my permission

And yet, if I were to type in his name (without the spaces) it will be auto-censored ... *mark l e w i s / performer*
This one’s over my head, I have no background whatsoever on ML but guessing that everyone else here has. (I’m new to the forums.)

**Bill Mullins** | 08/14/15 12:17 AM | link | filter

M.ark Lewis is currently posting as "performer" in another thread on the forum. He has a long history here. He has registered and then been banned/expelled under many different names at different times. He usually starts off with genuinely interesting contributions to threads (he has an extensive performing experience), but after a while devolves into trolling behavior and gets banned again. His online "voice" is pretty distinctive, and he can usually be recognized after only a few posts under a new name.

The forum software censors his name, thus the weird punctuation above.

Chris -- in your newsletter, you said you have a couple of photos of Gallaway. On pp 32 and 33 of [this book](#) are pictures of one of his classes in estimating. On p 32, on our left, is seated an older man in a bowtie. On p 33, he’s standing on the right. Is this Gallaway?

(and note that p 36 of this book shows a photograph of a fourth book written by Gallaway, which has not yet been mentioned here.)

**mam** | 08/14/15 04:51 AM | link | filter

_Bill Mullins wrote:_ M.ark L.ewis is currently posting as "performer" in another thread on the forum. He has a long history here. He has registered and then been banned/expelled under many different names at different times. He usually starts off with genuinely interesting contributions to threads (he has an extensive performing experience), but after a while devolves into trolling behavior and gets banned again. His online "voice" is pretty distinctive, and he can usually be recognized after only a few posts under a new name.

The forum software censors his name, thus the weird punctuation above.

Thanks a lot for clarification.

_Bill Mullins wrote:_ Chris -- in your newsletter, you said you have a couple of photos of Gallaway. On pp 31 and 32 of [this book](#) are pictures of one of his classes in estimating. On p 31, on our left, is seated an older man in a bowtie. On p 32, he’s standing on the right. Is this Gallaway?
Bill Mullins wrote: (and note that p 36 of this book shows a photograph of a fourth book written by Gallaway, which has not yet been mentioned here.)

Another book! Let’s find it The only trace I can find of it is this item in the R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company Archive at University of Chicago:


The only way to access it is on location it seems. So does anyone live in Chicago and wants to have a look at it and report back here?

(By the way, I have full pdfs of the two other books except "Estimating for printers").

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mam | 08/14/15 05:06 AM | link | filter
[delete this post]

mam | 08/14/15 05:11 AM | link | filter

So for anyone who wants to look for n-grams, here’s the script I mentioned:

https://github.com/alimony/ngram-finder

As I said before, I’ve only done some preliminary runs comparing EATCT to Roterberg, Hoffmann etc. but the results could probably be better if I had better text versions of these, instead of what’s extracted from a pdf automatically, since they are all just OCR’d at one point or another. (And most people OCR through something inferior such as Acrobat.)

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mam | 08/14/15 05:42 AM | link | filter

Another interesting piece of information:

I’m in contact with Bryan, the guy who drew these maps. It seems like he sits on an enormous collection of items tied to gambling in Chicago at the exact time when EATCT was written. All his research is in "over 50 thick volumes" and "none of it digital". A lot of gems are mentioned in our correspondence, such as: "I have a few Old catalogs of Gambling Supply Houses that sold cheating devises & supplies." and he also compiles a list of the address of "every dive and its owner".
coming from that angle. (Also, I sent him a list of all relevant names and candidates
from here and he did not recognize any of them from his materials.)

In any case, someone really needs to visit this guy and his personal archive. Who
knows what might be found there, or by discussing these things with him in more
depth.

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**lybrary** | 08/14/15 06:44 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Bill Mullins wrote:* Chris -- in your newsletter, you said you have a couple of
photos of Gallaway. On pp 31 and 32 of *this book* are pictures of one of his
classes in estimating. On p 31, on our left, is seated an older man in a
bowtie. On p 32, he's standing on the right. Is this Gallaway?

(and note that p 36 of this book shows a photograph of a fourth book
written by Gallaway, which has not yet been mentioned here.)

Bill, that is correct. This is Edward Gallaway. And if you go to page 8 of that book you
will see a nice head shot of Gallaway. From this portrait you can see that in his mid 50s
he was pretty much completely bald. This means in his 30s he was very likely already
starting to get bald which could easily explain why with 33 he appeared to be 'about
40'. And from the two classroom photos you can see that he certainly fits the height
requirements by Smith.

This means the description of Erdnase by Smith fits Edward Gallaway.

The book "A Course in Printing Estimating" seems to be a precursor of his "Estimating
for Printers" book. I have not found it anywhere, but it is mentioned in the copyright
catalog 1923 under R. R. Donnelley. So maybe a copy does exist in the Library of
Congress.

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**John Adams** | 08/14/15 06:52 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Firstly, I’m self aware enough to know that what I’m about to post may be considered
rather simplistic, but I really do think it’s important and it is something I haven’t
really seen people pick up on.

For those candidates who have names that are anagrams of SW Erdnase: Why on
earth would they choose Erdnase as a pen name?

To me it seems that only someone called ES Andrews would use Erdnase as a
pseudonym because they are not approaching it as an anagram, but simply as a
Consider if your real name is not ES Andrews, say it is WE Sanders, and you were fiddling around with anagrams to create a pen name then one that is available to you would be the respectable and realistic sounding ES Andrews. So why in that case would you plump for the weird and obviously fake name of SW Erdnase?

Anyway, as I say, simplistic

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**Joe Pecore** | 08/15 07:30 AM | [link] [filter]

*mam wrote:* So for anyone who wants to look for n-grams, here's the script I mentioned:  
[https://github.com/alimony/ngram-finder](https://github.com/alimony/ngram-finder)

... 

Here is a Windows program I just stumbled upon as another tool for those that want to play with n-grams: [http://www.kwicfinder.com/kfNgram/kfNgramHelp.html](http://www.kwicfinder.com/kfNgram/kfNgramHelp.html)

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**Bob Coyne** | 08/15 08:21 AM | [link] [filter]

*John Adams wrote:*

Consider if your real name is not ES Andrews, say it is WE Sanders, and you were fiddling around with anagrams to create a pen name then one that is available to you would be the respectable and realistic sounding ES Andrews. So why in that case would you plump for the weird and obviously fake name of SW Erdnase?

Anyway, as I say, simplistic

If the name on the book was ES Andrews, then there would be no clue that the name was an anagram since it sounds so normal. So by using something fake-sounding like SW Erdnase he frames it as a puzzle. And the very clever solution (anagram of WE Sanders plus erdnase=earthnose=mining-engineer) is hidden by obvious (false) solution ES Andrews which functions as a clever bit of misdirection.

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 08/15 09:14 AM | [link] [filter]

*Bob Coyne wrote:*

*John Adams wrote:* ...simplistic

If the name on the book was ES Andrews, then there would be no clue that the name was...
**Joe Pecore** | 08/14/15 09:42 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Jonathan Townsend wrote:* Project: using suspect and known ML writings to support the phrase matching hypothesis for claims of authorship.

Obvious by inspection?

Chris, how do you feel about using the ML/P posts as a test case? Derrick, Joe, Bill, mam, Bob - what do you think?

I entered many sample posts into JGAAP from the following people:
- Jonathan Townsend: [search.php?author_id=37&sr=posts](#)
- Bill Mullins: [search.php?author_id=113&sr=posts](#)
- ML: [search.php?author_id=4551&sr=posts](#)

I entered "performer" posts as the unknown author: [search.php?author_id=9986&sr=posts](#)

I ran a few analysis and ML came up as top prospect for each.

Would be cool to try on some magic books in which we know were "ghosted" by someone else (if someone has the time).

**Brad Henderson** | 08/14/15 09:46 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I know many authors who do not have copies of their own books. I am a self centered hoarder, so obviously I have a copy. I think having a first edition can be equally explained by KNOWING the author perhaps more so than having been the author.

**Lybrary** | 08/14/15 09:53 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Brad Henderson wrote:* I know many authors who do not have copies of their own books. I am a self centered hoarder, so obviously I have a copy. I think having a first edition can be equally explained by KNOWING the author perhaps more so than having been the author.

But if the owner of the book sounds just like the author of the book in question then I think it is a pretty straight forward conclusion that he IS the author.
Joe Pecore wrote: ... 
I entered many sample posts into JGAAP from the following people: ...

Would be cool to try on some magic books in which we know were "ghosted" by someone else (if someone has the time).

Thanks - was going to suggest Paine as author of our Declaration of Independence as a good test but if JGAAP is giving good match data... let's see what it makes of magic texts.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/14/15 10:11 AM | link | filter

lybrary wrote:

Brad Henderson wrote: I know many authors who do not have copies of their own books. I am a self centered hoarder, so obviously I have a copy. I think having a first edition can be equally explained by KNOWING the author perhaps more so than having been the author.

But if the owner of the book sounds just like the author of the book in question then I think it is a pretty straight forward conclusion that he IS the author.

That would make more sense if he had autographed copies - annotated copies (his handwriting is known?) - match between his writing and gaming house receipts...One copy of a book -> author... IMHO maybe ten or a box or local mention of someone giving away the thing - and either way it would seem he did not do because he "needs the money" - sophistry

Carlo Morpurgo | 08/14/15 11:23 AM | link | filter

Here is a more sophisticated list of matches between AOM and EATCT. This list starts from the logest matches and it goes down to 4-word matches, consecutively removing words from previously found common sequences.

https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3Wpu ... UZZb2xHbW8

PS: My brother wrote a small program in C++ (following my directions) which seems to be much better than what Mathematica has to offer. All we need is two text files, and a little polishing at the end with MS WORD.
Bill Mullins | 08/14/15 11:53 AM | link | filter

**lybrary wrote:**

*Brad Henderson wrote:* I know many authors who do not have copies of their own books. I am a self centered hoarder, so obviously I have a copy. I think having a first edition can be equally explained by KNOWING the author perhaps more so than having been the author.

But if the owner of the book sounds just like the author of the book in question then I think it is a pretty straight forward conclusion that he IS the author.

Except for some of us, the two authors **don't sound that much alike.** (I know your expert may feel otherwise, but conclusions without justification don't convince much. While my analysis is that of a layperson, I have at least shown my work.)

**lybrary wrote:** Edward Gallaway [founded] the school of print estimating,

Maybe not -- the American School of Printing had a class on the subject in **1917**.

**lybrary wrote:** {Gallaway wrote] the first authoritative and comprehensive textbook on print estimating.

Except for **Basford's**.

**Loring Lane** also wrote a book on the subject.

The United Typothetae of America (a guild for printers) **published** an estimating guide, with regular updates.

Even E. C. Andrews, who is a part of Peter Zenner's case for Thompson, wrote a **book** on a small subset of printing estimation.

All of these preceded Gallaway's books.

**lybrary wrote:** As I have already earlier eluded to "Estimating for Printers" looks like it is equally ground breaking in print estimating as EATCT was
When Gallaway wrote his book, his work was much more derivative. Inland Printer and other professional journals had published many articles on estimation over the previous 20 years. Books on the business of printing had chapters on estimating. Professional organizations for printers had workshops and classes on the subject, and other printers had already published full books and guides on how to estimate.

Gallaway may have written an excellent book on the subject (I'm not competent to judge), but it was by no means as ground breaking as Erdnase.

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**Brad Jeffers** | 08/14/15 01:05 PM | link | filter

*Brad Henderson wrote:* I think having a first edition can be equally explained by KNOWING the author, perhaps more so than having been the author. I think having a first edition can be equally explained by HAVING PURCHASED a copy, perhaps more so than either having known the author, or having been the author.

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 08/14/15 01:31 PM | link | filter

Does Estimating for Printers make mention of an example book project where ...(the story of how well the EACT book did) ?

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**lybrary** | 08/14/15 02:58 PM | link | filter

*Jonathan Townsend wrote:* Does Estimating for Printers make mention of an example book project where ...(the story of how well the EACT book did) ?

No. The kind of estimating that is dealt with in this book is about cost - how expensive it is to print a certain publication and what the printer needs to charge the customer. It has nothing to do with marketing or how well a book may do.

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**John Bodine** | 08/14/15 03:34 PM | link | filter

While talking with the wonderfully intelligent BJ Bueno, he mentioned he was using IBM's Watson Personality Test for some projects. I immediately asked him to drop in Erdnase to see what Watson thinks.
You are imaginative: you have a wild imagination. You are philosophical: you are open to and intrigued by new ideas and love to explore them. And you are calm under pressure: you handle unexpected events calmly and effectively.

You are motivated to seek out experiences that provide a strong feeling of prestige.

You are relatively unconcerned with both tradition and taking pleasure in life. You care more about making your own path than following what others have done. And you prefer activities with a purpose greater than just personal enjoyment.

Interestingly enough, when I put in the introduction and some of the text (only 563 words) from the Sanders book on Mine Timbering the personality results were almost identical.

The system also puts out data scores behind the above summary and a visualization of the personality data.

I don’t have the text file for Gallaway but perhaps someone here would like to explore using Watson as a tool to identify similar writing styles?

https://watson-pi-demo.mybluemix.net

John Bodine

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/14/15 04:14 PM | [link] | [filter]

Watson on the first 2300 words of Gallaway's book (introduction on p 3 through end of 1st paragraph on p 8, less tables on p 5, signature, headings, captions, etc.)

You are inner-directed, skeptical and can be perceived as insensitive.

You are imaginative: you have a wild imagination. You are philosophical: you are open to and intrigued by new ideas and love to explore them. And you are independent: you have a strong desire to have time to yourself.

You are motivated to seek out experiences that provide a strong feeling of efficiency.
out opportunities to improve yourself and demonstrate that you are a capable person.

Watson is the culmination of centuries of cold reading.

Richard Kaufman | 08/14/15 05:27 PM | link | filter

I highly doubt that the first printing of an esoteric book like Expert at the Card Table, particularly since it was self-published, would have had a print run of 10,000 copies.

The Art of Magic was written entirely by John Northern Hilliard, not T. Nelson Downs. Since Hilliard was a newspaper man, Bill should be able to unearth ample samples of his writing to be compared with that of Erdnase.

However, The Art of Magic was published in 1909, seven years after the Expert at the Card Table. It is, as has been noted, certainly more likely that Hilliard was influenced by Erdnase rather than that he was Erdnase.

Hilliard's only other major piece of magical writing is Greater Magic. If you own my edition, and you look in the back, you'll find that I delineated which parts of Greater Magic were written by Hilliard and which by Hugard. So, you can sample the parts of Greater Magic which were written by Hilliard against Expert at the Card Table.

I don't think you'll find anything convincing. To the best of my recollection, Hilliard hardly mentions Erdnase in Greater Magic--at the time he was writer Greater Magic (late 1920s), Expert at the Card Table was unknown to most magicians. Hilliard would have considered it "old stuff." He was looking for new and fresh ideas for Greater Magic. Somehow, I think that if Hilliard had written Expert at the Card Table, he would have snuck some material from Expert into the book.

lybrary | 08/14/15 05:48 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: Except for some of us, the two authors don't sound that much alike. (I know your expert may feel otherwise, but conclusions without justification don't convince much. While my analysis is that of a layperson, I have at least shown my work.)

Certainly, you are entitled to your own opinion, but there is momentum gathering around the linguistic match of Gallaway. It is not just me. Roger M. wrote that he sounds "very similar". The only forensic linguistics expert we have heard on this subject said "strong possibility", even Richard Hatch, if I interpret his comments correctly, does hear Erdnase at least in parts of the introduction of "Estimating for
support Gallaway as perhaps the strongest candidate proposed today.

Bill Mullins wrote:

lybrary wrote: Edward Gallaway [founded] the school of print estimating,

Maybe not -- the American School of Printing had a class on the subject in 1917.

Yes he did. I am quoting from the Inland Printer:


Gallaway founded that school. He was also the principal and main instructor of that school. It was his school which he later passed on to his assistant. Gallaway’s lecturing on print estimating started around 1915 with the Lakeside Press (R. R. Donnelley). He also taught an evening school at Chicago Typothetae of America (that is the one you are referring to above). He was the guy who made all that happen.

Bill Mullins wrote:

lybrary wrote: {Gallaway wrote] the first authoritative and comprehensive textbook on print estimating.

The United Typothetae of America (a guild for printers) published an estimating guide, with regular updates.

Gallaway was the instructor for Estimating at that organization. He very likely collected that guide for this organization. In the ad they give 608 S. Dearborn Street as their address. That is the same address where Gallaway later sets up his School for Print Estimating.

Bill Mullins wrote: All of these preceded Gallaway’s books.

Great, what an insight. There were books published on magic and gambling before EATCT. That says nothing about their quality, their content. How much do you know
Printers is incredibly detailed and covers more than other books do. The distinction Gallaway introduced for prices for large cities, intermediate-size cities, and small towns may very well be novel to him (I am still investigating this.) That is groundbreaking. It is also extremely practical. One commented that even today it would be of benefit to some in the industry, even though technology has vastly transformed printing.

Gallaway writes in his "How To Price Job Printing": "In conclusion, the production of this book has been a monumental task. The prices contained herein represent the work involved in the making of more than 4700 separate estimates. These sheets are in bound form in the office of the compiler for ready reference. If the user of this book should be in doubt about any price a check will be made against the detailed estimate sheet."

Think about how groundbreaking it is to compile a guide from 4700 separate estimates!

But you completely misunderstood my point. I am not arguing that the books are exact mirror images in their groundbreaking-ness. My point is that the authors who wrote them share similar approaches, very detailed and exhaustive, very practical advice and actionable information.

Compare that to say E. S. Andrews. Do we know anything like that about him? Do we know he had contact with McKinney? Owned a first edition? Wrote another book? Published it the same way? Wrote it with a similar mind set and point of view? Consider that Gallaway was an educator for at least the last 15 years of his life. Lectured, worked in the RR Donnelley training department, wrote course material, books, and eventually founded a stand alone school. Now consider Erdnase. He writes the book in part to avoid others being cheated at the card table, but he also writes it as a highly practical and instructional text book (exactly the same thing Estimating for Printers is). Erdnase and Gallaway not only sound alike they are both educators. They both want to teach us what they learned, and do that in a very practical, authoritative, and detailed way. What are the odds that these are not one and the same?

Carlo Morpurgo | 08/14/15 07:27 PM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote:
The Art of Magic was written entirely by John Northern Hilliard, not T. Nelson Downs. Since Hilliard was a newspaper man, Bill should be able to unearth ample samples of his writing to be compared with that of Erdnase.

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Hilliard's only other major piece of magical writing is Greater Magic. If you own my edition, and you look in the back, you'll find that I delineated which parts of Greater Magic were written by Hilliard and which by Hugard. So, you can sample the parts of Greater Magic which were written by Hilliard against Expert at the Card Table.

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Richard thank you for the insights.... Here's a question. If Hilliard was just influenced, why not mention and quote Erdnase in AOM rather than copying verbatim entire passages? I guess there were no such concerns about plagiarism back in those days? Secondly, I would be very happy to run the same program and analyze those parts of Greater Magic, against EATCT to see if more such material was "snuck in". Is there any way I can buy a pdf version of it?

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Tom Sawyer | 08/15/15 01:44 AM | link | filter

Carlo, this is not designed to answer the questions you posed in your most recent post. However, first, thanks for posting those various phrase-lists.

Second, some people may not realize that The Art of Magic was one of the first magic books to make reference to The Expert at the Card Table. It does so at least three times (pages 76, 133, and 206), and in one case calls it an "excellent treatise." (The Art of Magic, on Google Books, digitized by Google, from a copy at the New York Public Library. That's a 1921 version, but I tend to assume that the 1909 version has basically the same text.)

I'm not positive, but I think The Art of Magic might even be the first book (not magazine) to mention The Expert at the Card Table.

--Tom Sawyer

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Carlo Morpurgo | 08/15/15 06:57 AM | link | filter
Second, some people may not realize that *The Art of Magic* was one of the first magic books to make reference to *The Expert at the Card Table*. It does so at least three times (pages 76, 133, and 206), and in one case calls it an "excellent treatise." (*The Art of Magic*, on Google Books, digitized by Google, from a copy at the New York Public Library. That's a 1921 version, but I tend to assume that the 1909 version has basically the same text.)

I'm not positive, but I think *The Art of Magic* might even be the first book (not magazine) to mention *The Expert at the Card Table*.

--Tom Sawyer

Ah.. I did not catch that.... 😞 thanks. Still, it does not disprove that Hilliard had any role in the writing of EATCT, especially if he was one of the first people to mention the book...., But I am not putting forward theories here, I just got intrigued about this sequence finding process

Regarding the "unanswerable questions I posed" I have no clue about what you mean.

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**Joe Pecore** | 08/15/15 07:15 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

**Carlo Morpurgo wrote:**

*Tom Sawyer wrote:* Carlo, this is not designed to answer the questions you posed in your most recent post. ... --Tom Sawyer

... Regarding the "unanswerable questions I posed" I have no clue about what you mean.

I'm guessing your post which inquired: "If Hilliard was just influenced, why not mention and quote Erdnase in AOM rather than copying verbatim entire passages? I guess there were no such concerns about plagiarism back in those days?"

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**Carlo Morpurgo** | 08/15/15 07:29 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Joe Pecore wrote:*

**Carlo Morpurgo wrote:**

*Tom Sawyer wrote:* Carlo, this is not designed to answer the questions you posed in your most recent
clue about what you mean.

I'm guessing your post which inquired: "If Hilliard was just influenced, why not mention and quote Erdnase in AOM rather than copying verbatim entire passages? I guess there were no such concerns about plagiarism back in those days?"

Ok thanks. I thought it was a reasonable comment, and I apologize if I stepped over the line. I guess I am used to the idea that one quotes a reference when directly reproducing material from that reference in his/her own book or paper. Even just reproducing an idea, not necessarily identical words. Now I know that Hilliard quoted Erdnase, although not in reference to the passages that he reproduced in AOM.

lybrary | 08/15/15 07:38 AM | link | filter

Anybody who wants to make the Hilliard case should take a look at his handwriting from his notebooks. Does it match the handwriting on the EATCT copyright form?

Roger M. | 08/15/15 10:44 AM | link | filter

Just a clarification related to my earlier comment (as noted by Chris) that I indeed do think the intro in the printing book has overtones of sounding like Erdnase.

BUT, I also said it might only be relative if one were to examine multiple other books of the same vintage for a similar "sassy" writing style. There is certainly a similarity with "A Grand Expose" and "How Gamblers Win", both of which have a similar tone to both Erdnase and Gallaway. It seems it might be a common style of the day.

I have also noted more than once that I thought Chris was offering up many unsupported "opinions" more than he was sharing evidence or process as to how he arrived at those opinions. A statement made in the absence of any discussion of the process or evidence to support it is simply another man's opinion on any given topic.

I do think Gallaway makes an interesting addition to the candidate list, but I see nothing at all to date that would remotely imply that Gallaway was Erdnase.

I don't think I'm an example of anybody participating in a movement that sees Gallaway as the prime candidate. Quite the opposite, as I would consider both Andrews and Sanders still #1 and #2 in no particular order.

Richard Hatch | 08/15/15 11:56 AM | link | filter
on the EATCT copyright form?

Hilliard’s small neat handwriting clearly does not match the handwriting on the copyright form, but what does that tell us? Only that Hilliard did not fill out the form. Gallaway’s handwriting also does not match the form, so do we rule him out as the author on that basis? He was at McKinney’s at the time the book was published there. Why would he not fill out the form himself?

I’d also like to echo Roger’s sentiments as well expressed in the immediately preceding post: While I find one sentence in Gallaway’s introduction to his 1927 book has a rhythm and tone similar to that of some of Erdnase’s "Professional Secrets" section, I remain far from convinced that he was the author of the book. But definitely a "person of interest" in its production.

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Roger M. wrote: I have also noted more than once that I thought Chris was offering up many unsupported "opinions" more than he was sharing evidence or process as to how he arrived at those opinions.

- had contact with McKinney to make the book order (supported by bankruptcy files)
- owned first edition of EATCT (supported by his bookplate found in a copy)
- linguistic match (supported by expert opinion; no other candidate can offer an expert opinion to this date)
- 'W' in the surname (obvious; and the W is stressed in Gallaway making it more likely for Smith to remember it after 45 years than in Andrews)
- age/height match of Smith recollections (supported by photos)
- groundbreaking, detailed, practical, actionable advice of "Estimating for Printers" mirroring EATCT (supported by other books on that subject; and expert opinion)
- leading educator and innovator in his field (supported by industry literature; school founding; books; course notes)
- published his book exactly the way EATCT was published (supported by copyright records and title page)
- plausible theory for S.W. Erdnase (supported by nickname use today, use of word in literature before 1901, knowledge of German by Gallaway, and general use of German in that region at that time)

All of that is supported by more evidence than is available for any other candidate. I know that some prefer to disagree with expert opinion, but at least it is expert opinion that has been gathered and documented. What expert opinion can you offer for your preferred candidates?
look at his handwriting from his notebooks. Does it match the handwriting on the EATCT copyright form?

It is no worse a match than Gallaway's.

Richard Hatch wrote:

lybrary wrote: Anybody who wants to make the Hilliard case should take a look at his handwriting from his notebooks. Does it match the handwriting on the EATCT copyright form?

Hilliard’s small neat handwriting clearly does not match the handwriting on the copyright form, but what does that tell us? Only that Hilliard did not fill out the form. Gallaway’s handwriting also does not match the form, so do we rule him out as the author on that basis? He was at McKinney’s at the time the book was published there. Why would he not fill out the form himself?

Did I say we should rule him out if his handwriting does not match? No. I would use the handwriting as strong evidence in favor if it matches, but not as something to rule him out if it does not match, because we do not know if he filled it out or not.

We do not have a handwriting sample of Gallaway so we can't make that determination for him. His signature is not enough to compare handwriting according to two handwriting specialists I asked.

Why would Gallaway not fill it out? Because he was already a big shot at McKinney. He probably had people working for him who would do such things for him. But I am divided as to what is more likely, him filling it out or somebody else filling it out.

Bill Mullins wrote: It is no worse a match than Gallaway’s.

And how do you know? A signature is not enough to compare handwriting according to handwriting analysts. You seem to be the expert on everything, handwriting, linguistics, print estimating, use of German back then, yet all you offer is your own opinion. I am backing up my opinion with expert opinion. At least I am making an effort to be objective by bringing in experts.
Could Reveal Magic Trick Writer Who Pulled A Disappearing Act A Century Ago.” I would love to read that.

Chris--have you checked the digital files of *The Sphinx* or any other magic periodicals of that time for any mention of Gallaway? If he was a magician to any extent, that would help substantiate your case for him. As a leader in the printing industry, it would appear that Gallaway might have made a dent in magic circles--if he was interested in magic.

**Library** 08/15/15 04:15 PM  |  [link]  |  [filter]

*Leonard Hevia wrote:* Chris--have you checked the digital files of *The Sphinx* or any other magic periodicals of that time for any mention of Gallaway? If he was a magician to any extent, that would help substantiate your case for him. As a leader in the printing industry, it would appear that Gallaway might have made a dent in magic circles--if he was interested in magic.

I did check in the digital magic literature available to me and could not find a mention of Gallaway. The only link to gambling we know is that Jay Marshall noted that there were other gambling books with the Edward Gallaway bookplate. We do not know which ones, but we do know there were other gambling books. I am hopeful that some of these books will at some point emerge. I am also pursuing two other avenues that may tell us more about the books Gallaway owned.

From EATCT we know that Erdnase was a book guy. He writes so himself that he has pretty much read all the past literature both in magic and in gambling. Gallaway was also a book guy. I therefore think it is definitely possible that he learned magic tricks from books alone and did not associate with the organized magic community. I would think it likely that he visited Roterberg’s shop and bought magic books there. But we don’t have any evidence pro or con, just laying out a possible scenario.

**Larry Horowitz** 08/15/15 04:49 PM  |  [link]  |  [filter]

I cannot imagine an author wishing to remain hidden, having an underling fill out the copyright form.

**Bill Mullins** 08/15/15 05:02 PM  |  [link]  |  [filter]

*Larry Horowitz wrote:* I cannot imagine an author wishing to remain hidden, having an underling fill out the copyright form.
When Joe Klein wrote *Primary Colors* under the name Anonymous, it was copyrighted by "Machiavelliana, Inc." Incorporation papers for the company listed Klein as CEO and Registered Agent.

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*Bill Mullins | 08/15/15 05:28 PM | link | filter*

*lybrary wrote:*

*Bill Mullins wrote:* It is no worse a match than Gallaway’s.

And how do you know? A signature is not enough to compare handwriting according to handwriting analysts.

then I’m comfortable saying that the person who wrote this:
We all are claiming expertise in fields we aren't expert it.

Bill Mullins | 08/15/15 05:42 PM | link | filter

Leonard Hevia wrote: Does anyone have a copy of that August 16, 2000 Wall Street Journal article: "Fresh Clues Could Reveal Magic Trick Writer Who Pulled A Disappearing Act A Century Ago." I would love to read that.

Add your email address to your profile, or PM it to me and I'll send you the article. Plus another one from the London Financial Times from about a year later that you'll probably like (written in conjunction with a BBC Radio special on Erdnase).

lybrary | 08/15/15 05:51 PM | link | filter

Bill, I have no problem whatever your opinions are, but please do not put words in my mouth. I stated that based on this and the second photo it is clear that Gallaway fits Smith's recollections. That means he is neither too tall nor too short. Exactly how tall he is I have not determined, because it is not necessary.

The reason why signatures cannot be used to determine handwriting is because they are very special forms of handwriting. My own signature is completely different from my handwriting. For me my signature is more like a drawing not like writing.
Leonard Hevia | 08/15/15 05:54 PM | link | filter

Thank you Bill! PM sent.

Carlo Morpurgo | 08/15/15 05:56 PM | link | filter

Allright. I finally have a foolproof routine that matches common sequences of words between two files. I wrote it in Mathematica version 10.2. The sequences are given in decreasing order of length (down to length 4), and alphabetically within the length group, with no duplicates, and where each sequence is not a subsequence of longer sequences. I did not take care of the periods, but I did eliminate by hand the very few sequences that only differ by a period or commas at the end. There are also very few sequence with the period inside, which I mostly left. Since I was at it, I also compared EATCT with 13 other non-magic non-gambling books of roughly 25K pages each (cutting them down to that if necessary) written around the same period. I found these books in the Project Gutenberg page, and they are mostly randomly chosen in the technology bookshelf.

You will find all the results here: https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3Wpu ... DZ4UGswZjQ

The summary is as follows (unless noted all books have about 25K words):

1. Bookbinding I: 160 matches
2. Bookbinding II: 153
3. Distilling: 71
4. Glass Blowing: 97 (19K words)
5. Hat Making: 122 (23K words)
6. The Mind: 68
7. Photography: 94
8. Pianola Player: 75
9. Plumbing: 126
10. Making Things: 123 (24K words)
11. Violin Playing: 76
12. Woodworking: 146
13. Wood Carving: 135

In the folder you will also find the updated 1127 matches with AOM.
Edited: I had not run the clearing of sequences which are subsequences of other sequences, so the numbers are slightly lower.

Carlo, how many of these books use the word 'subterfuge'?

Looks like the word use may have been on an upswing from 1900 to 1930s:
https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?c ... ge%3B%2C1

none of the 13 books I used (cut down to 25K words) have that word in it. Art of Magic has it 10 times. EATCT has it 3 times (in the text).

Carlo, thanks.

That magic books use it is not that unusual, except EATCT had it in its title. But that "Estimating for Printers" uses it is significant. Common lexicon was another thing Olsson took into consideration, and the word subterfuge was the most interesting word of those.
'subterfuge'?

Looks like the word use may have been on an upswing from 1900 to 1930s
https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?c ... ge%3B%2Cc1

Yeah I can see from 0.00008% (1900) to 0.000095% (1927). What an upswing and
difference that must be causing. Rather than look at what essentially is noise, look at
the magnitude and how rare the word is, and how unusual the shared use is for a book
that has nothing to do with magic or gambling.

Joe Pecore | 08/15/15 07:55 PM | link | filter

Carlo Morpurgo wrote:

lybrary wrote: Carlo, how many of these books use the word
'subterfuge'?

none of the 13 books I used (cut down to 25K words) have that word in it.
Art of Magic has it 10 times. EATCT has it 3 times (in the text).

Oscar Teal used it 11 times in his book "Higher Magic" (1920):
https://books.google.com/books?id=uhY9A ... ge&f=false

Larry Horowitz | 08/15/15 10:51 PM | link | filter

Bill,

My point was not that someone would fill out the copyright forms using a cover name.
But rather that why would they have another person involved in their secret?

Carlo Morpurgo | 08/15/15 11:55 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote:

Carlo Morpurgo wrote:

lybrary wrote: Carlo, how many of these books use the word 'subterfuge'?

none of the 13 books I used (cut down to 25K words) have that word in it. Art of Magic has it 10 times. EATCT has it 3 times (in the text).
That magic books use it is not that unusual, except EATCT had it in its title. But that "Estimating for Printers" uses it is significant. Common lexicon was another thing Olsson took into consideration, and the word subterfuge was the most interesting word of those.

I don't doubt there were other hidden aspects to the analysis, but I confess that I am not a big fan of the so-called "Argumentum ab auctoritate" ("Argument from authority", cf. Schopenhauer's "The Art of Being Right")

Anyway, just for comparison, can you find any other book that uses the phrase "Cheap cards are clumsy"?

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/16/15 12:33 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*libray wrote*: Bill, I have no problem whatever your opinions are, but please do not put words in my mouth. I stated that based on this and the second photo it is clear that Gallaway fits Smith's recollections. That means he is neither too tall nor too short. Exactly how tall he is I have not determined, because it is not necessary.

Smith, in the Gardner-Smith Correspondence, twice pegs Erdnase's height at about 5'6", possibly less, but not taller. Gallaway clearly isn't a basketball player, but he could be as tall as 5'8" in the photo. There's no point of reference to say he is 5'6" or less. We have no idea how tall the men his standing next to are -- are they sitting on low or high chairs?

From the picture, we can't rule out that he is 5'6"-- it is entirely possible. But we can't confirm it, either; yet you seem to do so. If that is putting words in your mouth, I'm sorry.

But Smith had other recollections as well. Let's compare Gallaway to them:
- "Recalls nothing to suggest he had a wife."
  Gallaway was not only married but newly wed (for the second time) in late 1901.

- "Has impression he was not a Chicago man...He came from the East and N.Y."
  Gallaway was a Chicago man, and from the midwest. Not from N.Y.

- "Andrews was a very small man of slight build...I would say he [was] on the dainty side."
  From the picture of Gallaway seated, I'd say he's a man of some girth. His gut clearly sticks out farther than his chin and chest.
- "Features were on the "sharp" rather than "blunt" side."
Gallaway's close up portrait has a reasonably broad nose and full lips. Not sharp.

- "He mentioned to Smith that he was related to Dalrymple."
There is nothing known about Gallaway to suggest he was related to Dalrymple.

- "Andrews told Smith he was a former card shark who had decided to go straight."
There is nothing known about Gallaway to suggest he had been a card shark.

So, all in all, it's stretching it to say that he is a man who "fits Smith's recollections," because in many respects he does not. In some cases he fits them, in some cases it is possible he fits them, and in some cases he clearly does not fit them.

But either way, the copyright form does not have to be filled out by Erdnase. There is no requirement for it.

Then what possible purpose is served by saying:

lybrary wrote: Anybody who wants to make the Hilliard case should take a look at his handwriting from his notebooks. Does it match the handwriting on the EATCT copyright form?

Either it is probative or it isn't.

Edward Finck | 08/16/15 01:04 AM | link | filter

lybrary wrote:

Bill Mullins wrote: It is no worse a match than Gallaway's.

And how do you know? A signature is not enough to compare handwriting according to handwriting analysts. You seem to be the expert on everything, handwriting, linguistics, print estimating, use of German back then, yet all you offer is your own opinion. I am backing up my opinion with expert opinion. At least I am making an effort to be objective by bringing in experts.

Mr. Wasshuber you are regularly rude, and it's my opinion that you really should not publish personal attacks and invective on long respected members of this group. Bill Mullins is a very serious researcher and has long contributed valuable content to this forum and many other venues relating to conjuring history. You should be aware that
Edward Finck wrote: Mr. Wasshuber you are regularly rude, and it’s my opinion that you really should not publish personal attacks and invective on long respected members of this group. Bill Mullins is a very serious researcher and has long contributed valuable content to this forum and many other venues relating to conjuring history. You should be aware that you have a very "Jeff Busby" like approach of attacking those who don’t agree with you and you might re-think your approach before you inadvertently take his place in the land of magic vitriol.

Mr. Finck, what is rude in pointing out that I am trying, wherever possible, to back up my own opinions by experts to stay objective in my own statements?

I may remind you that my history in following facts is well established. When I posted my 'German immigrant' theory last year I wanted to find a way to test my theory. I found Dr. Olsson and asked him to analyse EATCT to see if there is a trace of German or any other foreign language. The report came back that there was none. I dropped my German immigrant theory. Now with Gallaway there was a very similar situation. I myself thought Gallaway writes just like Erdnase. So I asked Dr. Olsson to analyse if Gallaway sounds like Erdnase. At that point I had no idea what Olsson's opinion would be. He could have come back and said: "Chris, sorry, but these two guys just don’t sound very much alike." If that would have been the case I probably would have dropped Gallaway and moved on to some other person mentioned in the bankruptcy files. However, Olsson came back with a "strong possibility", essentially confirming my personal opinion. He even suggested to me I should exclusively focus my research on Gallaway because he looks that promising as being Erdnase.

If following facts is rude, if taking expert opinion to stay objective is rude, if pointing out that others don’t have anything else to offer than their own opinion is rude, then Mr. Finck I guess somebody needs to be rude here.

Bill Mullins wrote: But Smith had other recollections as well. Let's compare Gallaway to them:- "Recalls nothing to suggest he had a wife."

Gallaway was not only married but newly wed (for the second time) in late 1901.

Just to set the record straight, Bill. That line “Age at First Marriage: 23” [1930 Census] is a mistake. If you check the actual Census it says 33.
Bill Mullins wrote: So, all in all, it’s stretching it to say that he is a man who “fits Smith’s recollections,” because in many respects he does not. In some cases he fits them, in some cases it is possible he fits them, and in some cases he clearly does not fit them.

I see where the disconnect comes from. The context I made my statement was in the context of physical appearance and there Gallaway does fit Smith’s recollections. He has the right height and ’about 40’ is explained by being 33 and balding. You also forgot to mention that Smith remembers one without facial hair, just like Gallaway’s portrait depicts him. As to other features, that is again your opinion. To me his physical appearance matches Smith’s recollections. I am also not somebody who takes Smith’s recollections literal in each and every point. After 45 years there is a good possibility that his recollections are simply wrong. I am looking for a big mismatch with Smith’s recollections (like MFA who was I think 27 and 6’3” stretching the boundaries of what Smith remembered), which clearly is not the case with Gallaway and thus Gallaway fits Smith’s recollections in terms of physical appearance.

Bill Mullins wrote: “Recalls nothing to suggest he had a wife.”
Gallaway was not only married but newly wed (for the second time) in late 1901.

I am happily married for decades but neither my wife nor I wear a ring or anything else that would suggest we are married. Actually, my choice in clothes would strongly suggest I am a bachelor who will never find a wife. This is part of the problem of the discussion here. Non facts are being elevated to facts to try to make some point.

Bill Mullins wrote: ”Has impression he was not a Chicago man...He came from the East and N.Y.”
Gallaway was a Chicago man, and from the midwest. Not from N.Y.

Here is another of these non-facts. ”His impression was ...” So what exactly made Smith think he is not from Chicago? Because they met at a hotel and not at his home? Because Erdnase paid with a check that was numbered #1? We don’t know. Smith didn’t say. But meeting in a hotel to have some quiet time and the space to demonstrate and draw makes a lot of sense to me even if you live in Chicago. And
Or perhaps he did not want to tell his new wife about it and thus kept his personal accounting separate from his book accounting. Smith states that he thinks the check was drawn to a CHICAGO bank, not a NY bank. If you live in NY why do you open a bank account in Chicago? Looks to me Erdnase actually lived in or around Chicago or business took him there often enough that he would open a bank account at a Chicago bank.

The Louis Dalrymple mess. The case for ES Andrews is at least partly made by saying he is married to Dolly Seely and Seely is an alternative spelling of Seeley. Louis Dalrymple's mother maiden name was Adelia Seeley. This is stated to suggest that they were somehow related. However, no such proof has been found to date. But if that makes a candidate stronger then I have a lot more to offer for Gallaway.

(Just to be clear, I myself think none of this proves anything, just as it doesn't prove anything for the ES Andrews case. But others may think differently and I don't want to be rude and dismiss those differently thinking folks.)

- Edward Gallaway's sister Ida was married to a man with the surname Thomas. There is a Catherine Bricker (Thomas) on Louis Dalrymple's father side.

- There are two Gassaway folks on Dalrymple's father side: Rhoda Lewis (Gassaway), Elizabeth Lewis (Gassaway). Knowing that back then they had a long-s which could easily be mistaken for an l it could very well be that Gallaway changed to Gassaway or vice versa at some point.

- Both the name Gallaway and Dalrymple trace back to the exact same region in Scotland. Pretty likely that there was some family relation between those two families.

- There is a Walter Gallaway who was a political cartoonist for Puck and other magazines just as Louis Dalrymple. The October 8th 1902 issue of Puck shows a cartoon drawn by Walter Gallaway depicting two poker players. One of the players looks a bit like Edward Gallaway, bald, no facial hair and with a bow tie. See for yourself below. Could Smith have mixed up one Puck political cartoonist with another one? And could have Walter Gallaway had Edward Gallaway in mind when he drew that cartoon?
The problem with the Dalrymple thing is twofold. One, it could easily be something Smith misremembered. We know from his recollections that he wasn’t particularly good with names. So this could be just as wrong as Andrews. Second, it could be a
I know that objectivity isn't particularly appreciated here, but if you are objective you would have to forget about the whole Dalrymple thing until a candidate actually has some real family relationship, and even then you would have to question if we can trust Smith on that.

*libray wrote:* - There is a Walter Gallaway who was a political cartoonist for Puck and other magazines just as Louis Dalrymple. The October 8th 1902 issue of Puck shows a cartoon drawn by Walter Gallaway depicting two poker players. One of the players looks a bit like Edward Gallaway, bald, no facial hair and with a bow tie. See for yourself below. Could Smith have mixed up one Puck political cartoonist with another one? And could have Walter Gallaway had Edward Gallaway in mind when he drew that cartoon?
Nice picture! If that would be the case, he played poker in New York as well, since the scene is from NY judging by "The Donovan Association" on the wall for which I find a mere four search hits, all referring to a NY organization.

**Bill Mullins** | 08/16/15 10:18 PM | link | filter

_Zenner wrote: [Gallaway] was marrying for the first and only time._
Chris -- the genealogical information on Dalrymple and Gallaway is interesting. Thanks for providing it.

But as far as Smith’s recollections:
- Gallaway has a "W" in it. Smith said the writer’s name had a "W". You give Smith’s memory credit for this and mark it as a plus for Gallaway.
- Gallaway was 33. Smith said the writer was 40. You say Smith’s memory was faulty, and thus this isn’t a strike against Gallaway.

Given that Smith was a painter, I’d be more inclined to trust what he remembers seeing, than what he remembers hearing. But that’s just me.

It doesn’t make for a rigorously consistent argument for Gallaway when you can discard the bits of evidence that don’t support him like this. If you don’t think Smith is a reliable witness, that’s fine -- just don’t use him to support your case.

library wrote: [Erdnase] writes so himself that he has pretty much read all the past literature both in magic and in gambling.

I sure don’t remember that from the text. As someone said, "Non facts are being elevated to facts to try to make some point."
Bill Mullins wrote: But as far as Smith’s recollections:
- Gallaway has a "W" in it. Smith said the writer's name had a "W". You give Smith's memory credit for this and mark it as a plus for Gallaway.
- Gallaway was 33. Smith said the writer was 40. You say Smith's memory was faulty, and thus this isn't a strike against Gallaway.

Given that Smith was a painter, I'd be more inclined to trust what he remembers seeing, than what he remembers hearing. But that's just me.

It doesn't make for a rigorously consistent argument for Gallaway when you can discard the bits of evidence that don't support him like this. If you don't think Smith is a reliable witness, that's fine -- just don't use him to support your case.

I was about to make the same exact point: using only the part of Smith's memory that fits the candidate.

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**lybrary** | 08/16/15 10:54 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote:

lybrary wrote: [Erdnase] writes so himself that he has pretty much read all the past literature both in magic and in gambling.

I sure don't remember that from the text. As someone said, "Non facts are being elevated to facts to try to make some point."

Bill, you have read Erdnase and therefore it should be quite obvious to you that he makes very categorical statements about what is and is not found in the literature and how his own book differs. In order to make such statements you need to have been very well read. Here, to jog your memory, are two quotes which are relevant:

Erdnase writes: "...yet we have been unable to find in the whole category more than an incidental reference to any card table artifice;"

Erdnase writes: "Hence this work stands unique in the list of card books."

In order to make such statements he must have exhaustively read the card books and magic books. I know you are trying to be difficult, but it is very clear that Erdnase is a book guy and has extensively read the literature available during his time. But you can continue to spin it differently. Just makes you appear like you haven't read or
Bill Mullins wrote: But as far as Smith’s recollections:
- Gallaway has a "W" in it. Smith said the writer's name had a "W". You give
  Smith's memory credit for this and mark it as a plus for Gallaway.
- Gallaway was 33. Smith said the writer was 40. You say Smith’s memory
  was faulty, and thus this isn't a strike against Gallaway.

I have stated my opinions of Smith’s recollections in detail earlier on this thread. It is
true that I don’t read too much into all of his statements, or allow larger boundaries
around his statements. I have made clear differentiation of what I believe and why and
what I do not believe and why not. My opinion was formed before I even found
Gallaway, so it is not a case of selecting what fits. However, to make a fair comparison
you can’t say for one candidate you use them to make him stronger, and for the other
you don’t allow that. I am simply mentioning that Gallaway fits Smith’s recollections
very well for those who put much weight on Smith's statements.

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Tom Sawyer | 08/16/15 11:11 PM | link | filter

Regarding Marshall D. Smith, I think it is pretty frequent practice for people to
disregard certain things he said, and to rely on other things he said.

I would hesitate to say that "everyone" does this, but I believe that many do. Whaley,
Busby, and Gardner largely discounted the height business, though I believe they had
an explanation as to why Smith might have reported a lower height. But for the most
part, if you like Milton Franklin Andrews, you have to disregard at least something that
Smith was fairly certain about.

Smith told Gardner he was around 25 when he did the illustrations. This is in The
Gardner-Smith Correspondence, and maybe elsewhere. Nobody relies on his
recollection of his own age. [I corrected this paragraph a few hours after posting.]

Also, Smith appears to have been far off on his recollection of the number of drawings
he made.

So, I guess the important thing in this context is that a person should have some
grounds for accepting certain things and rejecting others.

--Tom Sawyer

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Bill Mullins | 08/17/15 12:25 AM | link | filter

Yes, Erdnase did make the two statements you quote. He is referring specifically to
notes). And when we review his writings, it seems that he took much more from magic sources than gambling sources.

And as far as general knowledge of the conjuring literature, he says "But so far as we can learn from the exhibitions and literature of conjurers", allowing for the possibility that there is more than he has read, rather than making an unequivocal statement that "there is nothing in the literature of conjurers". This is an admission that he hasn't read all of the conjuring literature.

And, FWIW, he was wrong about how extensive his knowledge was. He claimed as his own the SWE Shift, despite its having been previously published in "The 52 Wonders" years earlier. And there is material in Koschitz (1894) that Erdnase doesn't mention, despite claiming to describe "every known expedient, manoeuver, and stratagem of the expert card handler." He omits the bent corner dodge in 3 card monte, although it had been in use for decades.

I'm not trying to be difficult. I'm saying that Erdnase doesn't say the things you are claiming he says. It takes a careful reading of his words to parse it out.

Pete McCabe wrote:

People are not wrong to count some of Smith's recollections and discount others. No one's memory is perfect. It's almost certain some of his recollections were wrong, and it seems likely that at least some of what he remembered was right. This is why this kind of thing is very hard.

As magicians we can hardly complain that people have such horrible memories.

Bill Mullins wrote:

But how do you decide which is which? Keep the ones that help and discount the ones that hurt?

Jason England wrote:

While I feel the Erdnase = Galloway probability is near zero, I do think that Chris is
conjuring," so clearly he read those. But just a few sentences later he discusses what "Self-styled 'ex-professionals'" were doing. Although it isn't perfectly clear, I've always read this to mean that he was now including cheating/gambling book authors (like Green and Quinn) in his analysis of what techniques had been discussed or taught in the literature up until his book. And unless he was exclusively seeing these crusaders in person, he must've read their works.

Furthermore, Erdnase doesn't strike me as the kind of author that would have looked in all of the magic books for cheating techniques but not in any of the cheating books!

Therefore, I'd bet money he read the cheating books of the day including Green's various (but all similar) works, Evans' *How Gamblers Win, Sharps and Flats, Fools of Fortune* and the various chapters on cheating that appear in many of the otherwise pedestrian poker books of the late 19th century.

Jason

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**lybrary** 08/17/15 07:00 AM | link | filter

> Bill Mullins wrote: And, FWIW, he was wrong about how extensive his knowledge was. He claimed as his own the SWE Shift, despite its having been previously published in "The 52 Wonders" years earlier. And there is material in Koschitz (1894) that Erdnase doesn't mention, despite claiming to describe "every known expedient, manoeuvr, and stratagem of the expert card handler." He omits the bent corner dodge in 3 card monte, although it had been in use for decades.

Bill, you are judging this from a position 120 years later with pretty much all literature from that time available in digital form, searchable and available with one click of a button. We have the luxury to indeed know pretty much all that has been published back then. For somebody like Erdnase in 1900 it was probably impossible to find ALL books on that subject matter. So it is quite likely that he may have missed one or the other and hasn't literally read 'everything'. But that doesn't make Erdnase's or my statement incorrect. He was a man who has extensively read. And given his eloquence it is also clear he did not only read gambling and magic literature but was generally very well read. I have made that statement before. It is supported by fact. It is also supported by fact that Gallaway extensively read. Whatever your feelings are about Gallaway being Erdnase, both were book guys - highly intelligent, eloquent and well read.

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**Marty Jacobs** 08/17/15 07:20 AM | link | filter
and Flats, Fools of Fortune and the various chapters on cheating that appear in many of the otherwise pedestrian poker books of the late 19th century.

Like Jason and Chris, I also think Erdnase had read all of the gambling books he could get his hands on. I think it is fairly safe to assume that, if the book was readily available, then he had acquired it and digested the contents.

For example, I would be very surprised if he hadn’t read *Sharps and Flats* because his section on the holdout reads like a summary of the holdout information in that book.

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**mam** | 08/17/15 07:20 AM | link | filter

Is "The Man Who Was Erdnase" available in any digital and/or affordable form?

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**Zenner** | 08/17/15 08:11 AM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:*

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**Zenner wrote:** Gallaway was marrying for the first and only time.

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(From the Delphos *Daily Herald*, Feb 22 1896).
I know that you don't trust anything that is included in the Censuses but there is evidence in two of them that the marriage between Ed. and Rose was his first and her second.

First look in the 1910 Census. It specifically says after Ed's name that it was his M1 and after Rose's that it was her M2.

Now have a look at the 1930 Census which I mentioned in my posting. There is a column headed ‘Age at first marriage’. The entry after Ed's name is 33 (which appears to have been altered from 32) and the entry after Rose's name is 21. That had to be Rose's age when she married Samuel Flood back in January, 1893, seven months before the birth of Julia Flood.

So in two Censuses, 20 years apart, they actually tell us that Ed's marriage to Rose was his FIRST one, and, as she was his widow when he died, it was his LAST one. The news item in the Delphos Daily Herald, submitted in an anonymous letter, must have been a mistake or a hoax!

Why don't you check back to see whether or not they published an apology?

Cheers,

Peter Zenner

P.S. I haven't been away, just taking a rest and following the Gallaway debate. Harry S. Thompson is my first and only candidate and I have said as much as I want to for now.

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degrisy | 08/17/15 11:53 PM | link | filter

I am following this discussion about Erdnase and there is something I want to emphasize though I'm not a great student of the matter: everyone says that the real Erdnase definitely wanted to hide his identity and for this reason he resorted to various clever stratagems, but then the most popular theory is that SW Erdnase is simply the name of the author spelled backwards. If the logic must guide us both ES Andrews can not be Erdnase's real name or the real Erdnase was not really interested in hiding his own identity. The fact that to date no one knows who he was makes me lean for the first hypothesis: the real Erdnase CANNOT be ES Andrews.

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lybrary | 08/18/15 07:11 AM | link | filter

degrisy wrote: I am following this discussion about Erdnase and there is
then the most popular theory is that EW Erdnase is simply the name of the
author spelled backwards. If the logic must guide us both ES Andrews can
not be Erdnase's real name or the real Erdnase was not really interested in
hiding his own identity. The fact that to date no one knows who he was
makes me lean for the first hypothesis: the real Erdnase CANNOT be ES
Andrews.

I totally agree with this. However, I would not go so far as to say that it cannot be an ES
Andrews. But an ES Andrews would have to be supported by much more evidence
than just a 'man in Chicago who played cards'.

One of the reasons some believe Erdnase did not want to stay anonymous is the fact
that he paid Smith with a check. And the argument goes a check would provide a paper
trail to follow for others who may want to find out. I have some new thinking to offer
on that subject. Reading the historical accounts from those days in Chicago makes it
clear that this was a rough and tumble time. There were bombings, killings, police
brutality, at the same time with no or little police oversight, lots of gambling, lots of
business bankruptcies, fraud etc. With this in mind imagine Erdnase would pay Smith
in cash. It would be way too risky. Smith could have taken the cash and never shown
up with the drawings at the printer. A check provided some security. With it he could
prove payment and follow the trail who cashed it if necessary. So telling Smith his real
identity and paying with a check was a small price to pay in revealing his identity to
his illustrator. It was also a private transaction between Erdnase and Smith. There was
little concern that this would somehow get out into the public. However, all publicly
available information, the book itself and the copyright records, needed to be free of
Erdnase's real name, and that is what we indeed see today being the case.

I therefore agree that Erdnase did not want to be known or found out as the author of
his book by the public. That he told Smith his real name was necessitated by other
factors, which did not pose a high risk of causing his cover to be blown.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/18/15 09:13 AM | link | filter

degrisy wrote: ... the real Erdnase definitely wanted to hide his identity ...the
most popular theory is that EW (Sic) Erdnase is simply the name of the
author spelled backwards. If the logic must guide us ...

IMHO folks are working from the hypothesis that there is a single author. Also the
hypothesis that the person recalled by the illustrator is the author. These working
assumptions are treated as axiomatic in most of the discussion here.

The pseudonym constructed by reversing a common name is under debate. Yours truly
This search for a real person to satisfy the needs of this community of readers to find an author is intriguing. Even more so for those who’ve read Borges. Let’s play nice and leave Joseph Campbell out of it. Instead of questioning the why, we may as well learn what we can from the past. Do you have any contacts in Chicago?

Roger M. | 08/18/15 11:47 AM | link | filter

There is absolutely no evidence to indicate Erdnase was doing anything more than toying with anagrams, certainly nothing to indicate he was undertaking a major effort to remain anonymous.

Despite Chris’s details of a violent Chicago, it was in fact a city that was full of families, businesses, and plenty of folks walking their dogs in the park. After hall, the city hosted a Worlds Fair in 1893, and then again in 1933. Hardly the Wild West.

It stands equally that Mr. Erdnase paid Smith with a cheque simply because his toying about with his anagrams didn’t extend beyond placing the name "Erdnase" on the cover of the book. In effect, he wasn’t trying at all to hide his identity from Smith.

In an effort to make certain candidates "fit" the mold, we’re seeing some pretty large stretches of reality to accommodate a backstory adjusted to fit a specific candidate, or similarly adjusted or explained to repurpose one of the known facts we have on record!

Pete McCabe | 08/18/15 11:57 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote:

Pete McCabe wrote: People are not wrong to count some of Smith’s recollections and discount others.

But how do you decide which is which? Keep the ones that help and discount the ones that hurt?

You decide, Bill. Everyone decides, and they all decide in different ways. My point is that it is not valid to criticize someone’s argument solely by pointing out that they are counting some of Smith's recollections and discounting others.

mam | 08/18/15 12:14 PM | link | filter

Found this book from 1890, which has a section on gambling in Chicago (pages 389–407) of which this is an especially fascinating excerpt:
It must be remembered that all this occurred before the beginning of the present era of club life, which has done so much to pervert the morals, if not to overturn the foundations of society. It is a notorious fact that the heaviest play in Chicago today may be found in the most aristocratic and exclusive clubs. The police, of course, are not aware of it. Every man in Chicago doing business in what is known as the "Board of Trade district" has heard of the existence of a small club, whose membership is chiefly composed of operators on the floor of Change, and most men about town know where it is located. The appointments of the rooms while not luxurious, are of simple elegance and the cuisine and buffet are said to be matchless. Stories are current of fabulous sums having been lost and won across the tables in this exclusive resort.

Next stop: Find out what club he is talking about

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**Bill Marquardt** | 08/18/15 12:28 PM | link | filter

Is it not possible that when "Erdnase" presented himself to the printer and also the illustrator, that he used the pseudonym E. S. Andrews as if it were his real name? I believe this thought has been mentioned once before since he allegedly used check No. 1 from his checkbook to pay Smith. Would it really have been that difficult to open a bank account under an assumed name?

Reversing the pseudonym E. S. Andrews to S. W. Erdnase would have served as a double blind, so to speak, hiding his real name and yet seemingly providing it when some puzzle solver reversed S. W. Erdnase.

What I am saying is that both the printer and Smith may have actually believed the author's name was Andrews even though it was not. Given his penchant for ruse and artifice, I see this as more likely than the author using his true name which was not Andrews.

I realize that the name Andrews cannot be dismissed from investigation, but I highly doubt that it was the real name.

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**Carlo Morpurgo** | 08/18/15 12:36 PM | link | filter

Pete McCabe wrote:

Bill Mullins wrote:

Pete McCabe wrote: People are not wrong to count...
and discount the ones that hurt?

You decide, Bill. Everyone decides, and they all decide in different ways. My point is that it is not valid to criticize someone's argument solely by pointing out that they are counting some of Smith’s recollections and discounting others.

But it is perfectly ok to criticize an argument if these assumptions about "Smith's recollections" appear to be somewhat inconsistent. I think that this is what Bill was probably trying to convey.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/18/15 12:55 PM | link | filter

Bill Marquardt wrote: Is it not possible that when "Erdnase" presented himself to the printer and also the illustrator, that he used the pseudonym E. S. Andrews as if it were his real name? ...

The problem with conjecture is that almost anything is possible. Adding suppositions does not necessarily make a thing more likely.

Bill Mullins | 08/18/15 12:57 PM | link | filter

Bill Marquardt wrote: Is it not possible that when "Erdnase" presented himself to the printer and also the illustrator, that he used the pseudonym E. S. Andrews as if it were his real name? I believe this thought has been mentioned once before since he allegedly used check No. 1 from his checkbook to pay Smith. Would it really have been that difficult to open a bank account under an assumed name?
(Checks from that era with a business's logo/letterhead design are known, but they would have had to have been custom printed).

Checks with names and account information on them are a modern feature, that came along when checks started being processed by machines that could read account numbers from magnetic ink.

Erdnase may have opened the account in his real name. The check wouldn't have shown that. The bank would have debited the account based on the signature, which may have been the account holder's real name, or it may have been a name from a second signature card that Erdnase provided when he opened the account. Or, if he opened the account under a pseudonym, it may have been under that name.

The strongest evidence to me that Erdnase actually wanted to have his identity kept secret is that when Sprong went to Drake to find out who he was, they wouldn't tell. The pseudonym doesn't necessarily mean that he didn't want anyone to know who he was. His name may have been well known around the McKinney office.

**Bill Marquardt | 08/18/15 01:10 PM | link | filter**

*Jonathan Townsend wrote:*

> Bill Marquardt wrote: Is it not possible that when "Erdnase" presented himself to the printer and also the illustrator, that he used the pseudonym E. S. Andrews as if it were his real name?

...  

The problem with conjecture is that almost anything is possible. Adding suppositions does not necessarily make a thing more likely.

True, but the basis for the supposition is that it is unlikely an established person would be using the first check in his checkbook for such an enterprise. It was most certainly a brand new account. Having an account under a pseudonym would also have allowed him to receive payments into his account and later to withdraw the money, all without his real name being used.

Conjecture? Certainly, but one that makes sense.

**ADDED: @ Bill Mullins, I wrote the above while you were writing your latest. Thank you for the additional info. At any rate, nothing has established that his actual name**
Thanks for the clarification about checks of the time. They used signature card verification? multiple signature cards were okay on an account?

Bill Mullins wrote: ... when Sprong went to Drake to find out who he was, they wouldn’t tell. ...

IMHO that’s a puzzler. Not a name, not a diversion or hint but a lasting impression that the authorship of the text was a topic to avoid. There’s something of a pattern in that in magicdom.

So, who wrote that Kaps book you need special glasses to read?

Bill Mullins wrote: The strongest evidence to me that Erdnase actually wanted to have his identity kept secret is that when Sprong went to Drake to find out who he was, they wouldn’t tell. The pseudonym doesn’t necessarily mean that he didn’t want anyone to know who he was. His name may have been well known around the McKinney office.

Where is this episode described?

Bill Mullins wrote: ADDED: @ Bill Mullins, I wrote the above while you were writing your latest. Thank you for the additional info. At any rate, nothing has established that his actual name was Andrews.

Except that he told Smith that his name was Andrews, Sprong and Rullman said his name was Andrews, and possibly someone at Drake when Vernon spoke to them.

Bill Mullins wrote: The strongest evidence to me that Erdnase actually wanted to have his identity kept secret is that when Sprong went to Drake to find out who he was, they wouldn’t tell. The pseudonym doesn’t necessarily mean that he didn’t
Where is this episode described?

I'm sorry, I didn't check before writing. According to Vernon (see *The Vernon Touch*, p. 99),
"[Sprong] said he found out from Drake, who was one of the later publishers of Erdnase, that Erdnase is Andrews spelled all mixed up. His real name was Andrews. I asked Mr. Drake who this fellow Andrews was, and he said he was sorry, he couldn't tell me. So I went back there religiously for months and kept badgering the old man to tell me something about this Andrews. He said he couldn't betray a confidence and couldn't tell anything about Andrews."

Diaconis says in *Revelations*:
"Vernon recounts that J.C. Sprong persistently quizzed Drake, the publisher of Erdnase during the 1920's for information. Drake admitted knowing something about the author and finally told Sprong that S.W. Erdnase was an anagram for E.S. Andrews."

So Drake would tell Sprong his name was Andrews, but wouldn't tell any details about Andrews to Vernon.

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 08/18/15 02:05 PM | [link] | [filter]

That reads like a riddle. Sprong annoyed Drake - and Drake pointed out the obvious reverse name ... and nobody called shenanigans?

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**Bill Marquardt** | 08/18/15 02:39 PM | [link] | [filter]

*Bill Mullins wrote:*

*Bill Marquardt wrote:* ADDED: @ Bill Mullins, I wrote the above while you were writing your latest. Thank you for the additional info. At any rate, nothing has established that his actual name was Andrews.

Except that he told Smith that his name was Andrews, Sprong and Rullman said his name was Andrews, and possibly someone at Drake when Vernon spoke to them.

Which is why I believe he may have been using the name Andrews, acting as if it was his real name even though it was not. If he wanted anonymity, that would be the way to do it. Admitted conjecture on my part.
Bill Mullins wrote: So Drake would tell Sprong his name was Andrews, but wouldn’t tell any details about Andrews to Vernon.

Vernon never spoke to Drake. The August 1970 Vernon Touch column reads in such a way, that it seems Vernon himself is the one who "went back there religiously for months and kept badgering the old man to tell me something about this man Andrews."

Whether this was intentional, or an error in transcription, or a consequence of faulty punctuation is debatable.

The quote from Diaconis clearly attributes the persistently quizzing of Drake to Sprong.

The "badgering for months" and "persistently quizzing" are not separate occurrences, one being done by Sprong and the other being done by Vernon.

They are both referring to the same thing, the interaction between Drake and Sprong as related by Sprong to Vernon.

As pointed out by Leonard Hevia a while back, if you view volume 15 of the Vernon Revelations dvds, it is all made clear.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/18/15 03:39 PM | link | filter

Bill Marquardt wrote: ...why I believe he may have been using the name Andrews, acting as if it was his real name even though it was not. If he wanted anonymity, that would be the way to do it. Admitted conjecture on my part.

Let’s try Occam on this - if we drop the "he" we’ve got a printer being coy about the text and an artist meeting a stranger in a hotel room.

Lybrary | 08/18/15 04:33 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: Except that he told Smith that his name was Andrews, Sprong and Rullman said his name was Andrews, and possibly someone at Drake when Vernon spoke to them.

But none of this needs to be true. Gardner planted the name Andrews in Smith’s mind who later by his own admission is not good with names. All the other apparent confirmations of Andrews is hearsay that cannot be confirmed. And who says that...
Drake. Perhaps Drake couldn't say more because he didn't know more except the rumor that everybody seems to be repeating to this day.

lybrary | 08/18/15 04:36 PM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote: There is absolutely no evidence to indicate Erdnase was doing anything more than toying with anagrams ...

And where is the evidence that he was even 'toying with anagrams'?

Roger M. | 08/18/15 04:54 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote:

Roger M. wrote: There is absolutely no evidence to indicate Erdnase was doing anything more than toying with anagrams ...

And where is the evidence that he was even 'toying with anagrams'?

Well, in the folks that were told by Drake that Erdnase was actually E.S. Andrews in reverse, and the fact that Erdnase told Smith he was Andrews when he had the drawings done, and perhaps a couple more depending on how you interpret Vernons stories.

That's where the "toying around with anagrams" comes from.

Of course if you choose to disbelieve it all because it runs counter to your candidate ... that remains your option to do so.

(Totally off topic, but I'm off to see Mac Kings show in an hour with my daughter, and am actually quite excited!)

lybrary | 08/18/15 04:59 PM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote:

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(Totally off topic, but I’m off to see Mac Kings show in an hour with my daughter, and am actually quite excited!)

The problem is that these are not independent rumors. The reason Gardner planted the Andrews name was because of the existing rumors. So it is not independent. It could very easily be only one rumor that gets repeated and pops up at various places. It is still only a rumor and thus only one plausible theory not evidence at all. Elevating it to evidence status is a big error done here all the time. Neither one who spreads these rumors has anything more to add which suggests all they are doing is repeating the rumor because they don’t know anything more.

**Bill Mullins wrote:** Checks from that era with a business’s logo/letterhead design are known, but they would have had to have been custom printed).

At least Gallaway could have easily printed his own checks. Some checks had the account holder name handstamped and others had the name written in.

**Leonard Hevia wrote:** Nobody is immune to misplaced or missing quotation marks. Vernon is discussing Sprong’s encounter with Drake, and then it seems as if he suddenly placed himself inside the story without any preamble about searching for Drake to ask him in person. If you pencil in the quotation marks, then the narrative about Sprong continues in a logical fashion.

Inferring the "phantom quotation marks" puts that Vernon Touch narrative in perfect harmony with Vernon’s discussion in the Revelations video.
The August 1970 Vernon Touch column reads in such a way, that it seems Vernon himself is the one who "went back there religiously for months and kept badgering the old man to tell me something about this man Andrews."

Whether this was intentional, or an error in transcription, or a consequence of faulty punctuation is debatable.

I need to watch the Vernon DVD. And while I read Leonard's explanation when he posted it, there has been so much to absorb on the Erdnase thread the last six weeks that it slipped my mind.

FWIW, when David Ben quoted the passage in his biography of Vernon, he added quote marks:

"He said he found out from Drake, who was one of the later publishers of Erdnase that Erdnase is Andrews spelled all mixed up. His real name was Andrews. "I [Sprong] asked Mr. Drake who this fellow Andreios was, and he said he was sorry, he couldn't tell me. So I went back there religiously for months and kept badgering the old man to tell me something about this Andrews. He said he couldn't betray a confidence and couldn't tell anything about Andrews."

lybrary wrote:

Bill Mullins wrote: Except that he told Smith that his name was Andrews, Sprong and Rullman said his name was Andrews, and possibly someone at Drake when Vernon spoke to them.

But none of this needs to be true. Gardner planted the name Andrews in Smith's mind who later by his own admission is not good with names. All the other apparent confirmations of Andrews is hearsay that cannot be confirmed.

Smith didn't act like Gardner "planted" the name, he acted like it was on the tip of his tongue and Gardner reminded him of it. "His face lighted up and he was sure that was it."

Sprong was interested in sleight of hand (he was willing to pay $100 for a center deal), and motivated to find the author. He had been interested in magic since soon after the publication of Expert. His statement carries more weight than a hearsay rumor.
And who says that Drake actually knew who the real author was?

If Drake didn't know, why didn't he just tell Sprong "I don't know?" What's the advantage to him to make up a story for Sprong? And then continue to maintain the story as Sprong continues to pester him?

We do not know how the book actually ended up in Drake's hands. Perhaps the author sold it to McKinney who sold it to Drake.

One thing the bankruptcy records show that hadn't been clear to me was that all of these early people were tied up with one another. Gallaway, Drake, McKinney -- their business relationships were much more incestuous than I would have guessed. Drake may have been on the scene when McKinney printed the book. It's clear he knew McKinney. But he was involved in selling Expert so soon after its publication that McKinney's transactions with Erdnase would have been a recent memory. There's no reason to think he would have been in the dark about the matter -- it would have been due diligence for him to find out about Erdnase from McKinney before he started printing it and selling it himself.

Perhaps Drake couldn't say more because he didn't know more except the rumor that everybody seems to be repeating to this day.

Except when Drake told Sprong, it wasn't a rumor -- Drake's statement is the first time anyone said Erdnase = Andrews. Are you suggesting he made it up out of thin air?

---

Roger M. | 08/15 05:45 PM | link | filter

I don't know if you've noticed Chris, but NOBODY has come on side with your candidate as anything more than "interesting".

Before the desire to insult those who disagree with you becomes too strong ... I'd take that fact into account!

---

Bill Mullins | 08/15 05:57 PM | link | filter

I don't think that Chris has been insulting -- just perhaps a little blind to the problems with Gallaway = Erdnase. Even though I don't agree with that proposition, its been useful to look at the arguments for and against.

And "interesting" is about as much as can be said about any of the candidates -- none
performer | 08/15 06:02 PM | link | filter

Not true. I rather like the case that Chris presented. Not that I care one way or the other. I have never figured out what the fuss about Erdnase was in the first place. As it happens I can do most of the sleights therein and I consider it a very good book. But then there are many very good books. I thought this one was well written and illustrated.

I do get a psychic vibe somehow that when the identity of the author is discovered it will be a big surprise to you. It will be somebody whose name you have seen again and again but have never connected to Erdnase. And I also get a feeling that it is someone who couldn't have written it because he was not alive at the time. In other words the book was not written when you think it was written.

I have utterly no evidence for this theory. It is just a psychic thing. When the identity is discovered you will all be astonished to hear that I am right.

performer | 08/15 06:06 PM | link | filter

Oh and Mullins. It has come to my attention that you have brought up my name without receiving formal permission to do so. I wish to assure you that despite your speculation I did not write Expert on the Card Table. However, in my capacity as a psychic reverend of some distinction I will be happy to communicate with the spirit world on your behalf to find out. Naturally there will be a small charge and this should be paid in advance.

lybrary | 08/15 06:23 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: Except when Drake told Sprong, it wasn't a rumor -- Drake's statement is the first time anyone said Erdnase = Andrews. Are you suggesting he made it up out of thin air?

Yes, I am saying this is a real possibility, because human nature is a lot more complex than you make it out to be. Maybe he repeated a rumor or made a guess and then to safe face he simply makes up the line that he can't betray a confidence. Wouldn't be the first time something like this happened.

The bankruptcy files show that Drake did business with McKinney but nothing more. We have still no idea how the book ended up in Drake's hands. Maybe Erdnase sold it directly to Drake which makes Gallaway a pretty likely person, because if he is Erdnase he would already know the business Drake due to his work at McKinney. Or Erdnase could have sold the book to McKinney or any other printer/publisher/retailer.
I also think it is an error to say Drake did personally do all the business transactions. I don't know how large Drake was in 1901, but if I assume it was of similar size as McKinney then it is possible that Drake did not personally transact the purchase of EATCT. So he may never have had more knowledge than second hand reports from his employees.

All of this means there is no hard evidence that Drake would necessarily know who Erdnase really is. Just to be clear, it is also plausible that he could have known. We just don't know. Don't turn plausible theories into evidence. Once we actually have something to prove one or the other theory you can make it evidence.

Brad Jeffers | 08/15 06:43 PM | link | filter

I'm beginning to understand ...
It was Drake who started a rumor that S.W.Erdnase spelled backwards is E.S.Andrews.

Tom Sawyer | 08/15 06:47 PM | link | filter

Regardless of what one believes on the Smith-Sprong-Drake-Rullman aspects of the case, at least one thing seems pretty clear. Sprong's investigation is key, but we don't know the source of Drake's information. Edward Fink provided some ages of Drake family members. Based on that, the eldest child was 9 or so when the Erdnase book was published. Since Sprong probably dealt with one of the sons, this is an issue.

--Tom Sawyer

Lybrary | 08/15 07:30 PM | link | filter

Tom Sawyer wrote: Regardless of what one believes on the Smith-Sprong-Drake-Rullman aspects of the case, at least one thing seems pretty clear. Sprong's investigation is key, but we don't know the source of Drake's information. Edward Fink provided some ages of Drake family members. Based on that, the eldest child was 9 or so when the Erdnase book was published. Since Sprong probably dealt with one of the sons, this is an issue.

--Tom Sawyer

Exactly. So imagine Sprong hears it from a Drake son, who heard it from his father, who heard it from an employee of his who actually bought the book potentially not even directly from Erdnase. Lots of question marks, lots of things we don't know. Yet,
Leonard Hevia | 08/18/15 07:32 PM | link | filter

Wait a minute, wasn't it the elder Drake that Sprong spoke with about the identity of Erdnase, and not one of Drake's sons? Wasn't Sprong roughly the same age as the elder Drake?

Also, if Erdnase used "E.S. Andrews" as his cover name when he dealt with McKinney, Smith, the bank, and possibly Drake, as David Alexander has suggested, wouldn't that have made that name just a red herring and not really a rumor? Assuming that "E.S. Andrews" is not the true name of Erdnase. Why would Erdnase reveal his true name to all or some of these individuals/entities and create a weak link in the chain?

I also agree with Chris that "E.S. Andrews" was likely all that the elder Drake ever really knew. Drake may have parsed it out himself and read "Erdnase" backwards, assuming he never met Erdnase posing as E.S. Andrews. When Sprong pestered the elder Drake for information, Drake may have gone along for the ride and mentioned something about not betraying any confidences.

Tom Sawyer | 08/18/15 11:02 PM | link | filter

If Sprong met with Drake during or before 1912, then it would have been Frederick J. Drake (the father) with whom he met.

mam | 08/19/15 05:47 AM | link | filter

Wouldn't this whole Sprong/Drake episode make sense if Drake was Erdnase?

Also, EATCT uses the phrase "We betray no confidences in publishing this book" (my bold)

(Just a thought, I have not read up on Drake.)

Zenner | 08/19/15 06:50 AM | link | filter

Leonard Hevia wrote: Also, if Erdnase used "E.S. Andrews" as his cover name when he dealt with McKinney, Smith, the bank, and possibly Drake, as David Alexander has suggested, wouldn't that have made that name just a red herring and not really a rumor? Assuming that "E.S. Andrews" is not the true name of Erdnase. Why would Erdnase reveal his true name to all or some of these individuals/entities and create a weak link in the chain?
cheque from somebody calling himself 'Erdnase'?

I also agree with Chris that "E.S. Andrews" was likely all that the elder Drake ever really knew. Drake may have parsed it out himself and read "Erdnase" backwards, assuming he never met Erdnase posing as E.S. Andrews. When Sprong pestered the elder Drake for information, Drake may have gone along for the ride and mentioned something about not betraying any confidences.

I suspect that Drake knew all along who the author was but would tell Sprong only that it was Andrews spelt backwards. He had obviously given his word that he would say no more. It seems to me that quite a few of the author's friends MUST have known who it was, but they also did not betray his confidence.

Don't you think it's nice that some people can keep a secret when asked to?

Peter Zenner

Jonathan Townsend | 08/19/15 08:06 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: ...According to Vernon (see The Vernon Touch, p. 99), "[Sprong] said he found out from Drake, who was one of the later publishers of Erdnase, that Erdnase is Andrews spelled all mixed up. His real name was Andrews. I asked Mr. Drake who this fellow Andrews was, and he said he was sorry, he couldn’t tell me. So I went back there religiously for months and kept badgering the old man to tell me something about this Andrews. He said he couldn’t betray a confidence and couldn’t tell anything about Andrews."...

Odd for Vernon to use that phrasing rather than "backward" and "reversed". Similarly the "betray a confidence" reads as another wink.

"... in publishing this book" - but not in writing? Something about insufferable conceit.

Lybrary | 08/19/15 09:22 AM | link | filter

Jason England wrote: Therefore, I'd bet money he read the cheating books of the day including Green's various (but all similar) works, Evans' How Gamblers Win, Sharps and Flats, Fools of Fortune and the various chapters on cheating that appear in many of the otherwise pedestrian poker books of
general agreement that Erdnase did read the available gambling and magic literature of his time.

With that in mind consider now that we know from Jay Marshall that there were several other gambling books with the Edward Gallaway bookplate. We don’t know which books these were but we know there were several. We also know at least one of these was EATCT. That means we know a lot more about Gallaway’s interest in gambling and advantage card play than we know about ES Andrews or WE Sanders interest in these subject matters. That to me puts Gallaway much closer at cheating with cards than Sanders or Andrews.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/19/15 09:29 AM | link | filter

The erdnase text does appear informed by available literature of the time.

Having a common book of the time in ones library is not so much evidence of authorship as willingness to have the book on the shelf and some need to mark up ones books.

Lybrary | 08/19/15 09:56 AM | link | filter

Jonathan Townsend wrote: The erdnase text does appear informed by available literature of the time.

Having a common book of the time in ones library is not so much evidence of authorship as willingness to have the book on the shelf and some need to mark up ones books.

Jonathan, I am simply arguing that we can say that Gallaway had an interest in gambling and advantage card play, because we know he owned gambling books as well as EATCT. Do you agree?

Jonathan Townsend | 08/19/15 10:52 AM | link | filter

What do we really about the person whose name is on a bookplate based upon some sample of found books with his bookplates? That’s a research question with some avenues for statistics. Has this work been done?

@Chris, Galloway is an interesting candidate for author of the erdnase text. Fine. Keep building that case based on his known authored texts. That avenue introduces some questions including: Why leave around old research materials? Especially if the
lybrary wrote: I am simply arguing that we can say that Galloway had an interest in gambling and advantage card play, because we know he owned gambling books as well as EATCT. Do you agree?

That hypothesized "interest" could be anything from "had some remaindered books" to "studiously acquired the literature" - and to get a sense of that we'd need to know if his collection was more or less than the average guy who put bookplates in his books at the time in that area. Today folks buy old books by the yard to decorate shelves. Not everyone was a Thomas Jefferson.

Maybe he was given the gaming books by a prior owner? Maybe he was an organizer of the local underground gaming club? Maybe he was a wannabe advantage player? Maybe, maybe, maybe - which is fine for the fiction writer though not so good for the historian. Bravo for finding the artifacts. Let the artifacts speak for the world which created them.

lybrary | 08/19/15 12:17 PM | link | filter

Jonathan, these are all fair points, but we can't even say that much about ES Andrews or WE Sanders. We also know that Gallaway was an enthusiastic reader. After all he initiated two lending libraries in 1907 so that others less fortunate than him have books to read. With this it is not a bad assumption that he actually read the gambling books in his library. And thus it is not a bad assumption that he had an interest in card advantage play. Not a certainty, but quite possible.

mam | 08/19/15 01:04 PM | link | filter

Zenner wrote: It was interesting to note a couple of addresses in the McKinney Bankruptcy Files. Frederick J. Drake's business was at 356 Dearborn Street and Harry S. Thompson was based at Philip Ruxton Inks of 357 Dearborn Street.

Could someone point me to where in the bankruptcy files we get this address? Because all other sources I've found (e.g. books published by Drake) places his business at Wabash Avenue.

Richard Hatch | 08/19/15 01:10 PM | link | filter

Brad Jeffer wrote: I'm beginning to understand ...
This is not a "rumor". S. W. Erdnase does spell backwards to "E. S. Andrews". The rumor is that this has something to do with the author's identity.

In that regard, Rullman's name has several times been invoked in support of that theory, but I would say this support is very weak at best. Rullman first mentions the Andrews theory in the November 1928: Sphinx, Books of Yesterday by Leo Rullman:

In this connection we must not forget that excellent treatise by W. [sic] S. Erdnase (E. S. Andrews), “The Expert at the Card Table,” being an exposition of artifice, ruse and subterfuge at the gambling table. The original cloth is very scarce, but it is published in paper-back form at the present time.

He comes back to this topic in the February 1929 issue: Sphinx, Books of Yesterday by Leo Rullman:

The most mysterious figure in the realm of magical literature, whose one contribution to the subject is still, after 25 years, one of the classics, is S. W. Erdnase, author of “The Expert at the Card Table”. No other work, in my opinion, packs so much concrete information of use to the manipulator of cards, as this little volume. Who was S. W. Erdnase? Very little practical information concerning him is available. The magicians do not know him. The publishers of the book have not been in touch with him for many years, as the copyright was purchased outright, and no royalties figured in the transaction. It has been said that his real name was E. S. Andrews, which in reverse order produces the pen-name under which he wrote...

Rullman was intimately connected with the magic community for many years, both fraternally and as a dealer in magic books, so when he says "magicians do not know him" I think that carries some weight. I also do not think that he would simply make up the statement about the then current publishers (Drake) not having been in touch with the author for years. I assume he must have received this information in correspondence with the publishers. It would be nice to find that correspondence in a collection somewhere! But it seems that his citing of the Andrews theory is simply based on the reverse reading, not some insider knowledge.

Leonard Hevia | 08/19/15 01:15 PM | link | filter

Zenner wrote: Everybody's going around in circles again, Leonard. The name that 'Erdnase' was using was 'E.C. Andrews' and that is the name that appears in the McKinney Bankruptcy Files. That would also have been the name on Smith's cheque - would you accept a cheque from somebody calling himself 'Erdnase'?
Going around in circles is not necessarily a bad thing. It can serve as a refresher to keep in mind the history of this story. I take it you have seen Smith’s cancelled check and know for certain that Erdnase signed it **E.C. Andrews**?

I suspect that Drake knew all along who the author was but would tell Sprong only that it was Andrews spelt backwards. He had obviously given his word that he would say no more. It seems to me that quite a few of the author’s friends **MUST** have known who it was, but they also did not betray his confidence.

Don’t you think it’s nice that some people can keep a secret when asked to?

**Peter Zenner**

All we have is Sprong telling Vernon that Drake clammed up and wouldn’t talk. But why did Drake tell Sprong that it’s Andrews spelled backwards? I can think of only three reasons:

1. Drake parsed it out for himself or someone pointed it out to him.
2. Erdnase went around town as E.S. Andrews and possibly ran into Drake somewhere, or into other people who told Drake they ran into a Mr. E.S. Andrews.
3. Erdnase shared with him his true identity, or someone else did. That would have been foolish of Erdnase to create a weak link. Secrets can sometimes inadvertently slip out, even by those who are careful.

*lybrary wrote:* With that in mind consider now that we know from Jay Marshall that there were several other gambling books with the Edward Gallaway bookplate. We don’t know which books these were but we know there were several. We also know at least one of these was EATCT. That means we know a lot more about Gallaway’s interest in gambling and advantage card play than we know about ES Andrews or WE Sanders interest in these subject matters. That to me puts Gallaway much closer at cheating with cards than Sanders or Andrews.

E. S. Andrews and W. E. Sanders had cards in their hands. Sanders purchased a number of decks in bulk. Laymen don’t purchase decks of cards in bulk unless they are serious card players and/or magicians.
mostly I love it because every post serves as a reminder that when it comes to the identity of Erdnase, everybody’s in the same boat. Nobody knows.

Another fun find, the H. C. Evans catalogs from 1909 and 1929. The former does not have EATCT in it, but the latter does at page 20.

_Leonard Hevia wrote:_ E. S. Andrews and W. E. Sanders had cards in their hands. Sanders purchased a number of decks in bulk. Laymen don’t purchase decks of cards in bulk unless they are serious card players and/or magicians.

Leonard, I could now use the same criticism that was rendered against my gambling book argument for Gallaway, to argue against this. So here it goes. Owning decks of cards doesn’t mean Sanders was a gambler or magician. Maybe he was a card collector. Or maybe he bought them as a gift for somebody who liked to play cards. Or maybe he is like me and uses them as bookmarks. Or maybe his wife did decorations with them. Just owning them doesn’t mean you use them to play or gamble or do magic. Right?

_mam wrote:_

Zenner wrote: It was interesting to note a couple of addresses in the McKinney Bankruptcy Files. Frederick J. Drake’s business was at 356 Dearborn Street and Harry S. Thompson was based at Philip Ruxton Inks of 357 Dearborn Street.

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I see it here: [http://askalexander.org/display/66796/M...esource/93](http://askalexander.org/display/66796/M...esource/93)

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Precisely. And just owning books on gambling doesn't make Gallaway any closer to being Erdnase than either of these two gentlemen, as you stated earlier. On that note, I don't believe Sanders was married yet when he purchased those decks, so those decks were not for decorative purposes for a non existent wife. He purchased those decks prior to a trip where he would have some idle time in front of a campfire. A good time and place to practice cutting and shuffling a deck of cards.

Joe Pecore wrote:

mam wrote:

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I see it here: http://askalexander.org/display/66796/M ... esource/93

Great, thanks a lot!

Leonard Hevia wrote: He purchased those decks prior to a trip where he would have some idle time in front of a campfire. A good time and place to
Leo Garet wrote: ... But mostly I love it because every post serves as a reminder that when it comes to the identity of Erdnase, everybody’s in the same boat. Nobody knows.

I like seeing the research efforts. Kudos to those who bring in the data. Be it maps, papers, books, snipits from magazines ... it helps!

Leonard Hevia wrote: Precisely. And just owning books on gambling doesn’t make Gallaway any closer to being Erdnase than either of these two gentlemen, as you stated earlier.

But many have argued that the fact that Sanders had the decks on his packing list makes him a stronger candidate. And that only makes him a card player. Half the nation played cards back then. Owning a book on card advantage play brings you much closer to being Erdnase than just playing cards. A lot fewer folks were card cheats or even just interested in cheating with cards than played cards.

@Chris, some may be making a case for a candidate. Not sure any are making a serious scholarly claim that would make it into history journals.

Owning a book or pack of cards in a town that had gaming clubs ... not so significant IMHO. Where anyone could have been the author it matters how much more likely one particular person seems. For example the writing style would also have to show as a closer match than random samples of ballyhoo and exposition written at the time.

In our craft we risk losing the distinction between selling a trick to audiences in a show and making a case or claim among peers - perhaps leading to unintentional comic results.

Today’s Erdnase non-Clue: The illustrator did it in the hotel room with a mirror.

Who thinks Erdnase is witty? Tom Sawyer addresses this subject in his latest blog post https://erdnasequest.wordpress.com/ So I wanted to pose that question to the readers.
Definitely witty, in my opinion.

On something else, what do you think of the following passage, in regards to similarity with EATCT language:

In arranging this little volume the author has been prompted by gratitude for past favors, and a desire to fill a long felt want, without expectation, however, that these few leaves, penned with that which can be obtained in Terpsichore's vineyard, by penetrating every accessible recourse, and a compilation from the most able writers on the subject, together with original matter, can fill the entire niche in Terpsichore's temple.

At your feet, generous votaries of Terpsichore, is thrown the author's petit bouquet, many buds of which have been gathered through long years of unremitting toil in the chosen profession. If their tints have been blended not to harmonize at all times, your kind forbearance and pardon is asked.

Richard Kaufman wrote:
This book?  
http://www.amazon.com/Complete-Quadrill ... 1330461479

Perhaps we have a square dancing card cheat?

Yes, that's right. It is another book published by Drake in 1902, I wanted to test it on the readers here. Because I find the tone similar to the intro of EATCT but that would for me not equal that they have the same author, but rather that this tone is more common than one would first think, meaning that similarity between "Estimating for printers" by Gallaway and EATCT might be equally coincidental.  
At first I had hoped for A. C. Wirth to be a pseudonym as well, but it seems like that was the real name of the author and that he existed. That said, the traces of him are very few, and being member of the National Association of Teachers of Dancing in
But these are probably flukes upon flukes.

**mam** | 08/19/15 05:56 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

That, and of course that Erdnase violates many of the rules of "Etiquette for Ball and Drawing Room"!

Avoid slang phrases.

Do not contradict.

Give your opinions, but do not argue them.

**Richard Kaufman** | 08/19/15 06:25 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

A fluke is a fish.

**mam** | 08/19/15 06:39 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* A fluke is a fish.

I do not know what to make of this.

**Jonathan Townsend** | 08/19/15 07:55 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*mam wrote:*

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* A fluke is a fish.

I do not know what to make of this.

Maybe it's like that pick a color trick?

Flatworm, part of an anchor, lucky stroke in billiards, tail of a whale...?

Pick one, remember it and put it back in the dictionary. Multiple outs after they say which one (envelope, pencil, wallet...)

**observer** | 08/19/15 08:16 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)
Richard Kaufman wrote:

At first I had hoped for A. C. Wirth to be a pseudonym as well,

But these are probably flukes upon flukes.

Ira Cwth? Hey, it’s possible - w is a vowel in Welsh.

And whales have flukes ....

Roger M. | 08/19/15 09:39 PM | link | filter

As to buying decks of cards in bulk.

The concept of buying decks of cards in bulk is alien to all but gamblers and magicians.

Nobody here has any valid perspective on there being any other reason ... simply because this is the Genii Forum, and "you’re" posting here

Brad Jeffers | 08/19/15 10:32 PM | link | filter

Richard Hatch wrote:

Brad Jeffers wrote: I’m beginning to understand ... 
It was Drake who started a rumor that S.W.Erdnase spelled backwards is E.S.Andrews.

This is not a "rumor". S. W. Erdnase does spell backwards to "E. S. Andrews". The rumor is that this has something to do with the author’s identity.

I was being facetious.

The certitude that S.W.Erdnase spelled backward is E.S.Andrews is the single most intriguing fact in a case where speculations outnumber facts by a wide margin.

Brad Jeffers | 08/19/15 10:36 PM | link | filter

This search for the identity of Erdnase is for sure my favorite parlor game.

I like it better than Pictionary.
Jonathan Townsend wrote:

Leo Garet wrote: ... But mostly I love it because every post serves as a reminder that when it comes to the identity of Erdnase, everybody's in the same boat. Nobody knows.

I like seeing the research efforts. Kudos to those who bring in the data. Be it maps, papers, books, snipits from magazines ... it helps!

I'm not sure why you carved up (sorry, edited) my original very short post, but I did say there were “more than several reasons” why I love this thread. The bits and bobs you mention are among the “several”. Keep it coming.

mam | 08/20/15 05:32 AM | link | filter

How common do you think the (mis)spelling "slight-of-hand" was in 1902?

I have not found this spelling in How Gamblers Win, Magic; stage illusions etc., New Era Card Tricks, Our Magic, or Sleight of Hand.

I have however found it in EATCT and in the weird quadrille book, in the advert for Roterberg's Card tricks and how to do them.

Tom Sawyer | 08/20/15 06:17 AM | link | filter

I believe that Bill Mullins addressed that general topic in some depth in this post: Link.

lybrary | 08/20/15 06:47 AM | link | filter

Could also be an error the typesetter introduced. I am counting 88 instances of slight, slightly, slightest, etc. With so many 'slight' word occurrences it is easily possible for a typesetter to make this kind of error.

My overall impression from these and other little errors here and there is that the book was not as thoroughly checked and proofed as other books. I therefore believe the assumption that somebody like Gallaway ran this book on the side through McKinney’s print shop, rather than an official print job, is more likely.

mam | 08/20/15 07:23 AM | link | filter

Tom Sawyer wrote: I believe that Bill Mullins addressed that general topic in
Beyond simple linguistic metrics:

Here is an interesting comment from one of my email exchanges with Olsson. He writes:

"Estimating for Printers:
...not padded with ponderous editorial homilies...
...platitudinous dissertations...

"Expert at the Card Table":
...the writer uses no sophistry as an excuse for its existence...
...whining, mealy-mouthed pretensions of piety...

Note how both sets of phrases are about the plain practicalities of the respective art being described, yet do so in a fairly ornate way; that is a kind of extra-textual cohesiveness.

Yet another aspect how similar the writings of Erdnase and Gallaway are. We also noted that both Erdnase and Gallaway seem to like phrases with words that predominantly start with the same character. Gallaway: "...Padded with Ponderous...Platitudinous..." Erdnase: "...Mealy-Mouthe Pretensions of Piety..."

Certainly aspects to explore in more depth.

I’ll tell you one thing about that book I am quite sure the author was not a card shark as he claimed. He was a magician pretending to be a card sharp.

I have come across many scoundrels in my time as, shall we say, part of the social circles I have moved in. Naturally I would come across REAL card sharps occasionally who did it for a living. They would only know one or two moves at the most and would do them quite crudely but enough to get away with it. And they would hardly be called literary giants.

Whoever wrote that book was NOT a gambler! Too many fancy moves and too much encyclopediac knowledge for that. All those moves would be quite unnecessary for a gambler. And too well written. I would have sworn Vernon had written it if he wasn’t
written by someone else and keeping it secret all these years.

But of course I am talking nonsense. It can’t be Vernon. Or can it? Maybe a clever magician can make dates disappear. There. I always wanted to spread a conspiracy theory.

But to be serious I do think you should not be looking for a gambler or even a printer. You should be looking at those who were the skilled card magicians of the day. And I mean VERY skilled! Those moves were very advanced for the day. Very few people would have known all about them. That should narrow the search down.

Look for a skilled card magician, NOT a gambler.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/20/15 09:46 AM | link | filter

Not sure what the author meant by post-graduate course when the basics and criteria for graduating are left unstated.

Jonathan Townsend wrote: Not sure what the author meant by post-graduate course when the basics and criteria for graduating are left unstated.

Jonathan, don’t get me wrong, but some of your questions are utterly strange, perhaps even naive, or maybe I just don’t get what you are asking. Why would somebody use a term like ‘post-graduate’? Well, perhaps to express that it is more advanced than the average text. It doesn’t require a definition by the author.

Jonathan Townsend | 08/20/15 10:54 AM | link | filter

ah the calendar of slights ...

"... enable the skilled in deception to take a post-graduate course in the highest and most artistic branches of his vocation."

Presupposing a Hogwarts diploma? It’s not his opposition to the established approach of being prepared and rehearsed to suit the occasion but the claim of somehow advancing the art at the expense of so much of the craft. The audience is not supposed to see the methods. Consider that the one person using the palaver as provided for the queens trick also makes use of the technology previously demonstrated by Hofzinser.
How common do you think the (mis)spelling "slight-of-hand" was in 1902?

I have not found this spelling in How Gamblers Win, Magic; stage illusions etc., New Era Card Tricks, Our Magic, or Sleight of Hand.

I have however found it in EATCT and in the weird quadrille book, in the advert for Roterberg's Card tricks and how to do them.

"Slight of hand" wasn't common by 1902, but neither was it completely unknown. You can find examples of it being used in Mahatma, Stanyon's Magic and the Sphinx.

We also noted that both Erdnase and Gallaway seem to like phrases with words that predominantly start with the same character. Gallaway: "...Padded with Ponderous...Platitudinous..." Erdnase: "...Mealy-Mouthed Pretensions of Piety..." Certainly aspects to explore in more depth.

The fact that two writers had certain stylistic devices in common doesn't really tell us much without some sort of context (the same argument I was making about four word phrases, and sure enough, analysis of other books showed that it wasn't really that distinctive). Alliteration is a fairly common linguistic tool (see: E. A. Poe, "The Raven," "The Bells," "Annabel Lee"; "Peter Piper picked . . . "; any junior high school English class) -- how much was it used by other authors of the time? Was it consistently used by Gallaway in his other books?

For example, Roterberg's Preface in New Era Card Tricks uses "fascinating field" and "special study," and his Introduction uses "conjurer with cards," "degree of dexterity," "technically termed". All that on the first two textual pages of the book.

@Bill: And that is why I wrote "Certainly aspects to explore in more depth." Since you didn't criticize the other main part of my post, the extra-textual cohesiveness, I assume you agree with it.
analogy ... which may form a distance metric and basis for arguing that two texts have the same author. Arguing by or from intuition is about like disputing tastes - obvious to one and meaningless to many. Folks are still arguing about whether Paine's words influenced our Declaration of Independence.

On the gossip side: we don't have a "he told us not to discuss his identity" or "we agreed not to discuss authorship of that book" type quote.. so far.

@Chris, I applaud your finding sample texts from another author which you find similar to the erdnase text. Writing takes practice. The guy who wrote the text must be out there somewhere in the literary record. Earlier texts from another field would weigh more strongly as they are less likely the post hoc of something proctored. (the author of the later work had read erdnase and was therefore more likely to use word constructions found in that text)

**Tom Sawyer** | 08/20/15 04:08 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Jonathan, true about intuition, but I think that for some people that intuition as to Erdnase is *possibly* something more -- it's *potentially* based on a deep familiarity with the Erdnase text and *also* with texts being compared to it.

But I am not sure that anyone has that kind of familiarity with the other texts. And even as to Erdnase, the kind of familiarity I am talking about requires more than having read Erdnase many times. Some people get A's in their English literature classes and others, C's and F's.

--Tom

**lybrary** | 08/20/15 04:33 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Jonathan Townsend wrote:* (the author of the later work had read erdnase and was therefore more likely to use word constructions found in that text)

Jonathan, so you agree that Gallaway read, studied and absorbed EATCT, and therefore had an interest in card advantage play?

**Bill Mullins** | 08/20/15 05:02 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*lybrary wrote:* Since you didn’t criticize the other main part of my post, the extra-textual cohesiveness, I assume you agree with it.
Bill Mullins wrote:

lybrary wrote: Since you didn't criticize the other main part of my post, the extra-textual cohesiveness, I assume you agree with it.

Bad assumption. Not the first one you’ve made, lately.

Then you are starting to get lazy. In the past you didn't miss such opportunities. BTW, are you one of those who think Erdnase is witty?

Bob Coyne | 08/20/15 08:56 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: Beyond simple linguistic metrics:

Yet another aspect how similar the writings of Erdnase and Gallaway are. We also noted that both Erdnase and Gallaway seem to like phrases with words that predominantly start with the same character. Gallaway: "...Padded with Ponderous...Platitudinous..." Erdnase: "...Mealy-Mouthed Pretensions of Piety..." Certainly aspects to explore in more depth.

I've read a bit more of Gallaway and I keep tripping over very awkwardly composed sentences...sounds nothing like Erdnase (unlike Sanders who sounds exactly like him). Here's a sampling from Gallaway. Do you really think Erdnase writes this poorly?

- A careful study of the diagrams, supplemented with a little practice in folding sheets of paper, will soon master the difficulty of estimating work where the quantity on the job would warrant printing in gangs in order to cut labor costs in both pressroom and bindery.

- It contains 120 pages and every page is packed with information which is expressed in print-shop English and which will be of help to the printer who is endowed with good, common, every-day horse sense.

- the pertinency of this statement will be better understood when one appreciates that the very first problem...

- of course, it is always better to print sheetwise, the reasons for which will be given later on.

- the subject will be gone into thoroughly as it has a bearing on make-ready time...
the forms for the press.

- the advantage which a knowledge of imposition gives the estimator not only asserts itself on book layout, but it is also evident on nearly all jobs which run into moderate quantities or which might be combined with other jobs of the same character.

- further, it keeps the estimator always on the alert for possibilities in the saving of paper stock by making other than straight cuts on the stock.

- merely to show how a saving in both stock and presswork can be effected on many jobs, a number of problems will be given and then worked out.

- by this proceeding he will better visualize just what he is doing.

**Bill Mullins** | 08/20/15 10:14 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*lybrary wrote:* BTW, are you one of those who think Erdnase is witty?

I’d say more that he was droll, or amusing; but I can see why others would say witty. The pun on p 111, the "needs the money" line, some of his imagery, the excesses of his patter, all indicate to me that he has a dry sense of humor.

**Jonathan Townsend** | 08/20/15 10:24 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

You’re on the way to making a good case. Looking for meaningful measures is a big step toward credible argument. It’s like the mysteries where a set of footprints vanishes in the middle of a field. Look at the footprints – shoe sizes and shoes of the suspects

*lybrary wrote:* you agree that Gallaway read, studied and absorbed EATCT, and therefore had an interest in card advantage play?

A weak conditional on that - ie he may have read the erdnase text. Maybe he got it much later? Maybe it sat on the shelf unread? Are there marginalia in his handwriting? Studied - need evidence. Interest... also need evidence.

On the formal writing metrics you’d want to find writing published before 1901 with similar structures and phrasing. After 1901 and you get much more post hoc ergo proctor hoc noise in your statistics. If you find one author who is a close match - then you can expect time to factor into the ANOVA.
Jonathan Townsend wrote: You're on the way to making a good case. Looking for meaningful measures is a big step toward credible argument. It's like the mysteries where a set of footprints vanishes in the middle of a field. Look at the footprints - shoe sizes and shoes of the suspects

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On the formal writing metrics you'd want to find writing published before 1901 with similar structures and phrasing. After 1901 and you get much more post hoc ergo proctor hoc noise in your statistics. If you find one author who is a close match - then you can expect time to factor into the ANOVA.

Jonathan, if you argue that Gallaway uses similar phrases from EATCT but he is not the author, then you would have to admit that he must have read it. And actually to absorb phrases to use 25 years later he must have almost religiously read and studied the book. I am simply demonstrating that your argumentation is inconsistent. You can either explain the similarity with him being the author of both books. Or with him being the author of the later book and having absorbed, meaning read in detail, the earlier one. No?

Roger M. | 08/21/15 01:12 AM | link | filter

I probably have 50 or so books in my library that, for various and sundry reasons I’ve never read, or even opened the cover of.

I'm quite sure I'm not alone in owning books but not having read them.

That Gallaway owned a copy of EATCT, and that it was printed at his workplace ... does not (to me) indicate that he wrote it, that he was particularly interested in the subject matter, or was otherwise associated with the book Beyond simply owning a copy.

He could have picked it up from the pile of recently printed copies on the way home.
Indeed it would seem to me to be far more likely that Gallaway would have a copy as the man who may have run the printing press responsible for printing the book than it would for any of the other 1000 (or whatever one considers the print run to have been) other eventual owners of the book.

That Gallaway owned a copy remains worthy of interest and further investigation, but beyond that it seems leaps of faith rephrased and repeated.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 08/21/15 04:40 AM | link | filter

To me, one complicating factor is that *The Man Who Was Erdnase* (on pages 57 and 390) made a semi-big deal about Edward Galloway being interested in gambling and having multiple gambling books in his collection. This is especially so in the third full paragraph of page 57.

It is not especially solid evidence, but it is something.

I am still trying to figure out how the various facts (some rather thinly proven) relate to each other and what they add up to.

However, I do get that probably a lot of people do not attach much importance to the bookplate evidence.

--Tom Sawyer

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**lybrary** | 08/21/15 06:57 AM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote: ... or perhaps as a gift to a card playing friend, a gift he never gave.

Yeah right, and before he intends to give it as gift he quickly glues in his bookplate. The fact that Gallaway had several other gambling books in his library strongly suggests he was interested in gambling. That is the only sensible conclusion one can draw. Other scenarios are of course theoretically possible but highly unlikely. People generally do not fill up their homes with books they have no interest in, or glue their bookplate into books they intend to give away.

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**Zenner** | 08/21/15 07:47 AM | link | filter

Leonard Hevia wrote:
Going around in circles is not necessarily a bad thing. It can serve as a refresher to keep in mind the history of this story. I take it you have seen Smith's cancelled check and know for certain that Erdnase signed it E.C. Andrews?

Have you been through the McKinney Bankruptcy Files, Leonard?

Erdnase did business with McKinney - the firm was his contact address and Adrian Plate purchased his copy of *The Expert* from McKinney. O.K.?

Only one Andrews appears as a creditor in those Bankruptcy Files and that is "E.C. Andrews". O.K.?

No other names that have been associated with 'Erdnase' appear as creditors in those files; Gallaway appears only as a former employee.

"E.C. Andrews" contracted with McKinney in August, 1902, to distribute his books, whatever they were. What other name would be on his cheques when McKinney paid him his share of the proceeds? Whether he was paying out or being paid, he was doing business as "E.C. Andrews".

"E.C. Andrews" spelt backwards = "S.W. Erdnace", which sounds very much like "S.W. Erdnase" to me. A coincidence? I don't think so...

As I have said before, I suspect that *The Expert* was going to be published as being by "E.C. Andrews" until the author realised that there might be repercussions as it was the real name of somebody else.

Double blind? Printer's error? I don't know.

Peter Zenner

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**lybrary** | 08/21/15 08:12 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Billy Mullins wrote:*

*lybrary wrote: BTW, are you one of those who think Erdnase is witty?*
imagery, the excesses of his patter, all indicate to me that he has a dry sense of humor.

Do you see Gallaway displaying any such sense of humor?

Leo Garet | 08/21/15 08:53 AM | link | filter

[quote="Jonathan Townsend Today's Erdnase non-Clue: The illustrator did it in the hotel room with a mirror.[/quote]
Now that does boggle the imagination. Was he by any chance ambidextrous?

Bob Coyne | 08/21/15 10:24 AM | link | filter

Zenner wrote:
Only one Andrews appears as a creditor in those Bankruptcy Files and that is "E.C. Andrews". O.K.?

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Double blind? Printer's error? I don't know.

Peter Zenner

I think the EC Andrews listing in the bankruptcy files is very interesting. But it's hard to see how it supports one candidate over another. It's also interesting how in one occurrence in the bankruptcy files, the one letter that differed from ES Andrews (the C vs the S) was hand-over-written from a B (?) to a C it seems. Also a strange coincidence and hard to interpret.
I've found the following seven occurrences of Andrews in the bankruptcy files, with page numbers in the Lybrary PDF in parentheses:

E. C. Andrews (where handwritten "C" replaces typed "B"). (p. 131)
E. C. Andrews (p. 139)
E. C. Andrews (p. 149)
E. C. Andrews (p. 150)
E. C. Andrews (p. 160)
E. C. Andrews (p. 169)
E. B. Andrews (p. 393)

Did I miss any?

mam | 08/21/15 11:37 AM | link | filter

E. C. Andrews is Emory Cobb Andrews who was a chemist and worked for (among others) Philip Ruxton and specialized in ink and its application. He must have been highly skilled since he wrote serialized articles later turned into books on the subject:

"Color and its distribution in printing. How to estimate ink"
https://archive.org/details/coloritsdistribu00andr

"Color and its application to printing"
https://archive.org/details/coloritsapplicat00andria

We've got another estimator on our hands

Also, from his obituary in the Psi Upsilon publication, he was a member of the Omega chapter (i.e. University of Chicago):

Emory Cobb Andrews, Omega '00

Emory Cobb Andrews, 54 years old, vice president of the International Printing Ink corporation died suddenly in his home at 785 Willow road, Winnetka, Illinois, on June 7, last. Brother Andrews had been in poor health for a long time.

Mr. Andrews was a member of the University, Cliff Dwellers, Vista del Lago, and Indian Hill clubs. He was well known in the printing field and had published many articles on color and its application to printing. He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Helen Andrews, and two sons, Robert and
Andrews?

I can't find out from the files in what sense Andrews was a creditor of McKinney, e.g. what the latter owed the former. Had it been book plates it would be very interesting, since we know the only "official" books by Andrews were published too late in time to have had their plates dealt with in the bankruptcy.

Edit: He died in June 1932 and was thus born in 1878, making him 24 years old in 1902. Too young.

MAM, EC Andrews makes a far less compelling case. Here are some of the main points:

- We don't know anything about what books and interests he had. With Gallaway we know he had several gambling books and he had a first edition of EATCT, and thus we can assume he had an interest in gambling and card advantage play.

- He did not self publish his books. Gallaway self-published his books, registered the copyright, and remarkably also prints the price on the cover page, which is very telling.

- He doesn't sound like Erdnase to me. Gallaway does not only sound like Erdnase to me, but an expert forensic linguist agrees, and there are many points one could mention which show that similarity. The use of the word subterfuge is one such surprising fact.

- Do we know anything about his physical appearance? Gallaway does fit Smith's description very well.

So yeah, Gallaway makes a lot better case than E C Andrews. However starting from a name in the bankruptcy file is a far more promising strategy then looking anywhere else.

We only know he played a whole lot of instruments (search for "emory cobb andrews")

I think the occurrence of "E. C. Andrews" in the bankruptcy files is a false lead. We
bankruptcy files, but because the name reversal theory is so deeply rooted, anyone looking for Erdnase will give it significance.

Leonard Hevia | 08/21/15 12:51 PM | link | filter

Zenner wrote: Only one Andrews appears as a creditor in those Bankruptcy Files and that is "E.C. Andrews". O.K.?

I don't know.

Peter Zenner

You are absolutely correct Mr. Zenner. Emory Cobb Andrews appears as a creditor in those bankruptcy files.

I also agree with your second assertion.

Bill Mullins | 08/21/15 04:35 PM | link | filter

mam wrote: We only know he played a whole lot of instruments (search for "emory cobb andrews")

Note that one of the professors at the Univ of Chicago at this time was Robert Andrews Millikan, whose name has previously been associated with Erdnase.

James De Witt Andrews was at the Univ of Chicago Law School during that era.

Here is the signature of E. C. Andrews.

Bill Mullins | 08/21/15 04:48 PM | link | filter

Zenner has used Thompson's relationship with E.C. Andrews as justification for using as a pseudonym a reversal of "E. S. Andrews". For Thompson to have done so presupposes that Thompson knew Andrews prior to Feb 1902. The only evidence that they did know each other was that they both worked for Ruxton, but this can only be documented years later.

I don't think that E. C. Andrews worked for Ruxton that early. The Alumni Register for the University of Chicago through July 1902, printed in 1903, says that Andrews worked for G. S. Refining Co. of Chicago.
lybrary wrote:

Bill Mullins wrote:

lybrary wrote: BTW, are you one of those who think Erdnase is witty?

I'd say more that he was droll, or amusing; but I can see why others would say witty. The pun on p 111, the "needs the money" line, some of his imagery, the excesses of his patter, all indicate to me that he has a dry sense of humor.

Do you see Gallaway displaying any such sense of humor?

Not really, but I haven't read Andrews's writings nearly as closely as I have Erdnase's. If you see anything funny, point it out.

Bob Coyne | 08/21/15 10:17 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: Here is the signature of E. C. Andrews.

hmmm that C in his signature looks more like an S to me.

Bill Mullins | 08/21/15 11:30 PM | link | filter

Bob Coyne wrote:

Bill Mullins wrote: Here is the signature of E. C. Andrews.

hmmm that C in his signature looks more like an S to me.

Ancestry.com has his WWI Draft Registration card and the signature on it looks pretty similar.

Someone upthread asked about his physical appearance; a 1901 passport application says he was 5'11-3/4" tall.

Tom Sawyer | 08/22/15 05:13 AM | link | filter

Concerning the book inscribed by E.C. Andrews, I perceive that the gentleman to whom the book is inscribed (Henry Turner Bailey) is mentioned by Andrews in his
Bob Coyne wrote:

*Bill Mullins wrote:* Here is the signature of E. C. Andrews.

hmmm that C in his signature looks more like an S to me.

Wow...I agree....is this the first instance of a signature that really does read like the reverse of SW Erdnase?

Also, isn’t the reversal of "EC Andrews" pronounced the more or less in the same way as "SW Erdnase"?

Leonard Hevia wrote:

*Zenner wrote:* Only one Andrews appears as a creditor in those Bankruptcy Files and that is "E.C. Andrews". O.K.?

I don't know.

Peter Zenner

You are absolutely correct Mr. Zenner. Emory Cobb Andrews appears as a creditor in those bankruptcy files.

I also agree with your second assertion.

You are seeing something that isn't there, Leonard. The name "E.C. Andrews" appears several times in those Files but there is absolutely no evidence that it was Emory Cobb Andrews.

That I do know.

Peter Zenner
hmmm that C in his signature looks more like an S to me.

Wow...I agree....is this the first instance of a signature that really does read like the reverse of SW Erdnase?

Quite weird seeing it there, isn't it?

Also, isn't the reversal of "EC Andrews" pronounced the more or less in the same way as "SW Erdnase"?

I have been pointing that out for well over a month now, Carlo. But those who wish not to see it will continue to turn a blind eye.

Peter Zenner

---

**Carlo Morpurgo** | 08/22/15 07:09 AM | link | filter

*Zenner wrote:*

*Carlo Morpurgo wrote:*

Also, isn't the reversal of "EC Andrews" pronounced the more or less in the same way as "SW Erdnase"?

I have been pointing that out for well over a month now, Carlo. But those who wish not to see it will continue to turn a blind eye.

Peter Zenner

Sorry....I missed it... I have been following on and off...more off than on to be honest

---

**lybrary** | 08/22/15 09:28 AM | link | filter

I mentioned earlier one cannot compare a signature with regular handwriting, because a signature is more like a drawing rather than regular handwriting. But since Bill Mullins made a comment that he thinks there is no way that Gallaway could have filled out the copyright form of EATCT, based on a comparison of the signature to the handwriting, I wanted to demonstrate that Gallaway could very well be the filler outer.
On the left you see the y from Gallaway's signature. On the right is the y from McKinney from the copyright form. Both are characters at the end of a name. To me they look very similar. With this I am NOT saying that this proves that this is Gallaway’s handwriting on the copyright application form. But I do claim that this leaves the possibility wide open that he may have filled it out after all.

Bill Mullins | 08/22/15 01:04 PM | link | filter

I think all you’ve show possible is that someone at McKinney filled out the form, left one letter off McKinney’s name, and got Edward Gallaway to come finish it.

Library | 08/22/15 01:35 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: I think all you’ve show possible is that someone at McKinney filled out the form, left one letter off McKinney’s name, and got Edward Gallaway to come finish it.

Doesn’t look like somebody added the y. But it is a start that you agree the y’s look the same.

Carlo Morpurgo | 08/22/15 02:31 PM | link | filter
than regular handwriting. But since Bill Mullins made a comment that he thinks there is no way that Gallaway could have filled out the copyright form of EATCT based on a comparison of the signature to the

On the left you see the y from Gallaway's signature. On the right is the y from McKinney from the copyright form. Both are characters at the end of a name. To me they look very similar. With this I am NOT saying that this proves that this is Gallaway's handwriting on the copyright application form. But I do claim that this leaves the possibility wide open that he may have filled it out after all.

Chris, which Gallaway signature are referring to? The one posted earlier in this forum?

Carlo Morpurgo wrote: Chris, which Gallaway signature are referring to? The one posted earlier in this forum?

No, a different one. I have more than one signature samples of him.

The "y's" don't look the same.
One has a rounded top, the other forms a loop at the top.

Folks who loop their up-strokes don't suddenly stop and round them off. The two share some similarities, but they are (IMO) not the same.

Zenner wrote: The name "E.C. Andrews" appears several times in those Files
Bill Mullins wrote: Note that one of the professors at the Univ of Chicago at this time was Robert Andrews Millikan, whose name has previously been associated with Erdnase.

I love that the referenced piece on Wikipedia was added on April Fools' Day in 2006.

Roger M. wrote: The "y's" don't look the same. One has a rounded top, the other forms a loop at the top.

Folks who loop their up-strokes don't suddenly stop and round them off. The two share some similarities, but they are (IMO) not the same.

I am not an expert just comparing images. But keep in mind that in the signature the y is preceded by an 'a' and in McKinney by an 'e' - two different characters which may explain why the beginning of the y looks slightly different. Also keep in mind these two samples have a 25 year gap between them. Handwriting can certainly change over that time period. But the end of the y, the upstroke and then the final downstroke look pretty much identical. Again, my purpose was to show that Bill Mullin's assertion that these cannot be the same is silly. There is certainly a possibility that they might come from the same person. We don't know and based on the information available to us we can't make a call either way.

mam wrote: To what accuracy do we know the date of M. D. Smith's meeting with Erdnase at the hotel?

Leonard Hevia wrote: To what accuracy do we know the date of M. D. Smith's meeting with Erdnase at the hotel?

According to David Alexander from his January 2000 Genii article:

Marshall Smith told Martin Gardner that the day he met Erdnase was "bitterly cold." Weather records for the November--December 1901, and January 1902 show the only cold snap occurred on December 14th where the temperature
day that approached this temperature was late in January 1902.

Hurt McDermott notes in *Artifice, Ruse and Subterfuge* that Smith remembers keeping his coat on while Erdnase did not.

**Tom Sawyer** | 08/22/15 07:46 PM | [link] | [filter]

The viability of a December 1901 date pretty much depends upon whether or not the date allowed Smith enough time to do the drawings. A great many ins and outs of this have been discussed on this thread.

**mam** | 08/22/15 08:09 PM | [link] | [filter]

I guess one could also look up in "Estimating for printers" by Gallaway roughly how much time would be needed to prepare the entire book for print from manuscript and illustrations, i.e. when the drawings would have to be done at the latest for the book to realistically be done in time for the copyright date it has. As said, roughly, but still some sort of indicator.

**mam** | 08/22/15 09:25 PM | [link] | [filter]

(Which has more or less already been done, I realize when reading the Genii article from 2000.)

**Richard Hatch** | 08/23/15 01:16 AM | [link] | [filter]

*mam wrote:* I've found the following seven occurrences of Andrews in the bankruptcy files, with page numbers in the Lybrary PDF in parentheses:

- E. C. Andrews (where handwritten "C" replaces typed "B"). (p. 131)
- E. C. Andrews (p. 139)
- E. C. Andrews (p. 149)
- E. C. Andrews (p. 150)
- E. C. Andrews (p. 160)
- E. C. Andrews (p. 169)
- E. B. Andrews (p. 393)

Did I miss any?

Yes, this misses what I believe to be the most important occurrence of "Andrews" in the bankruptcy files, from which all the above follow. It doesn't show up in OCR.
This is in the Debtor’s Petition of February 10, 1903 and I believe it predates the above references. I believe the above references were transcriptions from this document’s handwritten list of creditors. The document may also be seen here: http://askalexander.org/display/66804/M ... resource/9
The $3 debt is listed as being for "Goods sold and delivered"

Zenner | 08/23/15 07:05 AM | link | filter

mam wrote:

Zenner wrote: The name "E.C. Andrews" appears several times in those Files but there is absolutely no evidence that it was Emory Cobb Andrews.

But very, very, very, very likely.

Please explain why you wrote that.

"E.C. Andrews" contracted with McKinney’s in August, 1902, to supply and deliver his books. Emory Cobb Andrews was born on January 16, 1878, making him 24 at the time. What book could he have been associated with?

I maintain that "E.C. Andrews" was the pseudonym used by the author of The Expert in his business dealings regarding that book. The availability of the book was announced in the following month's Sphinx. I believe that he took the name from Emory Cobb Andrews and that in no way could the man in the Files be Emory himself.

Unless you can show me what Emory’s dealings with McKinney were for, of course.

Peter Zenner

Bill Mullins | 08/23/15 10:15 AM | link | filter

Zenner wrote: I maintain that "E.C. Andrews" was the pseudonym used by the author of The Expert in his business dealings regarding that book. . . . I believe that he took the name from Emory Cobb Andrews and that in no way could the man in the Files be Emory himself.

How did Thompson know Emory so that he would use his name in late 1901/early 1902?
the author of *The Expert* in his business dealings regarding that book... I believe that he took the name from Emory Cobb Andrews and that in no way could the man in the Files be Emory himself.

How did Thompson know Emory so that he would use his name in late 1901/early 1902?

*mam wrote*: To what accuracy do we know the date of M. D. Smith's meeting with Erdnase at the hotel?

Alexander pinned down a possible date in 1901 that the meeting could have happened, but it also could have happened in 1900 or 1899.

*lybrary wrote*: Another one of your outlandish explanations. But coming from somebody who does think Erdnase didn't read any gambling books it is not a surprise.

Of course I think Erdnase read gambling books. What I was addressing was your specific comment that "He writes so himself that he has pretty much read all the past literature both in magic and in gambling." He didn't make any such statement. And the gambling literature of the era, sparse though it is, has material that he didn't address, suggesting that he wasn't familiar with it. He knew about some of the gambling literature, but there's no reason to think he knew about all of it.

It's a fair read of his book that he had read much of the conjuring literature, but he doesn't say that he read the gambling literature. Jason England makes the argument that he did, but it is also just as likely that he had seen the touring "reformed gamblers" who made their living by speaking on the evils of gambling and demonstrating their methods, and knew of them and their methods from their shows. J. P. Quinn lived in Chicago and did his schtick there many times. Kid Royal also performed in Chicago often in the 1890s. Erdnase probably was familiar with both of them -- but he makes no claim that he read "pretty much" all of their writings.

What is outlandish is the idea that by finding one handwritten character from the hundred or so on the copyright application that is similar to one character in some unknown number of signatures is in any way evidence that the two things were written by the same person. One matched character doesn't outweigh 99 clearly different ones.

Obviously my suggestion that Gallaway wrote one letter on the application was ridiculous -- to emphasize how far out was your suggestion that, based on one
Zenner wrote:

mam wrote:

Zenner wrote: The name "E.C. Andrews" appears several times in those Files but there is absolutely no evidence that it was Emory Cobb Andrews.

But very, very, very, very likely.

Please explain why you wrote that.

Because I find it very, very, very, very likely that one "E. C. Andrews" found in the bankruptcy files of a printing house is a known "Emory Cobb Andrews" that worked for another printing house next doors during the same time period. If you disagree then I have no further comment on this.

Richard Hatch wrote: Yes, this misses what I believe to be the most important occurrence of "Andrews" in the bankruptcy files, from which all the above follow. It doesn’t show up in OCR searches, alas. It is on p. 627 of the lybrary PDF. I would characterize it as "E. ? Andrews" where the middle initial appears to be a capital "C" written over a capital "B". This is in the Debtor’s Petition of February 10, 1903 and I believe it predates the above references. I believe the above references were transcriptions from this document’s handwritten list of creditors. The document may also be seen here: http://askalexander.org/display/66804/M ... resource/9

The $3 debt is listed as being for "Goods sold and delivered"

What are the ledgers referenced in the first column? E.g. "1-429" for that entry.

Bill Mullins wrote: What is outlandish is the idea that by finding one handwritten character from the hundred or so on the copyright application that is similar to one character in some unknown number of signatures is in any way evidence that the two things were written by the same person. One matched character doesn’t outweigh 99 clearly different ones.
was ridiculous -- to emphasize how far out was your suggestion that, based on one "matching" letter, the two documents were from the same hand.

Which I clearly emphasized is NOT what I concluded. I simply concluded that the possibility does exist unlike your categorical denial of it. We don't know who filled out the form, but Gallaway can't be ruled out at this point. The similarity of the y opens this possibility.

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**Lybrary** | 08/23/15 12:08 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Bill Mullins wrote:* It's a fair read of his book that he had read much of the conjuring literature, but he doesn't say that he read the gambling literature.

Bill, you are not exhibiting a particularly large amount of common sense here. So if Erdnase, as we pretty much all agree including yourself, has read the magic literature of his time, why would he suddenly change behavior and not read about his other interest - gambling and card advantage play? Of course he would. He clearly was somebody who read extensively and also somebody who knew a lot about books in general, otherwise he would not have pursued a self-publishing route. His broad vocabulary and eloquence also underscore that he was widely read, not just in magic and gambling. So yes, he definitely also read the prevailing gambling literature. None of this excludes that he may have missed some of the more obscure publications, and nobody can say for sure if he indeed read everything under the sun in magic and gambling. But he definitely read most of the magic and gambling literature available at that time.

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**mam** | 08/23/15 01:36 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I'm trying to find a photo of Emory Cobb Andrews. There definitely is one in the Cap and Gown yearbooks from the University of Chicago, since he was member of a lot of clubs and many of them have group photos in there. But it's sometimes a bit hard to make out facial features from low-res scans of really old photos. These are four of reasonable quality, Andrews should be in most of them:

[https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... ews/01.jpg](https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... ews/01.jpg)
[https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... ews/02.jpg](https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... ews/02.jpg)
[https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... ews/03.jpg](https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... ews/03.jpg)
[https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... ews/04.jpg](https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... ews/04.jpg)

Can you spot him?
I found this photo of Emory Cobb Andrews:

https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... ews/05.jpg

It's from the playbook of the musical comedy "The academic alchemist".

Looking at that photo, I've come to the conclusion that these photos are of Andrews as well:

https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... ews/07.jpg
https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... ews/08.jpg

And maybe this one:

https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... ews/06.jpg

A funny coincidence by the way, guess what street he lived on?

Vernon Avenue

Jonathan Townsend | 08/23/15 04:48 PM | link | filter

Bravo on the findings. Even if he did write "purse" I'm gonna hold out for a little more evidence.

mam | 08/23/15 05:05 PM | link | filter

Interesting to note about Emory Cobb Andrews is that he did a lot of things: photography, etchings, played the mandolin, banjo and clarinet, and led the university orchestra, wrote plays and acted in them, editor on the yearbook, etc. as well of course being an expert chemist and skilled enough in this as applied to print technology to later having written books on the subjects of ink and color.

Bill Mullins | 08/23/15 11:28 PM | link | filter

mam wrote: I found this photo of Emory Cobb Andrews:

https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... ews/05.jpg

It's from the playbook of the musical comedy "The academic alchemist".
Andrews makes a better looking girl than some of his classmates.

Bill Mullins | 08/23/15 11:49 PM | link | filter

*lybrary* wrote:

*Bill Mullins* wrote: It’s a fair read of his book that he had read much of the conjuring literature, but he doesn’t say that he read the gambling literature.

Bill, you are not exhibiting a particularly large amount of common sense here. So if Erdnase, as we pretty much all agree including yourself, has read the magic literature of his time, why would he suddenly change behavior and not read about his other interest - gambling and card advantage play? Of course he would. He clearly was somebody who read extensively and also somebody who knew a lot about books in general, otherwise he would not have pursued a self-publishing route. His broad vocabulary and eloquence also underscore that he was widely read, not just in magic and gambling. So yes, he definitely also read the prevailing gambling literature. None of this excludes that he may have missed some of the more obscure publications, and nobody can say for sure if he indeed read everything under the sun in magic and gambling. But he definitely read most of the magic and gambling literature available at that time.

Chris -- re-read my posts. I believe he read gambling literature. I don’t see where he said "I read gambling literature."

Re-read your posts. You said "He writes so himself that he has pretty much read all the past literature both in magic and in gambling." He said something like that about magic, but not about gambling.

And it is of minor importance, and not something you and I should be disagreeing about in such depth. We should be disagreeing on whether Gallaway wrote EATCT (he didn’t).

mam | 08/24/15 03:43 AM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins* wrote: *Here* is the same picture, in the context of the play from which it was taken "The Deceitful Dean."
I'm currently trying to figure out who wrote this piece, as it uses the word "subterfuge".

**magicam** | 08/24/15 04:19 AM | link | filter

*DChung wrote:* … Moreover you completely sidestepped my question about what "strong possibility" means. …

Still waiting, Chris, for an answer to DChung’s reasonable – and quite pertinent – question. Perhaps it’s too much to demand a precise probability (e.g., 47.5%), but as an expert Dr. Olsson must surely be aware of the evidentiary vagueness/malleability of "strong possibility" – without clear context and explication, I find the weight of his expert opinion to be slight.

[As a general note, I thought DChung bent over backwards to be fair and clear with you on all his points, and sad to say, found your responses disappointing.]

**mam** | 08/24/15 04:43 AM | link | filter

Hey all,

I'm thinking about starting to put together a central repository of information/data/materials for everything related to Erdnase. It would basically be a page/website with all the people, locations, dates, etc. with links to documents, photos and so on, as well as all verified facts including their sources. Sort of a condensed view of everything we know at this point. And not trying to "build a case" for any specific candidate. The purpose would be to not having to hunt every piece of information down through this thread, books, magazines, etc. when looking for some fact or another.

Three questions:

1. Does anything like this already exist?
2. Would anyone other than me find it useful?
3. Would anyone be willing to help out building it?

**Zenner** | 08/24/15 06:44 AM | link | filter

*mam wrote:* Because I find it very, very, very, very likely that one "E. C. Andrews" found in the bankruptcy files of a printing house is a known "Emory Cobb Andrews" that worked for another printing house next doors
I have seen no evidence that Emory Cobb Andrews ever worked for a "printing house". He worked for Philip Ruxton Inks - a manufacturer of printing inks - and Ruxton's was listed separately as a creditor in the McKinney Bankruptcy Files. So please tell me why you are saying that McKinney would owe money to Emory. He can't have been at Ruxton's above a few months and yet you are saying that he himself had a separate contract with McKinney to supply and deliver his own goods.

I would dearly love to hear your comments on this, so please don't just dismiss me.

Peter Zenner

Joe Pecore | 08/24/15 06:49 AM | link | filter

mam wrote: Hey all,
I'm thinking about starting to put together a central repository of information/data/materials for everything related to Erdnase.

You can expand on http://geniimagazine.com/magicpedia/Erdnase and make whatever new pages needed. You can upload pictures, files, etc. I'll help if needed. We can make a specific Erdnase "category" to group them all together too.

lybrary | 08/24/15 07:31 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: I believe he read gambling literature.

Very well, then we are in basic agreement on this point. I would phrase it stronger, that he extensively read gambling literature, everything he could get his hands on, just as he did with magic literature. But if you do not want to go that far that is fine. Knowing that Erdnase was very well read in gambling, it is significant that we know that Gallaway had several gambling books in his library as well as a first edition of EATCT. When somebody has several books on the same subject it is a straight forward assumption that he must have had an interest in that subject.

Bill Mullins | 08/24/15 09:13 AM | link | filter

Zenner wrote: He can't have been at Ruxton's above a few months

So how did Thompson know him prior to Feb 1902, in order to use his name while dealing with McKinney?
not have pursued a self-publishing route.

You are drawing many conclusions from scant evidence, but this is one of the biggest leaps. Are there any reasons that one would self-publish rather than be published traditionally besides:
1. Traditional publishers won't take the book (thus the existence of vanity presses)
2. The author thinks he could make more money by publishing himself than by being traditionally published.

I have never heard of a case where someone self-published a book because they liked to read.

*lybrary wrote:*

*Bill Mullins wrote:* I believe he read gambling literature.

Very well, then we are in basic agreement on this point. I would phrase it stronger, that he extensively read gambling literature, everything he could get his hands on.

Yes, you could do that. And you may well be right. But there is absolutely no evidence to support going that far.

When somebody has several books on the same subject it is a straightforward assumption that he must have had an interest in that subject.

But that's all it is -- an assumption. I have more than several books on the following categories:

- magic
- gambling
- birds
- astronomy
- light houses
- Von Braun’s rocket team/Peenemuende
- telescope making
- comic books
- numismatics
- trading cards
- science fiction/horror criticism
American slang

(and that's just at home -- my technical library at work covers several more topics)

and I'm not so knowledgeable about any of those subjects that I could write a book as comprehensive as Erdnase's.

Gallaway had some gambling books. He likely was interested in the subject. Doesn't mean he knew enough about the subject to write his own book. Think about it -- most people who have a small (or large) collection of gambling books aren't competent to write one. Your own experience as a book dealer must bear this out.

**mam wrote:** Hey all,

I'm thinking about starting to put together a central repository of information/data/materials for everything related to Erdnase. It would basically be a page/website with all the people, locations, dates, etc. with links to documents, photos and so on, as well as all verified facts including their sources. Sort of a condensed view of everything we know at this point. And not trying to "build a case" for any specific candidate. The purpose would be to not having to hunt every piece of information down through this thread, books, magazines, etc. when looking for some fact or another.

Three questions:

1. Does anything like this already exist?
2. Would anyone other than me find it useful?
3. Would anyone be willing to help out building it?

I've got a ton of stuff like this on my own computer hard drive. But it wouldn't be appropriate to post it online because some of it is personal scanned copies of things that are still in copyright (magazine articles, books etc).

---

**Richard Hatch** | 08/24/15 10:03 AM | [link] | [filter]

**Zenner wrote:**

*mam wrote:* Because I find it very, very, very, very likely that one "E. C. Andrews" found in the bankruptcy files of a printing house...
period. If you disagree then I have no further comment on this.

I have seen no evidence that Emory Cobb Andrews ever worked for a "printing house". He worked for Philip Ruxton Inks - a manufacturer of printing inks - and Ruxton's was listed separately as a creditor in the McKinney Bankruptcy Files. So please tell me why you are saying that McKinney would owe money to Emory. He can't have been at Ruxton's above a few months and yet you are saying that he himself had a separate contract with McKinney to supply and deliver his own goods.

I would dearly love to hear your comments on this, so please don't just dismiss me.

Peter Zenner

According to the biographical information in the publisher's preface to his 1911 book, Color and its Application to Printing (available in Google books), after working as a de facto assistant instructor in Chemistry at the University of Chicago, he entered commercial life working for the Corn Products Refining Company before "connecting himself" with Ruxton. Though the exact time line is not given, it seems unlikely to me that he would have been at Ruxton during the period in question, when the author of the book was known to have been dealing with McKinney (Feb-March 1902).

Richard Hatch | 08/24/15 10:22 AM | link | filter

This is probably just a coincidence (!) but I post it here in case anyone sees fit to pursue it:

Emory Cobb Andrews' mother's maiden name appears to have been Cobb (Ellen Cobb Andrews, born July 11, 1847 in Ledyard, NY, died Sept 26, 1910 in Chicago), raising the possibility that he was related to Benjamin Franklin Cobb (born 1844) who wrote many books, including one published in Chicago in 1902 illustrated by.... Marshall D. Smith! (That would be Jack Henderson Down East).

Bill Mullins | 08/24/15 11:06 AM | link | filter

There's been a lot of information (all interesting) about Emory Cobb Andrews posted lately. I've posted some of it myself.

But no one here thinks he had anything to do with the writing, printing or publishing of Expert at the Card Table, do they?
lybrary wrote: [Gallaway] clearly was somebody who read extensively and also somebody who knew a lot about books in general, otherwise he would not have pursued a self-publishing route.

I have never heard of a case where someone self-published a book because they liked to read.

Bill, I think you can’t read. First, my comment was related to Erdnase not Gallaway as you injected above. So let me restate my argument. Somebody who chooses to self-publish, finds a printer, pays for the print run, hires an illustrator, and is comfortable to then sell and market his book is certainly somebody who is comfortable with the book creation process and the book trade in general. Yes, I do have a lot of experience dealing with authors and one of the primary reason they come to me is because many have little idea how to create, publish and market their book. They are perfectly qualified to write it and can do that easily, but stuff that comes after writing is unfamiliar to them. That is why publishers do exist. The fact that Erdnase chose to self-publish demonstrates a certain familiarity with the book creation and publishing process.

Bill Mullins wrote:

lybrary wrote:

Bill Mullins wrote: I believe he read gambling literature.

Very well, then we are in basic agreement on this point. I would phrase it stronger, that he extensively read gambling literature, everything he could get his hands on.

Yes, you could do that. And you may well be right. But there is absolutely no evidence to support going that far.

Yes there is. Humans are creatures of habit. Since he describes his own extensive reading in magic it supports the fact that he most likely did the same in gambling, too. His book is about half on gambling related stuff and half on magic related stuff. These two subjects seem to be of about equal interest to him. All of this suggests that he did do as much extensive reading on gambling as he did on magic. Actually you could argue that the gambling side is a bit more important to him and thus he would have done at least as much research on gambling as he did on magic.

Bill Mullins wrote:
But that's all it is -- an assumption. I have more than several books on the following categories:

- magic
- gambling
- birds
- astronomy
- light houses
- Von Braun’s rocket team/Peenemuende
- telescope making
- comic books
- numismatics
- trading cards
- science fiction/horror criticism
- Tennessee history
- mental mathematics (a la Arthur Benjamin)
- recreational mathematics/puzzles
- American slang

(and that’s just at home -- my technical library at work covers several more topics)

and I’m not so knowledgeable about any of those subjects that I could write a book as comprehensive as Erdnase’s.

And that is all I am arguing right now. I am arguing Gallaway had an interest in gambling. This fact makes him a better Erdnase candidate than without it. Can you show even that much with ES Andrews or WE Sanders? Can you demonstrate that they had an interest in gambling? Gallaway had.

*Bill Mullins wrote:* Gallaway had some gambling books. He likely was interested in the subject.

Then we are in agreement. That is all I am trying to establish at this point. We have evidence that Gallaway had an interest in gambling. The fact that he had a copy of EATCT would allow us to go a step further and say he likely had an interest in card moves, too, but I am fine if some do not want to go that far. Gallaway’s interest in gambling is already a lot more than we can say of ES Andrews and WE Sanders on that subject.
else at the company handed him a copy one day in passing to, for example, look at the binding or the typesetting.

And, Chris, please maintain some decorum--which precludes telling Bill that he can’t read.

Zenner wrote: I have seen no evidence that Emory Cobb Andrews ever worked for a "printing house". He worked for Philip Ruxton Inks - a manufacturer of printing inks - and Ruxton's was listed separately as a creditor in the McKinney Bankruptcy Files. So please tell me why you are saying that McKinney would owe money to Emory. He can't have been at Ruxton's above a few months and yet you are saying that he himself had a separate contract with McKinney to supply and deliver his own goods.

Doesn't really matter if it's "printing house" or "printing supply house", since my point is that he worked in the center of all Chicago's printing business and it is no surprise to have him show up in McKinney records. I can come up with any number of reasons why McKinney owed him money, one for each potential "thing" or "service" they got from him but had not paid for yet, i.e. same as with everyone else in those files, per definition.

Where do you get the idea Andrews only worked a few months at Ruxton's? How did he end up second vice-president of the entire company in such short time?

Richard Kaufman wrote: The fact that Gallaway had a copy of any book from a company he may have worked for in any capacity means NOTHING. ZERO. Rather than assuming the book was in possession because he had some interest in it, it is just as easy to assume that someone else at the company handed him a copy one day in passing to, for example, look at the binding or the typesetting.

Richard you are forgetting that we know that he also had several other books on gambling. If it would be only EATCT then your argument would be stronger. But since he had several other books on gambling it does support the fact that he actually had an interest in that subject rather than an accidental ownership of the book. You yourself stated earlier that an employee of McKinney would pick up the book because he had an interest. What changed that you don't think this is a likely scenario?
That is a misrepresentation of my opinion. I don't look at such things lightly. It would deserve much stronger language in my opinion.

**mam**| 08/24/15 11:42 AM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:* There's been a lot of information (all interesting) about Emory Cobb Andrews posted lately. I’ve posted some of it myself.

But no one here thinks he had anything to do with the writing, printing or publishing of *Expert at the Card Table*, do they?

Not yet, at all, but for some reason I find him interesting enough to dig a bit more. He was at the right place (down to the block) at the right time and has a profile largely in tune with e.g. Alexander’s. However, as I wrote earlier, he's too young to have authored the book.

**Brad Jeffers**| 08/24/15 02:34 PM | link | filter

*Richard Kaufman wrote:* And, Chris, please maintain some decorum--which precludes telling Bill that he can't read.

Leave them alone.
I am enjoying the exchanges between Chris and Bill.

---

**Jane, you ignorant slut**

---
You've been making the argument for weeks that Gallaway was Erdnase. Are you backing off of that now? My work here is done . . .

I didn't mean to misrepresent your statement.

So let me restate my argument. Somebody who chooses to self-publish, finds a printer, pays for the print run, hires an illustrator, and is comfortable to then sell and market his book is certainly somebody who is comfortable with the book creation process and the book trade in general.

This isn't restating the old argument, it is making a new one. The old argument (the one you have been making, that I was responding to) was that Gallaway (when writing as Erdnase) was a book lover, therefore he would have been inclined to self-publish. (a conclusion that does not follow from the stated premise, BTW)

Yes, I do have a lot of experience dealing with authors and one of the primary reason they come to me is because many have little idea how to create, publish and market their book. They are perfectly qualified to write it and can do that easily, but stuff that comes after writing is unfamiliar to them.

The experience I was hoping you'd recall was that of a book dealer (see my post above, where I said "experience as a book dealer") selling to readers, not as a publisher. Just because a person has, or reads, a number of books on a subject does not mean that they could write on it. I think Expert is such a good book because the author brought his experience to the text, not his research and regurgitation of other gambling (and magic) books. If you want to convince me that Gallaway is Erdnase, show me that he gambled, not that he read about gambling.

**Bill Mullins wrote:**

*lybrary wrote:* Very well, then we are in basic agreement on this point. I would phrase it stronger, that he extensively read gambling literature, everything he could get his hands on.

Yes, you could do that. And you may well be right. But there is absolutely no evidence to support going that far.
same in gambling, too.

Anytime you say something is "most likely", you are offering opinion, not citing evidence. Give me one line from Expert that shows the author "pretty much read all the past literature . . . in gambling" and I'll back off from this.

His book is about half on gambling related stuff and half on magic related stuff. These two subjects seem to be of about equal interest to him.

If I were in a nit-picky mood, I’d point out that he wrote 40% more about gambling than he did about magic (116 pages vs 81), but I’m not . . .

And that is all I am arguing right now. I am arguing Gallaway had an interest in gambling. This fact makes him a better Erdnase candidate than without it. Can you show even that much with ES Andrews or WE Sanders? Can you demonstrate that they had an interest in gambling?

Marty’s Genii article on Sanders describes his gambling debts, the card games he played, and his trips to the Silver Bow, a gambling club.

Brad Jeffers wrote:

Richard Kaufman wrote: And, Chris, please maintain some decorum--which precludes telling Bill that he can’t read.

Leave them alone.
I am enjoying the exchanges between Chris and Bill.

It is reminiscent of the Point/Counterpoint exchanges between Dan Aykroyd and Jane Curtain.

A couple of folks have suggested that Chris is being rude to me -- so far, I have not been offended by anything he’s written (and to the extent I may have offended him, it was not my intention, and I apologize). I've had much worse things said about me on the internet (and probably have said worse myself). I’ve been online for quite a while and have a reasonably thick skin about such things. Chris and I are discussing ideas and the evidence behind them -- it isn’t personal. He is giving as good as he is getting. I hope, when this is all said and done, if we were to meet at a convention we could shake hands and have a beer. We continue to have emails off line which are much more collegial than some of the exchanges here.
Bill Mullins wrote: You've been making the argument for weeks that Gallaway was Erdnase. Are you backing off of that now? My work here is done . . .

Perhaps you didn't catch my drift. Yes, I am convinced that Gallaway is Erdnase, but what I have tried to establish over the last days is, to use a mathematical term, our largest common denominator. What can the anti-Gallaway folks and myself agree on? We already made a big step forward. We have established that you agree that: Gallaway was likely interested in gambling. I agree with this, you agree with this, perhaps others can agree with this, too.

Thanks for correcting me on Sanders. I am not an expert on him. So Sanders gambled. Good. That means more to me than his little magic trick in his notebook. What about ES Andrews? Anything we can say about gambling?

Bill Mullins wrote: I think Expert is such a good book because the author brought his experience to the text, not his research and regurgitation of other gambling (and magic) books. If you want to convince me that Gallaway is Erdnase, show me that he gambled, not that he read about gambling.

As I am sure you know a lot of expertise starts with an interest, then comes reading, then experimenting, and then perhaps innovating. Showing that Gallaway was interested in gambling, that he read about it is therefore the first step. Yes, it does not prove that he actually gambled or did any of the moves in EATCT, but it also does not exclude it. His interest in gambling makes him more likely Erdnase than having no interest in gambling. Do you agree?

Now that we have agreement on how to interpret the fact that he owned several gambling books, let's move on to the next set of evidence. Something new I am sure you will enjoy. Based on the feedback over the last days regarding if Erdnase is witty we received general confirmation that he is. Tom Sawyer calls it 'witticisms' in one of his blog posts. Bill Mullins commented "...I can see why others would say witty." MAM wrote: "Definitely witty, in my opinion." I also asked several people via email and they all agreed Erdnase is witty. See what I do? I like to be objective. I am not only stating my opinion. I am actually making an effort to check if my opinion is something others can agree with. I also think Erdnase is witty. Ok, so with Erdnase is witty in our mind please read this from a 1928 Inland Printer article:

"The addresses made for the occasion were masterly in every sense of the word; they fairly bristled with wit and sarcasm. Such a trio as Tom Quin, Theodore Regensteiner, and Edward Gallaway surpass anything in wit and humor that Flo Ziegfeld or Earl..."
Aha, so Gallaway was also witty: Erdnase witty, Gallaway witty. Nice match. This adds to the linguistic metrics, because wit goes beyond merely counting and comparing words. It is a special gift a style that isn’t very common. That is part of why Erdnase is such a good read. He writes interestingly and wit and humor is part of that. I leave you with contemplating this parallel between Gallaway and Erdnase.

Zenner | 08/25/15 09:28 AM | link | filter

mam wrote:

Zenner wrote: I have seen no evidence that Emory Cobb Andrews ever worked for a "printing house". He worked for Philip Ruxton Inks - a manufacturer of printing inks - and Ruxton's was listed seperately as a creditor in the McKinney Bankruptcy Files. So please tell me why you are saying that McKinney would owe money to Emory. He can't have been at Ruxton's above a few months and yet you are saying that he himself had a seperate contract with McKinney to supply and deliver his own goods.

Doesn't really matter if it’s "printing house" or "printing supply house", since my point is that he worked in the center of all Chicago's printing business and it is no surprise to have him show up in McKinney records. I can come up with any number of reasons why McKinney owed him money, one for each potential "thing" or "service" they got from him but had not paid for yet, i.e. same as with everyone else in those files, per definition.
Where do you get the idea Andrews only worked a few months at Ruxton's? How did he end up second vice-president of the entire company in such short time?

If that entry in the McKinney Files really was Emory Cobb Andrews then it would be a surprise, given his background and employment up to that point.

He graduated from Chicago University in August, 1900, and worked for a while for either (or both) the "G.S. Refining Company" and the "Corn Products Refining Company" (or perhaps they were one and the same?).

He then applied for a passport on June 19, 1901, and set sail for England on July 3 intending to return that autumn. When is autumn in Chicago? October-November? His occupation was stated to be "whol linen", or something like that - "wholesale linen"? Whatever it was it doesn't sound like anything to do with inks or printing.
Ruxton's for a few months! The contract between "E.C. Andrews" and McKinney's was made in August, 1902. I would say that 8 or 9 months = a few months, wouldn't you?

He then worked his way up to being manager of the Chicago office by 1910, Second Vice-President by 1913 and Vice President by 1918.

Yes, he was a clever chap - “A student at Princeton and a graduate of the University of Chicago, Mr. Andrews specialized in chemistry, and, though not officially on the faculty roll, was for a time in effect assistant instructor in chemistry in the University of Chicago.”

Peter Zenner

Zenner wrote: If that entry in the McKinney Files really was Emory Cobb Andrews then it would be a surprise, given his background and employment up to that point. […]

Thanks for all the additional information, you had more facts than I. Would you mind sharing the sources? I have the university info already, and some of the employment info based on alumni records and the introductions to his books, but e.g. the passport info I have not.

Bill Mullins wrote: Are there any reasons that one would self-publish rather than be published traditionally besides:
1. Traditional publishers won’t take the book (thus the existence of vanity presses)
2. The author thinks he could make more money by publishing himself than by being traditionally published.

Just as a data point, I self-published Scripting Magic a few years ago for neither of these reasons. I never asked a "traditional" magic publisher if they would take the book, and I had no expectation about making more money either way.

I did it because it seemed like a good idea and a fun project, where I would learn a lot. I did.

Tom Sawyer | 08/25/15 03:39 PM | link | filter
assumption is that he worked there as early as 1901 or 1902. Or maybe someone has presented evidence for a definite date, and I have missed it or forgotten it.

Anyway, based on Google Books search results, it appears to me that he began working for Ruxton no earlier than 1905. The items listed in the results were "snippet view" items, and the search results under those circumstances are often easy to misinterpret, but this was supported by three seemingly separate listings.

--Tom Sawyer

Edward Finck | 08/25/15 05:41 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: When somebody has several books on the same subject it is a straight forward assumption that he must have had an interest in that subject.

You must not be serious about that. Did you ever meet Jay Marshall? Jay, like many others, bought many books on subjects that didn't directly interest him. Jay even owned a book or two he wasn't secretly the author of...

Also, what other books on gambling or magic did Gallaway have in his library? You've mentioned repeatedly that he had other gambling books in his collection, how many and what are they? Were they all printed after Erdnase's book? Perhaps it was his handling of some aspect of the printing of Erdnase that started his interest in gambling and the other books in his collection were published and purchased after Erdnase.

The fact that Gallaway later worked for Bentley, Murray and Co., a firm who printed various materials including score cards sometimes used for book making, shows that Gallaway's reputed few other gambling books might have been collected, like Erdnase, because he was involved in printing them later in his life.

Edward Finck wrote:

lybrary wrote: When somebody has several books on the same subject it is a straight forward assumption that he must have had an interest in that subject.

You must not be serious about that.

Oh yes I am.
I don't think somebody who owned a million books is the typical case. Of course, there are other reasons why somebody could have several books on a particular subject, but the most likely and straightforward - you know Occam's razor - assumption is that they had an interest.

Edward Finck wrote: Also, what other books on gambling or magic did Gallaway have in his library?

We don't know.

Edward Finck wrote: You've mentioned repeatedly that he had other gambling books in his collection, how many and what are they? Were they all printed after Erdnase's book?

We don't know. But if we find these books which had his bookplate then we will know. They should be somewhere in some collection.

mam | 08/25/15 06:56 PM | link | filter

Is anyone interested in this entire thread as a pdf and/or Kindle compatible file? I decided I want to read it all, from the start, and wanted a better (and offline) format so I did a quick and dirty conversion. It's about 700 pages. Given of course I'm not breaking any rules by doing so, I'd be happy to share it.

Zenner | 08/26/15 05:37 AM | link | filter

mam wrote: Thanks for all the additional information, you had more facts than I. Would you mind sharing the sources? I have the university info already, and some of the employment info based on alumni records and the introductions to his books, but e.g. the passport info I have not.

When I started investigating the possibility of Harry S. Thompson being Erdnase, way back in April, 2013, I did umpteen searches on umpteen web-sites. I found that he worked for Ruxton's and a search on Ruxton's came up with the name "E.C. Andrews". Imagine my delight! And then "E.C. Andrews" turning up in those Bankruptcy Files with a contract dating from August, 1902, clinched it.

I searched for more information on Mr. Andrews for completeness sake. His passport application and draft registration card came up on one of the genealogy sites. I think that it was the LDS Family Search site. Others may have them...

Peter Zenner
concluded that Harry had pinched Emory's name for his pseudonym. Their connection was only that they both worked for Philip Ruxton and Emory was the new boy. He was probably also sent out for a "bucket of elbow grease" and a "left-handed mop".

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/26/15 09:18 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Tom Sawyer wrote:* I am not certain what assumptions are being made regarding the date that Emory Cobb Andrews began working for Philip Ruxton. It seems, however, that the assumption is that he worked there as early as 1901 or 1902. Or maybe someone has presented evidence for a definite date, and I have missed it or forgotten it.

Anyway, based on Google Books search results, it appears to me that he began working for Ruxton no earlier than 1905. The items listed in the results were "snippet view" items, and the search results under those circumstances are often easy to misinterpret, but this was supported by three seemingly separate listings.

--Tom Sawyer

*Zenner wrote:* I concluded that Harry had pinched Emory's name for his pseudonym. Their connection was only that they both worked for Philip Ruxton and Emory was the new boy.

As late as Jan 1904, Andrews was with Cobb Manufacturing Co. of Chicago, and had not yet become associated with Ruxton.

There is no evidence that Thompson knew Andrews as early as 1902. So no reason to think that Andrews's name was available to be "pinched" by Thompson. And as such, no explanation for why Thompson would use "S. W. Erdnase" as a pseudonym.

In 1905, Emory patented a paper clip.

*Another book* by Andrews.

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**Jack Shalom** | 08/26/15 09:48 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Edward Finck wrote:
Also, what other books on gambling or magic did Gallaway have in his library?
Chris, sorry if I missed it, but what then is your source for stating that Gallaway had magic and gambling books in his library?

**Bill Mullins** | 08/26/15 10:46 AM | link | filter

*Jack Shalom wrote:*

Edward Finck wrote:
Also, what other books on gambling or magic did Gallaway have in his library?

Chris W. wrote:
We don't know.

Chris, sorry if I missed it, but what then is your source for stating that Gallaway had magic and gambling books in his library?

From *The Man Who Was Erdnase* p. 390:
"Local Chicago amateur magician William C. Griffiths bought a group of magic and gambling books that a second-hand book dealer had been holding for Rufus Steele, who had died in 1955. Several of the gambling books had the bookplate of Edward Gallaway. One was a first edition of *The Expert* that Griffiths gave to Marshall." This information got in the book from a letter to Martin Gardner from Marshall.

So, we don't know if any of the magic books were from Gallaway, and we don't know how many gambling books there were. I believe I recall seeing somewhere in this thread that there were 3 known books with Gallaway's bookplate -- I'm only aware of two (*Erdnase* and *The History of the Works of the Learned* book that has been previously linked).

**Jack Shalom** | 08/26/15 11:11 AM | link | filter

Thanks, Bill

**Roger M.** | 08/26/15 11:50 AM | link | filter

3 books on gambling in a collection certainly doesn't seem like "a lot", especially when the company you work for printed one of them.

**Richard Hatch** | 08/26/15 01:12 PM | link | filter
Just to clarify: of the three books known to have Gallaway's bookplate, only one is on gambling, and that is the first edition EATCT. The other two are both volumes of the History of the Works of the Learned, one of which was recently offered on eBay. Presumably Gallaway had a much larger library than these three books (!) and it apparently included several gambling titles, as noted in TMWWE. There may be those who know what those titles were, but if so, they haven't shared their information on that here.

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**Roger M.** | 08/26/15 03:07 PM | [link] [filter]

Chris, from what information did you determine Gallaway had a large collection of gambling books?

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**Zenner** | 08/26/15 06:31 PM | [link] [filter]

*Bill Mullins wrote:* As late as Jan 1904, Andrews was with Cobb Manufacturing Co. of Chicago, and had not yet become associated with Ruxton.

I can't access that or even read the excerpt. But so what? I suspect that this was a sideline. As late as 1913 he was doing three jobs - In the November 19th issue of the Princeton Alumni Weekly, it was reported that "Emory C. Andrews is Second Vice-President of Philip Ruxton, Inc., manufacturers of printing inks. He is also chemist with the Corn Products Company and Manager of the Woodcock Can Company." [Volume XIV, No. 8, page 192]

In the 1900 Directory of the Alumni of the University of Chicago, it said that he was in real estate. That never made it to his CV either. He was probably just helping out in his father's office.

Did you never do two (or more) jobs at the same time? Andrews did and so did I. He got married on January 1, 1904, and probably started bottling "Knock- Out Spots" in a spare room just to make some extra cash. Clever bloke our Emory

Peter Zenner

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**Edward Finck** | 08/26/15 07:26 PM | [link] [filter]

*Zenner wrote:* and probably started bottling "Knock- Out Spots" in a spare room just to make some extra cash. Clever bloke our Emory
I'm sorry to be ignorant but what the heck are "Knock-Out Spots"?

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**Edward Finck** | 08/26/15 07:40 PM | link | filter

*lybrary wrote:*

*Edward Finck wrote:* Also, what other books on gambling or magic did Gallaway have in his library?

We don't know.

*Edward Finck wrote:* You've mentioned repeatedly that he had other gambling books in his collection, how many and what are they? Were they all printed after Erdnase's book?

We don't know. But if we find these books which had his bookplate then we will know. They should be somewhere in some collection.

It's pretty telling that your candidate Gallaway (and I remind you that Jay Marshall considered him as writer/editor and discarded the theory in the 50s) is primarily based on your belief that he had gambling books in his collection. The only gambling book positively known to be in his collection is one he was involved with printing. The speculated other books could have been printed much later and also collected by him when he worked at Bentley, Murray & Co. a known printer of gambling material. Without these supposed books in his collection your whole argument for Gallaway collapses.

Jay definitely investigated Gallaway and spoke with his remaining family and then removed Gallaway from consideration. Jay was really smart and did a lot of the original research and footwork on Erdnase with Martin. If there was an actual case for Gallaway being the author it's extremely likely Jay would have made it.

E.F.

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**Zenner** | 08/26/15 08:09 PM | link | filter

*Edward Finck wrote:*

*Zenner wrote:* and probably started bottling "Knock-Out Spots" in a spare room just to make some extra cash. Clever bloke our Emory
I did a search on the Cobb Manufacturing Co. and found that they were (or he was) marketing a stain removal product -

""KNOCK - OUT - SPOTS. Wine, Tea, Coffee, Vegetables, Fruit, Grass, Mildew, Scorch, Ink. Perspiration, Iodine, Silver Nitrate and all Similar Stains. KNOCKOUT-SPOTS will remove Payson's Indelible Ink. Save your clothes and save money. Don’t send them to the cleaners. Use KNOCK- OUT-SPOTS. If washing will not remove the stains on your table linen--use KNOCK-OUT- SPOTS. Use it on anything that is stained or spotted. It works. It will not injure cotton, woollen or linen goods. The most delicate and valuable laces can be cleaned without the slightest injury to the fabric. NO ACID-NO LIME--NO POISON-NO DANGER. Quick, effective and permanent in its effects. Handy for the housewife --Handy for everybody. Try it once, and you will use it always. It is something, you have always wanted. There is nothing else like it anywhere. Manufactured by THE COBB MANUFACTURING COMPANY OF CHICAGO. PRICE, 25 CENTS FOR LARGE TWO-OUNCE SIZE. 80 CENTS FOR SIX-OUNCE SIZE. A two-ounce bottle will last a long time and will always be ready for use. Don’t forget that we want jingles. $5.00 for every Jingle that we accept." (November 15, 1904. The Daily Review from Decatur, Illinois · Page 2)

I couldn’t find a similar advert in *The Chicago Tribune*, or anywhere else for that matter.

Peter Zenner

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**lybrary** | 08/26/15 11:17 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Roger M. wrote: Chris, from what information did you determine Gallaway had a large collection of gambling books?

I never said large. I said "several gambling books". From Gardner/Busby/Whaley: "An inveterate book collector, by the time of his death in 1930 Gallaway had gathered a fair-sized collection of gambling books. ... Several of the gambling books had the bookplate of Edward Gallaway."

Edward Finck wrote: It's pretty telling that your candidate Gallaway is primarily based on your belief that he had gambling books in his collection.

Your reading comprehension is lacking. It is one of the less important pieces of evidence I have offered over the last weeks.

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**Edward Finck** | 08/27/15 11:46 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)
Gallaway is primarily based on your belief that he had gambling books in his collection.

Your reading comprehension is lacking. It is one of the less important pieces of evidence I have offered over the last weeks.

And once again your tact is lacking and so is your case. Without these mysterious gambling books being in his collection your case is zilch.

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**mam** | 08/27/15 12:58 PM | [link] | [filter]

*mam wrote:* Is anyone interested in this entire thread as a pdf and/or Kindle compatible file? I decided I want to read it all, from the start, and wanted a better (and offline) format so I did a quick and dirty conversion. It’s about 700 pages. Given of course I’m not breaking any rules by doing so, I’d be happy to share it.

I asked Richard Kaufman for permission and he said yes, so here it is:

- PDF: [https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... rdnase.pdf](https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... rdnase.pdf) (700 pages)
- Kindle: [https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... dnase.mobi](https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/307 ... dnase.mobi)

Have fun

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**Bill Mullins** | 08/28/15 04:31 PM | [link] | [filter]

Something that Chris has pointed out that Erdnase and Gallaway have in common is that they both self-published authors. At first glance, this would seem to be a connection that strengthens the case. But I’m not so sure.

If Erdnase was Gallaway, what is the explanation for the disconnect between letting Drake be the publisher of *EATCT* from 1905 onward, yet publishing *Estimating for Printers* himself?

If he was consistent about the benefits of self-publishing, he never would have transferred *EATCT* to Drake.

If, on the other hand, he took a bath on the first edition, and was content to let Drake deal with the headaches of publishing, why would he then go back into self-publishing for his *Estimating* book? In particular, why not let the school at which he taught do the publishing?

And another thing—why would someone with as many connections to publishing as...
I have been thinking about the original manuscript and through what hands it must have passed.

To begin with, Erdnase authored the manuscript either literally (i.e. by hand) or typed it. To have it printed, it was handed over to James McKinney and company. If this happened in person, Erdnase visited McKinney at the Bentley Murray building, 73-75 South Plymouth Court (today 511 South Plymouth Court). It could however have been sent by mail. Depending on the exact routine for handling incoming manuscripts, it may have passed any number of hands before ending up with the person who was to do the typesetting.

So the text was set in print by someone. Do we know with which technology? If letterpress (movable type), there would be no trace of the book "plates" after it was printed, as the type would be disassembled and reused for other projects. If instead something like a rotary printing press was used, flexible plates would have been produced specifically for this project. If so, these may have survived for a long time unless deliberately destroyed.

In the McKinney bankruptcy files, three types of plates (electro, patent, photo) are mentioned as belonging to Drake. But my understanding of the preceding documentation by The Equitable Trust Company is that these were produced by Drake and sent to McKinney for printing with, not the other way around. So the notion that these entries in the bankruptcy files could be the plates for EATCT cannot be correct, or am I missing something? What we would like to find is instead what was in McKinney’s own possession at the time of the bankruptcy, or even in Drake’s possession when they bankrupted or dissolved (did they?) Could there be any Drake bankruptcy files out there?

For copyright matters Erdnase left a c/o McKinney address. Any such matters or any other correspondence would again mean that either Erdnase visited McKinney every now and then, or they communicated via mail. If the latter, there would be an address somewhere at McKinney for them to write to, unless someone had memorized Erdnase’s real address (read: probably not.)

I don’t know what usually happened to a manuscript after set in type and printed. Returned to author? If so, in person or via mail? Is there even the remote possibility that this manuscript still exists?

Summing it up with some final thoughts:
Were any permanent plates produced? Where did they end up after McKinney's bankruptcy?

Let's find more McKinney documents, and start looking for Drake's.

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**Carlo Morpurgo** | 08/28/15 11:43 PM | [link] | [filter]

*Carlo Morpurgo* wrote: Allright. I finally have a foolproof routine that matches common sequences of words between two files....
You will find all the results here: [https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3Wpu...DZ4UGswZjQ](https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3Wpu...DZ4UGswZjQ)

.....
The summary is as follows

1. Bookbinding I: 160 matches
2. Bookbinding II: 153
3. Distilling: 71
4. Glass Blowing: 97 (19K words)
5. Hat Making: 122 (23K words)
6. The Mind: 68
7. Photography: 94
8. Pianola Player: 75
9. Plumbing: 126
10. Making Things: 123 (24K words)
11. Violin Playing: 76
12. Woodworking: 146
13. Wood Carving: 135

.....
The routine I wrote was actually a tiny bit faulty...The problem isn't as straightforward as one might think. We now have a perfected version in C++ that will do the job correctly. The updated results are as follows: (unless noted all books have about 25K words)

0. Art of Magic: 1474 Matches (120K words)
1. Bookbinding I: 195
2. Bookbinding II: 172
3. Distilling: 82
4. Glass Blowing: 106 (19K words)
5. Hat Making: 142 (23K words)
6. The Mind: 77
7. Photography: 104
Since I was at it I ran eatct against EC Andrews' "Color and its application", and I got 140 matches.

Results are still posted here https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3Wpu ...
DZ4UGswZjQ

Not counting AOM the average no. of common sequences is....(drum roll) 130! (more precisely 130.36)

This is just for completeness...it's not going to make a dent in the more serious research that has been posted here (and that I enjoyed reading).

ps. and no, I am not thinking about this every day my brother found a gap and he fixed it

lybrary | 08/29/15 07:29 AM | link | filter

mam wrote: For copyright matters Erdnase left a c/o McKinney address. Any such matters or any other correspondence would again mean that either Erdnase visited McKinney every now and then, or they communicated via mail. If the latter, there would be an address somewhere at McKinney for them to write to, unless someone had memorized Erdnase's real address (read: probably not.)

You have to ask yourself why would a printer like McKinney even agree to an arrangement like that? McKinney is a printer not a publisher. They print books and other things and then deliver those. End of project. Copyrights go on for decades. Why would McKinney agree to be the post box for Erdnase? All those with a candidate who is not employed at McKinney need to explain this. With Gallaway it is very easy. He worked there. Putting his employer's address on the copyright form does not pose any problem. You just have to read the evidence. The evidence fits an employee at McKinney a whole lot better than a one time customer.

lybrary | 08/29/15 07:47 AM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: If he was consistent about the benefits of self-publishing,
mathematical objects and you are blind to the circumstances that have changed during the 25 years which are between these books. When Gallaway published EATCT he just got married, his first born was on the way, and he may have already felt the crumbling of his employer McKinney. Lots of good reasons to sell his book to Drake or McKinney or somebody else. We don't know who he sold it to. In 1927 he had a completely different personal and professional environment.

But even ignoring all these circumstances there is another very good reason. The main problem self-published authors face is how to sell the stack of books the printer has just delivered. Gallaway might have not been as successful selling these to retailers as he initially thought, particularly since Erdnase wasn't a household name back then. And so he decides to sell his project. In 1927 he was the founder and owner of a flourishing print estimating school. This meant he had a built in customer base for his book. Every semester new students came who all were asked to buy the textbook "Estimating for Printers". On top he was a well-known and respected authority on estimating in the print industry. Now he was a household name. It was certainly a lot easier to sell his estimating book. But also keep in mind that just 3 years after he published "Estimating for Printers" he died. We do not know his mid- or long-term plans with his later books.

*Bill Mullins wrote:* In particular, why not let the school at which he taught do the publishing?

Correction. It was not a school where he merely taught. He founded it, owned it, and was the principal instructor.

*Bill Mullins wrote:* And another thing-- why would someone with as many connections to publishing as Gallaway would have had ca. 1902 mishandle the copyright like Erdnase did?

Can you explain 'mishandle'? I don't see where it was mishandled. Application was valid and paid.

*By the way, Philip Ruxton’s company sure knew how to write ad copy*
Can you explain 'mishandle'? I don't see where it was mishandled.

Application was valid and paid.

There are several, for lack of a better word, "anomalies" with the copyright of *EATCT* that indicate to me that the author didn't know what he was doing.

1. Twice on the application, the "residence" of the author is given as 73 Plymouth, which was McKinney's work address.

2. The book stated that it had been copyrighted in Great Britain, and in Canada, and it hadn't been. This caused Frederic Jessel, in 1905, to say "no place of publication is given, but the copyright was registered in Canada". And it (along with poor memory) confused Dai Vernon about the book's history for years as well.

3. Some illustrations have specific copyright notices, and others do not.

I don't think 'mishandled', or 'not knowing what he was doing' are the right words here. If it was Gallaway's first self-published book, which it may very well be, then this was also most likely the first time he applied for copyright.

*Bill Mullins wrote*: 1. Twice on the application, the "residence" of the author is given as 73 Plymouth, which was McKinney's work address.

I would say this was a deliberate act to stay as much anonymous as he could. Listing his employers address, a place he was 6 days out of the week, doesn't strike me as unusual. I don't think this was an error or that he did not know what he was doing. I think he very well knew what he was doing and it was deliberate. Fits into the whole want to be anonymous thing. Wouldn't you agree?

*Bill Mullins wrote*: 2. The book stated that it had been copyrighted in Great Britain, and in Canada, and it hadn't been.

Do we know this for a fact? I remember reading somewhere that the British copyright records for that year have been destroyed (by fire?) and one cannot know anymore if copyright was applied for or not. But even if he did not apply for the Canadian and British copyrights I see it simply as a deterrent. Most copyright statements are. Very few, even if infringed take legal action due to the cost involved with litigation. I even
general book market for which the ISBN number is used.

Bill Mullins wrote: 3. Some illustrations have specific copyright notices, and others do not.

So what? I don't know the exact rules and regulations that applied back then, but I don't think illustrations were required to have separate copyright statements. I think that this is more a sign of a somewhat sloppy and inconsistent book production than a 'mishandling' of copyrights.

Bill Mullins wrote: 1. Twice on the application, the "residence" of the author is given as 73 Plymouth, which was McKinney's work address.

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If you are Gallaway, and wanting to be anonymous, and are willing to lie when stating your residence, it doesn't make much sense to put down your place of employment instead. There are hundreds of thousands of other addresses in Chicago that are more anonymous.

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H Adrian Smith, writing in The Linking Ring in 1951:

"Another objective was Stationers' Hall, where I was most anxious to check into the mystery of the true identity of S. W. Erdnase. Those who own The Expert at the Card Table may recall that the title page verso states the book to have been entered in Stationers' Hall, the British equivalent of the American copyright. If true, I was certain
the period of 1895 to 1904 failed to reveal any trace of the book either under S. W.
Erdnase or E. S. Andrews, nor was any listing found in the cross-index volumes under
either the cover title or title-page title. I am convinced that the book was not entered in
Stationers’ Hall, regardless of the printed note in the book”

David Ben did a similarly exhaustive search of Canadian records, finding the
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The "so what" is that Erdnase didn’t know how to properly mark, and didn’t properly
register, copyrights. He didn’t know what he was doing.

A person with Gallaway’s background in printing and publishing would have done a
more competent job.

Bill Mullins wrote: If you are Gallaway, and wanting to be anonymous, and
are willing to lie when stating your residence, it doesn’t make much sense
to put down your place of employment instead. There are hundreds of
thousands of other addresses in Chicago that are more anonymous.

You still want to know what is mailed to you by the copyright office. Putting down a
completely fake address makes little sense. Putting down your employers address
where you have access to correspondence makes sense. His actions regarding the
addresses he provided are completely consistent and sensible.

Bill Mullins wrote: H Adrian Smith, writing in The Linking Ring in 1951:

"Another objective was Stationers’ Hall, where I was most anxious to check
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Thanks. So he did not register it there. Doesn’t mean it is inconsistent. Either simply a deterrent as I stated before, or perhaps he intended to register the foreign copyrights later but due to him selling his book project early he had no time and at that point no interest anymore. All we know he registered early 1902 at the US copyright office. If I have this correct then the first Drake copies appear in 1903. We also don’t find any explicit mention of the book in the bankruptcy files or indications that Drake bought it during the bankruptcy proceedings. It is therefore likely that Erdnase/Gallaway sold the book sometime in 1902, which could be pretty soon after he applied for copyrights in the US. Once sold why would he still be registering Canadian or British copyrights?

Bill Mullins wrote: The "so what" is that Erdnase didn’t know how to properly mark, and didn’t properly register, copyrights. He didn’t know what he was doing. A person with Gallaway’s background in printing and publishing would have done a more competent job.

The US copyright was proper and valid. And why would somebody be a copyright register expert when one is working in the print industry as estimator? The copyright registration is something a lawyer would do rather than a printer or print estimator. That this was something new to him is again completely consistent with Gallaway’s background.

Roger M. | 08/29/15 04:37 PM | link | filter

Based on everything presented to date, my opinion would be that not only is Gallaway not Erdnase, but there is nothing compelling enough to even continue to consider him as a potential candidate.

In effect, Chris would like us to accept Gallaway as Erdnase simply for the act of his asking us to do so.

IMO, Jay Marshall was on the right track when he rejected Gallaway after his own
the search we have from Chris is that Gallaway owned a copy of EATCT ... hardly surprising when one considers he was likely the man that physically printed it, or was at least involved with its production.

In other words, Chris has presented nothing more than the details as to how, and in what order he made his own, personal leaps of faith.

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Tom Sawyer | 08/29/15 05:15 PM | link | filter

I think I understand fairly well where some of the people who are not enthused about Edward Gallaway are coming from.

I don't know of anything hard that one can point to in defense of the Gallaway case.

But I think that (in large part) the way a person views the case comes down to the question of why Gallaway might have owned a copy of the book.

I personally have significant problems with believing that Gallaway's possession of the book was connected with his work duties.

But I realize that other people (possibly most) vehemently disagree with this.

--Tom Sawyer

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CENTERDEAL | 08/29/15 05:49 PM | link | filter

Hi all,

This is a long thread and deservedly so, i find your thread compelling and although i feel that i might be out of my depth adding to this fascinating discussion on Erdnase i would just like to say how this has taken an almost "Sherlock Holmes" feel to it. Often when reading Expert at the card table i get that rich, elegant, Victorian feel when i have cards in hand at the card table reading away so your discussion only adds to that unique feel. I started seriously reading Erdnase when i was 13 and now at the age of 36 i still take something new away from this book each time.

Chris

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mam | 08/29/15 06:23 PM | link | filter

mam wrote: Were any permanent plates produced? Where did they end up?
transferred:

1. Plates and printed copies brought by Erdnase from McKinney to Drake in 1903.
2. Plates sold (by Drake?) to Frost in 1937
3. Plates confiscated from Frost by the sheriff.
4. Plates "passed into possession" of Powner in 1942.
5. Plates "remade" by Powner in 1944.

One observation is that according to TMWWE (page 57) the McKinney company was a small one consisting of "James McKinney, his brother Pat, and Edward Gallaway." The interesting part of this is that Gallaway is referred to as "the typesetter" (my bold). This suggests that he was the only typesetter, and it would follow that it was definitely Gallaway who set the book in type.

(I guess all of this is known and obvious to non-newcomers like me.)

Richard Kaufman | 08/29/15 07:20 PM | link | filter

Just as a general question to all who know this better than I: how much of The Man Who Was Erdnase is just wrong, dumb mis-information? Whaley's other large books are so full of errors as to be ridiculous, so what makes The Man Who Was Erdnase any better in any way?

Ilybrary | 08/29/15 07:31 PM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: Whaley's other large books are so full of errors as to be ridiculous, ...

I think that is an unfair comment if you are basing this on Whaley's "Who's Who in Magic" and his "Encyclopedic Dictionary". Those are huge volumes with literally tens of thousands of data points. Just the fact that Whaley took the time and effort to compile something like this is remarkable. That there are errors in these encyclopedic works is completely normal and understandable. But some of these errors have been corrected over the years since I am updating these ebooks and removing errors where I hear of them or find them. If you have a list of errors please send them to me.

Bill Mullins | 08/29/15 08:52 PM | link | filter

Richard Kaufman wrote: Just as a general question to all who know this better
The problem with *TMWWE* isn't that it is wrong, it is that it just isn't right.

For example, throughout, passages are written that assume the truth of the book's thesis: that MFA was Erdnase. So it will say "Erdnase did so-and-so", but it wasn't Erdnase who did it, it was MFA. And it will say "MFA did this", but it wasn't MFA, it was Erdnase. Usually a careful reading and knowledge of the background will help figure those out.

Another problem is that minor facts get exaggerated (or even made up), ambiguities are ignored and uncertainties are wiped away.

The passage referred to by MAM above is an example: "Andrews had the 205 heavy stereotype plates moved from the McKinney Company over to the Drake premises. Along with the plates came most of the unsold stock of the first printing. As mementos, Andrews kept a good stack of them for himself."

The only "facts" I recognize in the passage are that the book had 205 pages, and Drake ended up with the ability to print it. Everything else is exaggeration, made up, assumed to be true although unprovable, or are jumps to conclusions.

Note that "Andrews" is the one who did this, not Erdnase. But we don't know if Erdnase was even on the scene at this point -- the transfer may not have involved him at all. We don't know for sure if the book was printed from stereoplates (although that is certainly possible, even likely). We don't know how Drake came into possession of the plates (if there were plates). We don't know how many 1st edition copies Drake ended up with, or if it was most of them (I tend to think that Atlas and Roterberg had enough to account for "most"). And there is no evidence that Erdnase (excuse me, Andrews) kept "a good stack for himself."

That narrative is consistent with the history of the book, mostly. But clearly the authors state things as fact that are unsupported by evidence. They may be doing it for dramatic effect, or to develop a narrative that reads smoothly, or to bolster the case for MFA=Erdnase (all three, probably).

It may be that many of these "facts" are supported by some evidence that wasn't cited by the authors. But the footnotes that exist make me think not, from the way they are written.

And I have no idea if this is Whaley's doing, or Busby's (I don't think Gardner's role was anywhere near as big as the other two). Some passages are clearly the work of Busby, and some are from Whaley. But much of the book is difficult to attribute.
and it is all in one place. Much of the biographical material on MFA during the period from when he killed Bessie Bouton until he killed Nulda Oliva and himself seems to be true. The history of sleight-of-hand and gambling books that precede Erdnase is good.

**Tom Sawyer** | 08/29/15 10:03 PM | link | filter

Concerning the asserted confiscation of plates, this was discussed at some length on this thread back in 2011.

**Bill Mullins** | 08/29/15 11:24 PM | link | filter

*library wrote:*

*Bill Mullins wrote:* If you are Gallaway, and wanting to be anonymous, and are willing to lie when stating your residence, it doesn’t make much sense to put down your place of employment instead. There are hundreds of thousands of other addresses in Chicago that are more anonymous.

You still want to know what is mailed to you by the copyright office.

You said earlier that most copyrights exist for deterrent effect only. That being the case, why does he need to receive correspondence? for that matter, what correspondence would he need to receive from the Copyright Office in any case?

*Bill Mullins wrote:* H Adrian Smith, writing in The Linking Ring in 1951:

"Another objective was Stationers' Hall, where I was most anxious to check into the mystery of the true identity of S. W. Erdnase. Those who own The Expert at the Card Table may recall that the title page verso states the book to have been entered in Stationers' Hall, the British equivalent of the American copyright. If true, I was certain that the author's true name would be properly entered in these records. . . . Since their records go back only to 1925, a further search was necessary to find the Hall of Records, where earlier entries are preserved. A careful check of their catalogue from the period of 1895 to 1904 failed to reveal any trace of the book either under S. W. Erdnase or E. S. Andrews, nor was any listing found in the
David Ben did a similarly exhaustive search of Canadian records, finding the appropriate documents (in Dai Vernon’s father's own handwriting) for the period, and there was no record of EATCT in them.

Thanks. So he did not register it there. Doesn’t mean it is inconsistent. Either simply a deterrent as I stated before, or perhaps he intended to register the foreign copyrights later but due to him selling his book project early he had no time and at that point no interest anymore. All we know he registered early 1902 at the US copyright office.

Hurt McDermott’s book points out that a 1891 treaty meant that there was no need to copyright the book in either country -- it was already protected throughout the UK and Canada.

Someone who worked in the industry, as did Gallaway, should have known this. Can you point to any other 1902 books with a triple copyright?

Bill Mullins wrote: The "so what" is that Erdnase didn't know how to properly mark, and didn't properly register, copyrights. He didn't know what he was doing. A person with Gallaway's background in printing and publishing would have done a more competent job.

The US copyright was proper and valid. And why would somebody be a copyright register expert when one is working in the print industry as estimator? The copyright registration is something a lawyer would do rather than a printer or print estimator. That this was something new to him is again completely consistent with Gallaway’s background.

I don’t believe it has been established that Gallaway was an estimator at this time. It doesn’t take a lawyer to fill out the forms -- the information required is straightforward, and any author could do it.

Chris made a comment on Tom Sawyer's blog that I was going to comment on there, but decided to do here instead, because it follows up on a point I’ve tried to make earlier here. (sorry Tom)

Chris -- the right group to consider is "people who hired McKinney to print a book." You’ve expanded that group to include "people who hired McKinney to print a book, plus other people who had a business relationship with McKinney" which
We know the nature of the business transaction between Erdnase and McKinney, and Gallaway's relationship with McKinney wasn't based on that kind of transaction. Therefore him being an employee (and in the expanded second group but not in the first) doesn't make him any more likely to have been Erdnase than anyone else.

The strong points of the case for Gallaway (for values of "strong" that are very small) are:
1. Interested in gambling (as evidenced by Marshall's statements about his books).
2. Self published author
3. Geographical proximity

Olsson has said that it is possible that Erdnase is Gallaway, but we don't have his analysis to show why that may be so. I don't see an unsupported statement, even from an expert, to count for much. But should you publish his report I'm certainly willing to revisit that, based on what it may say.

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**Bill Mullins wrote:** You said earlier that most copyrights exist for deterrent effect only. That being the case, why does he need to receive correspondence? for that matter, what correspondence would he need to receive from the Copyright Office in any case?

Clearly you have never applied for a copyright yourself. I have done this multiple times. Even though the communication is now all electronic I would assume that it wasn’t fundamentally different back then. The main communication you get from the copyright office is a confirmation that your copyright has been issued. I assume that they sent out a copyright certificate or at least some form of acknowledgement that the copyright has been properly registered. They would also get in touch with you if there was something they needed to clarify on the application, if an error was made for example. That means you definitely want the copyright office to be able to get back to you and not just give them a fake address. Otherwise your copyright may never be issued (because of some error in the application), your application fee would be wasted, and then it wouldn't be a deterrent anymore, would it? Any wannabe infringer could check and see that there is no copyright registered for it. Gallaway/Erdnase was cleverer than that.

**Bill Mullins wrote:** Hurt McDermott's book points out that a 1891 treaty meant that there was no need to copyright the book in either country -- it was already protected throughout the UK and Canada. Someone who worked in the industry, as did Gallaway, should have known this. Can you point to any other 1902 books with a triple copyright?
errors? This actually plays right into the deterrent story. So if there was a treaty that already legally protected the book then there was no need to apply for these copyrights in Canada and Britain. But you still want to let your potential infringers know that it is protected in Canada and in Britain, because they might not know about that treaty, and thus the triple copyright notice. Clever chap Erdnase/Gallaway. But why would somebody in the print industry know about this treaty and all the legalese of copyrights? Maybe Gallaway knew, maybe not. I have no information about how well he knew the prevailing laws. We know that Gallaway self-published and registered the copyrights for his two books just fine, just as Erdnase did for EATCT. In summary, we have at least two good reasons why the copyrights were never applied for in Canada or Britain. Either, he sold the book before he could register these foreign copyrights. Or he knew about the treaty and thus never actually applied, only made it clear in the book that it was protected there - to strengthen his deterrent. So what exactly is your point? Even if you read from this that Gallaway did not fully understand the copyright laws then I don’t see where your rub is. Gallaway is not a lawyer. How much he actually knew or not knew about it doesn’t mean anything. Maybe he was more interested to practice his bottom deal then to read up on copyrights.

*Bill Mullins wrote:* I don’t believe it has been established that Gallaway was an estimator at this time. It doesn’t take a lawyer to fill out the forms -- the information required is straightforward, and any author could do it.

Again you are making my point. Estimator or not, he was no lawyer and thus would not necessarily know the details of the copyright law, foreign treaties and such. But Gallaway was a very clever and intellectual person. Maybe he knew about those things. We don't know. And yes, you are correct any author could fill them out as did Erdnase/Gallaway at least three times perfectly fine. Your point again is?

*Bill Mullins wrote:* Chris -- the right group to consider is "people who hired McKinney to print a book." You've expanded that group to include "people who hired McKinney to print a book, plus other people who had a business relationship with McKinney" which conveniently includes Gallaway. If you knew that Gallaway was in the first group, you'd have a heck of a case.

We know the nature of the business transaction between Erdnase and McKinney, and Gallaway’s relationship with McKinney wasn’t based on that kind of transaction. Therefore him being an employee (and in the expanded second group but not in the first) doesn’t make him any more likely to have been Erdnase than anyone else.

And this is where you are wrong. You are ignoring the possibility that an employee
was completely normal. You told the foreman or the owner and as long as you did not interfere with the normal business operation and paid for the materials used it was completely normal. This typically meant you staid longer at the shop after your regular work day was over and printed your own project. It is something so normal and happens so often that it boggles the mind that you can't understand this. As I have pointed out before there are a couple of signs that suggest that EATCT was such an employee pet project and not a regular book order:

- The care of James McKinney & Co notice on the copyright application makes a lot more sense for an employee author than for a one time customer. (It is not only consistent with his wish to stay anonymous as much as possible, but it could also be easily explained with a move of his home address. Remember Gallaway just got married and his wife brought a daughter into the marriage. Maybe his wife wanted to move to a better bigger place. To avoid missing any communication coming from the copyright office he uses his business address. Completely understandable - maybe not to all.)
- Self-publishing requires a certain familiarity with the book printing industry. An employee at a print shop certainly has that. It is also consistent with 'needing the money' because as employee he can print the book much cheaper than an official print order would have cost.
- Various little errors and inconsistencies in the book itself suggest to me and other book experts that the book did not run through the multiple quality checks a regular print order would have.

None of this means that Erdnase must have been an employee. This is not hard evidence for it. But it favors an employee, it fits an employee much better than a regular customer. With that I could have made the starting group even smaller - employees at McKinney - but I didn’t. However, regardless of what you think of Gallaway, McKinney employees make for very strong Erdnase contenders.

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**mam** | 08/30/15 09:37 AM | [link] | [filter]

Tom Sawyer wrote: Concerning the asserted confiscation of plates, this was discussed at some length on this thread back in 2011.

Still reading up on all these years of thread, sorry for the noise, will come back to this point when I’ve read those parts.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 08/31/15 07:04 AM | [link] | [filter]

I think the Edward Gallaway case is going to be developed by Chris (and probably...
The mere existence of other candidates is one of the things that tends to suggest that any single case is going to be considered by many to be fairly weak, at best.

I see Gallaway’s employment by McKinney as strengthening his case. One of the things I am thinking about, though, is whether the bookplate evidence would be stronger if Gallaway had not been employed by McKinney. For some people, at least, I think this would appear to be so.

--Tom Sawyer

Jonathan Townsend | 08/31/15 01:18 PM | link | filter

what makes one claim, piece of historical evidence in context or case for authorship stronger than another?

Bill Marquardt | 08/31/15 02:32 PM | link | filter

@Jonathan: I am not an expert on Erdnase et al by any means. I am, however, something of an old west historian and have researched the histories of the Earp family and Doc Holliday rather thoroughly.

"Primary evidence" such as newspaper articles, census records, court records, and family records such as one might find in a family Bible are generally considered more reliable than any other form of evidence such as a biography.

My personal experience is that newspaper articles are not very reliable. As an example, one Ohio newspaper claimed that Doc Holliday had killed as many as fifty men in gunfights when in fact there are only two killings established to be at his hands. Both of those killings occurred while he was deputized by law enforcement. (He may indeed killed more than the two, but there is no established proof.). Newspapers of a century or more in the past were extremely unreliable in their reporting, even more so than today.

As has been shown in this thread, the census is not always accurate, either. I recently found a report on a 1930 census of my mother’s family and found several errors, for example putting her first and middle names in the wrong order and misspelling one of them.

Circumstantial evidence, such as much of what fills this thread, is almost meaningless unless supported by a great deal of other circumstantial evidence.
Hi All,

Regarding Jonathan Townsend’s most recent post on this thread, the questions he states really get to the crux of the whole S.W. Erdnase question. And unfortunately, a lot of posts seem to be premised on an unspoken premise that is totally invalid, namely, that almost all of us approach evidence in ways that are quite similar.

Bill Marquardt’s response I think is excellent. It points out some of the problems to which many of the posts on this thread appear oblivious.

Concerning newspaper articles, I don’t exactly disagree with what Bill Marquardt says. But I think it can be said that each newspaper article needs to be judged on its own merit. Usually, or frequently, one can tell by the nature of the article whether it is pretty accurate on one hand, or not so reliable, on the other. It depends on many things, which are beyond the scope of this post.

To consider the "Pippins" article about Edwin Sumner Andrews, well, to start out with, it gets his name wrong! But it is “obvious” that it is talking about Edwin Sumner Andrews (which is sort of self-evident if you know a little about that man). And even though there may be one or two other little inaccuracies, it seems highly likely that the point that everyone derives from it, namely that E.S. Andrews played cards socially from time to time, is accurate.

At the same time, it is definitely hearsay, and we don’t know with absolute certainty that it is accurate on that main point. So, I would not bet the family farm on it. But I suspect that it has a 98 percent chance of being accurate. (For Erdnase-case purposes, on this issue, that means 100 percent.)

Concerning circumstantial evidence, one of the problems with it in the Erdnase case is that it is often subject to two or more conflicting inferences. At least in those instances, you either need a lot more circumstantial evidence, or (better) a lot of direct evidence, which on key points, as Bill M. kind of indicates, is extremely scarce.

A somewhat more mysterious aspect of the case is that addressed by Bill Marquardt in his final paragraph.

In some ways, that issue is of more interest.

The evidence being (overall) as weak as it is, a great deal of the evaluation of evidence is highly subjective, and it tends to rest significantly on people being required to draw
One thing that pretty much has to be assumed is that there are certain aspects of any case that are more important than others. That is one of the difficulties in the Edward Gallaway case. One of the key aspects of Erdnase was that he was highly knowledgeable in the areas of card-table artifice, and card magic requiring sleight-of-hand. That is a bit of a void in the Gallaway case, and actually that aspect of the Edwin Sumner Andrews case is almost as weak as that.

--Tom Sawyer

Did we already know that James McKinney lived at 520 McLean Avenue?

Richard Hatch wrote: Did we already know that James McKinney lived at 520 McLean Avenue?

Yes, from Chicago directory and census records. He is listed at 520 McLean in the directories from 1893 through 1905. The 1908 directory has the home address as 526 McLean, possibly a typo. The 1910 Census lists his home as 3639 McLean, but the streets were renumbered in 1909 and I suspect it is the same address, with a new number, though I haven’t confirmed that.

Bridget McKinney is shown at the 520 McLean address, in the bankruptcy papers.

Richard Hatch wrote: Bridget McKinney is shown at the 520 McLean address, in the bankruptcy papers.

Bridget was James McKinney’s mother, born in Ireland in about 1840. She is not listed among his survivors when he died in 1911, so presumably predeceased him.
in the directories from 1893 through 1905. The 1908 directory has the home address as 526 McLean, possibly a typo. The 1910 Census lists his home as 3639 McLean, but the streets were renumbered in 1909 and I suspect it is the same address, with a new number, though I haven't confirmed that.

That is exactly what 520 McLean resolves to with the 1909 number change, see this document: [http://www.chsmedia.org/househistory/1909snc/start.PDF](http://www.chsmedia.org/househistory/1909snc/start.PDF) (page 101).

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**Bill Mullins** | 09/01/15 11:48 AM | link | filter

*Richard Hatch wrote:*

*Tom Sawyer wrote:* Bridget McKinney is shown at the 520 McLean address, in the bankruptcy papers.

Bridget was James McKinney's mother, born in Ireland in about 1840. She is not listed among his survivors when he died in 1911, so presumably predeceased him.

From the Chicago Daily Tribune 10/27/1904 p.13:

"THE FOLLOWING BURIAL PERMITS WERE issued by the health department yesterday:

McKinney, Bridget, 70; 375 McLean-av., Oct. 24"

Details are slightly off, but I suspect this is her.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 09/02/15 03:48 PM | link | filter

For some inexplicable reason, about a day has gone by with no new posts on this thread.

I thought I might address one of the most fundamental questions in Erdnase-dom, namely whether Marshall D. Smith’s recollections regarding the name "Andrews" are reliable.

(Probably this immediately will trigger a half-dozen three-line posts on this thread, dealing with other topics.)

Anyway, if you believe that S.W. Erdnase’s real name was Andrews, two of the main things you have upon which to hang your hat are Marshall D. Smith’s recollections
It’s actually quite easy to disregard Smith’s recollections on this topic, mainly because in the first place Smith could not remember the name at all. According to *The Gardner-Smith Correspondence*, page 8, Martin Gardner’s notes (regarding a conversation of late 1946) state:

Before I mentioned Andrews as the name, he [Smith] said that Erdnase didn’t sound right, and he recalled it as a name with a W. When I said Andrews, his face lighted up and he was sure that was it. Does not recall first name or initials.

I’m quoting this word for word, because it is really the only way to analyze what Gardner said. There are some nuances that are more clear from the exact words. For instance, it appears that the “W” was mentioned in connection with a discussion of surnames. I think that has been mentioned on this thread, but I don’t know that Gardner’s exact words were quoted. Also, Smith’s failure to recall the first name seems to call into question the recognition of the surname.

You want to know how much weight I place on the “W” business? Zero. None whatsoever. Well, okay, I can’t keep myself from giving it just the tiniest bit of weight, but rationally I should not. Therefore, it does not matter too much to me that “Wilbur” starts with “W,” or that “Gallaway” has a “w” in it.

Of course, the evidence is hearsay on at least a couple of levels. Smith told the information to Gardner. Gardner told it to his notes. The notes told it to us. Those are probably the main levels, but of course there were other steps. The notes actually were converted (somehow) to the printed word. I have now quoted it. There may be some other levels in there somewhere.

But we cannot ask Smith for details of what he witnessed. And we can’t ask Gardner for further details on what Smith told him. And unfortunately Gardner’s notes are not all that well-rounded or detailed.

Of course, one of the great mysteries of the Erdnase case is, “Why on earth did Gardner not give Smith eight or ten names to choose from?” Maybe he did not want to appear as though he were giving Smith the third degree. Yet the same procedure was apparently followed to a “T” by Gardner after he learned the full name Milton Franklin Andrews. What does he do? He writes Smith a letter (in 1949) saying (page 14 of *TGSC*):

Recently I ran across some clues involving a man named Milton Franklin
Gardner should have taken, because it tends to give Smith an idea of what his response should be. I realize that Smith had already indicated that he didn’t remember, so in a sense this was probably okay, to refresh Smith’s recollection, but anything (recognition-wise) that flowed from this would likely have been highly unreliable.

Gardner also said (same page):

I realize, of course, that it would be almost impossible to recall the name of so casual a contact, but just on the chance that the name might seem familiar I thought I’d write.

Again I say, “Huh?” The guy supposedly remembered “Andrews,” so Gardner SHOULD have said, “Since you were so sharp in remembering his last name, I’m sure you will know whether or not this is the right Andrews.”

Smith’s reply was not a one that lends credence to his earlier recognition of the name Andrews. To make a short story extremely short: He did not recognize “Milton,” and he thought he might recognize “Franklin,” but he indicated that it could be his “imagination.”

Well, there is more that could be said. But some of the stuff that Smith said (as reflected in *The Gardner-Smith Correspondence*) seems pretty equivocal.

And maybe Gardner’s approach was the best that could have been done, though from the foregoing, it appears that there could have been a number of improvements.

— Tom Sawyer

**Lybrary** | 09/02/15 04:18 PM | link | filter

Tom, I agree 100%. Particularly the recollection of a name, 45 years later, is highly suspect in and of itself, because many other names have already overlaid this memory. Add to this Gardner’s one sided questioning essentially planting the name in Smith’s memory and you are left with nothing but misinformation.

But for me personally the real mystery is not Gardner’s less than optimal way to conduct his interview, but the almost single minded reliance on this one piece of highly unreliable memory by almost the entire Erdnase hunting community.

**Roger M.** | 09/02/15 04:27 PM | link | filter
candidate whose name isn't "Andrews" (or Sanders for that matter).

I guess that makes it a wash both ways.

Roger M. wrote: Well, it's equally a mystery as to how quickly folks are willing to dismiss Smith's recollections, especially if dismissing those recollections involves trying to hype a candidate whose name isn't "Andrews" (or Sanders for that matter).

I guess that makes it a wash both ways.

Please show us where Tom has hyped a name. I don't think Tom even has a name he favors at this point. The name Andrews has been hyped for 70 years based on nothing but rumors and faulty 45 year old memories.

Richard Hatch | 09/02/15 06:25 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: Tom, I agree 100%. Particularly the recollection of a name, 45 years later, is highly suspect in and of itself, because many other names have already overlaid this memory. Add to this Gardner's one sided questioning essentially planting the name in Smith's memory and you are left with nothing but misinformation.

But for me personally the real mystery is not Gardner's less than optimal way to conduct his interview, but the almost single minded reliance on this one piece of highly unreliable memory by almost the entire Erdnase hunting community.

Without knowing the actual details of the author's identity and his interaction with Smith, we can't know that what he told Martin Gardner was "misinformation". And most of those who favor the Andrews theory of authorship likely don't do so solely or even principally on the basis of Smith's testimony, but more likely on the compelling and almost certainly not coincidental reverse spelling of S. W. Erdnase to arrive at E. S. Andrews. Obviously, we don't know if that is the author's true name, but if it is not a coincidence (and I don't believe it is) then it seems likely that is either a clue to the author's identity or a deliberate "red herring" to confuse the authorship issue. Those who favor the author's need for "strong anonymity" favor the latter. My personal profile of the author does not ascribe a need for such "strong anonymity to him, so I favor the former and think it reasonable to start a search looking for an "E. S. Andrew..."
In my reading of Gardner's interview and correspondence with Smith, I am impressed with Smith's carefully qualifying of what he is sure of versus what he is uncertain of. For example, though prompted, he is sure of the last name "Andrews". Not so clear on the first name or initials - possibly he never knew them... It was a more formal time and a business relationship that may have simply been conducted between "Mr. Andrews" and "Mr. Smith", though Erdnase knew enough about Smith to put his correct first and middle initial on the title page (and why would he do that if he wanted "strong anonymity"? Anyone could have tracked Smith down in the Chicago directories for 1902/1903 and likely gotten enough information - hotel and dates of meeting, bank used for check, exact physical description, nature of relationship with Dalrymple, how the author got in contact with him, etc... - to narrow the search considerably). Gardner describe's Smith's mind as "sharp" and when we have been able to follow up on statements he made, that has been confirmed. For example, he told Gardner that he had illustrated a book about the sister of Jesus called "His Sister" at about the same time and was proud of the work he had done on it (unlike his work for Erdnase, where the author stressed accuracy over artistry). He couldn't remember the author's name but he thought the publisher was "Wynona" (Gardner's spelling in his notes). Gardner was unable to further identify and find a copy of the book in his research, but he lacked today's internet resources. Here's a copy of the book online: [http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100594482](http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100594482).

The title is correct, and the publisher is "Winona". Considering Gardner was interviewing him more than forty years later, I think this demonstrates a remarkable memory on Smith's part.

In their correspondence after the initial in person interview, they consistently refer to the author as "Andrews", not "Erdnase", indicating that there was no doubt in Smith's mind on this point, just as he was certain the man could not have been 6' 1.5" tall (MFA's height).

Gardner also corresponded with Edgar Pratt, who confirmed the name Andrews (though Pratt was referring to MFA) and Charlie Maly and Audley Dunham, associates of James Harto, who Pratt claimed had helped Erdnase with the book. Both Maly and Dunham confirmed that Harto had corresponded with Erdnase, and both refer to him as "Andrews". Dunham says "Yes, I have heard Jim Harto speak of Andrews..." Maly says, "Your informer is correct - Jim Harto did have contact with Andrews (Erdnase)..." While, like Smith, not independent recollections of the author's name (since Gardner wrote them seeking confirmation that Harto had, as claimed by Pratt, known Erdnase/Andrews), they also tend to support the Andrews theory of authorship.

Personally, I like Smith's memory and I like the "Andrews" theories and have not yet seen compelling arguments to cause me to favor other theories (though I must admit I like them, too. I just don't favor them at present:}
Richard Hatch wrote: And most of those who favor the Andrews theory of authorship likely don't do so solely or even principally on the basis of Smith's testimony, but more likely on the compelling and almost certainly not coincidental reverse spelling of S. W. Erdnase to arrive at E. S. Andrews.

There are two problems with this. All of the Andrews 'evidence' is tightly connected - one caused the other - and thus not independent verification of each other. That S.W. Erdnase reverses into E.S. Andrews, a real name in use, was most likely the cause of the various rumors that it supposedly was an Andrews. Gardner's questioning also comes from that rumor which he believed and thus tried to confirm. So all of the evidence comes down to the fact that the pseudonym reverses to a name that is in use. However, that is simply one of several possible theories (German nickname, German slur, intentional smoke screen, or some other logic lost to us) to explain the name. It is not evidence. There is not one shred of real evidence that supports that it was an Andrews or any of the other theories. And to Smith's memory, just because somebody is intelligent doesn't mean he has a good memory. Just because he was right in some things doesn't mean he is correct in all of his statements. I also read Smith's letters to indicate he is very shaky with names, easily mixes them up (see Franklin story) and even admits that his vivid imagination may play tricks on his recollections. Smith was also very eager to help Gardner which has been shown in research on memory and witness testimony as a red flag. Investigators stay away from such witnesses for good reasons. They are unreliable.

Regarding the strong versus weak anonymity, let's not kid ourselves. Just because we are a group of a dozen or so die hard Erdnase sleuths does not mean everybody wants to track down authors. Most readers would take the name as is, not give it a second thought, and focus on the contents. This means the danger of somebody actually trying to track down the author by starting with the illustrator name, particularly a Smith which is the most common name in the US, doesn't strike me as particularly worrisome for an author who wants to stay anonymous. And even if somebody would do that and would successfully track down the illustrator who says Smith would have cooperated and revealed his real name?

MagicbyAlfred | 09/02/15 07:12 PM | link | filter

In a civil case in a court of law in the U.S. all the plaintiff need do (often to recover an award in the millions from the defendant) is establish his case by a "preponderance of the evidence." Put another way, that translates to a "more likely than not" standard, or in mathematical terms, 51%. Though I must confess that my own knowledge and research on the Erdnase issue pales by comparison to virtually every contributor who
circumstantial evidence coupled with and in addition to the reversed name spelling to add up to mere coincidence. I am sure that there will be much more argument and evidence offered before this is presented (if ever) to a jury of Erdnase’s magical peers for a verdict. But I must say that if I was on that jury and was charged with rendering my vote today, it would be in favor of the Andrews theory, certainly as being substantially more likely than not. That being said, it remains to be seen if a case is ever presented featuring evidence that proves Erdnase’s true identity "beyond a reasonable doubt" or "beyond the shadow of a doubt" - the standard applicable to determining guilt in an American criminal case.

As an addendum to my previous post, I had not read Lybrary’s recent post at the time of writing mine, and I must admit that Lybrary sets forth a pretty convincing rebuttal to the Andrews theory. There is also the nagging logical question that arises: If someone were writing under a pseudonym, raising the inference that they wanted to conceal their identity, why would it be in the form of such a pat and easily discernible anagram?

Dick, I can’t remember seeing those Dunham and Maly quotations before. That is very interesting.

*The Man Who Was Erdnase* seems to me to be extremely vague about both Dunham and Maly, regarding their support for the asserted Harto connection with Erdnase (or Andrews). I don’t think I have ever seen any of them cited before this as support for the general notion that Erdnase’s name was Andrews.

Like Chris, I see that as a separate historical thread: For whatever reason, they either thought Milton Franklin Andrews was Erdnase, or thought that Erdnase’s name was Andrews, or both.

Regarding Smith, we know his reason for thinking Erdnase was Andrews: Erdnase told him so (or so Smith recalled).

Hurt McDermott says on page 64 of *Artifice, Ruse & Erdnase* that, "It’s not even perfectly clear whether it’s Ireland or Maly who identified Erdnase as Andrews." Also relevant is pages 135, where Hurt says: "Perhaps Harto had agreed to keep Erdnase’s true identity secret as he also didn’t share his knowledge of Erdnase’s identity with Audley Dunham or Charles Maly either."
I'm very unclear as to what Harto's or Maly's or Dunham's evidence was with regard to the name Andrews. If it is anything like Pratt's, then "Ouch." If it is not, then great, that could potentially be a strong argument that Erdnase's name was Andrews.

--Tom Sawyer

Carlo Morpurgo | 09/02/15 08:17 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote:

Roger M. wrote: Well, it's equally a mystery as to how quickly folks are willing to dismiss Smith's recollections, especially if dismissing those recollections involves trying to hype a candidate whose name isn't "Andrews" (or Sanders for that matter).

I guess that makes it a wash both ways.

Please show us where Tom has hyped a name. I don't think Tom even has a name he favors at this point. The name Andrews has been hyped for 70 years based on nothing but rumors and faulty 45 year old memories.

he has not...but you have Back when you highlighted, more than once, some facts (or factoids) in support of Gallaway that "fitted" Smith's recollections.....

Roger M. | 09/02/15 08:20 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: Please show us where Tom has hyped a name.

You misunderstand Chris ... it wasn't Tom I was referencing ... it was you.

My point simply being that you're very quick to dismiss anything from the Gardner-Smith Correspondence that doesn't match up perfectly with your proposed candidate.

And yet the Gardner-Smith exchange remains the most solid, actual evidence in the entire case.

lybrary | 09/02/15 09:06 PM | link | filter
Which by the way everybody else has done who put forward their case. But as I have pointed out the main points in favor of Gallaway do not rely on Smith's recollections which is exactly the reason why it is such a strong case. Most of Smith's recollections do in fact match Gallaway. One could even make the Andrews recollection fit by using the red herring theory to explain the name. But there are good reasons to doubt Smith and that is why I have not made his memories an essential part of the Gallaway case. To refresh your memory, the Gallaway case rests primarily on:

1) Was an employee at McKinney
2) Owned a first edition
3) Publishes his books identical to Erdnase (self-published, copyright applied, price prominently on title page)
4) Sounds like Erdnase (Olsson report, witty, ...)
5) Similar approach of teaching a subject. Similar groundbreaking books.
6) Interest in gambling

None of this requires Smith. But if you want you can now throw in Smith which means pretty much all of his recollections of height, age, hotel, no-sign of marriage, W in the surname etc. either fit or can easily be explained.

Richard Hatch has made part of his E.S. Andrews case on the premise that he MAYBE is related to Dalrymple. And that is a big MAYBE. If you want to talk about hype then this would be double hype because we can neither be sure about Smith's Dalrymple comment nor do we know if ES Andrews is even remotely related to Dalrymple. If you would be really objectively comparing the cases made so far you would see the double standards which are applied.

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**Bill Mullins** | 09/02/15 10:11 PM | link | filter

The 1944 Fireside Publications Canadian edition says it is copyrighted that year in Canada. Has anyone ever confirmed this?

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**Roger M.** | 09/02/15 11:25 PM | link | filter

*lybrary wrote:* If you would be really objectively comparing the cases made so far you would see the double standards which are applied.

All the other champions of candidates have refrained from making definitive statements that their candidate is definitely Erdnase.

It seems (to me at least) that all the other champions have maintained an open mind.
Gallaway is an interesting candidate, and that's all he is based on the evidence brought forward to date. Again, no double standard here, as all the other candidates are equally as "interesting" as Gallaway might turn out to be.

You might want to detour onto the road which states that Gallaway might be a good candidate for Erdnase, as opposed to the one you're currently on - which tends to repeatedly state that Gallaway is Erdnase ... and everybody else is wrong.

Or do as you see fit to do ... but don't claim "double standards" in the Erdnase thread just because nobody is jumping up and down congratulating you on having found our Mr. Erdnase.

Not to put too fine a point on it, but you haven’t found Mr. Erdnase, you've simply identified another candidate - (and you're the second person to do so, as Jay Marshall was first to ID Gallaway as worthy of having a look)

Bill Mullins | 09/03/15 12:23 AM | link | filter

I've taken a while off from the discussion, for fear I was getting too excited about it. But you guys have drawn me back in.

lybrary wrote:

Bill Mullins wrote: If you are Gallaway, and wanting to be anonymous, and are willing to lie when stating your residence, it doesn't make much sense to put down your place of employment instead. There are hundreds of thousands of other addresses in Chicago that are more anonymous.

You still want to know what is mailed to you by the copyright office. Putting down a completely fake address makes little sense. Putting down your employers address where you have access to correspondence makes sense. His actions regarding the addresses he provided are completely consistent and sensible.

Maybe so, but they don't support wanting to be anonymous. The McKinney address on the copyright form is an straightforward path back to the author. You've said it yourself -- he needed to be able to be contacted there.
and thus not independent verification of each other.

This is simply not true. For example, Sprong's statement that Andrews = Erdnase, as told to him by Drake, is completely independent of the other statements supporting that thesis (Smith, Pratt, Rullman, etc).

To refresh your memory, the Gallaway case rests primarily on:

3) Publishes his books identical to Erdnase (self-published, copyright applied, price prominently on title page)

One major difference in publication, which is hugely relevant to a case of author attribution, is that Gallaway wanted the world to know that he had authored his book, and the author of EATCT didn't want anyone to know who wrote it.

Your list of similarities is greatly outweighed by the problems with your theory:

1. No evidence that Gallaway had any skill with cards.
2. That Gallaway was Erdnase gained no traction with Jay Marshall, who was much closer to witnesses and evidence than you or I could ever hope to be.
3. Suppositions and surmises, but no evidence, for any theory that explains why Gallaway would use the pseudonym "Erdnase".
4. No evidence that Gallaway had any interest in conjuring.
5. Gallaway's life in the years before 1902 is not consistent with any expert 19th century expert gambler that we know about. J. P. Quinn, George Devol, J. H. Green, Kid Royal, Canada Bill. Gamblers with the level of skill of Erdnase didn't have long term, stable "day jobs".
6. No explanation for how and why Gallaway could write a groundbreaking revolutionairy book, and then abandon the subject for the rest of his life.

You've taken a couple of legitimate interesting coincidences and combined them with "plausibles" and "he must haves" to build a case.
Bill Mullins wrote: 2. That Gallaway was Erdnase gained no traction with Jay Marshall, who was much closer to witnesses and evidence than you or I could ever hope to be.

There is no evidence that Marshall ever considered Gallaway a possible Erdnase. The Andrews theory was so strong that anybody without an Andrews name was not considered. And even if we want to go out on a limb and say Marshall may have considered Gallaway, where is the evidence on which bases he rejected him?

Bill Mullins wrote: 3. Suppositions and surmises, but no evidence, for any theory that explains why Gallaway would use the pseudonym "Erdnase".

The reversal theory used for E.S. Andrews is exactly the same - a theory - which comes with its own share of problems of being too obvious. Both can explain the name (with Gallaway we even have 3 possible theories, not just one), but they are all just theories. We have no evidence on this for any candidate.

Bill Mullins wrote: 4. No evidence that Gallaway had any interest in conjuring.

No evidence for ES Andrews to have any interest in conjuring.

Bill Mullins wrote: 5. Gallaway's life in the years before 1902 is not consistent with any expert 19th century expert gambler that we know about. J. P. Quinn, George DeVol, J. H. Green, Kid Royal, Canada Bill. Gamblers with the level of skill of Erdnase didn't have long term, stable "day jobs".

This is wrong on two levels. i) Who says Gallaway had stable day jobs? Everything I can see is that he changed companies as frequently as people got hair cuts. Certainly not the stable day job you make it out to be. ii) As I have demonstrated before, there is plenty of time for somebody with a stable day job and no kids to practice and acquire the skills. Experts come in all shapes and sizes. By all measures Erdnase is a very special person. There is no requirement to make him fit the stereotype.

Bill Mullins wrote: 6. No explanation for how and why Gallaway could write a groundbreaking revolutionary book, and then abandon the subject for the rest of his life.

Plenty of reasons. Remember, he got married, then his son was born, he advanced in his printing career. All good reasons to give up your active card advantage play. With this you can see that your assertions are either outright wrong or not any different to ES Andrews. However, there is not more evidence for ES Andrews than he lived in Chicago and he occasionally played cards socially. But on the Gallaway side
Bill Mullins wrote: One major difference in publication, which is hugely relevant to a case of author attribution, is that Gallaway wanted the world to know that he had authored his book, and the author of EATCT didn’t want anyone to know who wrote it.

Common sense, Bill, common sense. Who wants to be known to cheat people out of their money? Particularly if you are not making your old cheating days your new career. Being a print estimator is a respectable profession. No need to hide your skills on print estimating, but plenty of reasons not to be known as card advantage player. Really, Bill, is that the best you can do?

Tom Sawyer | 09/03/15 07:28 AM | link | filter

Hi All,

Chris said that all of the Andrews evidence is “tightly connected.” Bill said that this “is simply not true.”

Both of these men elaborated on their positions, so it seems pretty clear what each of them means, at least if you are sort of familiar with the basic facts.

In this post I’ll talk about Chris’s view, which is probably much more difficult to understand or accept for those not all that familiar with the Sprong-Harto-Maly-Dunham details. (My “separate historical thread” remark in my most recent post here was intended to apply only to Harto-Maly-Dunham.)

Actually, I don’t know whether I am restating Chris’s position exactly congruently with what he has said, so you can view what I say below independent of what Chris meant, if it turns out that what I am saying is different.

We have largely accepted that the people that have been mentioned as sources for “Erdnase is someone named Andrews” actually got their information directly or indirectly from Erdnase. But the proof of this, except as to Smith, appears to be extremely weak.

Except as to Smith, in significant part upon that "proof" comes from “no one knows exactly where.” It seems to be fruit form a tree called "I know Erdnase was named Andrews, because the pen name includes 'Andrews' reversed."

So, the question is, “Does this ‘poisonous tree’ idea hold water?” And I think that under one reasonable view of the evidence, it does.
good possibility that Dunham got his identification from Frances Marshall. And if this is so, then I guess there is no evidence that Harto ever identified Erdnase as being named Andrews. I don’t even know that Harto believed that his Erdnase was named Andrews. (See the first full paragraph on page 135 of Hurt’s book.)

2. Regarding Sprong, his comments are no stronger than “Drake’s,” but it has not been demonstrated clearly what Drake’s source of information was.

3. Regarding Smith, yes "his face lighted up," and he obviously believe Erdnase’s name was Andrews. But the fact remains that this could be an inaccurate recollection, even if in his own mind he was absolutely, positively certain. It is hard for me to say to anyone, “Don’t worry, Gardner’s specific mention of the name can be disregarded.”

The point is, beliefs that “Erdnase was named Andrews” held by Harto-Maley-Dunham-Drake-Sprong and even Smith, could be directly connectible with an idea that one or more people just inferred from the backwards spelling. The evidence just isn’t clear.

What are the probabilities that the “poisonous tree” theory is accurate? I don’t know, but I think that most theories that “Erdnase was not named Andrews” probably accept its validity, unless there is some other explanation for the statements of Harto, Maly, et alii.

--Tom Sawyer

The Andrews rumors fit both somebody with actual name E.S. Andrews (except the simple name reversal is too obvious) and somebody without it, by using it as cover name. Reverse spelling the cover name functions as psychological convincer. Based on the 70+ years of search for an Andrews proofs how good a method it is to hide your real name.

You may now ask why the cover name E.S. Andrews? I say why not? Andrews is a reasonably common surname. Andrew is also a common first name. All good reasons to use it as cover name.

Having said that, the whole Andrews discussion is moot. It doesn't mean a thing. It doesn't make any one candidate more or less likely. If your candidate's name is Andrews then he fits the rumor. If your candidate is not Andrews then to make the rumor fit it was his cover name. That means we can simply forget about it and move
Tom Sawyer wrote: 3. Regarding Smith, yes "his face lighted up,"

--Tom Sawyer

Was the Smith-Gardner conversation via Skype?

Richard Hatch | 09/03/15 09:03 AM | link | filter

Carlo Morpurgo wrote:

Tom Sawyer wrote: 3. Regarding Smith, yes "his face lighted up,"

--Tom Sawyer

Was the Smith-Gardner conversation via Skype?

This interview was in person, not via phone, as has sometimes been misstated.

mam | 09/03/15 11:54 AM | link | filter

If I wanted to examine printing errors in the first edition, what are my options?

(Ideally that would be looking at an actual first edition, but I don't have access to one.)

Bill Marquardt | 09/03/15 01:38 PM | link | filter

@lybrary - Would you consider it a possibility that Erdnase was an acquaintance of Gallaway, and that he asked Gallaway for help in publishing his book, knowing that Gallaway was in the printing business? Perhaps Gallaway even acted as a ghost writer or editor of the book.

As Gallaway appears to have had some interest in advantage play but might not have had enough time to have been an experienced player himself, I would think that such a scenario is possible. This is pure conjecture of course, but it could explain a few things.

lybrary | 09/03/15 02:02 PM | link | filter

Bill Marquardt wrote: @lybrary - Would you consider it a possibility that Erdnase was an acquaintance of Gallaway, and that he asked Gallaway for help in publishing his book, knowing that Gallaway was in the printing
As Gallaway appears to have had some interest in advantage play but might not have had enough time to have been an experienced player himself, I would think that such a scenario is possible. This is pure conjecture of course, but it could explain a few things.

Bill, I am certainly all ears, particularly if you have some evidence or arguments for it. You say it would explain a few things. Perhaps you can lay out these things. I should add that I have made some investigations into this area. At some point I thought that his older brother August may be the real cardshark. There is some evidence for it, but also some against it. Also Olsson who did the linguistic analysis did comment on this during our email and phone exchange. He feels it was unlikely a ghostwritten book.

Bill Marquardt | 09/03/15 04:38 PM | link | filter

You have made an excellent case to include Gallaway as a candidate, and I am not really arguing against him being Erdnase. Your case, however, like all the others, lacks a convincing piece of evidence to positively name him as the author of EATCT.

It is difficult to remember all the facts that have been presented, but I understand that Gallaway was involved in the printing business from an early age, making it difficult to attribute to him a great deal of expertise in cardsharpening. Obviously, he knew a great deal about book printing. I recall that the introduction to EATCT contains language similar to Gallaway's writing in his estimating book. If Gallaway had been some sort of "go-between" between someone called Andrews, whether a real name or not, and the printer, that could explain how he was intimately involved in the process of writing the book and yet not be the actual author. This scenario also eliminates the need to prove that he was an expert card handler or a magician.

Presumptuous, yes, but such an explanation would resolve the issue of him being both "author" and "not author," effectively making both sides correct. If I were to write a historical novel based on the story of EATCT and its mysterious author, I would likely choose such a plot (and leave the ending AMBIGUOUS.)

mam | 09/03/15 05:13 PM | link | filter

I’m trying to assemble a better picture of the James McKinney operation. These are the titles I have found that were printed by McKinney, based on the bankruptcy files:

Books printed by James McKinney for Jamieson-Higgins:
Girls from the Bible by Susan Clark Handy
Helen’s Babies by John Habberton
Moon Children by Laura Dayton Fessenden
Peck’s Red Head Boy by George W. Peck
Peck’s Uncle Ike by George W. Peck
Sunbeams by George W. Peck
Tales from Longfellow by Molly K. Bellew
Tales from Tennyson by Molly K. Bellew
“2002”: Childlife One Hundred Years from Now by Laura Dayton Fessenden

Works printed by James McKinney yet to be identified:

“How to sell perfect speaker”
Frontispiece for “Health, Strength and Beauty”
Music “Just because you are you”
“World’s Celestial” cloth bound
Galveston Prospectus
“Story of Africa”
South Africa
Poems
Goethe

Manuscripts held by James McKinney at the time of the bankruptcy, but never printed:

“Maxims of Theodore Roosevelt”
“Boudoir Library”

Does anyone know of any titles that are not in the list above? (Except, of course, a certain card book.)

Of these titles, Moon Children was mentioned in this thread by Richard Hatch back in 2012 and I believe he owns a copy. I have digital copies of a few of the others, and also of that Jack Pots book by Eugene Edwards that might or might not have been printed by McKinney, but was published by Jamison-Higgins. Also mentioned back then is Yankee Mother Goose and Old Mother Hubbard but I have yet to confirm that these were actually printed by McKinney, although likely, because:

It seems like James McKinney and Jamieson-Higgins were very tightly connected, maybe even to an extent we don’t yet know. McKinney printed virtually all of their books, but something else went on in their business dealings that caused one concerned creditor in the bankruptcy, The Paper Mills Co., to write to the district
Your petitioner further represents that it is also a creditor of Jamieson-Higgins Co., and that from a hurried examination of the books of the Jamieson-Higgins Co. it appears that said company and James McKinney have been giving each other accommodation paper and had numerous transactions with each other, and that several thousand dollars were paid by Jamieson-Higgins Co. to James McKinney within a few days prior to the filing of the petition in bankruptcy against both Jamieson-Higgins Co. and James McKinney,

Your petitioner further represents that it believes it is absolutely necessary in order to ascertain the exact financial condition of the bankrupt, to have an examination of the books of said bankrupt made by an expert accountant, and that such examination should be made in conjunction with the examination of the books of Jamieson-Higgins Co.

Your petitioner therefore prays that an order may be entered herein directing some responsible expert accountant to make an examination of the books of said bankrupt, in conjunction with the examination of the books of said Jamieson-Higgins Co., at the expense of this estate.

(This is from page 402 in the Lybrary version of the bankruptcy files.)

Tom Sawyer found this notice in The Bookseller, January 1903:

FAILURE OF JAMIESON-HIGGINS COMPANY.

The Jamieson-Higgins Company incorporated, of this city, was placed in the hands of George W. Stanford as receiver by Judge Kohlsaat on December 23. The house was organized in 1900 by Charles Higgins and Samuel W. Jamieson, and had of late made a specialty of new juvenile books with colored pictures. Indications have pointed to this failure for some months back, but it was hoped that the holiday sales would enable the company to tide over the danger.

The house was tangled up with the printing business of James Kinney, which is also in the hands of a receiver. Mr. Kinney is said to be a heavy stockholder in the publishing business. Liabilities are placed at about $40,000, with assets nominally valued at $30,000. The books show to be due by the company in open accounts $4,231.27, notes $31,791.60. Books sold on consignment all over the country, with a small stock on hand, plates and copyrights comprise the principal assets.
says that both companies filed for bankruptcy at the same time. I’m as of now tracking down the Jamieson-Higgins bankruptcy files in the hope that it will yield even more background, asset info, etc. regarding their publishing business. If interesting materials on Jamieson-Higgins can be found in the McKinney files, it probably goes both ways, is my thinking.

Another line of investigation is the list of employees at McKinney that can be found as creditors in the bankruptcy files, claiming "wages earned as a laborer":

Edward Gallaway
George Billings
Patrick McKinney
George Mausey
Fred Hitzleberger
John Hallenan
G. Anderson
E. Langan
D. Johnson
Carl Smith
G. Chandler
M. McCabe
F. Lacy
Bartlett Donahue
Gus Steinmayer
J. A. Vogenthaler
Louis Levin
F. Schrum
J. Zimmerman
John Way
W. J. Smith
W. P. Taylor
Joe Warren
C. Dunnett
E. J. Hellenback
F. H. Thorpe

The first three names have the same address, 79 Van Buren Street, at a couple of places, I wonder why, and what was at that address? I have not done any research on any of these names yet, just thought I’d throw it out here first. Except, of course, the first name, of which there is quite some research being done.
tightly connected, maybe even to an extent we don't yet know....I'm as of now tracking down the Jamieson-Higgins bankruptcy files in the hope that it will yield even more background, asset info, etc.

I can spare you that work. I have the Jamieson-Higgins bankruptcy files as long as I have the James McKinney files. I got them at the same time exactly because of their close connection. But so far I have not found anything that would really be noteworthy.

For all those who have bought the James McKinney bankruptcy files from Lybrary.com you can now download the Jamieson-Higgins bankruptcy files from your digital shelf. You will find new download links called JH.PDF, which are the ones for the Jamieson-Higgins stuff. Enjoy and thanks for your support of my work locating these files.

Bill Marquardt wrote: You have made an excellent case to include Gallaway as a candidate, and I am not really arguing against him being Erdnase. Your case, however, like all the others, lacks a convincing piece of evidence to positively name him as the author of EATCT.

It is difficult to remember all the facts that have been presented, but I understand that Gallaway was involved in the printing business from an early age, making it difficult to attribute to him a great deal of expertise in cardsharping. Obviously, he knew a great deal about book printing. I recall that the introduction to EATCT contains language similar to Gallaway's writing in his estimating book. If Gallaway had been some sort of "go-between" between someone called Andrews, whether a real name or not, and the printer, that could explain how he was intimately involved in the process of writing the book and yet not be the actual author. This scenario also eliminates the need to prove that he was an expert card handler or a magician.

Presumptuous, yes, but such an explanation would resolve the issue of him being both "author" and "not author," effectively making both sides correct. If I were to write a historical novel based on the story of EATCT and its mysterious author, I would likely choose such a plot (and leave the ending AMBIGUOUS.)

Bill, yes Gallaway started to learn the printers art with 14 at the Delphos Herald. But I don't understand why some feel that would prevent him from becoming an expert card handler and gambler. We know for sure that Gallaway did not have any children
be: census, marriage records. So for all we know Gallaway was single all the way to 1901 when he got married, which also provides a nice reason for why he changes his lifestyle. Why would a single person, even with a steady job (also that is quite unsure), not be able to achieve expert level with cards? There was certainly enough time for him to do that. Also there were plenty of gambling places in Chicago to accommodate a cardshark for a long time (If you doubt that read for example "Chicago by Gaslight" or other accounts of the gambling scene in Chicago during that time.) What exactly do you feel makes this impossible? I feel some have a too narrow romantic stereotype of the cheating gambler.

Richard Hatch | 09/03/15 06:22 PM | link | filter

lybrary wrote:

mam wrote: It seems like James McKinney and Jamieson-Higgins were very tightly connected, maybe even to an extent we don't yet know....I'm as of now tracking down the Jamieson-Higgins bankruptcy files in the hope that it will yield even more background, asset info, etc.

I can spare you that work. I have the Jamieson-Higgins bankruptcy files as long as I have the James McKinney files. I got them at the same time exactly because of their close connection. But so far I have not found anything that would really be noteworthy.

For all those who have bought the James McKinney bankruptcy files from Lybrary.com you can now download the Jamieson-Higgins bankruptcy files from your digital shelf. You will find new download links called JH.PDF, which are the ones for the Jamieson-Higgins stuff. Enjoy and thanks for your support of my work locating these files.

I'm glad to see these released, as I have had access from another source but not had permission (till now) to reveal any information gleaned from them. The one thing that I spotted that I believe may be of significance is the very close writing match of "S. W. Jamieson" to the person who filled out the Copyright Statement for Erdnase. The capital S, W, J, and an F and several of the lowercase letters look like perfect matches to me, so though I am no expert on handwriting, I strongly believe that S. W. Jamieson filled out the copyright application for Erdnase. He was a co-founder and treasurer of Jamieson-Higgins, not an employee of McKinney, and probably too young himself to have been the author. But why would he fill out the application? One theory that has been discussed is that perhaps the author took the manuscript to J-H to publish and they took it to McKinney, but declined to issue it as their imprint due to the Comstock laws. Pure speculation, of course, at this point... But take a look and see if you don't
mam wrote: Frank. H. Thorpe

I have not done any research on any of these names yet, just thought I'd throw it out here first.

I have done some research on Frank H. Thorp, because he was both an employee and he is also mentioned in combination with some unnamed plates. He was actually my first hot lead finding the bankruptcy files, because I thought this was quite interesting that an employee also owned a set of printing plates. (This by the way further demonstrates that running your own book as employee wasn't in any way unusual. I know some question that, but the Thorp data in the bankruptcy files clearly documents this.) I think I located him in the census where he is mentioned as printer. Here is what I found on him so far:


1910 census [http://www.mocavo.com/Frank-H-Thorp-B18 ... 5220924940](http://www.mocavo.com/Frank-H-Thorp-B18 ... 5220924940)

1920 census [http://www.mocavo.com/Frank-H-Thorp-B18 ... 5162321154](http://www.mocavo.com/Frank-H-Thorp-B18 ... 5162321154)


There is also another Thorp family listed right above which is probably related: Levi Thorp, Mary S Thorp, Franklin Thorp (8 years old).

I even tried to connect Thorp to the famous Edward Oakley Thorp who wrote "Beat the Dealer" who was the one who developed the first blackjack card counting systems. I thought perhaps gambling runs in the family. Edward O. Thorp was born in Chicago. But so far I was not able to make a connection.

One way to start further teasing out the list of employees would be to identify the age of everybody. This could give us a rough idea of seniority. Combine this with the wage claim data and we might be able to create an org-chart for McKinney
gleaned from them. The one thing that I spotted that I believe may be of significance is the very close writing match of "S. W. Jamieson" to the person who filled out the Copyright Statement for Erdnase. The capital S, W, J, and an F and several of the lowercase letters look like perfect matches to me, so though I am no expert on handwriting, I strongly believe that S. W. Jamieson filled out the copyright application for Erdnase. He was a co-founder and treasurer of Jamieson-Higgins, not an employee of McKinney, and probably too young himself to have been the author. But why would he fill out the application? One theory that has been discussed is that perhaps the author took the manuscript to J-H to publish and they took it to McKinney, but declined to issue it as their imprint due to the Comstock laws. Pure speculation, of course, at this point... But take a look and see if you don't agree that S. W. Jamieson likely filled out the copyright application. Does this help any of the known candidates?

Richard, that is an interesting observation. My initial thought here is the following: Jamieson-Higgins was a publisher. One of the things publishers do is register the copyrights for the books they publish. James McKinney is only a printer not a publisher. It would be natural for James McKinney to refer Erdnase to his friend Jamieson to help him with applying for the copyright, and perhaps Jamieson said: "Alright, I will do it for you."

Richard Hatch | 09/03/15 07:29 PM | link | filter

Conjuring Arts wrote: Conjuring Arts has also had the McKinney Bankruptcy papers for some time and have decided to release them to all, free of charge. The files are now available to search and view via Ask Alexander to all account holders (even at the free level) and are in the S. W. Erdnase directory located here:

Erdnase

Please note that this will also allow users to post links to interesting pages.

It’s probably not a coincidence, but I noticed that the above link now also includes the Jamieson-Higgins bankruptcy files. For those wanting to compare the handwriting, here is a link to writing by "S. W. Jamieson"(in the lower right hand corner): http://askalexander.org/display/66806/McKinney+bankruptcy+papers+file+7+electronic+resource/31 and here is the Erdnase copyright application: https://onedrive.live.com/redir?resid=8FDC2BFE754ADD8!209&authkey=!AKkHdxZGXDAvNx8&v=3&ithint=phot
**Conjuring Arts wrote:** Conjuring Arts has also had the McKinney Bankruptcy papers for some time and have decided to release them to all, free of charge. The files are now available to search and view via Ask Alexander to all account holders (even at the free level) and are in the S. W. Erdnase directory located here:

Erdnase

Please note that this will also allow users to post links to interesting pages.

It's probably not a coincidence, but I noticed that the above link now also includes the Jamieson-Higgins bankruptcy files. For those wanting to compare the handwriting, here is a link to writing by "S. W. Jamieson"(in the lower right hand corner):

http://askalexander.org/display/66806/McKinney+bankruptcy+papers+file+7+electronic+resource/31

and here is the Erdnase copyright application:

https://onedrive.live.com/redir?resid=8FDC2BFE7554ADD8!209&authkey=!AKkHdxZGXDAyNx8&v=3&ithint=photo%2cjpeg

The "g" seems more of a problem...as well as the "y".

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**lybrary | 09/03/15 09:15 PM | link | filter**

I have now compared the little bit of writing that is in the bankruptcy files of Jamieson and the EATCT copyright form and I have to say this is as good a match as one can expect. The upper case characters do match almost perfectly. And also several of the lower case characters are a decent match. But it should be fairly straight forward to put this totally to rest, because Jamieson must have filled out other application forms for Jamieson–Higgins and those should be available. As publisher they would frequently apply for copyrights. Congratulations Richard. One open question answered.

The important question I am contemplating is: "Does that mean anything for any of the proposed candidates?"
Ancestry.com, that is consistent with the bankruptcy files and the copyright application.

Yes, the lower case g and y are different, but that possibly is a result of using one’s most formal writing (in lieu of a typewriter) for the official form, vs. routine handwriting on the bankruptcy files.

But similarities abound. Compare the J in "Jas McKinney" (copyright) to "Jamieson" (bankruptcy); the F in "Feb" (copyright) to F in "Forward" (bankruptcy). Both documents have two different, similar versions of lower case e: one is a typical cursive e, the other resembles a backwards 3.

All of these examples are somewhat more stylized than either the Spencerian or Palmer methods of handwriting that were taught during the era. As such, they are deviations from the norm, so it would be highly coincidental for two different writers to deviate in the same way on multiple letters.

About two weeks ago I sent a query about the issue to a former officer in the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, someone with great experience in comparing handwriting samples and testifying about it in court, to see what could be said about the two documents. I don't know if I will get a reply -- usually this person charges professional fees for such opinions, and I didn't offer one, but nothing ventured nothing gained.

lybrary | 09/03/15 09:59 PM | link | filter

Bill, I am shocked, you are consulting with an expert?!

Bill Mullins | 09/03/15 10:43 PM | link | filter

Yes, but only to validate what I had already been able to see -- that the copyright application was not written by Gallaway <G>.

Bill Mullins | 09/04/15 12:01 AM | link | filter

lybrary wrote: Bill, yes Gallaway started to learn the printers art with 14 at the Delphos Herald. But I don't understand why some feel that would prevent him from becoming an expert card handler and gambler. . . . What exactly do you feel makes this impossible? I feel some have a too narrow romantic stereotype of the cheating gambler.
You brought this up earlier, and mentioned that despite your studies and other activities, you still had sufficient time to develop high level athletic skills.

I think you may be projecting a 21st century lifestyle onto a 19th century person. Remember, middle class jobs with plenty of leisure time are a post WWII invention. Gallaway was a tradesman, who had been working since his teens in a blue-collar field (although as he got older, he certainly climbed up the ranks, but during the years you posit he was becoming an expert card player, he was busy learning the printing trade). His later success in the field argues that he was dedicated in his youth, not spending a lot of time in gambling dens and saloons. People who have to work that young don't do it to fill the idle hours; they do it because they need money. The workweek was longer than 40 hours. Six day weeks and 10 hour days were not uncommon. Printing would have taken place in hot warehouses and shops, and the work itself could have been laborious -- loading presses, moving pallets of paper and lead plates, wheeling barrels of ink, etc. And when he arrived home, dog-tired, he had no labor saving devices like we do now; dishes and clothes had to be washed by hand, food prepared from scratch rather than pulled from the freezer and microwaved. Everything took longer, and was harder to do.

I really don't see how someone who was a printer in the 1880s and 1890s would have been able to obtain the top level skills that Erdnase clearly had. Erdnase's full time job was to work a deck of cards -- he was not a weekend poker player. He was a professional, who "would rather play than eat."

And going back to the discussion between Tom and Chris about reversed names and Andrews. I don't insist that Erdnase's name was E. S. Andrews, or even Andrews. But what a convincing case must have is evidence of why the candidate used "Erdnase" as a pseudonym. For anyone named "E. S. Andrews" the answer is obvious -- reversals are an accepted way to develop pseudonym. If you are an mining engineer whose name anagrams to S. W. Erdnase, the foreign language pun/scrambled name is perfectly reasonable.

But to get Ed Gallaway or Harry S. Thompson to S. W. Erdnase, you really have to make stuff up for which not only is there no proof, there is no evidence. Gallaway could have been called Erdnase as a kid (a nickname which will never put "Bubba" out of business), but there's no evidence that he was. Thompson could have known Emory Cobb Andrews as early as late 1901, but there's no evidence that he did.
Printers” it sounded very much like Erdnase. To validate what I had already been able to see I hired Olsson to get an independent confirmation which he did by stating that Gallaway was a strong possibility of being Erdnase from a linguistic point of view.

*Bill Mullins wrote:* What prevents it is that apprentices (which is essentially what a 14 year old in a trade is) don’t have free time to develop the skills to become a master card cheat.

I disagree. 10 hours six days a week as single leaves plenty of time even in the 19th century. The apprenticeship also meant that the master and the family of the master took care of his apprentices outside the work hours. Some lived with the masters, ate with them, and were otherwise looked after. That means Gallaway may very well not had to prepare every single meal by himself (there are also restaurants and street vendors), or wash his own clothes. Also remember that he apprenticed at the Delphos Herald which means he probably still lived at home at that time and received the usual care parents provide. All of this means there is plenty of time for him to develop a deep expertise with cards.

We might also look at this from this side. The day has 24 hours. If he worked 10 that means there are 14 left. Say he slept 8 hours that leaves 6 hours a day plus a full Sunday. Even if we take away 3 hours for the daily chores that leaves him with 3 hours of daily practice plus a full Sunday. Some researchers believe that you need about 10,000 hours to become a top expert in any particular field. If we say 3 hours of practice every day then you get 1095 hours per year. So let’s say about 1000 hours per year. That means in 10 years (when he was 24) Gallaway could have been an expert card handler. But he could have started earlier than 14. Back then kids were earlier in many ways. He may have started to riffle shuffle and false deal with 10 or 11. By 14 he may already have had a foundation of card handling. That means in his late teens and early 20s he may already prowling the saloons and bars to look for games.

On top of this we do not know if Gallaway was continuously employed. After his apprenticeship he went to Chicago and I see him bouncing around at various businesses. There could have been times where he was unemployed which would have provided further time to hone his skills with cards, as well as gamble.

All of this means there is plenty of time and opportunity for Gallaway to become an expert card advantage player. I know it doesn’t fit your stereotype, and it may very well be a bit out of the norm, but it certainly was possible. Clearly, Erdnase was not the norm in so many ways.

*Bill Mullins wrote:* But what a convincing case must have is evidence of why the candidate used “Erdnase” as a pseudonym.
which is the reason he chooses it. Not good enough for you?

*Bill Mullins wrote:* ...the foreign language pun/scrambled name is perfectly reasonable.

So if the foreign language pun is perfectly reasonable, why is then the German nickname for Gallaway or the German/Irish slur for Gallaway not perfectly reasonable? Gallaway was a honor student in German and was embedded in a German culture with some of his siblings marrying into German immigrant families, German newspapers being published, public addresses in German, etc.

*Bill Mullins wrote:* Gallaway could have been called Erdnase as a kid (a nickname which will never put "Bubba" out of business)

I think you have your German wrong. "Bubba" AFAIK is not a German nickname.

*Bill Mullins wrote:* The "so what" is that Erdnase didn't know how to properly mark, and didn't properly register, copyrights. He didn't know what he was doing.

Bill, now that we know that Jamieson filled out the copyright application for Erdnase, are you still holding on to your notion that whoever filled out the form didn't know what he was doing? Jamieson must have filled out dozens of copyright application forms for his publishing house Jamieson-Higgins. He must have known what he was doing. No?

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**Roger M.** | 09/04/15 10:20 AM | [link] | [filter]

In a continuation of discussion as to whether Erdnase could have become what he became, and wrote the book he wrote, all the while working full time as a printer ... I've noted before that he didn't just become proficient with a deck of cards, he *single handedly invented an entirely new form of advantage card play and cheating*, and advanced the craft in one fell swoop perhaps more substantially than anybody has since.

The concept that he could have developed this advanced work in what would essentially be his spare time outside of a full time job seems to betray a lack of understanding related to the actual contents of the book.

Although perhaps convenient, it's best not to separate the man (Erdnase) from his work (EATCT) in the course of discussions related to the search for the authors actual identity.

In Chris's note above, the 10,000 hour nugget is likely what it would take a reader to
what are wholly original works.

The 10,000 hour comment Chris made conveniently forgets that EATCT is a work of *original creations* ... not a re-hash of previous sleights and thinking.

In the case of authorship of EATCT, the 10,000 hour "rule", and similar thinking simply does not apply.

I'd not say that having a deep understanding of the actual contents of the book is essential to searching for Erdnase, but certainly a lack of understanding of the actual *material* contained within the book can (and obviously in some cases already has) lead searchers quite clearly down an entirely wrong path.

Considering Erdnase's age (via Smith) and the contents, EATCT is clearly the result of a man's life work to date, working and practicing as near to full time as possible as a card cheat and hustler.

Despite opinions rendered over the years that EATCT and Mr. Erdnase are some sort of magicians efforts to write about cheating at cards, actually understanding the contents of the book causes one to realize just how silly this line of thinking really is. The same "silliness" applies to the concept that Erdnase could have conceived of the contents of the book on his lunch hours and evenings before bed.

It's simply not possible, as the actual contents of the book clearly demonstrate.

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**observer** | 09/04/15 10:45 AM | link | filter

*Roger M. wrote:* he *single handedly invented an entirely new form of advantage card play and cheating.*

? *Sharps and Flats* was published in 1894.

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**Roger M.** | 09/04/15 10:57 AM | link | filter

There were other (even more important) books on advantage play and cheating that were also published prior to EATCT.

Erdnase penned *original* material, which doesn't in any way conflict with books being written before EATCT on advantage play and cheating at cards.

I have a first edition of Sharps and Flats, and I enjoy reading it still ... but it's pedantic when compared to EATCT.
S&F is a compendium of existing knowledge at the time, EATCT is a wholly original piece of work.

Roger M. wrote: In Chris’s note above, the 10,000 hour nugget is likely what it would take a reader to master the skills in the book today … but it would have taken three or four times that for our Mr. Erdnase to conceive, practice, perfect, and eventually commit to paper what are wholly original works.

I am not saying that the 10,000 hour rule strictly applies here or that it even has to apply at all. The 10,000 hour rule is just as controversial in the nature vs nurture debate, as the Erdnase candidate controversies here. But it still does provide a good measure to start to gauge if it is plausible or not. Also, the 10,000 hour rule is generally not used to explain simply becoming skilled, it is used in connection with superstars like Mozart, or superstar athletes in various fields, or people creative in business like Steven Jobs and Bill Gates. All of these did create entirely new concepts and had novel thoughts and ideas just like Erdnase.

For many years I have had an interest in the talent versus training debate (my articles in my newsletters prove that). I have extensively read the literature in this area. What I have learned and seen does not exclude Erdnase to be working in the printing trade. Not at all. It is a misunderstanding of human nature. You also have to factor in a certain amount of talent. Some are just more talented from the get go. Take for example the young German Moritz Mueller (14 years of age) who does incredibly beautiful and skillful coin magic https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCVSI6 ... x5bie9c4mw Some need to practice many many years to achieve such mastery. This kid has acquired it with 14 years of age. Per his own account in a few years of practice. Imagine Erdnase to be somebody like that but only with cards. He could easily go into a print apprenticeship with 14 and become the Erdnase we know from his book. This is a very arrogant position you have about humans in general. The ability to achieve, to create is enormous. Even a steady job would not hold back a determined and talented person.

Roger M. wrote:

Roger M. wrote: In Chris’s note above, the 10,000 hour nugget is likely what it would take a reader to master the skills in the
This is a very arrogant position you have about humans in general.

No Chris, it's not at all arrogant. It's simply an honest assessment of Mr. Erdnase's ability to work full time and also develop the material he presents in his book, and to do so at the relatively young age at which he authored the book.

I suspect your lack of understanding of the actual contents of the book is responsible for informing your inaccurate assessment of how long Erdnase would have had to put in to develop his original material.

I have studied the actual contents of EATCT for well over 30 years, and my assessment is based on the practical experience gained by working through (page by laborious page) the fruits of Mr. Erdnase's labor.

Roger M. wrote:

lybrary wrote:

Roger M. wrote: In Chris's note above, the 10,000 hour nugget is likely what it would take a reader to master the skills in the book today ... but it would have taken three or four times that for our Mr. Erdnase to conceive, practice, perfect, and eventually commit to paper what are wholly original works.

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I have studied the actual contents of EATCT for well over 30 years, and my assessment is based on the practical experience gained by working through
have any kids or advise young folks, because you would tell them they can't do ABC if they don't conform to XYZ. You are the person who would tell Spud Webb that he could never dunk let alone win the NBA dunking contest. You would be the person to tell Rene Lavand to drop sleight-of-hand magic because he has only one hand and how could he ever be good at it. If people like you would be in charge we would have never flown to the moon or built airplanes. You are a sad mediocre man who can't see beyond hurdles and difficulties and you have no appreciation of the human spirit to do something nobody has done before. Unless somebody conforms to your romantic stereotype of a gambler he can't be a gambler. Perhaps because you had to study so hard and long to understand Erdnase - and who says you actually do - you can't believe that others could do it faster or better, or that Erdnase himself could come up with this in less time it took you to master it. By all accounts Erdnase was special. The fact that we still consider his book in such high regard more than 100 years after he wrote it is testament enough. You want to make him an average guy. He is not. He could easily be a printer or whatever else he wants to be, because he is special, regardless of how many hours or leisure time you think it requires.

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**Roger M.** | 09/04/15 03:56 PM | link | filter

Your position is not only wrong and misinformed I utterly resent it.

All to personal Chris.

I don't give a sh_it what you do, or don't resent.

Try sticking with the topic at hand (Erdnase) rather than blowing a vein when somebody dares disagree with your erroneous conclusions regarding Erdnase.

You're just plain wrong in your ridiculous Gallaway argument, and I do understand that you're having a very difficult time hearing anybody tell you you're wrong.

I don't resent you or your argument, but I certainly won't hesitate making a point of telling you when I think your conclusions are utterly ridiculous.

That you don't understand the contents of the book is painfully obvious.

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**Bill Mullins** | 09/04/15 04:00 PM | link | filter

*lybrary wrote:* You are a sad mediocre man

Earlier, when people said you were being rude, I defended what you were doing as...
You probably ought to take a breather from this thread for a few days.

**Jonathan Townsend** | 09/04/15 04:11 PM | link | filter

I think folks will have a better time considering candidates when the rhetoric avoids disparaging the champion and stays on the matter.

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**Dustin Stinett** | 09/04/15 05:02 PM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:*

*lybrary wrote: You are a sad mediocre man*

Earlier, when people said you were being rude, I defended what you were doing as passionate debate and not a personal attack.

I can no longer do that.

You probably ought to take a breather from this thread for a few days.

I agree. Chris, please take a voluntary break from the Forum or I will make it involuntary for several days. I'm certain that you have other things you can do over the weekend.

And I suggest that everyone involved here rein it in and stick to the topic. In the meantime, I am going to sort all this out and delete the nonsense. This is too important a thread to be hijacked by this kind of stuff.

Dustin

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**Carlo Morpurgo** | 09/04/15 05:20 PM | link | filter

*Roger M. wrote: There were other (even more important) books on advantage play and cheating that were also published prior to EATCT.*

Erdnase penned *original* material, which doesn't in any way conflict with books being written before EATCT on advantage play and cheating at cards.

I have a first edition of Sharps and Flats, and I enjoy reading it still ... but
being quite dated upon publication in S&F.

S&F is a compendium of existing knowledge at the time, EATCT is a wholly original piece of work.

It would be nice to have a small list of basic slights in EATCT that can be reasonably considered totally original (i.e. unpublished before EATCT). If this list has been written before maybe someone can point out where to find it.

performer | 09/04/15 06:38 PM | link | filter

I see that my post stating that the book was not written when you all think it was written was deleted. OK. Don't take me seriously. However, one day in the future you will find that I will turn out to be right. I always am.

Jack Shalom | 09/04/15 06:44 PM | link | filter

The 10,000 hour comment Chris made conveniently forgets that EATCT is a work of original creations ... not a re-hash of previous sleights and thinking.

Not rhetorical: How can we know that?

How do we know that Erdnase is not just reporting stuff he picked up along the way, things that were "underground" but not in print?

How do we know that they are not "some useful improvements" of unpublished work, and not "original creations"?

Roger M. | 09/04/15 07:35 PM | link | filter

Jack, we know that because the book is a unified work, one which maintains a solid consistency related to thinking and execution throughout.

EATCT represents a comprehensive system from cover to cover, as opposed to a loose collection of unrelated ideas assembled into one volume.

The only way to effectively understand and see this - is to pick up a deck of cards and begin working your way through the book. Once you've done that, the mastery of the author over the material becomes crystal clear to the reader.
through socializing with other hustlers, would absolutely have influenced his own thinking as he developed his original system.

I'm not stating that Erdnase was the creator of the second deal, or the bottom deal, etc, etc.....I'm saying that the way he presents his book in its complete form represents an original system of advantage play and cheating at cards, and does so in a way previously unseen in book form.

Taken as a whole, the book was absolutely original when it came out, such that it still remains a singular and comprehensive method of thinking about cheating at cards, even today.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 09/05/15 02:03 AM | link | filter

I wonder whether this Labor Day weekend will be quiet on this thread. I suspect so.

Personally, tomorrow I hope to watch as much as I can of UCLA playing Virginia, and also Berkeley playing Grambling, even though I think the two games will overlap.

Anyway, I bethought myself that I would check and see how many posts there were made on this thread during the Labor Day weekend last year (which I believe was August 30, August 31, and September 1).

There were two posts, one by me and one by Bill Mullins.

That's not necessarily all that relevant, because the thread as been extremely busy in recent months.

But okay, that isn't really what I want to say at the moment.

This might be a good time to wonder who the main S.W. Erdnase candidates are at present.

I don't really know how many “major cases” there are. It seems as though the most frequently discussed cases are those of Edwin Sumner Andrews, Milton Franklin Andrews, and Wilbur Edgerton Sanders.

Hurt McDermott (in *Artifice, Ruse & Erdnase*) liked Milton Franklin Andrews, then Edwin Sumner Andrews, then . . .

R.F. Foster!
He dismissed Wilbur Edgerton Sanders rather summarily.

Actually, Hurt’s discussion of why he liked certain candidates and didn’t like others may be a weak area of his book.

Overall, I like Hurt’s book quite a bit. I think it is probably the best book overall on the subject, certainly better than *The Man Who Was Erdnase* as to authorship issues. But it is not without weaknesses.

Actually, my own main argument against Foster is that it seems as though it would have been *constitutionally impossible* for a man like Foster to write a book like *The Expert at the Card Table*, since Foster bent over backwards trying to protect people from being cheated.

On the other hand, that is more of a philosophical argument -- hard to convince anyone of anything based on that.

But obviously few care much at all about Foster as a candidate, though Hurt developed some very interesting information about Foster in his Erdnase book.

--Tom Sawyer

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**mam** | 09/06/15 12:46 PM | [link] | [filter]

Did anyone read *Jack Pots* by Eugene Edwards?

It’s been mentioned by title here in the thread, but no references to its content. The book was published in 1900 by Jamieson-Higgins, and we know now that they and James McKinney & Co. were tightly intertwined. Chapter 12 (“Crooked Gambling”) might be of interest, where:

*(page 310)*

A retired gambler, who, in his day was the most skilled "second dealer" in the country, explains these methods very entertainingly.

The chapter then goes on to describe or at lest reference second deals, peeks, accomplices, false shuffles, shifts, marked cards, palming, etc. There is a detailed description of how to bring cards from the center to the top of the deck, which is something the "gambler then showed":

*(page 312)*
and then with the middle finger he would slide the wanted card out about half an inch towards his fingers. Then he would press down on the card and in this manner raise it outside the pack. He would then remove his forefinger, thereby allowing the cards to fall back again. The needed card would be standing on its side outside the pack, and it would then be an easy matter to shift it on top of the pack. In fact, the whole operation looked easy enough until tried, and then it became very difficult.

It does not sound to me like Edwards had a grip on sleight of hand himself, but rather like he is an outsider trying to describe a complex move being shown to him. That the methods are explained "very entertainingly" to Edwards could also hint at the gambler in question having a way with words.

Could the publishing of this book have sparked the idea to publish EATCT? And could the retired gambler that Edwards obviously had rapport with, have been talked into writing it?

A former gambler needing money, a publishing company on the verge of bankruptcy, and an already established contact through Edwards. Sounds like a good recipe for a book like EATCT to happen.

mam | 09/06/15 01:12 PM | link | filter

Which brings to mind something I'm sure there are a couple of easy answers to:

How do we know that McKinney/Jamieson-Higgins did not pay Erdnase for writing the book? Other than it saying self-published on the title page? That is one way to cover any connection between your respectable publishing/printing company (specializing in children’s books) and name, and something controversial like a book on card cheating.

Disregarding the self-published statement, they might as well have asked Erdnase to write the text, suggest M.D. Smith for the illustrations and set them up in a hotel room, pay Erdnase an upfront sum in cash, then never see him again. Which would also explain why copies were being sold by McKinney, why it was copyrighted in Jamieson’s handwriting, etc. etc. Because, simply, it was a McKinney/Jamieson-Higgins product, just with an added layer of obfuscation.

But I'm probably missing something obvious here.

Jonathan Townsend | 09/06/15 01:35 PM | link | filter
imagine perhaps? Were the cards red backed, blue backed or perhaps black backed?

Try Borges' Quixote story with a twist that the reviewer does not know of Cervantes and works only from the text proffered as recent publication. From there rather than compare the two texts he goes on to imagine and comment upon the author.

---

**Tom Sawyer** | 09/06/15 03:45 PM | [link] | [filter]

Hi Jon,

I have not read that Borges story ("Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote"), but I have read a little bit about it.

I suppose at the very least your comment may raise questions such as the following:

1. Is there any utility to the inquiry into the S.W. Erdnase identity question?

2. Assume for the moment that we find the answer to the question "Who was Erdnase?" Will we **recognize** that we have **found** the answer?

3. Do we have some kind of a need to keep looking, even when we already have the answer?

4. Are we asking the wrong questions -- the answers to which seem to lead us to S.W. Erdnase, but do not?

A little bit of examining those questions is hard to dodge.

But an **in-depth** examination?

That takes **a lot** of mental energy, and most people probably prefer to avoid that, and would rather try to determine what color the backs of Erdnase's cards were (though I may have missed your meaning in your mention of the card backs).

Thanks for the post.

--Tom

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**Leonard Hevia** | 09/06/15 08:05 PM | [link] | [filter]

Tom Sawyer wrote:
2. Assume for the moment that we find the answer to the question “Who was Erdnase?” Will we **recognize** that we have **found** the answer?

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4. Are we asking the wrong questions -- the answers to which seem to lead us to S.W. Erdnase, but do not?

-- Tom

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1. David Alexander answered the first question in his Erdnase article:

The question naturally arises, "Why should we care who Erdnase was?" This was answered by Ross MacDonald's hard-boiled but occasionally sentimental detective Lew Archer. When he was asked why anyone should care about history MacDonald has Archer respond that someone ought to be interested in finding out the truth about things, for the truth ought to matter.

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**Carlo Morpurgo** | 09/07/15 08:16 AM | link | filter

Leonard Hevia wrote:

Tom Sawyer wrote:

1. Is there any utility to the inquiry into the S.W. Erdnase identity question?

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1. David Alexander answered the first question in his Erdnase article:

The question naturally arises, "Why should we care who Erdnase was?" This was answered by Ross MacDonald's hard-boiled but occasionally sentimental detective Lew Archer. When he was asked why anyone should care about history MacDonald has Archer respond that someone ought to be interested in finding out the truth about things, for the truth ought to matter.

The desire to find the truth is almost genetic, an axiom. However, I find that what matters the most, in the end, is not so much the truth itself, but the process that lead to it. The efforts involved in finding the solution to a challenging problem - whatever it is - almost inevitably produce new ideas, new techniques, new knowledge, and more problems to solve. And that is regardless of whether the initial problem is solved or
Richard Hatch wrote: [...] I strongly believe that S. W. Jamieson filled out the copyright application for Erdnase. He was a co-founder and treasurer of Jamieson-Higgins, not an employee of McKinney, and probably too young himself to have been the author.

I have August 1881 as his birth, is that what you have found as well?

Scott Lane | 09/07/15 05:07 PM | link | filter

I would like to present a possible candidate (and associates) for being responsible for the authorship of the book EATCT. This is the first time I am going public with this information.

Please try and refrain from attacking the messenger. I would like to kindly ask that we look at the facts of the case and clearly identify any comments/posts that are supposition or speculation. I don’t think we should rule out speculation because many times those are clues that turn out to be hard facts.

I have been involved in researching Erdnase for about five decades and have some very strong family ties to many of the families in the research that I am going to put forth. I realize that this will take many posts and I hope that it will not be too much of a bumpy ride.

Several years ago I published some of my research on a website called swerdnase.net. It is a website that I have not changed in several years. The information I presented in the website is just that – a bunch of my research. Posted there are true leads, dead ends and unfinished research. I did not organize it - I just posted it. The website contains a fraction of my research.

I am hoping other researchers can help with the things that I will post in this thread. I realize I am going to get pushback because I have taken a different path to the research that has already been completed. Although I think many of you will be surprised how much of the current research ties to my findings.

The story starts when William A. Bowles, a physician, who started a hotel and health resort in French Lick Indiana in about the year 1840. The hotel was leased to a Dr. John A. Lane in about 1848. This location was an internationally recognized spot and became a meca for illegal gambling casinos. John A. Lane held the hotel and casino for many years but Bowles refused to renew the lease. There are many, many stories that I am skipping over but this is just a thread. One funny note, John Lane was so mad about
I am now skipping many, many stories concerning this time period but suffice to say in 1880 the French Lick hotel property was sold to satisfy a court judgment and was bought at a sheriff’s sale by Hiram E. Wells and James M. Andrews of Paoli, Indiana. In 1897 the Monon railroad was built. It was known as the Chicago, Indianapolis, French Lick and Louisville railroad. About 50 percent of the people that visited the French Lick area were from Chicago.

According to family tradition, James M Andrews was an expert card dealer.

Scott Edward Lane

Scott Lane | 09/07/15 05:47 PM | link | filter

This is a correction to my last post. The Monon railroad started in 1887 not 1897.

Scott Edward Lane

mam | 09/07/15 06:10 PM | link | filter

Scott,

I’m having a very hard time making anything out of the materials on your website. It’s an enormous collection of notes of mostly people that seem to have no connection to the Erdnase case. Frederick J. Drake and a couple of others are mentioned, but most of it is about their various ancestors.

Who is the candidate you are proposing? James M. Andrews? Why?

Jonathan Townsend | 09/07/15 06:31 PM | link | filter

That’s great to get new information into this discussion. Would you post links to the documents/support data as well?

Richard Hatch | 09/07/15 06:51 PM | link | filter

mam wrote:

Richard Hatch wrote: [...] I strongly believe that S. W. Jamieson filled out the copyright application for Erdnase. He was a co-f...
I have August 1881 as his birth, is that what you have found as well?

That is the date given in the 1900 Census for him. I believe passport applications are also available which likely give a more specific date, but I don't have access to those.

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*mam* | 09/07/15 06:59 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Richard Hatch wrote:* That is the date given in the 1900 Census for him. I believe passport applications are also available which likely give a more specific date, but I don't have access to those.

It turns out the passport application says August 3, 1880.

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*mam* | 09/07/15 08:59 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

I've started doing some background on Jamieson-Higgins, and while I know others are as well, I thought I'd post what I come up with here.

One starting point is this notice about what eventually becomes the bankruptcy of the firm. The typed out text is as follows:

RECEIVER FOR PRINTING FIRM.

Jamieson-Higgins Company Goes to the Wall—Partner Sues a Bindery Concern.

The Jamieson-Higgins company, book publishers at 334 Dearborn street, was placed in the hands of a receiver yesterday by Judge Kohlsaat. No statement of liabilities and assets was given out. The company did a book printing and publishing business. The officers of the company are Stillman B. Jamieson, Charles Higgins, and Samuel W. Jamieson. Later in the day suit was filed in the Circuit court by Stillman B. Jamieson against the W. G. Godwin company of West Chicago. Jamieson asks the court to appoint a receiver for the company, alleging that he holds its notes for $11,600, secured by a chattel mortgage upon the plant. He declares that there is now due him $12,017, for principal and interest. Besides the Godwin company the bill names T. W. and C. B. Sheridan, Dexter Folder company, and Smyth Manufacturing company of Hartford, Conn., as codefendants. (Chicago Daily Tribune, December 25, 1902)
According to his 1913 passport application he was born on July 27, 1875. He was a lawyer at that time, while his WWI draft record has the more formal (and higher up?) Master in Chancery. He was married to Maurine G. Jamieson and they had at least two children: Hamer Jamieson (born August 23, 1899) and Stillman B. Jamieson Jr. (born July 23, 1900). The 1900 Census also shows a daughter by the name Hester H. Jamieson born in August 1899, which makes no sense if Hamer was born at the same time. Cannot find any other mentions of Hester, so she might have died at a young age. It seems like this part of the Jamieson family later moved to Pasadena, California, but while living in Chicago they had a house at 4510 Woodlawn Avenue. As far as I can tell, this was Stillman B. Jamiesons address in 1902 when EATCT was published and the Jamieson-Higgins company went bankrupt.

**Samuel White Jamieson**

Stillman's brother, about six years younger. At the time of the 1900 Census he was still staying with his/their parents Thomas Nevin Jamieson and Anna Mary Jamieson (née Bringham) in the house next doors to Stillman. Other than the brother, Samuel also had the sisters Helen M. Jamieson and Alice H. Jamieson. Samuel marries Amy L. Jamieson (née ???) and they have a son, Thomas N. Jamieson, named like Samuel's father. S. W. Jamiesons occupation according to the 1900 Census is Publisher, as we all know, but already in the 1910 Census his occupation has changed to Farmer. Did he give up publishing altogether?

Samuel and Amy Jamieson later seem to have moved to California as well, the Glendale city directory of 1923 shows their address as 900 Matilja Road. What can be gathered from passport applications, ship passenger lists etc., it may be that the Jamiesons moved there to become farmers/ranchers of some sort, i.e. leave the Chicago city life for California country life, sometime around 1918-1919.

**Charles Higgins**

Have just started to look at Higgins, but as far as I can tell he did quite a bit of publishing, often as chief editor. A number of ads for books he edited can be found, and a couple of newspaper articles as well. I have not yet figured out if another person by the same name was active in Chicago at the same time, I can’t say for sure. But I did find Higgins' signature, which might be useful to someone having to compare it at some point.

Well, that’s it for now. It was a lot of family background, but I found that an easy place to start. Hopefully this can lead to more useful information on these three guys’ publishing activities. Does anyone know if something like incorporation records...
By the way, here's a Google spreadsheet I did from the relevant parts of the 1900 Census regarding the Jamieson families.

Scott Lane | 09/07/15 09:00 PM | link | filter

There could possibly be insights to the authorship of the EATCT if you follow the ownership of both the French Lick Springs and West Baden Springs hotels. Other clues might be found in the smaller surrounding hotels, casinos and boarding houses.

Some hotel owners were Hiram Wells, James M. Andrews, Louisville Syndicate, John T. Stout, Amos Stout, James Braden, George W. Campbell, Elvet B. Rhodes, Capt. John C. Howard, Dr. John L. Howard, Lee W. Sinclair, Thomas Taggart and the great Edward Ballard. Some of the other casino owners were Bledsoes, Galloways, Dixons, and Grigsbys.

If you follow these families and their relatives it is amazing how they tie into the story. Some of it hard fact and some of it has not yet been researched and simply conjecture.

Other players come into view with their connections to the hotel owners such as magicians William Hilliar and James Harto.

It may be important to pay attention to the timing of when the hotels changed ownership and the events that surrounded the hotels.

One such event might be that the West Baden Springs hotel burned down in 1901 and the grand reopening was in 1902.

Scott Edward Lane

mam | 09/07/15 09:02 PM | link | filter

Scott Lane wrote: Some hotel owners were Hiram Wells, James M. Andrews, Louisville Syndicate, John T. Stout, Amos Stout, James Braden, George W. Campbell, Elvet B. Rhodes, Capt. John C. Howard, Dr. John L. Howard, Lee W. Sinclair, Thomas Taggart and the great Edward Ballard. Some of the other casino owners were Bledsoes, Galloways, Dixons, and Grigsbys.

If you follow these families and their relatives it is amazing how they tie into the story. Some of it hard fact and some of it has not yet been researched and simply conjecture.
Here's a nice page with info about Jamieson-Higgins: http://www.georgewpeck.com/publishers/jamieson.html

mam wrote: Scott,

I'm having a very hard time making anything out of the materials on your website. It's an enormous collection of notes of mostly people that seem to have no connection to the Erdnase case. Frederick J. Drake and a couple of others are mentioned, but most of it is about their various ancestors.

Who is the candidate you are proposing? James M. Andrews? Why?

I would assume, naively, that the main reason is that he was an expert card dealer who owned a hotel/casino, combined with the fact that "James Andrews" does yield SW ERDNASE in the usual way. (Other combinations such as SW ERDNASEM, SW ERDNASEMA, etc. being less good looking)

By the way, this sounds really good to me!

Let's start with the magician James Harto.

According to Magicpedia:

"His first performance as at the Bristol Museum in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1886. Years of performing continued with A Night With the Spirit Company, Leon Harto Company, Ringling Shows, Charles Sparks Shows, the original Buffalo Bill Show, The Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill Wild West Shows, Hagenbeck and Wallace Shows, Robinson Shows, and the Walter L. Main Show and vaudeville. He played all over the United States and Canada. Later he became a dealer in magical apparatus in Indianapolis, Indiana"

Edward Ballard started out dealing in the Rat Club in a small town outside of French Lick called Paoli. This little casino opened on the day of President Lincoln’s inauguration. There is a picture of it on the website – http://www.flwbmuseum.com. He was later hired by Lee W. Sinclair, where he started out as a bowling alley pin
casinos and hotels. He later bought and owned almost every major circus and traveling show in the United States except for Ringling Brothers. He eventually sold all of his circuses to the Ringling Brothers just a few days before the stock market crash. He walked away with the money and smelling like a rose.

Remember that almost all circuses at that time had a gambling tent.

The next post I will provide some interesting coincidences from TMWWE that relate to some of the other hotel/casino owners.

Scott Edward Lane

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**Roger M.** | 09/07/15 11:47 PM | link | filter

Scott, in a nutshell, who is your candidate - and why is he potentially the author of EATCT?

I have a difficult time with teasers, in that I can't see clearly where you're going in terms of why this fellow might be S.W. Erdnase.

Thanks.

---

**Pete McCabe** | 09/08/15 02:51 AM | link | filter

Sorry to disagree, Roger, but I think Scott should put the information out in any way he pleases. We've all waited over a hundred years to find out who Erdnase was, another couple of days won't hurt.

---

**Richard Stokes** | 09/08/15 03:59 AM | link | filter

Just curious, but Is this now the longest Genii thread?

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**Scott Lane** | 09/08/15 06:57 AM | link | filter

I don’t wish to confuse anyone on the identity of the person(s) that I believe are responsible for the authorship of TEATCT. I said from the beginning that my research has taken me in different directions than most Erdnase hunters.

I think this may be the resting place of James M. Andrews. This is the link.

http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi...=92553715&
Scott Edward Lane

**Richard Hatch** | 09/08/15 07:38 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Scott, those gravesite links both show people with last name "Andrew" not "Andrews". Is that just a typo?

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**Scott Lane** | 09/08/15 08:01 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Thank you for commenting Richard. I hope you had a safe trip back from Magic Live.

These may not be the correct gravesites. I don’t have all the answers. Please follow this link. I believe this might be the family of the hotel/casino owners.

[http://www.in.gov/library/4252.htm](http://www.in.gov/library/4252.htm)

Scott Edward Lane

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**Roger M.** | 09/08/15 10:00 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

_Pete McCabe wrote:_ Sorry to disagree, Roger, but I think Scott should put the information out in any way he pleases. We’ve all waited over a hundred years to find out who Erdnase was, another couple of days won’t hurt.

I agree Pete, he’s free to share information as he chooses to, and in whatever form he chooses.

Lack of patience wasn’t the point of my post though.

Scott posted:

_I would like to present a possible candidate (and associates) for being responsible for the authorship of the book EATCT._

I was politely asking when he was going to make that presentation.

I also noted that I personally found it easier to follow a fact based story that informed the reader up front where it intended to go.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 09/08/15 01:34 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)
This item on irrigation of avocado trees was apparently co-written by S.W. Jamieson: *Irrigation.*

--Tom Sawyer

Another company led by the Jamiesons: Stillman was President and Samuel was Secretary of the company "D. H. Champlin & Co." and may even have cofounded it in 1902.

Information concerning James M. Andrews:

General Information
James M. Andrews possibly fits the anagram SW Erdnase.
James M. Andrews was a hotel/casino owner and operator.
James M. Andrews was reputed to be an expert card dealer.

Harto Connection
James Harto did work for Edward Ballard, one of the hotel/casino owners.
James Harto did open a magic shop in Indianapolis.
Fits in with the testimony of Francis Marshal, Maly, Dunham.

Hood Connection
Reconciles Hood's Testimony

MD Smith Connection
Fits in with Smith Testimony

I think that research may prove that MFA and James M. Andrews were related.
I think that J. Stores Campbell may possibly be related to one of the hotel/casino owners.
I think that the alias MFA used (Clayton Hill) may refer to one of the hotels/casinos owner.
I think there may be a connection between Eva Howard and one of the hotel/casino owners.
I think that the alias Edna Little has some kind of relationship/meaning to one of the
**Roger M.** | 09/09/15 04:57 PM | link | filter

Is there additional information you've yet to provide that links your candidate to EATCT Scott?

French Lick, like Hot Springs and Galveston were certainly ripe with gamblers and hustlers, as "wide open" cities across the country were back in the day.

I like the French Lick connection for its gambling culture, and its proximity to Chicago ... but I'm not yet seeing a connection to Erdnase?

---

**Carlo Morpurgo** | 09/09/15 05:26 PM | link | filter

*Roger M. wrote:* Is there additional information you've yet to provide that links your candidate to EATCT Scott?

French Lick, like Hot Springs and Galveston were certainly ripe with gamblers and hustlers, as "wide open" cities across the country were back in the day.

I like the French Lick connection for its gambling culture, and its proximity to Chicago ... but I'm not yet seeing a connection to Erdnase?

Just curious, Roger, what would be your ideal "connection to Erdnase", I mean a connection that would satisfy you....

Regarding Scott, I would be happy to see, for a start, some sort of documentation that would corroborate the claims

- James M. Andrews was a hotel/casino owner and operator.
- James M. Andrews was reputed to be an expert card dealer.

(with "Andrews" and not "Andrew")

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**Roger M.** | 09/09/15 07:16 PM | link | filter

*Carlo Morpurgo wrote:*

Just curious, Roger, what would be your ideal "connection to Erdnase", I mean a connection that would satisfy you....
As was done with MFA, Sanders, Andrews, even Gallaway... something (however tenuous) that draws the candidates name closer to the EATCT.

Obviously my definition of a "connection" may not be shared by others.

In a nutshell, anything beyond establishing a link between the candidate and the book that is based entirely on simply being alive in 1902, near Chicago, and somebody who played cards (*everybody* played cards in 1902).

---

**Scott Lane** | 09/09/15 07:51 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

Hot Springs and Galveston were local gambling hot spots. French Lick and West Baden Springs were internationally renowned because of the health benefits of the water.

James M. Andrews and Hiram Wells purchased the hotel/casino in a sheriff’s sale that was widely publicized. Please see the link:

[http://www.ingenweb.org/inorange/histfl.htm](http://www.ingenweb.org/inorange/histfl.htm)

James M. Andrews was a Master Mason as shown in the following link:

[https://books.google.com/books?id=eZVGA... ns&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=eZVGA... ns&f=false)

My mom told me that James M. Andrews was an expert card dealer. I am related to the Lane’s, Galloway’s, Campbell’s and Ballard’s. Many of my family members relatives owned, operated and were dealers in many (most) of the illegal casinos in the area. Their ownerships, exploits and capabilities are well documented in the historical record and widely known by the locals.

To relieve any doubt about what my card or my relative’s card capabilities are in the world of gambling card slights and subterfuge, I publicly challenge anyone on this thread to a crooked gambling contest. The challenger must bring $10,000 cash and I will bring $10,000 cash. I will write the rules to the contest which will be publicly posted prior to the event. The winner will take all. Does anyone on this thread have the backbone to accept my challenge?

Scott Edward Lane

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**Roger M.** | 09/09/15 08:05 PM | [link](#) | [filter](#)
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Scott Edward Lane

Not following how this is in any way relevant to the search for S.W. Erdnase?

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Scott Lane | 09/09/15 09:54 PM | link | filter

Roger m.? wrote:

“Carlo, something beyond saying that because a candidate lived in the United States, played cards, and was 28 (or whatever similar age) years old in 1902 – he becomes a candidate for Erdnase”

I have followed this post for some time now and I was determined to ignore a couple of participants because they don’t ever seem to bring much to the table, but in this case I must reply. Feeding off of other people’s hard earned research is one thing but misrepresenting others theories because of their own sloppy research (or lack of) is where I draw the line.

This being said, I must reply to Roger m.?

Please revise your post, James M. Andrews was obviously not 28 in 1902.

Scott Edward Lane

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Larry Horowitz | 09/09/15 10:51 PM | link | filter

Scott,

Let me see if I’ve got this right.

The better YOU are with a deck of cards, the more likely your candidate is Erdnase.

Sorry, but from my point of view any credibility you may have hoped for went out the
Roger M. wrote: In a nutshell, anything beyond establishing a link between the candidate and the book that is based entirely on simply being alive in 1902, near Chicago, and somebody who played cards (everybody played cards in 1902).

Everybody except Harry S. Thompson.

Carlo Morpurgo wrote:

Carlo Morpurgo wrote:

Just curious, Roger, what would be your ideal "connection to Erdnase", I mean a connection that would satisfy you....

Carlo, something beyond saying that because a candidate lived in the United States, played cards, and was 28 (or whatever similar age) years old in 1902 - he becomes a candidate for Erdnase.

As was done with MFA, Sanders, Andrews, even Gallaway... something (however tenuous) that draws the candidates name closer to the EATCT.

Obviously my definition of a "connection" may not be shared by others.

In a nutshell, anything beyond establishing a link between the candidate and the book that is based entirely on simply being alive in 1902, near Chicago, and somebody who played cards (everybody played cards in 1902).

What Scott wrote about James M Andrews is indeed more than "lived in the United States, played cards in 1902". The name in reverse gives SW Erdnase, he was a hotel/casino owner and operator in Chicago, and also an expert card dealer, around 1902. In my opinion these facts alone would make anybody an excellent candidate for Erdnase, and, at a minimum, a good lead to follow for more "solid proof". Remember that Scott proposed a possible candidate.

Tom Sawyer wrote:

Personally, I missed any reference to owning a place in Chicago. Wikipedia shows the French Lick location to be in southern Indiana.
man’s name was James M. Andrew, with no "s" on Andrew. I have seen it without the "s" in what seem to be three separate independent sources.

I am not positive on any of the foregoing -- just stating a few current impressions.

I didn’t take Roger M. literally on the US reference. I think I see the point he was making. Roger wanted more information. More information (meaningful information) has not really been forthcoming -- in my view.

I am sure Scott believes otherwise.

On the other hand, I don’t think Scott is under any obligation to participate in a dialog, answer questions, or present any information on the subject desired by others on this thread. (I don’t think anyone has suggested otherwise.)

--Tom Sawyer

Carlo Morpurgo | 09/10/15 08:22 AM | link | filter

Tom Sawyer wrote: Personally, I missed any reference to owning a place in Chicago. Wikipedia shows the French Lick location to be in southern Indiana.

I don’t think the "expert card dealer" idea has been demonstrated convincingly.

I don’t think the name has been shown to be James M. Andrews. I get the vibe that the man’s name was James M. Andrew, with no "s" on Andrew. I have seen it without the "s" in what seem to be three separate independent sources.

I am not positive on any of the foregoing -- just stating a few current impressions.

I didn’t take Roger M. literally on the US reference. I think I see the point he was making. Roger wanted more information. More information (meaningful information) has not really been forthcoming -- in my view.

I am sure Scott believes otherwise.

On the other hand, I don’t think Scott is under any obligation to participate
I totally agree that more information is needed. On the other hand, one does not just stumble on the truth by chance. One starts by following some leads, (maybe guided just by a hunch), and perhaps Scott just wants to propose more promising leads. In this Erdnase case, frankly, any lead (even weak) seems like a good thing...

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**Carlo Morpurgo** | 09/10/15 08:31 AM | link | filter

Tom Sawyer wrote: Personally, I missed any reference to owning a place in Chicago. Wikipedia shows the French Lick location to be in southern Indiana.

---

I agree, I incorrectly wrote Chicago. It's not really a relevant detail, however.

---

**Roger M.** | 09/10/15 10:48 AM | link | filter

My reference to living in the U.S.A., playing cards, and being "around" 28 years old was [generic](#). As Tom alluded, I was making a general point about benchmarks for possible Erdnase candidates. I should have been more precise.

It definitely wasn't a direct reference to any one candidate, rather a reference to the recent raft of candidate proposals.

I was reflecting that I personally thought that simply being the right age, playing around with cards, and living in the U.S.A. should probably not be the benchmark to then be declared a possible candidate for Erdnase.

Perhaps other readers enjoy the lower benchmark that has been recently applied to candidate proposals ... I personally believe that a lower benchmark doesn't assist in the process.

Again, that's just my personal opinion (and considering the number of personal opinions being proffered in this thread as "evidence" recently, my personal opinion is somewhat, if not completely innocuous).
Carlo Morpurgo wrote:
James M Andrews

The name in reverse gives SW Erdnase,

No it doesn't.

Tom Sawyer | 09/10/15 01:05 PM | link | filter

Whenever a "candidate" is named Andrews, with the first name James, you can get the reversal (and arrive at "S.W. Erdnase") by ignoring any middle name and dropping the JAM and THEN doing the reversal. True, you have letters left over, but it works okay.

Hurt McDermott notes that this works with middle names as well as first names, and also that it works with names like Charles and Symes as well as James. (See Artifice, Ruse & Erdnase, pages 76 and 77.)

It does seem a little bit tortured. Hurt more or less suggests that this can make the number of potential (reversible) candidate names unmanageable.

--Tom Sawyer

Carlo Morpurgo | 09/10/15 01:24 PM | link | filter

observer wrote:

Carlo Morpurgo wrote:
James M Andrews

The name in reverse gives SW Erdnase,

No it doesn't.

Acute observation Mr. Observer .... I had already explained what I meant by "reversing" and Tom has already answered. It's certainly not the first time that this kind of reversal has been pointed out for a "James Andrews" potentially connected to SW Erdnase
observer wrote:

Carlo Morpurgo wrote:
James M Andrews

The name in reverse gives SW Erdnase,

No it doesn’t.

Acute observation Mr. Observer .... I had already explained what I meant by "reversing" and Tom has already answered. It’s certainly not the first time that this kind of reversal has been pointed out for a "James Andrews" potentially connected to SW Erdnase

Ah - so as long as you have the pattern

"[anything]es [anymiddlename] Andrews"

that "gives SW Erdnase".

It's all so clear now!

---

Carlo Morpurgo | 09/10/15 01:47 PM | link | filter

observer wrote:

Carlo Morpurgo wrote:
Acute observation Mr. Observer .... I had already explained what I meant by "reversing" and Tom has already answered. It's certainly not the first time that this kind of reversal has been pointed out for a "James Andrews" potentially connected to SW Erdnase

Ah - so as long as you have the pattern

"[anything]es [anymiddlename] Andrews"

that "gives SW Erdnase".

It's all so clear now!
known (even by word of mouth) to be an expert card dealer. Find another one like that and I am sure serious researchers here will start ....researching.

Roger M. | 09/10/15 02:44 PM | link | filter

Carlo Morpurgo wrote: I would take on any lead that has a ***ES*ANDREWS operating a casino in the midwest around 1900......=center

I'm not sure one could ever find the logic in a casino owner ever sitting down and writing a book like EATCT, a book detailing (in the most advanced form to date) how to cheat at cards such that they could gain an advantage over the authors casino

Doesn't really make any sense.

Carlo Morpurgo | 09/10/15 03:15 PM | link | filter

Roger M. wrote:

Carlo Morpurgo wrote: I would take on any lead that has a ***ES*ANDREWS operating a casino in the midwest around 1900......

I'm not sure one could ever find the logic in a casino owner ever sitting down and writing a book like EATCT, a book detailing (in the most advanced form to date) how to cheat at cards such that they could gain an advantage over the authors casino

Doesn't really make any sense.

Actually, Andrews and Wells owned and operated the French Lick Springs hotel for several years after they bought it in 1880, but certainly not after 1891 (Andrews probably even before that year). This perhaps makes a bit more sense.

Carlo Morpurgo | 09/10/15 03:40 PM | link | filter

In this document you will find better info regarding the ownership of the Hotel...see pages 57-58 regarding Andrews (with the final “s”)
http://focus.nps.gov/nrhp/AssetDetail?a ... 9786f9b87c (download left asset)

Don’t get me wrong, I am not supporting anyone....just got curious about this story...
have I ever seen Richard dig in his heels when another candidate has been offered or when his candidate has been questioned. I have never seen him resort to the various dick measuring arguments or not so thinly veiled name calling we have seen here. If a better candidate appears, he chases him.

Now there may be others who are equally open minded and honest in their quest for truth (Tom’s replies have impressed me, however I have been exposed to Hatch’s efforts for much longer and have seen the consistency of his approach), but I thought it worthy of mention.

I am far more likely to be open minded to a presentation of a theory by someone who was themself open minded during the formulation of that theory, someone who is focused only on the facts and not some weird personal ego stroke which comes from conveying the fActs.

Carlos wrote:

In this document you will find better info regarding the ownership of the Hotel...

Thank you so much for finding this document! I am completely overjoyed! Do you think there is another document for the West Baden Springs Hotel? The story will really start coming together if you look at both the hotels.

Scott Edward Lane

Carlos Morpurgo wrote: Carlos wrote:

In this document you will find better info regarding the ownership of the Hotel...

Thank you so much for finding this document! I am completely overjoyed! Do you think there is another document for the West Baden Springs Hotel? The story will really start coming together if you look at both the hotels.
However, from the document I pointed out it appears that the French Lick Springs hotel was also a casino only after Taggart took over (hence after Andrews) It would be nice for you to provide additional information regarding Andrews’ activities as a casino operator.

**degrisy** | 09/10/15 11:56 PM | link | filter

Does someone know why only 50 drawings out of the 101 appearing in the EATCT have a copyright notice under them? I think the reason is the cost of the copyright. If this were the case it would be very interesting because the copyrighted images could be regarded as a clue to the sleights that Erdnase considered most important and original. I have never heard this theory. Someone agrees?

**Scott Lane** | 09/11/15 01:04 AM | link | filter

Carlo wrote:

“However, from the document I pointed out it appears that the French Lick Springs hotel was also a casino only after Taggart took over (hence after Andrews) It would be nice for you to provide additional information regarding Andrews' activities as a casino operator.”

Please follow the link below to see more of the history of the area. This is a graduate school thesis written by John W. O’Malley while at Loyola University in 1957. Documentation of the hotel casinos starts around 1887 and definitely by the early 1890s. Hood, the owner of H.C. Evans gambling supply house in Chicago, stated that he knew Andrews throughout the 1890s and he “could do everything in the book” referring to EATCT.

http://ecommons.luc.edu/cgi/viewcontent ... luc_theses

Scott Edward Lane

**Carlo Morpurgo** | 09/11/15 06:48 AM | link | filter

*Scott Lane wrote:* Carlo wrote:

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Please follow the link below to see more of the history of the area. This is a graduate school thesis written by John W. O'Malley while at Loyola University in 1957. Documentation of the hotel casinos starts around 1887 and definitely by the early 1890s. Hood, the owner of H.C. Evans gambling supply house in Chicago, stated that he knew Andrews throughout the 1890s and he “could do everything in the book” referring to EATCT.

http://ecommons.luc.edu/cgi/viewcontent ... luc_theses

Scott Edward Lane

Very interesting....
Where do you find the quote by Hood, regarding Andrews, do you have some documents about that?

---

mam | 09/11/15 11:00 AM | link | filter

Hey all, did we already know that there was an "S. W. Drake"? This name is listed as Frederick J. Drake & Co., 3645 Pine Grove Ave., Chicago, in 1006 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago.

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mam | 09/11/15 01:13 PM | link | filter

mam wrote: Another company led by the Jamiesons: Stillman was President and Samuel was Secretary of the company "D. H. Champlin & Co." and may even have cofounded it in 1902.

Also, Stillman B. Jamieson was president of the "Green May Medicine Company" and president and secretary of the "Rock Plaster Manufacturing Co".

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Tom Sawyer | 09/11/15 02:36 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

Here are comments on a few recent posts:

degrisy: As far as I know, no one has published a widely accepted explanation of why
Carlo: It will be interesting to see whether Scott replies to this. Since your question was directed to him, I’ll probably wait till after his next post before saying anything here about this.

mam: Not too long ago, Edward Finck listed some Drake family members: Link. S.W. Drake would be Stafford W. Drake. According to information stated there by Edward, the Drake kids were pretty young when The Expert at the Card Table was published. Stafford would have been six or so when the book was published.

--Tom Sawyer

Scott Lane | 09/11/15 03:37 PM | link | filter

Carlo wrote:

Where do you find the quote by Hood, regarding Andrews, do you have some documents about that?

This comes from a letter from R. W. Hood to Gardner Dec 13, 1946. I cannot find my Gardner Correspondence but it is referenced in TMWWE on page 56. Help from any participant on this thread would be greatly appreciated. Everyone may not agree on some of these secondary sources but maybe we can get somewhat of a consensus.

There is a bit of conjecture that has to be presented at a later date so it would be good to baseline this information.

Scott Edward Lane

Bill Mullins | 09/11/15 04:27 PM | link | filter

The quote by Hood to his son is a 3rd hand retelling of a comment by Hood Sr. about Erdnase. To say it is referring to "Andrews" (be it MF Andrews, as Busby/Whaley meant, or James Andrews, as Scott may mean) is begging the question.

Richard Hatch | 09/11/15 05:05 PM | link | filter

The Richard Hood letter to Martin Gardner of December 13, 1946 makes no mention of Erdnase or Andrews. He refers only to "the author" of "The Expert at the Card Table." Here are the relevant references from that letter:
You know, the Great World's Fair of '93 made Chicago a mecca for everyone who had any angle for making easy money and I believe that brought the author of this book to Chicago. I never knew the gentleman personally and believe that he has long since passed on...

I have heard my Father say that this author was capable of executing every trick that he described in his book. In fact, had some that were to his mind too good to be exposed.

Sorry that I cannot add anything to your knowledge about this man or his descendents...

So the Hood letter neither supports nor argues against an "Andrews" or any other candidates. It would support a candidate who spent time in Chicago "well along in the [18]90's" and someone who knew Edwin C. Hood.

---

**Tom Sawyer** | 09/15 05:24 PM | [link] [filter]

Dick, that extract is highly interesting.

It seems to me that this raises the issue of whether the father knew that the man was the author, or whether, like Pratt, he figured it out for himself based on other information. If the latter, then "ouch."

--Tom

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**Richard Hatch** | 09/15 05:48 PM | [link] [filter]

It is instructive to compare the Hood letter's actual content (above) with the use TMWWE (p. 56) makes of it:

Edwin C. Hood was one of his close associates in Chicago. Hood was the owner of the Chicago firm of H.C. Evans & Co., then America's leading manufacturer and supplier of gaffed gambling apparatus. Founded in 1892, it was the nature of the business that there really was no "Mr. Evans" — the company name was derived from a reverse mangling of the founder's own. Andrews and Hood had first met in this prairie metropolis in the 1890s, possibly as early as the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, which made that city a mecca for everyone who had any angle for making easy money. Hood was impressed with Andrews' card work. "He was capable of executing every
It is easy to see how someone relying only on TMWWE would assume that the Hood letter supports an "Andrews" theory.

Brad Jeffers | 09/15 06:08 PM | link | filter

By their own accounts, Edwin Hood, Marshall Smith, Del Adelphia, and Hugh Johnson are all people who had face to face contact with Erdnase.

Who else is on this list?

Jonathan Townsend | 09/15 06:19 PM | link | filter

Brad Jeffers wrote: By their own accounts, Edwin Hood, ... The item quoted reads as a report by his son more than a direct statement by E. Hood.

"H.C. Evans & Co" - I can see one H and one O, no D...

What's the other name?

Richard Hatch | 09/15 06:33 PM | link | filter

Brad Jeffers wrote: By their own accounts, Edwin Hood, Marshall Smith, Del Adelphia, and Hugh Johnson are all people who had face to face contact with Erdnase.

Who else is on this list?

Del Adelphia did not make this claim, though Hugh Johnston recalled meeting Erdnase when Del Adelphia brought him backstage in Denver... A minor point, but perhaps worth noting...

Mike Caveney owns Del Adelphia's first edition EATCT. Alas, it is not signed by the author...

Tom Sawyer | 09/15 07:25 PM | link | filter

As Jon Townsend and Dick Hatch sort of imply, coming up with actual first-person statements is a little difficult. Even so, I think that the name of James Harte could probably be added to the list.
“You know, the Great World’s Fair of ’93 made Chicago a mecca for everyone who had any angle for making easy money and I believe that brought the author of this book to Chicago. I never knew the gentleman personally and believe that he has long since passed on…”

When it says “I believe that brought the author of this book to Chicago.” Could that be interpreted that the author was NOT a resident of Chicago?

Scott Edward Lane

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**Pete McCabe** | 09/11/15 08:08 PM | link | filter

That’s how I interpreted it.

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**Jack Shalom** | 09/11/15 09:23 PM | link | filter

there really was no "Mr. Evans" — the company name was derived from a reverse mangling of the founder's own

Is the founder someone other than Hood? If so, who?

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**Richard Hatch** | 09/11/15 10:38 PM | link | filter

*Jack Shalom wrote:*

there really was no "Mr. Evans" — the company name was derived from a reverse mangling of the founder's own

Is the founder someone other than Hood? If so, who?

The founder was Edwin C. Hood. The company's name was apparently derived from his own initials reversed, and Edwin changed to Evans: H. C. Evans. Busby/Whaley speculate that this may have influenced the name reversal to arrive at "Erdnase".

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**Scott Lane** | 09/12/15 06:00 AM | link | filter

I hate to leave the Hood analysis this early but we can circle back around.

I implore anyone on this thread who wants to follow the James Andrews story to thoroughly read the two documents that Carlo posted and the one document I posted
amount of information.

MAM posted a question about the Drake family and Tom Sawyer posted a comment about James Harte (Harto)(Chandra). These issues must be addressed but this might not be the best time if we are to develop the James Andrews case.

I am sorry to jump around but it may be best to turn our attention to a magician named William J. Hilliar. Does anyone know on this thread when Hilliar came to the US and the date and place that he allegedly committed suicide?

Scott Edward Lane

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**Tom Gilbert** | 09/12/15 09:00 AM | link | filter

Brad Jeffers brought up a point that I was wondering about. Who knew, or probably knew who Erdnase was. Besides the list Brad made, I’ve read (on this forum) that most likely the editors of Sphinx, the publisher of the book, and a statement by Scarne (for what it’s worth) that he would contact Mrs. Erdnase is what we have. I guess if there’s any truth to this, and when Scarne made the comment, following up on the candidates and when their spouse was still alive may be of interest.

One other point is why the big secret. The romantic answer that he was a marked man at some level doesn’t work. If he was marked, most likely he would be found. Maybe he came from a prestigious family, or they had a big business, possibly he had another job and wouldn't want his name known.

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**Scott Lane** | 09/12/15 06:18 PM | link | filter

Information on William J Hilliar:

1876-1936, Born in England

 Came to the United States in 1901.

Performed in Detroit, Michigan.

Edited the first issue of The Sphinx, which came out in March 1902.

He was a prolific magic writer, ghostwriter and alleged plagiarist.
his name.


Published multiple books with F. J. Drake & Company

Wrote a column on magic for the Billboard Magazine.

The Billboard became the paper of record for circuses, carnivals, amusement parks, fairs, vaudeville, minstrels, whale shows and other live entertainment.

For many years Hilliar worked large circuses in charge of the side shows and other venues as performer and manager.

He took the place of Howard Thurston for a performance in Chicago in 1902 without the audience noticing the substitution.

Hilliar allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself at age 59, 1936.

On November 15, 1936, a cab driver picked up Hilliar in downtown Cincinnati and drove him to the magician's home at 1228 Iliff Avenue in the suburb of Price Hill. Telling the driver, "I'll be back in a minute," Hilliar went to the garage in the rear of the home and fired a bullet into his right temple.

Scott Edward Lane

Scott Lane | 09/12/15 06:33 PM | link | filter

William J. Hilliar

He worked for the Great Edward Ballard a casino/hotel owner in French Lick/West Baden Springs, IN.

About nine days after the great Edward Ballard was murdered William J. Hilliar was dead with a gunshot wound to the temple.

Scott Edward Lane

Brad Jeffers | 09/13/15 02:40 AM | link | filter
Non-useful anagram information:

Vladimir Nabokov had a character in *Lolita* named Vivian Darkbloom.

Axl Rose anagrams to Oral Sex.

I am sorry to jump around in trying to present the James Andrews case but it may be best to turn our attention to a magician named James Harte. Does anyone know on this thread when Harte came to the US and the circumstances surrounding his alleged connection to Erdnase?

I believe he was born in Webster, Massachusetts in 1870. [http://geniimagazine.com/magicpedia/James_S._Harto](http://geniimagazine.com/magicpedia/James_S._Harto)

Regarding Harte, on September 2, 2015, Dick Hatch posted some new information about the Maly-Dunham-Harte situation, and I think the precise words of Maly and Dunham tend to show how unclear the situation really is.

From what I have been able to prise out of the rather sparse factual background I am aware of, it appears to me that:

First, there is not any evidence that Harte identified the man he worked with as "Erdnase." He *might* have identified the man as "Andrews."
that (M.F.) Andrews was Erdnase.

Thirdly, and even more important, although it seems that Harte BELIEVED the man was Erdnase, we don’t know upon what he based that belief.

Also, the whole Harte relationship with The Expert at the Card Table does not appear to have really grabbed the magic world, maybe because The Man Who Was Erdnase seemed pretty sure that Harte wrote part of the book -- an idea which I think few if any accept today, except maybe as a remote possibility.

I find that whole area fraught with uncertainty.

--Tom Sawyer

Richard Kaufman | 09/14/15 03:36 PM | link | filter

Tom, I find most of life fraught with uncertainty. (Written without a hint of sarcasm!)

Tom Sawyer | 09/14/15 05:00 PM | link | filter

I hear you.

mam | 09/14/15 05:40 PM | link | filter

Is it just me, or does this ad for a Jamieson-Higgins title look very similar to the cover of the first edition of EATCT? It’s the same font (look at that slanted a in "Table" and "Iscariot"), has the initial "The" in italic, and uses acorn decorations.

Tom Sawyer | 09/14/15 07:32 PM | link | filter

That is quite interesting. It is very similar, but I am not sure what one does with that information.

I assume that is from The Publishers' Weekly for May 31, 1902. The very next advertisement is also quite similar, but it is from the Riggs Publishing Company. For that matter, the advertisement that precedes it is also similar.

I tend to think that this happened to be a basic typeface and style (though without the prominent acorns) favored by the periodical. In other words, I think it is probably a coincidence.
I will continue to develop the case for James Andrews. Below is some information on James S. Harte.

James S. Harte Information:

1870-1933

His first performance as at the Bristol Museum in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1886. Worcester, MA is not far from the home of MFA.

James S. Harte worked for Edward Ballard a casino/hotel owner in French Lick/West Baden Springs, IN.

Harte performed with A Night With the Spirit Company, Leon Harte Company, Ringling Shows, Charles Sparks Shows, the original Buffalo Bill Show, The Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill Wild West Shows, Hagenbeck and Wallace Shows, Robinson Shows, and the Walter L. Main Show and vaudeville. He played all over the United States and Canada.

James S. Harte also performed as James Harto and Leon Harte.

Harte was a professional magician who also performed a mind-reading act as "Chandra, The Mystic", with his wife starting in 1896.

Harte owned a Magic Shop in Indianapolis, Indiana. He was a dealer in magical apparatus and opened the shop in 1905 and ran it until his death in 1933.

The first copy of EATCT magicians have documented was purportedly given to magician Edgar Pratt by James Harte.

Edgar Pratt believed Harte wrote the Legerdemain section on EATCT.

Associates the Taylor brothers confirmed that Harte spoke of his involvement with the Legerdemain section in EATCT.
Legerdemain section.

Charles Maly claimed to have seen a notebook with materials relating to a sequel to the EATCT.

James S. Harto allegedly referred to the author of the EATCT as “Andrews”.

The Legerdemain section of EATCT has materials that are similar to what James S. Harte would have written.

James S. Harte was a life-time friend of Harry Houdini.

Harte may have been the first magician to feature escapes and escape tricks.

In the late 1930’s prior to his death Harte was institutionalized in a sanitarium.

Harte destroyed and burned much of his writings and papers prior to his death.

Scott Edward Lane

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**Scott Lane** | 09/15/15 07:52 PM | [link] | [filter]

To move the James Andrews case foreword we need to look at M. D. Smith’s testimony and start to look at the mystery/anomalies concerning the illustrations in the EATCT.

Scott Edward Lane

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**Richard Hatch** | 09/16/15 12:39 AM | [link] | [filter]

Scott, thanks for continuing to develop your interesting case for James Andrews of French Lick. I have questions about the following assertions about James Harte (Harto):

*Scott Lane wrote:* The first copy of EATCT magicians have documented was purportedly given to magician Edgar Pratt by James Harto.

Pratt did claim to have received a copy of Erdnase from Harto, and it is presumed he was talking about a first edition, but it is not clear if that was the case or whether he purchased it from Harto or if it was a gift from Harto. I don’t believe Gardner ever saw the copy in question.
of his involvement with the Legerdemain section in EATCT.

I've never seen any claims that connect Pratt's friends the Taylor brothers to Harto. Pratt claimed the Taylor brothers were associates of Milton Franklin Andrews. The Taylor brothers (according to Pratt) showed Pratt stuff Andrews had shown them and said would be in the book. When Pratt saw EATCT, he recognized some of the material as things the Taylor brothers had shown him.

Scott Lane wrote: Martin Gardner claimed that Audley Dunham who built magical apparatus and sorted through Harto's papers after his death confirmed that Harto collaborated on the Legerdemain section.

Dunham's letter to Gardner confirms Harto's claimed association with Erdnase, but is very ambiguous regarding the nature of that association:

Audley Dunham to Martin Gardner wrote: Yes I have heard Jim Harto speak of Andrews he was referred to Jim by another magician the name of which I cannot recall at the present time...

...Jim referred to some part he helped on Erdnase...

...if I am not mistaken there was a letter in Waldo [Logan]'s purchases from this magician to Jim in which some mention is made of Jim helping on Erdnase. Erdnase has never interested me much... there was, however, an original Erdnase in [Harto's] effects...

...Roltare Eggleston said something about Harto being connected with Erdnase, but it is all so vague now and Roltare is gone also...

Scott Lane wrote: James S. Harto allegedly referred to the author of the EATCT as "Andrews".

This is not clear from the Maly and Dunham correspondence with Gardner. Possibly they are simply referring to "Andrews" because Gardner referred to "Andrews" as the author.

Scott Lane wrote: The Legerdemain section of EATCT has materials that are similar to what James S. Harte would have written.

A claim along these lines is made by Whaley and Busby in TMWWE, but I have never
I take seriously the claim that Harto claimed to have known/helped Erdnase, since it was made by Pratt, Maly, Dunham and Roltare Eggleston (according to Dunham) and it appears there was at one time written documentation of that claim (letters, a notebook on a possible sequel to EATCT).

Scott Lane | 09/17/15 01:49 AM | link | filter

To move the James Andrews case foreword we need to look at M. D. Smith’s testimony and start to look at the mystery/anomalies concerning the illustrations in the EATCT.

I know the M. D. Smith information has been presented before, but I would like to recap:

The book was illustrated by M. D. Smith.

He was interviewed almost 50 years later by Martin Gardner, one of the first serious Erdnase hunters.

M. D. Smith was born in Prairie du Chien, WI

Smith met with a man who claimed to be Andrews in a cheap hotel in Chicago to illustrate the EATCT.

The man explained that he was a “reformed gambler” who originally came from the east.

He said he was related to Louis Dalrymple a well known illustrator of the New York based weekly Puck magazine specializing in political satire.

M. D. Smith’s Recollections are as follows:

The hotel room was not heated and Smith kept on his overcoat. He noticed the man was not wearing an overcoat. (?)

M. D. Smiths stated:

“There was nothing tough or hard about him at all.”

“His manners and his voice were smooth and soft and pleasant.”

“He was extremely gentlemanly and polite”.

M. D. Smith also recalled the following:

He placed a board on the table and did some card tricks.

Smith believed the man was honest with him.

The man stated he was unconcerned about the artistic quality of the drawings but insisted that they show the exact positions of his fingers.

Smith was amazed at his client’s hands. They were the “softest” he had ever seen. The man explained to Smith it was important for him to keep his hands in good condition and he kept them “greased”.

Smith was surprised when the man offered him a local check, number one, from a new and unused account drawn on a Chicago bank.

Later Smith recalled that the man he met was shorter, about 5’6”.

When Martin Gardner showed him a picture of Milton Franklin Andrews 6’2”, Smith stated that it did not look like the man he met in the motel room.

When Martin Gardner showed M. D. Smith the EATCT, Smith did not remember doing so many drawings.

Scott Edward Lane

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**Carlo Morpurgo** 09/17/15 07:04 AM | [link] | [filter]

*Scott Lane wrote:* To move the James Andrews case foreword we need to look at M. D. Smith’s testimony and start to look at the mystery/anomalies concerning the illustrations in the EATCT.

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The man explained that he was a “reformed gambler” who originally came from the east.

He said he was related to Louis Dalrymple a well known illustrator of the New York based weekly Puck magazine specializing in political satire.

M. D. Smith’s Recollections are as follows:

The hotel room was not heated and Smith kept on his overcoat. He noticed the man was not wearing an overcoat.(?)

M. D. Smiths stated:

“There was nothing tough or hard about him at all.”

“His manners and his voice were smooth and soft and pleasant.”

“He was extremely gentlemanly and polite”.

“He looked more like a man of education and refinement”

M. D. Smith also recalled the following:

He placed a board on the table and did some card tricks.

Smith believed the man was honest with him.

The man stated he was unconcerned about the artistic quality of the drawings but insisted that they show the exact positions of his fingers.

Smith was amazed at his client’s hands. They were the “softest” he had ever seen. The man explained to Smith it was important for him to keep his hands in good condition and he kept them “greased”.

Smith was surprised when the man offered him a local check, number one, from a new and unused account drawn on a Chicago bank.

Later Smith recalled that the man he met was shorter, about 5’6”.

When Martin Gardner showed him a picture of Milton Franklin Andrews 6’2” Smith stated that it did not look like the man he met in the motel.
remember doing so many drawings.

Scott Edward Lane

Scott, to help the James Andrews case move forward, could you tell us what your own speculation/deduction is about the drawings (based on the above information)? and perhaps how this is in any way connected to James Andrews.

AJM | 09/17/15 07:24 AM | link | filter

I am Erdnase...and so is my wife!

performer | 09/17/15 08:55 AM | link | filter

AJM wrote: I am Erdnase...and so is my wife!

I have reason to believe this is an incorrect statement.

Leo Garet | 09/17/15 10:11 AM | link | filter

performer wrote:

AJM wrote: I am Erdnase...and so is my wife!

I have reason to believe this is an incorrect statement. 😐

I believe you may be correct. However, until evidence to the contrary is produced, I believe I will keep an open mind on the subject.

performer | 09/17/15 11:15 AM | link | filter

I haven’t the slightest interest in who wrote Erdnase as it doesn’t put a shilling in my pocket. However, I am surprised that nobody has mentioned that there are a couple of small paragraphs about William J Hilliar in Bobo’s Modern Coin Magic in the Stanley Collins section. It seems he was pretty good at the Miser’s Dream.

Tom Sawyer | 09/17/15 07:57 PM | link | filter

A few of you may claim that you are S.W. Erdnase, or that your spouse is. But some of you will remember that I actually proved that my daughter was Erdnase. I was able to do this by marshaling a lot of clear facts that went far beyond any possibility of
Regarding the recent references to Smith on this thread, *The Man Who Was Erdnase* says that Erdnase told Smith he "had come from the East." I have seen that on this thread as well, more than once, I believe.

However, I don't seem to see that in *The Gardner-Smith Correspondence*, but maybe I missed it. I thought Dick Hatch discussed the ins and outs of this on this thread not long ago, but i could not find such.

--Tom Sawyer

**Richard Hatch | 09/17/15 09:19 PM | link | filter**

*Tom Sawyer wrote:* Regarding the recent references to Smith on this thread, *The Man Who Was Erdnase* says that Erdnase told Smith he "had come from the East." I have seen that on this thread as well, more than once, I believe.

However, I don't seem to see that in *The Gardner-Smith Correspondence*, but maybe I missed it. I thought Dick Hatch discussed the ins and outs of this on this thread not long ago, but i could not find such.

From the Gardner-Smith Notes, p. 17, Smith's letter of May 20, 1950:

Can't remember Conn[ecticut]. He came from the east and N. Y.

This is in response to Gardner asking him about Milton Franklin Andrews, who was from Hartford, Connecticut.

Although this information (about the author coming from the East) is not mentioned in Gardner's work notes of his interview with Smith, it is mentioned in his 1947 article in the SAM Program, "The Mystery of Erdnase" (reprinted in *The Annotated Erdnase*, p. 263):

A man named Andrews arrived in the city from the East and got in touch with Smith. He said he was a reformed gambler.

It is worth noting that Smith would have seen this article in the convention program (which reproduced a photo of Smith circa 1902 and one of Smith's paintings), so he was in a position to dispute any errors Gardner might have made in his account. This was also several years before Gardner developed the Milton Franklin Andrews theory (at the time this was written, though he doesn't mention it in this article, he believe the author's name was "James Andrews" and claimed in correspondence from that period...
Dick, thanks for all those details about the "east" as Smith's stated point of origin for Erdnase.

--Tom

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**Scott Lane** | 09/17/15 11:15 PM | link | filter

Carlo wrote:

“Scott, to help the James Andrews case move forward, could you tell us what your own speculation/deduction is about the drawings (based on the above information)? and perhaps how this is in any way connected to James Andrews.”

Mr. England wrote on this thread on 8/23/2014 the following:

“I don’t know if anyone has brought this up before, but for some time now I’ve believed that the copyright notices were placed only under the illustrations where Erdnase felt he had some original thinking or innovation.”

I believe this theory has merit.

Scott Edward Lane

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**Scott Lane** | 09/17/15 11:16 PM | link | filter

M. D. Smith stated that the hotel room he met Erdnase in was cold and that he left his overcoat on when he lined the illustrations. I am trying to determine if the person who met M. D. Smith wore an overcoat to the meeting. Did he ware one and just take it off when he got there? The illustrations do not show an overcoat. This point may be important if we try to determine if the man who met Smith was staying in a nearby hotel. If he was coming from a nearby hotel, it would be nice to know who owned the hotel. Were there any nicer/larger hotels in the area where the meeting took place?

Scott Edward Lane

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**lybrary** | 09/18/15 05:07 AM | link | filter

I interpret the choice of hotel as follows. It was convenient because cheap and close to where Gallaway lived.
Hi All,

Based on what Smith said, hotels near the intersection of Congress and State are going to lead the pack for being the Erdnase-Smith Hotel, and that pretty much makes Bartl's Hotel (later the State Hotel) a front runner. This was at the corner of Harrison and State. (Bill Mullins figured out the Bartl name.)

Even though we don't know for certain that that is the hotel, Chris's post rests on the premise that it definitely helps a candidate's case if there is some plausible reason, specific to a candidate, as to why a certain hotel would have been chosen. This is a valid premise, in my view.

Regarding overcoats, *The Gardner-Smith Correspondence* (page 7) to me implies that Erdnase was wearing an overcoat and removed it, but actually it doesn't really say that.

A theory on the overcoat business was addressed by Leonard Hevia in this post: Link.

(Seems to me, though, that on a really cold day, Erdnase would have been wearing an overcoat, at least while outside.)

--Tom Sawyer

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**lybrary** | 09/18/15 10:31 AM | link | filter

Same argument regarding the overcoat can be made for Gallaway. Since he lived close to the hotel he may have gone there without overcoat.

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**Jonathan Townsend** | 09/18/15 10:35 AM | link | filter

*lybrary wrote:* Same argument regarding the overcoat can be made for Gallaway. Since he lived close to the hotel he may have gone there without overcoat.

Imagine you're in the hotel lobby and hear this: "I'd like to rent a room for a couple of hours. Yeah, just a couple of hours. I have a guy coming to meet me. - no need to send up a couple of waitresses. We'd like some privacy thanks. ..."

Still reads as a little odd.

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Erdnase needed the illustrations to be accurate on some points, and not on others. On details that weren't relevant to what Erdnase was trying to describe, I wouldn't assume the drawings to be "photo-realistic". For example, even though one of the illustrations shows an ace from a Bee deck, I don't take that to mean that Erdnase actually used Bee cards -- this may be a detail that Smith added in his studio, at his leisure -- a matter of "artistic license".

Here is one reason to think that Smith's drawings weren't exact representations of exactly what happened in that cold hotel room:

23% of the cards in a normal deck are face cards. Smith's drawings show something like 35 spot cards, and no face cards. (You may get a different count -- I tended to ignore cards that I wasn't certain about, and when the same scenario was shown twice at successive moments, and when the effect called for a specific card such as "The Three Aces"). The odds of 35 randomly selected cards all being spot cards are \(1/(0.67)^{35}\) -- or less than 1 in a million.

The only conclusion that makes sense is that Smith drew all spot cards because they were easier -- regardless of whether he actually saw face cards when Erdnase was posing for him.

If Erdnase wore an overcoat, but it was easier to draw cuffed shirts and a jacket, then Smith drew cuffed shirts and a jacket. (or maybe what I'm calling a jacket was, in fact, the sleeves of an overcoat).

Were there any nicer/larger hotels in the area where the meeting took place?

There were many other hotels in the immediate area. Whether they were larger or nicer I've never tried to figure out.

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**Bill Mullins** | 09/18/15 12:29 PM | [link] | [filter]

Welcome back Chris.

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**Bill Mullins** | 09/18/15 01:27 PM | [link] | [filter]

Just to muddy the waters . . .

The 1901 city directory for Chicago on Ancestry.com lists as one of the tenants of 73 Plymouth "Jordan Show Printing". The president of Jordan was Howard M. Andrews.
I was very disappointed with the McDermott book. There was nothing new apart from his alleged discovery of the hotel used by Messrs Erdnase & Smith and that turned out to be impossible - the State Hotel had not yet been built and it was in the wrong place! As you know, there was a smaller hotel called Bartl's on the corner of State and Harrison Streets but that was there until at least 1904 and none of the windows could have possibly faced north.

Martin Gardner wrote

> It was in a very cheap hotel on the east side of State Street. He thinks it was on the S. E. corner of Congress and State, and he thinks the window faced north. Might have been a corner room.

Just as I once wrote, "artists are trained observers", artists prefer north facing windows. No, you don't have to take my word for it, Bill. I did a search for someone to back me up. Try [http://www.finearttips.com/2010/01/why-how-to-turn-your-window-into-instant-north-light/](http://www.finearttips.com/2010/01/why-how-to-turn-your-window-into-instant-north-light/)

Contrary to most people on here, I believe Marshall Smith's testimony. If he wasn’t sure, he said so. There must have been something on the south-east corner of Congress and State, so I set out to have a look myself.

Bartl's hotel is listed on page 358 of Flinn's *Chicago: Marvelous City of the West*. The proprietor was John Bartl and the address was 355 State Street (the State Hotel was numbers 351-359). It didn’t take long to search for John Bartl in the 1900 Census and then have a look back to see who or what was at the north end of that same block. Hey Presto!

The enumerator started on that stretch of State Street with number 325. So that must have been the one on the corner. What was there? A saloon run by Jacob Schram Junior and a hotel run by William Kerr. They are described as "Saloon Keeper" and "Hotel Keeper" respectively.

The only problem is that the name of the establishment is not given and a search of the internet and the guide books has yielded nothing. Maybe it was called "Schram’s" or "Kerr’s"? When Smith said it was a cheap hotel, he meant it. In 1900 the "lodgers" were low paid workers - cooks, waiters, porters, actors, etc.

Why did they use a cheap hotel? It was right next to the terminal for the first elevated railway in Chicago? The track ran along an alley behind the buildings and terminated
Over to you, Bill.

Peter Zenner

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Roger M. | 09/19/15 10:57 AM | link | filter

Zenner wrote: I was very disappointed with the McDermott book. There was nothing new.....

From the publishers statement, referencing Hurt's book:

"the book's primary purpose is to survey all existing theories"

I don’t see anything in that statement that would promise the book would present anything "new".

Having said that, Hurt certainly penned some wholly original thinking that was indeed his own, and most definitely "new".

Hurt's book is excellent, and a mandatory Erdnase reference.

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mam | 09/19/15 01:36 PM | link | filter

Hey everyone,

For some reason i haven't had a look at the editions we have in the Swedish Magic Circle's library until now, so this is just a quick update on what's there. I have not done any close inspection yet, as I had quite a headache when I last visited, but let me know if you want me to look for anything in particular next time, e.g. measurements, signature count, page count, etc.

The oldest copy is a Drake one, that with only 178 pages and far too small margins. After the 178 pages is a number of blank pages, and last an ad page of another paper type/color: image 1, image 2, image 3, image 4

Next is the Powner/Fleming hardcover, inscribed by M. D. Smith: image 1, image 2

There are also the paperback Powner editions, both with the original title and as "Card Secrets Exposed": image 1

Then, the MacDougall edition: image 1
with articles on Erdnase, and the Montana history magazine, and probably some more stuff I forgot.

So as I said, just let me know if you want any additional information on any of these.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 09/19/15 04:20 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

This post was inspired by Peter Zenner's most recent post.

Back in 2012, Hurt McDermott and I corresponded a little bit about the geographical area of the State Hotel (which in the Erdnase era had a different name).

Hurt was kind enough to share a little bit of his additional research with me, and it is my understanding that if he had lived long enough, he was going to use some of his new findings in a revision to his book *Artifice, Ruse & Erdnase*.

He told me in essence that he had determined to a high degree of certainty that "James Manning's saloon" occupied the southeast corner of State and Congress in 1902. He provided me with a few other details as well, and sent me a digital version of an old photograph of the place taken somewhat later -- which as I recall I was able to locate myself on the internet later on.

--Tom Sawyer

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**Brad Jeffers** | 09/19/15 05:57 PM | link | filter
NO ARRESTS FOR BOMB NO. 30
Chicago Sunday Tribune - June 27, 1909

Although the police profess to have one man under suspicion as having caused bomb explosion No. 30 at Manning & Bowes Saloon, 321 State Street, no arrests were made yesterday (Saturday, June 26, 1909). There is a rumor that is gaining in strength that the man under suspicion has a strong political "pull," but the police deny that this is true of the person they are seeking.

Detectives from the headquarters and the Harrison street station house continued work throughout the day upon the case, but were unable or unwilling to report any progress when asked about the bomb throwers.

Assistant Chief of Police Schuettler declares that every means the department has at its command is being used in the pursuit of the man or men responsible for the repeated outrages.

"I wish I knew who the certain police official is who knows the persona responsible for the dynamite bombs in the so-called gamblers' war; I would give ten years of my life to know who is responsible for the outrages."
"I don't believe there is any official attached to the Chicago police department who has information that would lead to the identity of the perpetrators of the bomb outrages," said the assistant chief.

"I have officials of a powder company at work trying to locate the place where the bomb throwers obtain the powder which is the explosive used in most of the bombs. I believe we are close upon the track of the bomb throwers, but cannot afford to make arrests upon suspicion. We have several persons under surveillance, but it is our business to catch them in the act in order to secure a conviction."

"It makes me feel mighty bad to know that no arrest has been made as yet, but we would be in a worse way if we made arrests upon suspicion and were unable to produce evidence against the suspects that would satisfy a court."

"We have followed up the movements of all the known gamblers, and we have obtained lists of men that are supposed to be their enemies within the gambling fraternity. I have heard rumors that there is someone who we are afraid to arrest. That is untrue."

"If we secure evidence against anyone, no matter how he may be connected, we will not hesitate to make arrests. This last outrage has made the detectives who have worked at times upon cases determined to land the men who are responsible."

Roger M. wrote:

Zenner wrote: I was very disappointed with the McDermott book. There was nothing new .....  

Expertly edited Roger. You purposely missed out the rest of the sentence --

apart from his alleged discovery of the hotel used by Messrs Erdnase & Smith and that turned out to be impossible - the State Hotel had not yet been built and it was in the wrong place!

I knew that the rest of the book was a summary of other people's research. I had already confirmed that with the publisher.

What is the point of anybody contributing anything to this discussion when people like you are lurking in the shadows? I was disappointed to find that McDermott had
Zenner wrote: ...
What is the point of anybody contributing anything to this discussion when people like you are lurking in the shadows? ...

To state your case with verifiable information and add to what others can learn by reading here.

Roger M. wrote:

Roger M. wrote:

Zenner wrote: I was very disappointed with the McDermott book. There was nothing new ..... 

Expertly edited Roger. You purposely missed out the rest of the sentence --

No, you noted very specifically that there was "nothing new" in Hurt's book, and I pointed out that there was never a promise of anything "new".

The remainder of your sentence being edited out changes nothing.

(BTW ... I'm not at all "lurking in the shadows" (I post quite regularly to this thread, always under my own name).
Also, I'll point out your phrase "people like you" is probably a bit too personal, and off-topic.)

Brad Jeffers wrote:
NO ARRESTS FOR BOMB NO. 30
Chicago Sunday Tribune - June 27, 1909

Although the police profess to have one man under suspicion as having caused bomb explosion No. 30 at Manning & Bowes Saloon, 321 State Street, no arrests were made yesterday (Saturday, June 26, 1909).

So we know that the saloon at 321 State Street belonged to Messrs Manning & Bowes.
In 1893 the whole site, including a single-story saloon owned by Messrs Crosby & Beer on Congress Street, between Howland's bar and the 'L' railway terminal, was purchased by Frederick Siegel and a three-storey building was erected.

321 State Street was a bar, on street level, and obviously remained a bar until at least 1909 when it was bombed. People don’t live (permanently!) in bars and that’s why #321 wasn’t included in the 1900 Census. It wasn’t a hotel.

The State Hotel was on the corner of State and Harrison Streets BUT, if you look at the picture of it, you will see that right on the corner, on the ground floor, was a business called 'Dineen Buffet'. The bedrooms of the State Hotel extended over the the Dineen Buffet, so they were both on the corner.

Whoever owned the bar at #321 between 1893 and 1909 we don’t know (yet). In 1900, however, #325 was the first inhabited building listed on the Census and it was a hotel with a bar. There is no reason not to believe that the bedrooms extended over the bar on the corner (and whatever was at #323) in just the same way as the State Hotel/Dineen Buffet example.

It would be great to know what William Kerr’s hotel at 325 State Street was called. Come on Bill, you’re the man for this!

Peter Zenner

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**Tom Sawyer** | 09/20/15 04:39 PM | link | filter

I just re-looked at the email from Hurt McDermott in which he mentioned the James Manning establishment. It appears that Hurt was indicating that the southeast corner of Congress and State was at that time **also** occupied by a couple of other entities, but I’m not getting into that at the moment, in part because Hurt is not here to qualify what I am saying.

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**mam** | 09/21/15 12:37 AM | link | filter

For what it’s worth, Bryan Lloyd’s vice maps says the southeast corner of State/Congress was a place called "The Eldorado": [http://www.artifacting.com/historic-vic ... f-chicago/](http://www.artifacting.com/historic-vic ... f-chicago/) Not entirely clear though in what year, I’ve emailed and asked him.
corner of State/Congress was a place called "The Eldorado":

That's interesting, mam, but the State Hotel is marked on that map, so I presume that it was drawn up after 1904. As I posted, Bartl's was there until at least that year.

I have found what was at 323 State Street at the time of Erdnase. It had been a massage parlour and a pharmacy but in the Chicago Tribune for Sunday, January 27, 1895, there was a large advert for a Doctor F.L. Sweany with an office at that address. He was still there in February, 1902, as an advert on page 3 of The Chicago Live Stock World dated February 12, 1902, confirms.

So, on the ground floors at 321 and 323 were a saloon bar and a doctor's office. There were two floors above those premises though and I believe we will find that they were occupied by bedrooms belonging to William Kerr's hotel at #325 - eventually!

Peter Zenner

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**Tom Sawyer** | 09/21/15 05:56 AM | link | filter

Hi All,

At the moment, on my S.W. Erdnase blog I am running a little series of posts on this whole “Erdnase hotel” business.

However, there a couple of things I wanted to mention here at this time.

I think it has been mentioned a number of times on this thread that there were many hotels in the area of State and Congress back in the 1901-1902 era, so I am not presenting that generalization as a new fact.

The State Hotel (to use a more recent name) in my view was and continues to be the best candidate for being the Erdnase hotel, even though it was located at the other end of the block from where Hurt McDermott’s book placed it.

But still, we don’t know which hotel is the right one, and while Smith’s recollection of the location could have been right, that was definitely an area upon which he did not express certainty. He seemed sure about the east side of the street, but not about the intersection, the north-facing window, or the corner room. (On these last things, Gardner used the word “thinks” or “might.”)
I don’t think anyone has ever attempted to list them. *Moran’s Dictionary of Chicago*, 1893, which is on the Hathi Trust Digital Library website, is early, but probably gives some indication of how numerous the hotels were in the area. It lists hotels with “moderate prices” at the following addresses (among others):

109 State Street
230 State Street
248 State Street
250 State Street
262 State Street
268 State Street
310 State Street
312 State Street
326 State Street
346 State Street
355 State Street
368 State Street
398 State Street
407 State Street
487 State Street
499 State Street

Now it would not surprise me if a number of these came into existence in connection with the World’s Columbian Exposition, and vanished soon after. But my point is that for just about any stated address in the area, it would not be surprising to find a that a hotel was there.

I am very unclear on what Peter Zenner’s evidence is for a hotel at 325 State Street. I "get" that he says that a “Hotel Keeper” was at that address, but I did not see him say that the census records stated that a *hotel* is at that address. Possibly even more important, 325 State is not 321 State, although it certainly seems possible that a hotel, if present in that area, could have spanned three (or more) street addresses. Also, the year 1900 is not the year 1901 or 1902 (though of course we don't really know when Erdnase and Smith met).

--Tom Sawyer

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**Zenner** | 09/21/15 10:37 AM | [link](#) | [filter](#)

*Tom Sawyer wrote:* At the moment, on my S.W. Erdnase blog I am running a little series of posts on this whole “Erdnase hotel” business.
Tom Sawyer wrote: The State Hotel (to use a more recent name) in my view was and continues to be the best candidate for being the Erdnase hotel, even though it was located at the other end of the block from where Hurt McDermott’s book placed it.

Why? It was not where Smith said it was and there were NO north facing windows. If you are going to totally ignore Smith then you might as well go for any of the "between fourteen and fifteen hundred hotels in the city of Chicago, including small and large, and houses of all grades, but excluding lodging houses, boarding houses and distinctively family hotels, where no transients are received."

Tom Sawyer wrote: But still, we don’t know which hotel is the right one, and while Smith’s recollection of the location could have been right, that was definitely an area upon which he did not express certainty. He seemed sure about the east side of the street, but not about the intersection, the north-facing window, or the corner room. (On these last things, Gardner used the word “thinks” or “might.”)

McDermott wrote on his page 124:

The fact that The State Street Hotel occupied the corner at which Marshall Smith remembered the hotel, while not proving it absolutely, is still solid external evidence that Marshall Smith’s memory may have been correct on this point.

Back on his page 123 he wrote:

When I found out that a hotel did actually exist at the point where Marshall Smith remembers the meeting, I made a pilgrimage down to Congress and State. On the spot where the hotel stood, there now stands a building called University Center which hosts classrooms for three Chicago institutes of higher learning, Roosevelt University, DePaul University and Columbia College Chicago (no relation to Wilbur Edgerton Sanders’s alma mater). On the corner itself is an entrance for Panera Bread on the first floor. The present address is 501 S. State Street.

He couldn’t have been more precise in his placing of the State Hotel BUT IT WAS TOTALLY WRONG. Not only that but THE STATE HOTEL DID NOT EXIST IN 1901-02. I will take Smith’s testimony over McDermott’s any day.
The 1900 Census is only about 18 months before the Erdnase period; a bit nearer.

Tom Sawyer wrote: I am very unclear on what Peter Zenner’s evidence is for a hotel at 325 State Street. I “get” that he says that a “Hotel Keeper” was at that address, but I did not see him say that the census records stated that a hotel is at that address. Possibly even more important, 325 State is not 321 State, although it certainly seems possible that a hotel, if present in that area, could have spanned three (or more) street addresses. Also, the year 1900 is not the year 1901 or 1902 (though of course we don’t really know when Erdnase and Smith met).

If you would like to read my post again, you will find that I had checked the 1900 Census. A Census lists the people living at an address at the time it was taken. I wrote:-

When Smith said it was a cheap hotel, he meant it. In 1900 the "lodgers" were low paid workers - cooks, waiters, porters, actors, etc.

How would I know that, if the "lodgers" at the hotel hadn't been listed on the Census? It was pointless to list all of the "lodgers" because they may well have changed by 1902. There were 23 on June 1, 1900, the date of the Census.

Peter Zenner

mam | 09/21/15 12:28 PM | link | filter

As a little intermission, for your entertainment, I present the following graph:
Also, 2011 had more posts than the four years before that, combined. However, 2015 will soon have twice the posts of the three years before that, combined. Is it currently the golden age of the ERDNASE thread?

Tom Sawyer | 09/21/15 03:32 PM | link | filter

To mam:

That is a revealing graph. The rebirth of my own intense interest in the topic dates back to about the first red line, with all of the excitement that Richard Kaufman generated in connection with Marty Demarest’s then-forthcoming article.

To Peter:

Thanks for clarifying about the source of your inference about there being a hotel at 325 State Street and of your list of the types of “lodgers.” As a matter of fact, I wondered where you got that latter information as well. If you had said originally that the information came from the census, I would not have had those questions.
the time to reply.

--Tom Sawyer

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**mam** | 09/21/15 03:40 PM | link | filter

*Tom Sawyer wrote:* That is a revealing graph. The rebirth of my own intense interest in the topic dates back to about the first red line, with all of the excitement that Richard Kaufman generated in connection with Marty Demarest’s then-forthcoming article.

On a five hour train ride today I finally finished reading the entire thread, up until my own first few posts here. It has been quite a journey reading those 280,000+ words spanning twelve years. All the various ideas and topics, people coming and going, the build-ups to central events such as the Demarest article, the sad demise of some key contributors, and just the sheer curiousness of everyone involved. A big thank you to all of you! It’s exciting to have entered the quest at a time where activity is at an all-time high, where every single day yields interesting posts in this thread.

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**Bill Mullins** | 09/21/15 11:17 PM | link | filter

1906 map of the SE corner of State and Congress
I'm pretty sure that the building labeled "Stewart Radio" is in this picture is 321 State,
not as detailed) photo of it.

Compare this to the Vice map that mam linked to above -- it only includes four addresses on the East side of State between Harrison and Congress, when there are in reality many more.

Note that the address "321 State" could just as easily be called "61 Harrison".

Zenner wrote: The enumerator started on that stretch of State Street with number 325. So that must have been the one on the corner.

325 State is an address in the 2nd building from the corner. The building at the corner includes 321 and 323 State.

Bill Mullins | 09/22/15 12:19 AM | link | filter

Okay, the State Hotel (and predecessors in that building) at the NE corner of State and Harrison did have at least some northern exposure. The Sanford Fire Insurance map I linked above shows the hotel going from 351-359 State St.

If you look at this bird's eye view map, you can see that the hotel has a small open space between 351 and 349 State, and that it includes some windows. And once you know what to look for, you can see the space on the 1906 map. So it is certainly possible, that if Erdnase met Smith here, he could have had a room with a North-facing window.

Scott Lane | 09/22/15 12:38 AM | link | filter

It is interesting that Campbell owned a place across the street in 1932.

Scott Edward Lane

Tom Sawyer | 09/22/15 02:52 AM | link | filter

Hi All,

Bill Mullins posted some quite interesting information above regarding the intersection of State and Congress and related matters.

This caused me to undertake another search for the source of the image that Hurt
Here is a link to a related photo, a close-up of the entrance to the US Army recruitment office at 323 State Street. You can see part of the signage for the “gowns” store found in the wider shot. Link to other photo.

I’m providing links, because the website mentions restrictions on the images, and I don’t know what those might be.

The photos were taken later on, and possibly the relevant address changes had already taken place.

--Tom Sawyer

mam | 09/22/15 04:11 AM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:* I’m pretty sure that the building labeled "Stewart Radio" is in this picture is 321 State, and
http://i789.photobucket.com/albums/yy173/amcombilu/190%20postcar
d%20one%20corner%20of%20State%20and%20Congress_zpsrirhil.jpg
here is an earlier (but not as detailed) photo of it.

Actually, I think Stewart Radio is on 323 State. All their signs say 505 State, which is what maps to 323 State with the street renumbering of 1911. Also, if I read it correctly, the Sears & Roebuck building occupies 282-319 State in the old numbering.
Also wanted to point out that the US Army/Gowns building in Tom’s photos match the Stewart building in Bill’s, looking at the appearance of these, e.g. the decorations on the top of the buildings (can’t remember the term for this).

Edit:

The 505/323 State address is listed as an upstairs address in the 1911 renumbering document, while the street level 323 address became 503.

mam | 09/22/15 06:19 AM | link | filter

*Zenner wrote:* So, on the ground floors at 321 and 323 were a saloon bar and a doctor’s office. There were two floors above those premises though and I believe we will find that they were occupied by bedrooms belonging to William Kerr's hotel at #325 - eventually!

There were two 323’s, one store and one upstairs. I would guess the upstairs one was
had rooms at 323 State since both ground and floor levels were occupied by other businesses. This is based on the assumption however that both upstairs floors belonged to one tenant (Sweany) which I have not been able to confirm yet. **Dr. Sweany had some great ads by the way.**

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**mam** | 09/22/15 06:58 AM | link | filter

Another interesting note is from The Inter Ocean, March 1, 1902 where it is written that "The following writers were indicted yesterday on the charge of keeping a common gaming house" and for the 325 State address is given one "N. Hansen".

Since 323 became 505 and 327 became 509, I draw the conclusion that 325 became 507 (it is not written out in the 1911 renumbering document), 507 is by the way seen in one of Tom's photos, at which time it was apparently a liquor store. But that is much later than 1902.

My current thinking is this:

If Smith remembers correctly that the hotel was one the east side of State, and he "thinks" at it crossing Congress, we can start excluding possible locations. Sears & Roebuck occupied the entire block on the NE, so not there. We are left with the entire SE block. The further south, the less likely it gets, to the point where you hardly even see the State/Congress intersection. This is on the assumption that Smith remembered that intersection because it was near the hotel rather than at the exact corner.

So if all addresses along that block can be pinpointed to other businesses in 1902, it could be narrowed down. And it would not surprise me at all if we end up on Bartl's/State Hotel, which occupied 351, 353, 355, 357 and 359 State.

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**Zenner** | 09/22/15 07:18 AM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:* Note that the address "321 State" could just as easily be called "61 Harrison".

*Zenner wrote:* The enumerator started on that stretch of State Street with number 325. So that must have been the one on the corner.

325 State is an address in the 2nd building from the corner. The building at the corner includes 321 and 323 State.
building stood on the corner of CONGRESS and State Street. It was neither Bartl’s nor the State Hotel!

#321 was a street level saloon, #323 was Dr. F.L. Sweany’s office up to and including 1902 at least, and #325 was the hotel - shown as a doorway to Stewart Radio Service upstairs and over the top of numbers 321 and 323. That doorway was shown on Tom’s photographs as the entrance to the army recruiting office which occupied the same space - upstairs and over the top of 321 and 323!

We have actually found the site of the hotel where Erdnase & Smith met up. Now all we need is a photograph of the building when the space later occupied by the above two lessees was occupied by the hotel which was run by William Kerr at the time of the 1900 Census.

The building was erected in 1893 by Frederick Siegel and the different premises were let to different businesses. If you check the advert for Dr Sweany’s business, which I mentioned in a previous posting, you will see that his address was "323 State St., Cor. Congress, Chicago, Ill". Even though 321 was on the actual corner, he still referred to 323 as being on the corner.

I can't find one but there should be a book about Dr. Sweany and his nefarious activities. He sounds very interesting but he is definitely off-topic in this thread:-)

Thanks again Bill,

Peter Zenner

Zenner | 09/22/15 09:09 AM | link | filter

mam wrote: at 323 was in 1902 also the Bipper Bros store selling meat among other things (see Chicago Tribune, June 4, 1902),

I think that you might have misread the number, mam. The following is from the Chicago Tribune dated November 9, 1900, page 4:-

Frederick W. Bipper died at the Mercy Hospital at 1 o’clock yesterday afternoon as the result of an operation. He was taken ill on Saturday.

Mr. Bipper was born in Germany fifty-seven years ago and came to the United States in 1860, settling soon after in Chicago. In 1873 he started a meat market at Eighteenth street and Wabash avenue, and eighteen years
As for your discovery that:

"The following writers were indicted yesterday on the charge of keeping a common gaming house" and for the 325 State address is given one "N. Hansen".

I can quite believe that Mr Hansen had replaced Mr Kerr between June, 1900 and March, 1902. I didn’t understand the term "writer" in that context but a quick search on Google has revealed that it is short for "policy writer", a person who operated the Numbers game - an illegal lottery. But then I suppose that our American friends would already know that.

Peter Zenner

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**mam** | 09/22/15 10:05 AM | link | filter

Zenner wrote:

*mam wrote:* at 323 was in 1902 also the Bipper Bros store selling meat among other things (see Chicago Tribune, June 4, 1902),

I think that you might have misread the number, mam. The following is number 9, 1900, page 4:-

![Evening Riot in Wabash Avenue](image)

And look at the second to last column:

Might be a typo in the article though, but the location seems to fit with the larger description of the meat convoys during that (very violent, by the way) strike. Also, if Frederick W. Bipper died in 1900, someone was obviously continuing the business, and it may have moved to 323 State between 1900 and 1902.

Zenner wrote: As for your discovery that:
is given one "N. Hansen".

I can quite believe that Mr Hansen had replaced Mr Kerr between June, 1900 and March, 1902, but I don't understand the word 'writer' in that context. Perhaps one of our American friends can explain - is it a term used in gambling over there?

For anyone with a Newspapers.com account, here's the entire article (first column on page)

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**Bill Mullins** | 09/22/15 11:56 AM | link | filter

*Zenner wrote:* Those pictures are definitely of the building we are referring to - but in no way could 321 be called 61 Harrison. The building stood on the corner of CONGRESS and State Street. It was neither Bartl's nor the State Hotel!

Whoops -- you caught me in a mistake. I was thinking Congress, but my fingers typed Harrison. But it's pretty obvious to anyone who looks at the map -- 321 State and 61 Congress are two addresses for the same corner.

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**magicam** | 09/22/15 07:09 PM | link | filter

*Zenner wrote:*

Tom Sawyer wrote: At the moment, on my S.W. Erdnase blog I am running a little series of posts on this whole “Erdnase hotel” business.

I hope that you are not lifting material from the Genii Forum to include on "your" blog!

Having known Tom for well over 40 years, I find that remark insulting to him. If you took the time to read his blog, then you’d realize your comment was out of line.

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**Tom Sawyer** | 09/22/15 11:19 PM | link | filter

Clay, thank you, that was very kind of you. --Tom

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**Zenner** | 09/23/15 07:26 AM | link | filter

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those premises though and I believe we will find that they were occupied by bedrooms belonging to William Kerr's hotel at #325 - eventually!

There were two 323's, one store and one upstairs. I would guess the upstairs one was Dr. Sweany, because at 323 was in 1902 also the Bipper Bros store selling meat among other things (see Chicago Tribune, June 4, 1902), which would lead me to the conclusion that they had the store level address. This also means no hotel could have had rooms at 323 State since both ground and floor levels were occupied by other businesses. This is based on the assumption however that both upstairs floors belonged to one tenant (Sweany) which I have not been able to confirm yet.

I found that rather confusing, mam, after doing my research on the 1900 Census. Now I have found that 1911 book on the re-numbering and have realised that the mistake was with whoever compiled the book. I am sure they got it wrong. 321 & 323 were stores (s). 323 upstairs (u) was actually 325 on the 1900 Census. 507 is missing but it was actually 325 in 1906 when Otto Trogisch got his licence and 507 on the photograph taken outside the army recruiting office in 1916.

So there were apparently two 325s, not 323s. The premises at 325 on the 1900 Census listed both Jacob Schram (Saloon Keeper) and his "servant", a cook called Frederick Hawes, and then William Kerr (Hotel Keeper) and his family, along with all of his "lodgers".

Jacob Schram must have occupied the premises later occupied by Otto Trogisch. Even though Trogisch’s premises appear to be in the next building, he shared his street number with the business up those stairs and over numbers 321 and 323. No wonder that Chicago needed to sort its street numbering out!

Peter Zenner

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**Bill Mullins | 09/23/15 10:07 PM | link | filter**

There were a LOT of hotels in the immediate area of the SE corner of State and Congress. Within just a one-block radius, the 1905 Sanford Fire Insurance maps show hotels at:

- 78-80 Vanburen (Sheet 68)
- 76 Vanburen (Sheet 68)
- 286-288 State (Sheet 68)
- 300 State (Sheet 68)
352-354 State (Sheet 68)
341-345 Wabash (Sheet 69)
355-361 Wabash/33 Harrison (corner building) (Sheet 69)
351-359 State/47-57 Harrison (Bartl/State Hotel) (corner building) (Sheet 69)
347-349 State (Sheet 69)
38-40 Harrison (Sheet 77)
62-72 Harrison/356-358 State (corner building) (Sheet 76)

And lodging houses at
306 State (Sheet 68)
308 State (Sheet 68)

(Sheet 68 is the one I posted. 69, 76, and 77 are all adjacent to it.)

Per the listing of hotels in the 1900 City Directory, p 2256, we can give names to some of these:
Congress Hotel 318 State
Great Western Hotel 38 Harrison
Meyer's Hotel 356 State
New Century Hotel 306 State
Royal Hotel 308 State

If you accept Peter's argument that there was a hotel at SE State and Congress, you can take Smith's memories at face value. But if you decide that Smith was a little off, and that the hotel in question was merely near SE State and Congress, it is a leap of faith to say it was Bartl's -- it could have been any of a number of other ones.

And from this same 1900 Chicago Directory, we know that Marshall Smith worked at 324 Dearborn (p.1768) at the time -- only a couple blocks west. Which sort of raises the question -- "Who chose the hotel?" Erdnase, for reasons we can only guess at, or Smith, because it was only a short walk from where he worked? (Tom Sawyer has annotated a map that shows just how close everything was.)

And note the saloon Peter mentions above at 325 State, only listed under Jacob Schramm, not Jacob Schram, listed on p. 1690 of the directory linked above. William Kerr is shown has having furnished rooms at 325 State (p. 1035). I'd envision "furnished rooms" as being a rooming house, much less transient than the hotel Smith describes, and not amenable to day rates as Erdnase and Smith used.
Bill Mullins | 09/24/15 12:17 AM | link | filter

I think the area was hotel-dense, but not uniquely so. I suppose you could go to the 1900 City Directory, and plot them, and get an idea if other areas had as many.

To me, the area is interesting because of the concentration of printers -- everything else that is Erdase-interesting about the area ultimately stems from that, I think.

Zenner | 09/24/15 05:14 AM | link | filter

Congratulations on more excellent research, Bill.

Bill Mullins wrote: If you accept Peter’s argument that there was a hotel at SE State and Congress, you can take Smith’s memories at face value. But if you decide that Smith was a little off, and that the hotel in question was merely near SE State and Congress, it is a leap of faith to say it was Bartl’s -- it could have been any of a number of other ones.

As I previously wrote:

If you are going to totally ignore Smith then you might as well go for any of the "between fourteen and fifteen hundred hotels in the city of Chicago, including small and large, and houses of all grades, but excluding lodging houses, boarding houses and distinctively family hotels, where no transients are received."

How can you pick and choose between Smith’s statements? Either you believe him or you don’t. You are insinuating that he was either a liar or totally senile. Martin Gardner wrote:

“Although Smith must have seen him on several occasions, he can recall only one meeting, but that one he recalls vividly. It was in a very cheap hotel on the east side of State Street. He thinks it was on the S.E. corner of Congress and State, and he thinks the window faced north. Might have been a corner room.” (Gardner-Smith Correspondence, page 7)

VERY CHEAP HOTEL

O.K., you have shown that William Kerr was just a keeper of furnished rooms, but on the 1900 Census. he described himself as a "Hotel Keener". It’s the same address we are
Bill Mullins wrote: And note the saloon Peter mentions above at 325 State, only listed under Jacob Schramm, not Jacob Schram, listed on p. 1690 of the directory linked above.

I used the spelling on the 1900 Census. He also appears on the 1880 Census with the same spelling. His father was also a Jacob Schram and he also was a saloon keeper. Schram or Schramm, it’s the same bloke we are talking about.

So Bill, we have a very cheap hotel on the east side of State Street, on the corner of Congress and State in fact. And the rooms on the Congress Street side of this very cheap hotel must have been north facing.

Thanks for doing the research but I still believe Marshall Smith

Peter Zenner

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Tom Sawyer | 09/24/15 07:21 AM | link | filter

The way the evidence is mounting up, it seems to me that the chances of there having been a hotel (or anything remotely like a hotel) at the southeast corner of State and Congress during the 1901 to 1902 era are slim. At least, nothing I have seen supports that view.

It is possible, I suppose, that Professor Host, whose opinion Hurt McDermott originally relied on, may have had some information we do not know about that supports the idea of a hotel there. This possibility would seem to be predicated on the concept that the "State Street Hotel" is different from the "State Hotel."

So I am not really ruling out the possibility. I’m just saying that I have not seen any evidence that supports the idea.

The Chicago Tribune, January 27, 1901, talks about the corner building being sold. It says:

"State Street Building Sale.

"Oliver & Scott have sold for $30,000 cash for Henry Siegel of Siegel, Cooper & Co., to J. C. Billingslea, the three-story pressed brick store and office building at the southeast corner of State and Congress streets, 40x80 feet, together with the unexpired portion of the ground lease, which has still fourteen years to run. The building will be occupied by several farm journals."
Peter -- if you want to believe that the upper floors of 325 State were a hotel/ rooming house/ lodging whatever, I've got no beef with that. Obviously a bunch of people lived there in 1900.

But there is no reason to believe that the upper floors of 321/323 was a part of the same hotel. Arguing against it:

1. The fire insurance map shows a solid masonry wall from ground level to roof between 323 and 325. There was no internal access between the two buildings. I tend to think this is highly reliable, since this sort of information is exactly why fire insurance maps existed.

2. The 1932 photo of 321 through 325 shows that the two buildings are separately constructed and are distinct from each other.

There is no reason to believe that 321 State/61 Congress had a hotel.

And as far as Marshall Smith, I think he expressed confidence about the "East side of State", but not so much about the exact corner or address. So it could have been any of the hotels on that street, including the Bartl/State hotel (which, as I showed earlier, did have north-facing windows.)

mam wrote: Also wanted to point out that the US Army/Gowns building in Tom's photos match the Stewart building in Bill's, looking at the appearance of these, e.g. the decorations on the top of the buildings (can't remember the term for this).

Crenellations?
Crenellations?

Almost, it's cornices

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**Zenner** | 09/25/15 06:24 AM | [link] | [filter]

*Bill Mullins wrote:* Peter -- if you want to believe that the upper floors of 325 State were a hotel/rooming house/loaning whatever, I've got no beef with that. Obviously a bunch of people lived there in 1900.

Oh Bill, how many times do I have to repeat this - I got the information from the 1900 Census. Jacob Schram [sic], "Saloon Keeper" and his "servant" were listed at 325 and William Kerr and his family and his 23 "lodgers" were also listed at 325. I assumed that because of them being at the same number, they were parts of the same business. My mistake was because of the "chaos" regarding street numbering before 1911.

William Kerr was described as a "Hotel Keeper". He had 23 "lodgers". This wasn't just a bloke with a spare room; it was a business - and as a business, letting furnished rooms, he was listed in that Business Directory you kindly provided a link for.

But there is no reason to believe that the upper floors of 321/323 was a part of the same hotel.

321 and 323 were street level businesses - the first was a saloon and the second was Dr Sweany's office during the whole of the Erdnase period. Neither businesses occupied the floors above them. They were accessed up the stairs through the door to the right of 323. They were occupied in 1900 by William Kerr and his rooms. Later, as shown in the photographs of the businesses on that corner, they were occupied by the army recruitment office and later still by the Stewart Radio Service, still using that door to the right of 323 and occupying both of the two floors above numbers 321 and 323.

The two upper floors WERE the hotel (or whatever you want to call it). It looks from your buildings plan as if Dr Sweany's office was only the front of 323, so MAYBE the "hotel" also occupied that space on the ground floor behind Sweany's office.

Arguing against it:

1. The fire insurance map shows a solid masonry wall from ground level to roof between 323 and 325. There was no internal access between the two buildings. I tend to think this is highly reliable, since this sort of
buildings. The confusion was sorted out in 1911 when the upstairs premises were renumbered 505 and the saloon next door (Schram's/Trogisch's) was renumbered 507. Yes there would be a solid wall between the door to 325/505 and the door to 325/507; they were separate buildings.

It's the "chaotic" numbering that has caused the confusion and your unwillingness to accept that there was a business on that corner where you could hire a room is making it more difficult!

2. The 1932 photo of 321 through 325 shows that the two buildings are separately constructed and are distinct from each other.

The original numbering of the businesses in that corner building was 321, 323 and 325. Then (unfortunately for me!) there was another 325 on the other side of that "solid masonry wall".

There is no reason to believe that 321 State/61 Congress had a hotel.

321 State was a saloon bar on the ground floor of a building also occupied by a doctor's office at 323 and up the stairs at 325 were Kerr's rooms. William Kerr referred to himself as a "Hotel Keeper" and Marshall Smith referred to it being a very cheap hotel. There is EVERY reason to believe that there was a business in that building on the corner of Congress and State Streets where you could hire a room. Call it what you like; it served one purpose - to let rooms.

And as far as Marshall Smith, I think he expressed confidence about the "East side of State", but not so much about the exact corner or address. So it could have been any of the hotels on that street, including the Bartl/State hotel (which, as I showed earlier, did have north-facing windows.)

Martin Gardner said that Smith recalled the occasion vividly. He is the only person who we know for a fact met Erdnase and yet you want to dismiss him. Why? There was a very cheap "hotel" (or whatever) EXACTLY where he said there was. Does the State Hotel look like a very cheap hotel to you?

I squinted at that map of the Chicago Business District and I didn't see any windows facing north. It had windows facing east onto State Street, south onto Harrison Street, and west overlooking that alley where the elevated railway ran (Victoria Avenue on your plan, now S. Holden Court) At roof level I saw a gable end higher than the building next door - but no windows.
Bill Mullins | 09/25/15 11:03 AM | link | filter

Peter -- you keep losing me.

There was a building at the SE corner of State and Congress. For clarity's sake, I'm going to refer to it as the Siegel Building instead of by addresses.

I can see no reason to think that the upper floors of the Siegel building ever had the address 325 State St, but you seem to believe that was the case. Can you explain to me why you think so?

Peter Zenner wrote: I squinted at that map of the Chicago Business District and I didn't see any windows facing north. It had windows facing east onto State Street, south onto Harrison Street, and west overlooking that alley where the elevated railway ran (Victoria Avenue on your plan, now S. Holden Court) At roof level I saw a gable end higher than the building next door - but no windows.

I think you mean west onto State, and east overlooking the alley.

I've taken a screen grab of the image of the State Hotel and marked the north-facing walls which could have had windows. I can't upload it to a hosting site from work, but I'll email it to you. From the perspective of the artist, you can't see any windows, but a late 19th century hotel would have had them for illumination and ventilation.

mam | 09/25/15 12:01 PM | link | filter

Here's a 1902 photo of the department store on the NE corner which I, for clarity's sake, will not call the Siegel Building even though it was owned by Siegel:
In the lower right is the hotel where Erdnase and Smith met; the photo is actually taken on that very occasion, and if you squint hard enough you'll see Erdnase standing in the window doing one-handed shifts with both hands, one using red Bee 216's and the other using a blue deck of M. D. Smith's own design, which he drew from photos of diamonds.

Bill Mullins | 09/25/15 12:51 PM | link | filter

Actually the building was owned by Levi Leiter, and leased to the Siegel Cooper dept store.

The photo appears to have been take after 1891, when the Leiter building was built, and before June 1893 when the building we have been blathering about was constructed.

mam | 09/25/15 12:58 PM | link | filter

(I wonder why the Chicagology website puts 1902 on the photo.)

Larry Horowitz | 09/25/15 01:39 PM | link | filter

Since much ink has been devoted in recent days to finding the exact hotel/ building, I
years preceding book publication?

Bill Mullins | 09/25/15 02:19 PM | link | filter

*mam wrote:* (I wonder why the [Chicagology website](http://www.chicagology.com) puts 1902 on the photo.)

Dunno. But if you go to the website you linked to which hosts the photo, and scroll down to the next image of the Siegel-Cooper Store and compare the two, its pretty clear (to me, at least) that there are two different buildings at the SE corner of State and Congress.

The older one appears to be shorter (the 1893 construction replaced a 2 story building), and the cornices and window trim are different. And its difficult to judge color on a B&W photo, but I’d say the cornices are much darker than the brick walls on the short building, while they are the same color on the Stewart Radio building.

Tom Sawyer | 09/25/15 02:33 PM | link | filter

To me, the 321 building in that photo looks similar to the "Army recruiting" version. Personally, I think it is probably the same building. The window area looks quite similar, and even seems to have that curved brick area above the window.

There are differences, though, like there seems to be a long protrusion beneath the window area. I think part of that might be rolled-up awnings (based on what appear to be alternating light and dark, as in the case of stripes).

The coloration (or at least the densities of different parts) is different. The cornice looks different, but I think the corner is lined-up with something in the background that makes it look like it overhangs further.

It does give the vibe of being shorter, but I think that could be due to the positioning of the camera or the like.

The picture is unusual in that it seems to be a nice, clear picture, but when I study the 321 part, it is hard for me to figure it out.

Tom Sawyer | 09/25/15 06:14 PM | link | filter

Hi All,

By the way, regarding the apparent argument that a street re-numbering was
This is pretty clear from the fact that the floors above (as occupied by the Army recruiting facility) were at 323 State Street long before the downtown re-numbering of circa 1911 and also before the other re-numbering of circa 1909.

The Hathi Trust Digital Library (with an appropriate search) lists several references showing the address of the recruiting facility, and at least one such use of the address was July 1905.

--Tom Sawyer
And another. This one is from an eBay auction, which may disappear after a while.

The windows of 321 State have no arches, and the building appears to be at least 4 stories -- I wonder if...
it was "photoshopped" by an artist at the postcard company?

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**Zenner** | 09/26/15 06:07 AM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:* Peter -- you keep losing me.

Can't think why; I am being as clear as possible.

There was a building at the SE corner of State and Congress. For clarity's sake, I'm going to refer to it as the Siegel Building instead of by addresses.

That's OK. The site was purchased by Frederick Siegel, along with a single story saloon at the back, and the new building as we see on the photographs and artists' impressions was erected in 1893.

I can see no reason to think that the upper floors of the Siegel building ever had the address 325 State St, but you seem to believe that was the case. Can you explain to me why you think so?

I know so - and have explained this at length in previous postings. The three businesses in your "Siegel Building" all had separate street numbers. You have supplied links to the Business Directories and a close-up of the two troublesome doorways has been posted on here. There were two addresses with the number 325 up until the renumbering of 1911, when they became numbers 505 and 507 respectively. Where else in that block could Kerr's Rooms have been, other than upstairs where the army recruiting offices were later located?

*Peter Zenner wrote:* I squinted at that map of the Chicago Business District and I didn't see any windows facing north. It had windows facing east onto State Street, south onto Harrison Street, and west overlooking that alley where the elevated railway ran (Victoria Avenue on your plan, now S. Holden Court) At roof level I saw a gable end higher than the building next door - but no windows.

😊

I think you mean west onto State, and east overlooking the alley.

You're quite right; I got disorientated. You are not the only one who can make mistakes.
artist, you can’t see any windows, but a late 19th century hotel would have had them for illumination and ventilation.

I haven’t had the e-mail yet but I have had a look at the fire insurance plan of the block which you sent me (Chicago+1905-1951vol.1,1906 69s). The State Hotel is clearly marked and there is no space between it and the rest of that block to the north of it. Go on Bill have a look at the plan which you supplied - any windows in the north wall of the State Hotel could only look into the premises next door!

Peter Zenner

mam | 09/26/15 11:54 AM | link | filter

Here’s a nice birds-eye panoramic photo from around 1913, and it has the entire block we are currently discussing near the center of the photo:

http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2007660802/resource/

You might have to download the TIFF file to get full detail.

Bill Mullins | 09/26/15 10:41 PM | link | filter

Zenner wrote:

Zenner wrote: I can see no reason to think that the upper floors of the Siegel building ever had the address 325 State St, but you seem to believe that was the case. Can you explain to me why you think so?

There were two addresses with the number 325

You keep saying this, but provide no evidence to back it up.

Where else in that block could Kerr’s Rooms have been, other than upstairs where the army recruiting offices were later located?

They were in the building labeled 325/327 on the fire insurance map. It had 3 floors plus a basement. Assume it was as big as the "Siegler building" -- 40’ x 80’. Assume that all of the 2nd and 3rd floors, plus half the first, plus half the basement, were available as lodging space. That’s 9600 sq ft. The Tenement Museum describes a small cheap apartment typical of the era as 325 sq ft. That allows for 29 apartments.
share an apartment reducing even farther the number of apartments required (so that they could be bigger).

_Peter Zenner wrote:_

_Peter Zenner wrote:_ I squinted at that map of the Chicago Business District and I didn’t see any windows facing north. It had windows facing east onto State Street, south onto Harrison Street, and west overlooking that alley where the elevated railway ran (Victoria Avenue on your plan, now S. Holden Court) At roof level I saw a gable end higher than the building next door - but no windows.

_Bill Mullins wrote:_ I’ve taken a screen grab of the image of the State Hotel and marked the north-facing walls which could have had windows. I can’t upload it to a hosting site from work, but I’ll email it to you. From the perspective of the artist, you can’t see any windows, but a late 19th century hotel would have had them for illumination and ventilation.

I haven’t had the e-mail yet but I have had a look at the fire insurance plan of the block which you sent me (Chicago+1905-1951vol.1,1906 69s). The State Hotel is clearly marked and there is no space between it and the rest of that block to the north of it. Go on Bill have a look at the plan **which you supplied** - any windows in the north wall of the State Hotel could only look into the premises next door!
Hi All,

The bird’s-eye view photo that mam posted a link to (in his most recent post) is really a remarkable photo. As mam says, you can see the entire block that has been under discussion. Thanks for posing the link, mam!

One of the confusing things about the photograph is that State Street seems to sweep downward from the upper-right, then at approximately the State Hotel it begins to sweep upwards to the left. This is just a feature of the panoramic nature of the photograph. In reality, the street was straight (at least in this area).

Because of the domed building in the background (the Federal Building), that big, wide street (in the left half of the photograph) that is nearly vertical and kind of vanishes into the distance is Dearborn -- which in reality is PARALLEL to State Street. The vertical street in the right half of the photograph would be Harrison, just to the right of the State Hotel (running along the south side of the hotel).

You can easily discern the Siegel-Cooper building, of which Bill recently posted various postcard images. Going across the street the viewer’s right, you can see the 321-23 building with the whitish awnings (three groups of two). Then to the viewer’s right there are apparently three buildings, then the very tall building, which was the Hopkins Theatre in 1902, then three buildings progressively taller.

Then comes the State Hotel. You can the indentation Bill recently discussed, and which is evident in the little map extracts he recently posted in the post immediately preceding this one. Additionally, there is an opening in the top of the building, so it seems that there is another surface there with probably north-facing windows.

Anyway, it’s an amazing photo!

--Tom Sawyer

Bill Mullins | 09/28/15 10:26 PM | link | filter

Having seen the 1913 photo linked by mam, I realize that the 1898 Bird’s Eye Map isn’t 100% accurate.

There are 3 exterior north-facing walls in the State Hotel at the NE corner of State and Harrison, not 2 as I showed above.

From the 1913 photo:
The wall marked "A" is simply a north-facing wall, exposed because the building at 347/349 State doesn't extend the full depth of the block to Victoria, as do the buildings at 351/353 and 357/359 State.

"B" and "C" are the north-facing walls in atria in the hotel. These empty shafts are meant to provided sunlight and ventilation to rooms that would otherwise be wholly interior to the building. And while it has been suggested to me off-line (hello, Peter!) that they aren't apparent on the Fire Insurance map, I think they are:
If you look carefully, within the rectangles that define the atria is written "1B". If I read the key for the maps correctly, that indicates that these spaces are 1 story tall with a basement. I also think the southernmost one has a skylight of some sort (which would be appropriate if this were the lobby or another common area of the hotel).

So, to summarize what I’ve been getting at for the last few days:
1. Smith said they met on the east side of State, possibly the SE corner of State and Congress.
2. The SE corner of State and Congress had no hotel, so it couldn't have been there.
3. So Smith was wrong about that point, but still could have been right about the general location.
4. There were many hotels in the immediate area.
5. A strong possibility is the hotel at the other end of the block -- the Bartl Hotel, later called the State Hotel. Despite initial appearances, maps and photos show it had several north-facing walls which would have had the windows Smith described.

After studying this area for a few days, it occurs to me that it’s odd that Smith described the location the way he did -- "the SE corner of State and Congress". If I were describing the spot, especially to another native Chicagoan, I would have said "across Congress from the Sears Building" (as it had come to be called). I don't know what to make of this, other than maybe Smith gave directions differently than I would have.
Richard Hatch | 09/29/15 08:15 PM | link | filter

For those who collect variant editions, I just received the Martino reprint, which is strangely a reprint of the retypset Dover edition, without Martin Gardner's introduction and with the later Drake "Congress" copyright statement added. It is likely a print on demand title and I expect Dover may try to protect the copyright on their edition, so this may not be available long. Here's a link to the amazon listing: http://www.amazon.com/Expert-at-Card-Ta ... 614278644/

Tom Sawyer | 09/30/15 10:24 AM | link | filter

In reply to Larry Horowitz's question above regarding hotel documents, I think that is definitely a possibility, but probably a very remote one. If you look on eBay, you can see a number of old hotel registers listed, including one from 1904 and one from around 1896 -- not from Chicago. So, such items exist. I do not know whether there are any repositories that hold a concentration of such items from Chicago.

Tom Sawyer | 10/03/15 07:16 AM | link | filter

Hi All,

One of the issues that faces everyone thinking about the Erdnase case is this: Assuming that “S.W. Erdnase” is in some way related to the author's real name (but not necessarily an exact reversal), one wonders just how far away from a perfect anagram is acceptable.

Example: W.E. Sanders is a perfect anagram. It uses all of the letters and adds no letters.

Another example: M.F. Andrews in nowhere near perfect. It adds two letters to the title-page name (“M” and “F”) and takes away two letters (“S” and “E”).

Of course, one probably tends to be more lenient with real names that have “Andrews” as a surname, though I am not sure why, exactly.

But let’s assume that you are willing to look at names that add two letters and delete two letters. Then you would probably be interested in the name “Dr. Sweany” (if you count “Dr.” as a part of the name).

If you take the first seven letters of DR. SWEANY (one of the tenants at or near the southeast corner of State and Congress [according to many posts on this thread]), they
You could look at “DR. SWEANY” as adding one letter (a “Y”), and taking away two letters (“S” and “E”). (I gather, by the way, from a couple of sources on the Hathi Trust Digital Library website, that "Sweany" was not the man’s real name. Example: Link.)

--Tom Sawyer

Todd Karr | 10/06/15 06:55 PM | link | filter

An Erdnase Manifesto

Todd Karr

The details of a number of swindles and crimes committed under various aliases by swindler E. S. Andrews and later, I believe, under his actual name of Charles E. Andrews (b. 1859 in Indiana, d. Aug. 26, 1907 in Chicago) from 1901 to 1907 make me feel he is a strong candidate as the author of The Expert at the Card Table.

I'm detailing all my research here for you to examine as you like.

I am also providing a free download link to the 1907 news photo of Charles E. Andrews and his wife, plus two key articles: http://we.tl/AvDxQ2HYJ9.

I'll post another link on this thread soon so anyone interested can download all my documents and sources.

As I explored in my Erdnase Scroll research, I have been following the trail of con artist E. S. Andrews for a number of years, but his trail ran cold around 1905. I figured he was either dead, had gone straight, or was using another alias, and when I investigated Charles Andrews, his activities fit perfectly into the gap.

There are also several elements of Charles E. Andrews' life that mesh well with other accounts of Erdnase, like Martin Gardner and Marshall D. Smith’s accounts, Richard Hatch’s research on Edwin Sumner Andrews, and the McKinney bankruptcy records. He’s the right age, height, and demeanor as described by Smith, liked Chicago hotel rooms, and his hands look like the drawings. (I’ll add that Martin Gardner liked my findings on E. S. Andrews, and Dick Hatch says he’s excited about my latest research.)

He also meets many of my personal criteria of what I would expect from someone who wrote The Expert: a gambler, connections to Chicago and England, an aspect about writing, a con man, smart, used aliases, gentlemanly, spectacular in some way, and left words that sound reasonably like Erdnase.
any explicit connection between the book and a person, there’s no solid proof of any theory about Erdnase’s identity, and when all the leads in my research are explored, my suggestions may turn out to be completely off-base. I wouldn’t mind if it means getting closer to the truth and credit this amazing author.

Please feel free to investigate all the following clues and paths, if you want to get closer to definitive truth.

Correct my mistakes and poke holes in my ideas, but let’s find the whole story. There are court records to read, arrest reports to uncover, and a lot of missing information that hopefully still exists preserved somewhere. And I would love someone to find his grave in La Porte, Indiana, and send me a photo. I’d like to finally to pay my respects someday.

If it’s all just another false lead, I’m still pretty happy to have uncovered a character like E. S. Andrews / Charles E. Andrews, bamboozler of professionals and police, ladies’ man, traveler, and scoundrel. The stories of his cons are larger than life and I’ve had immense fun chasing this colorful man through history, whether or not he wrote the book.

E. S. Andrews, Swindler
From 1901 to 1905, a con man using the name E. S. Andrews, which seems to have been one alias among many, pulled off a series of smooth schemes and crimes around the United States that bilked professionals in towns around the U.S.

The following selected articles and documents on E. S. Andrews provide information I have published before and present here to provide the complete story.

Kokomo, 1901
On November 23, 1901, just before the 1902 publication of The Expert at the Card Table, the Fort Wayne News reported on a scam perpetrated in Kokomo by "A stranger giving his name as E. S. Andrews of the Brandon Commercial Company, Chicago." The news report stated that the con man had a clever collections-agency scheme that succeeded in bilking forty local merchants and physicians.

Andrews had come to Kokomo three weeks prior and convinced the businessmen and doctors to hire him to collect their debts. Each participant paid Andrews a "membership fee" of $15 (or about $900 total). The newspaper reported that "Before leaving, Andrews collected several accounts from debtors, all of which he took with
**Dubuque, 1902-1903**

In December 1902, the *Dubuque Telegraph-Journal* announced the new local address of the Charles Brandon Commercial company at the Bank and Insurance Building, noting that "Mr. E. S. Andrews is in charge."

A month later, Andrews had fled town with over $1500 in $25 membership fees and collected debts. As the Davenport Republican reported on January 31, 1903, the swindled subscribers were reluctant to admit they had been conned.

One of the professionals stated: "We were all a lot of suckers and should not have let Andrews go as long as we did. He did not live up to the contract he made with me, and I understand that he did not live up to the contract he made with others. I was to pay him a commission of five percent on all collections made on current business, and he was to get 10 to 25 percent on all debts that he collected. I gave him my note, and so did other members, while others paid down their $25 fee.

"I estimate from the number of subscribers he had to the 'Charles Brandon Commercial Agency' that he must have got out of town with from $1500 to $1800. He would have no trouble in negotiating the notes.

"His subscribers included lawyers, doctors, and businessmen. He was to make reports of collections every twenty-four hours and remit a check for the amount collected, after the commission was deducted, but he forgot to make the report and send me the check."

The article says Andrews was arrested but not only avoided charges by threatening the witnesses (perhaps with a countersuit) but also managed to have his accuser held liable for the costs of his arrest. As the swindled businessman explained: "One of the subscribers had Andrews arrested and got the worst of it, because two or three others were afraid of the bluff made by Andrews. The subscriber paid the costs, amounting to $2.50."

**Fort Wayne and Oshkosh, 1904**

E. S. Andrews appeared again in Wisconsin in 1904 pursuing the same scam, only this time the law caught up with him. Andrews had set up another collections scheme as the Charles Brandon Company, in association with local law firm Finch and McPhall in the Pixley-Long block in Fort Wayne. Andrews again skipped town with membership fees and debt sums, returning to Indiana, the scene of his 1901 swindle.

Oshkosh Sheriff M. K. Rounds (the *Fort Wayne Press* gave his name as "J. M. Rounds")
Wisconsin for trial.

Andrews was arrested on July 7, 1904 on a warrant from Justice Skelton and was held awaiting the arrival of the Wisconsin sheriff.

Four days later, Andrews left Fort Wayne at noon in the custody of Sheriff Rounds. The Fort Wayne Evening Sentinel reported that Andrews had embezzled money and had also used his notices of collection to purchase "a number of diamonds and other articles." The newspaper noted that "Judge O'Rourke was called upon to remand him into the custody of the Wisconsin sheriff on a requisition honored Saturday by Governor Durbin."

A *Daily Northwestern* reporter interviewed Andrews in his jail cell in Wisconsin and quoted him at length in an article in the newspaper on July 12, 1904. The speech reads glibly, but I do not believe these are his exact words, since in those pre-taping days, a reporter jotted notes and typed them up later into coherent prose:

"Mr. Andrews was seen by a Northwestern reporter this morning while in jail. He is a bright-looking young man whose appearance is that of a shrewd and honest businessman. He said he did not care to talk for publication, but in answer to questions and in the ordinary conversation, he did say to the reporter:

"This is the first time I have ever been arrested. The jail here is a palace compared to that in Fort Wayne. That is a bad place to be in.

"I did not read the complaint against me and do not know exactly the technical charge against me. In a general way, I know what it is, but I say technically, I have not ascertained.

"I believe in being philosophical, however, and while I should not be pleased to stay here long, I can stand it for a time if I can have plenty of reading matter and plenty of fresh air.

"I shall have good legal counsel, but I do not think I will need it. I have nothing to fear and believe I could go into court representing myself and convince the court that the law is on my side.

"So far as my not going under my own name in Fort Wayne is concerned after leaving here, that will have no effect in the case. It may, to the outsider, give rise to the opinion that I was trying to hide, but while that is true, I had no idea I was wanted here on a criminal charge."
"Sheriff Rounds has treated me very nicely indeed, and while I shall be glad to leave him and his custody, I shall remember the kindnesses he has shown me.'

"Sheriff Rounds is loud in his praises of the assistance rendered him by Superintendent of Police Henry Gorseline at Fort Wayne, and the latter held onto the prisoner in the face of all the efforts made by lawyers to free him."

Remember also that Indiana magician James Harto claimed to have known Erdnase.

The seemingly media-savvy conman E. S. Andrews went out of his way to deny using a false identity in a note published the next day in the Daily Northwestern: "It was incorrectly stated in your account of an interview with me that I was known while in Fort Wayne under an assumed name. I was known there as E. S. Andrews, representing the Charles Brandon Commercial Company: This is my name and the company is the same as I represented here, and I never used any other name and do not intend to. Yours truly, E. S. Andrews."

**The Oshkosh Trial**

On August 8, 1904, the *Daily Northwestern* reported, Andrews was charged in Oshkosh Municipal Court with embezzlement. The original charge had been filed by fur merchant E. F. Steude, who had been bilked of $108. The hearing had already been postponed due to the absence of a prosecution witness, attorney A. C. McPhall, one of Andrews' legal associates in the scheme.

The following day, a *Daily Northwestern* article announced that after intense arguments by Andrews' defense attorneys "Maurice McKenna of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and E. P. Finch of Oshkosh" the judge had found adequate cause for Andrews to stand trial on embezzlement charges.

This news report states that Andrews took a number of precautions to legally justify his financial shenanigans. Andrews had clients sign contracts with a fine-print clause authorizing him to make deductions from the money he collected. He had clients make out their checks to his partner, who then paid Andrews (Small note: Funds were deposited in a bank; Erdnase paid Smith with a bank check). In court, Andrews claimed innocence by shrewdly stating the attorney had never paid him the full amount of the money collected.
manager.

Bail was set at $2000 and promptly posted by his legal team. Further procedural challenges from Andrews' attorneys delayed the trial until matters were cleared up sufficiently on August 17, when municipal court Commissioner W. W. Waterhouse concluded Andrews had to stand trial.

On August 23, Andrews appeared in municipal court, this time represented by attorney Henry Fitzgibbon of Menasha. The trial was adjourned until August 27.

The trial was either prolonged or postponed, since it was not until September 28 that Andrews was finally found guilty of embezzlement, though for a reduced sum of $37.50. The trial took place in Milwaukee, and the jury took only a half hour to reach their decision, the Daily Northwestern reported on September 19: "The jury, in view of the whole circumstances, found that Andrews was working what is popularly known as a 'graft' and that he willfully retained the amount charged against him. The penalty for the offense is from six months to one year imprisonment in county jail or state prison." All the above information is from the Daily Northwestern, which covered the trial with regular news articles.

The court sentenced Andrews to eight months in jail. As the Fort Wayne Sentinel stated on October 14, 1904, Andrews had already spent four months in custody, and the judge noted this in his sentencing.

Other articles following Andrews' case focused on the misconduct of one of his associates, attorney A. K. McPhall, who disappeared after Andrews was arrested but was spotted in Oshkosh by acquaintances after Andrews' sentencing.

In a related case the following April, with Andrews still in jail, the Oshkosh Municipal Court issued a decision in favor of one of his victims. A Dr. J. M. Conley had hired Andrews to collect debts and gave him a promissory note for $42.63 as a retainer. Andrews went to a local store Birely and Son and traded his note for Conley's debt for a diamond. The court found in favor of Birely and Son, agreeing that Dr. Conley was still obliged to pay the amount of the promissory note to whomever held it.

Chicago, 1905-1907
Shortly after the end of Andrews' jail sentence, he apparently set up shop again in another location, this time Chicago. The Chicago Tribune of December 20, 1905 notes the incorporation of the Charles Brandon Commercial Company, based in Pueblo, Colorado, with capital of $5000 in Pueblo and $2500 in Illinois.
merchants before collecting debts and pocketing the funds. Tyler was arrested for obtaining goods under false pretenses and embezzlement. However, the newspaper stated, "Andrews has disappeared."

Meet Charles E. Andrews, Sr.
The Cook County, Illinois, death record for Charles E. Andrews Sr. states he died at age 48, meaning he was born in Indiana around 1859. The 1860 U. S. Census for Peoria lists a Charles E. Andrews born in 1859 in Indiana.

Andrews' mother, Affia, is 29, born in New York. His father, Edward A. Andrews is age 48, born in England, and his profession is listed as “Local editor.” The British lineage and literary connection may explain the unusual copyrighting of *The Expert* in England. Edward, who used initials in his professional name, E. A. Andrews, had in fact been co-owner since 1860 of the *Peoria Transcript*. I'd imagine his son would pick up at least a minimum of writing skills and would likely have connections to printers and other aspects of publishing.

Aliases and New Scams
One might reasonably imagine that upon his exit from prison, E. S. Andrews would use another name if he resumed his con games, and it looks like he used several. The crimes that Charles E. Andrews committed and the locations involved lead me to feel that he and E. S. Andrews are the same person.

In addition, there are also several aspects about conman Charles E. Andrews that surprisingly intersect with those of the railroad agent E. S. Andrews that Richard Hatch has pursued. My feeling is that conman Charles E. Andrews may have known or been related to Edwin Sumner Andrews.

In July 17, 1906, the *Albuquerque Evening Citizen* reported that a conman named W. B. Andrews was posing as an agent for a supposed “California Southern Railroad,” recruiting young women from a secretarial school as stenographers to work at a fictional “central office” in Los Angeles and point leading to it. One lady was apparently given a position as stenographer at the Grant Hotel in Peoria, but the newspaper implies that Andrews pressured her for intimacy.

The aspect of the stenographers and school are significant. As Richard Hatch has pointed out, Erdnase told artist Marshall D. Smith that he was related to renowned artist Louis Dalrymple. This artist's mother may have been related to Dollie Seeley, Edwin Sumner Andrews' wife, was a stenographer and ran a secretarial school.
was using his name and railroad access to impress his victims, plus showing his name on a copy of the impressive *Expert*. If Edwin Sumner Andrews and Charles E. Andrews were related, that would explain why Erdnase would say that he was related to Dalrymple but perhaps not necessarily that his own wife was the one whose family had the connection.

The August 17, 1906 *Davenport Argus* said that Andrews had been captured in Logansport, Indiana, and called him “one of the cleverest of confidence men,” with a long history of crimes. Pinkerton agents had followed his trail after he conned a young woman in Hampton, Iowa, named Grace Gukert. Andrews’ scheme was to promise an $85 monthly salary for office work. Once they reached a strange city, Andrews would ask for the victim to pay for a certain kind of typewriter as a required tool for the job, then skip town with the money, stranding the trusting girl.

In Grace Gukert’s case, Andrews brought her to Chicago and just before arriving asked for her purse containing the claim checks for their luggage, then disappeared with her handbag and $40 inside it. She contacted the police, and Andrews was followed to St. Louis before his eventual capture in Logansport, Indiana.

A month later, Charles E. Andrews was arrested in South Bend, Indiana, convicted, fined $25, and sentenced to three years in Michigan City prison, as the September 26, 1906 *Indiana Morning Star* stated. The article says Andrews had also used the aliases Charles Adams and E. E. Smith and wanted by police in Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri, as well as a number of counties around Indiana. During the trial in Logansport, Indiana, two other victims testified, Margaret Loftus and Jennie Gregg.

Other victims, according to the news item, included Jesse Hoover and Glen Brown, students at the Huntington Business College.

The article adds that “His occupation formerly was railroad construction boss on California and Mexican railroads. He speaks English and some Spanish.”

On October 4, 1906, the *Plymouth Tribune* ran a late report of the sentencing, adding that Andrews had brought victims to Indianapolis and Chicago.

**The End of the Expert**
On August 26, 1907, Charles E. Andrews shot his wife India Ethel Blaine, 25, to death during an argument at the Saratoga Hotel in Chicago, then killed himself.

Newspapers from coast to coast put together the story, the most thorough in the local
Years before, Charles E. Andrews had apparently lived in Elkhart, Indiana, since about 1897 and started a restaurant there, then ran away with a waitress, Grace Bennett, around 1900, leaving behind his wife and son, the now-23-year-old Charles Jr.. Andrews took Bennett to California, then reportedly deserted her. His wife divorced him and remarried grocer Edward Paul and later moved to California herself.

Sometime after his exit from prison after his Logansport conviction in 1906, Charles E. Andrews met India Ethel Blaine of Flora, Indiana, and they became involved. Around June 1906, Andrews moved her out of her parents’ Indiana home and off to California, where they ended up in Covina, where Andrews ran a shooting gallery.

Around Saturday, August 24, 1907, Andrews and Blaine traveled to Chicago and checked into room 842 of the Saratoga Hotel. The following Tuesday, August 26, one of Andrews’ last acts, ironically was to leave behind a piece of writing, directly dictated from his words and heart. Andrews began composing a letter to his son, which the woman began handwriting for him. He asked Charles Jr. to get his mail in Elkhart and asked him to come to see him and Ethel in Chicago, then told him to mind his mother and not to talk to anyone.

For those who are interested in comparing Andrews’ letter to the text in *The Expert*, the following words and phrases appear in both: “We have been,” a form of the verb intend (“intended” in Erdnase), write, past, several, occasions, “to get,” know, myself, address (mail meaning), general, feeling, reason, last, mind, wrong, “have to,” explain, and opening a sentence with “However.”

The letter ended abruptly. Whether out of a petty argument over the phrase “obligations to” instead of “obligation to” or the mention of his ex-spouse, Andrews suddenly shot Blaine twice. A waitress, May Williams, ran to the room and saw Andrews standing holding a smoking gun. He turned it on himself next and shot himself in the head. He died on the way to St. Luke’s Hospital.

His son, Charles Jr., tearfully claimed the body, brought it back to Indiana, and had his father buried somewhere in La Porte. He stated that his father had been in dire financial circumstances and perhaps was already panicked over the possibility of losing India Ethel Blaine. Faced with his act and a certain return to prison and perhaps execution, Andrews went over the edge. The *Indianapolis Star* said on August 29 that Knights of Pythias members served as pallbearers and that the son was the lone mourner.

In California, Andrews’ former wife spotted the coverage and asked the Quincy, Illinois, lodge of the Knights of Pythias to check if it was indeed her ex-husband, which its members confirmed, according to the September 1, 1907, *Los Angeles Herald.*
Covina neighbors stated Andrews ran his shooting gallery there under the name C. Andrews (the headline states it as “C. J. Andrews”), saying he and Blaine had left some unpaid bills behind. The September 14, 1907 article in the Covina Argus describes Andrews as a “short, thick-set man,” matching Marshall D. Smith’s description of Erdnase’s stature.

**Another Smoking Gun**

A state away from Indiana in Tennessee, one newspaper covering the episode reported something extraordinary, perhaps a fact that reporter there knew from experience. The Nashville Tennessean of August 27, 1907 article began with the headline: “Bloody and Mysterious Tragedy in Chicago Hotel: Former Gambling King Guns Down Girl and Then Sends Bullet Through His Own Brain.” The body of the piece describes Andrews as “a gambling king in northern Indiana.” (The later Covina Argus article mentions this as well, but it seems to be simply rewritten information, rearranged as “Andrews was at one time known as the king of gamblers in northern Indiana.”)

If Andrews is indeed the man we’ve been seeking, it would explain why he was never heard from again, why he did not reappear to enjoy his well-earned credit.

I hope he’s the expert, the brilliant mind behind the intricate array of techniques, precise explanations, vivid observations, and techniques he was bold enough to name after himself. He deserves a final bow.

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**Richard Hatch | 10/06/15 07:26 PM | link | filter**

Wow, fascinating stuff, Todd, thanks for sharing it. A couple of quick questions for clarification: If Charles Andrews Sr. was 48 when he died in August 1907, his birth would have been around 1859, not 1852. Is this a typo in your posting? Your note mentions "E. S. Andrews" swindling activities dating from 1901, but a March 1899 front page story in the Buffalo (NY) Courier has an E. S. Andrews pulling this collection scam in Erie, PA for Wingate’s Trade Exchange (a collection agency).

Assuming (as I do) that this is the same "E. S. Andrews", this would indicate earlier activity along those lines using that name [I think Bill Mullins found this article some time ago].

Also, a March 28, 1904 article about E. S. Andrews (the collection agency swindler) in the Oshkosh Daily Northwestern describes him as a "young man" of "pleasant address... said to have claimed to be a student at Yale who wished to make money to continue his studies." That would imply someone who in 1904 appeared to be in his early twenties, much younger than recalled by Smith.
How strange, too, that this candidate (Charles Andrews) died in a hotel room after shooting his mistress (having left his wife and child) and then turned the gun on himself, just like the official version of Milton Franklin Andrews' death in Berkeley two years earlier!

Todd, if Charles E. Andrews, the man who was conning stenographers, was convicted and sentenced to three years in Michigan City prison in late September 1906, how did he end up killing his girlfriend and himself in a Chicago Hotel room less than year later (August 1907)? Different Charles E. Andrews?

Todd is apparently unable to get onto the Genii Forum at this time, but wanted me to post that the 1852 birthdate for Charles E. Andrews is a typo and the correct date is the 1859 date given earlier in his post. Dollie Seeley was the wife of Edwin S. Andrews (the train agent), not Louis Dalrymple (also a typo in the above). Todd also indicated that Charles Andrews apparently only served 11 months of the 3 year sentence. Much of this will apparently be clarified when he posts the many other newspaper citations he has found on this candidate.

My bad. I wish posts were editable!! My thanks to Dick Hatch. Yes, the correct birthdate is 1859, Dollie Seeley was married to ES, and as for the sentences, all his sentencing seems to vary wildly from the time eventually served, much like today’s briefer-than-expected sentences for various reasons. A lot of these questions will be answered when I post all the primary documents...I’m just cleaning them up before uploading them, which will be asap.

And it may turn out there’s more than one E. S. Andrews here. Dick and I have chased down many E. S. Andrewses, including a despondent Canadian government printing office official and others that initially looked promising. For comparison, remember that magic currently has a Greg Wilson and a Gregory Wilson, and TV had a Mike Douglas and a Michael Douglas (We had a Michael Douglas, too, now known as the prize-winning jazz-influenced magician Mon Dre).

Another aspect I didn't mention: If you think about the scope of the book, Andrews
All the debate and nit-picking is great, and I hope it leads to something, even if my guy’s just another character (or characters). There are many possible leads: his restaurant in Elkhart, the other complaints, news items, and court hearings, and hopefully family members with papers.

Also, if anyone has any questions or thoughts, feel free to email me at toddkarr@aol.com. I don’t post here often.

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**Todd Karr** | 10/07/15 01:03 AM | link | filter

Also, Richard asked about the "young man" references. The Chicago Trib says Andrews was 50, and the death certificate says 48. In 1904, at 44/45, I’d say that’s close enough, especially because it’s a subjective term (an older man will think a 30-40ish man is young, but a teen will think he’s a geezer). It’s important to use caution when accepting second-hand deadline-news judgments as airtight boundaries, so I try not to make the reporter into an infallible source of history.

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**Roger M.** | 10/07/15 01:09 AM | link | filter

Wow!, what a fantastic "share" Todd. I’ve been aware that you had a "new" candidate for quite a while, it’s exciting to finally read some of the details.

I look forward to reading your additional material.

Some of the personal characteristics as you describe them certainly begin to align with those one would expect Mr. Erdnase to display.

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**Todd Karr** | 10/07/15 01:19 AM | link | filter

Looks like I managed to edit my post in time after all. I’ve corrected the 1859 date and restored Dollie as E.S.’s bride.

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**Todd Karr** | 10/07/15 01:24 AM | link | filter

I neglected to follow up on the McKinney element. The record shows "E. C. Andrews," which is pretty close to "C. E. Andrews."

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**Scott Lane** | 10/07/15 03:08 AM | link | filter
"I shall have good legal counsel, but I do not think I will need it. I have nothing to fear and believe I could go into court representing myself and convince the court that the law is on my side."

This may be an indication that he was either “not guilty” or that he had extensive political connections having the “law (is) on my side.”

I am finding in my research that there was a group of people that would use E. S. Andrews and anagrams of S. W. Erdnase to help them get out of trouble. As they got farther away from Indiana the political connections were not as strong.

I believe you may find some of your answers if you look at the aliases that he used:

Charles Adams and E. E. Smith

Due to the research I have been doing I do not believe that C. E. Andrews wrote EATCT but I think there may be some connections.

Scott Edward Lane

**Sworn Lip(s) | 10/07/15 10:05 AM | link | filter**

“Ding” Don’t look….listen! That’s a line by that blind guy from that movie ‘Sneakers’. I think they called him Whister. That being said, I challenge anyone to actually read the “Juvenile” series by Benj. F. Cobb....the Jack Henderson books. Then.....follow up with his ‘ A country boy in the city, or, The adventures of Sandy Pike’

Gentlemen, you will get the shivers when you finish these series. And when you go back and look at the very first illustration that Smith did for Cobb in the very first of the series...‘down East’....yep!.....there he is!

Not only are all the chapters names for a person or place that has strong ties in the con & gambling world, but the coded slang is all there too. Why Cobb even ‘bucks the tiger’ in the first book...not to mention Headlight Archie.....whom he refers to Mr. Andrews. And now look at the Cobb/Smith timeline in conjunction with AR&S. It feels like they traveled together. In modern sense, It’s like Ricky Jay guised his adventures to locations where his skills could be homed & used... and T.A. Gagnon was the illustrator.

And in my close, I will be happy to accept any ridicule to this post after only first reading the books yourself.

Always Now-RW
Here's a download link for 38 documents on E. S. Andrews and Charles E. Andrews. PLEASE CREDIT TODD KARR IF YOU USE THESE MATERIALS. THANKS! http://we.tl/oF6kMAs014

Great work, Todd! And thanks for sharing here.

Richard Hatch asked about the E. S. Andrews who managed Wingate's in the 1890s in New England. I have many records on this agency and this E.S. but eventually decided this E.S. was a different man based on the years, location, age, and because although there was a scam connected with the agency, it seems the culprit was Bert Hilliard, an associate that this E. S. helped bring to justice, according to the news items.

Clarification: Charles E. Andrews appears to have been arrested in South Bend in 1906 and tried in Logansport.

Richard Kaufman wrote: Great work, Todd! And thanks for sharing here.

Thanks, Richard.

Open Q to Messrs. Karr, Hatch, et al:

To what extent has contact been made with descendants of your top candidates? Given that the primaries are long deceased, it seems likely that a "smoking gun" - if one exists - would lie buried in a box in some unsuspecting family member's basement or attic.
Bill Mullins | 10/10/15 06:27 PM | link | filter

W. E. Sanders died without descendants, I believe. Richard Hatch found family of Edwin Sumner Andrews (that’s how he got the photograph). M. F. Andrews had a daughter, I believe, but nothing is known about her.

I'm sure Chris Wasshuber is checking into family on Gallaway, and Peter Zenner has contacted Harry Thompson's grand-daughter.

All of the above is documented earlier in this very thread.

Todd Karr | 10/10/15 10:48 PM | link | filter

Here is a link to another batch of articles and documents about Charles E. Andrews. Again, if you use these, please credit Todd Karr. Thanks!

29 items – 1900-1907: http://we.tl/XnUuYOtSwd

Some highlights:

1. Two May/June 1901 Paducah KY Evening Sentinel articles about Charles Andrews (described again as a "young man") who set up a gambling operation at the water works building, with cards and dice confiscated as evidence. (Note also that even a few years later, articles called Andrews a "young man" at the same time they are saying he's around 40-something to 50.)

2. A long Aug. 16, 1906 Huntington IN Herald article "Wanted Everywhere: Man with Many Aliases in Logansport Jail" giving many in-depth details about Charles E. Andrews (here under a number of his assumed names) with an astounding explanation of his swindling methods using the rails and conductors around the country.

Note that he had fake train passes printed and that the Illinois printer was being pursued.

Richard Hatch was right about working the railroads, covering a large area with multiple swindles.

I love that they mention a no. 8 Remington typewriter.
Erdnase’s introduction: "...if it sells, it will accomplish the primary motive of the author, as he needs the money."

4. December 10, 1900 LA Times article on C. E. Andrews, who had skipped town in Portland after moving there briefly, leaving behind bills and lovers, plus a tale of being in Cuba during the Spanish American War. (One of the earlier articles I posted mentions Andrews speaking Spanish.)

It has all the earmarks of Charles E. Andrews' m.o.

1900 is the year when Charles E. Andrews apparently left behind his wife and son in Elkhart with a waitress, then left her in California. The article says New York, but an abandoned wife anyplace in the east would fit the bill.

5. An important July 12, 1904 Daily Northwestern piece on E. S. Andrews' arrest in Indiana by Sheriff Rounds, which I may have left out of my first batch of material. It has the great jailhouse interview with Andrews.

6. An April 11, 1906 Sedalia MO Democrat article on the arrest of C. E. Andrews alias G. W. Forder alias A. Johnson, J. A. Johnson, and J. J. Shutt. There's a physical description that matches. He was all over the map, and everyone seems to have been looking for him.

7. An extensive August 27, 1907 Chicago Inter-Ocean article on the Chicago tragedy, with ANOTHER photo of Andrews.

8. Coverage in the August 27, 1907 Indianapolis News, focusing on Andrews' ill-fated wife, local resident India Ethel Blaine, who was a nurse at two Indiana insane asylums. Many details and the astounding fact that Blaine's sister had also been shot to death by her husband. There's also a better copy of the same photo that appeared in the Chicago Tribune. I have included a cropped copy of this image.

9. Charles E. Andrews Jr.'s 1918 draft registration: He was born Sept 1, 1884.

From this and other census records: His mother, Sadie E. Andrews, born around 1864,
10. Several articles from the 1906 Logansport arrest involving Andrews' stenographer scheme, including the fact that one of his female victims recognized and subdued him until police arrived.

Plus a number of other items of interest.

Ron Giesecke | 10/11/15 12:05 PM | link | filter

Upon finding myself flailing about in the agitation cycle of life, and being nearly completely absent from Magic Forums completely for a few years (with a few aberrant exceptions. I'd hate for the doggedly-incredible research aggregators in here to find some wayward post that proves I wasn't completely absent and make me look stupid), I marvel at one thing, and rejoice at another.

Marvel:

That this thread is alive and well--YEARS LATER. Someone mentioned way back that they hoped this thread was being preserved. I agree. It should perhaps be a book in and of itself.

Rejoice:

That the jury is still out on all of this. I for one would become slightly depressed, if the entire issue was completely resolved. I own the Dover, 1995 edition, and I simply assumed back then that the issue was closed.

And, maybe it is. But for me, continued opaqueness and occlusion makes things more exciting.

Bill Mullins | 10/12/15 01:08 AM | link | filter

Does anyone know if this includes the entire text of Erdnase?

Richard Hatch | 10/12/15 05:17 PM | link | filter

Bill Mullins wrote: Does anyone know if this includes the entire text of Erdnase?
don't know, but I assume so. An usual edition of EATCT!

Brad Jeffers | 10/12/15 05:19 PM | link | filter

I asked Dan Frederickson about this, and he said that it does indeed contain the entire text of the book. 
So if you are a collector of the various editions of Erdnase, I guess this would count as one.

Tom Sawyer | 10/12/15 05:44 PM | link | filter

Maybe the next step is a T-shirt with the entire text (if that has not been done already). 
A close relative of mine has a T-shirt with *The Three Musketeers* -- not the whole text, 
but a lot of it. (The book is quite long.) I think texts (or partial texts) of a number of 
books have been issued that way.

Pete McCabe | 10/12/15 11:11 PM | link | filter

I have a t-shirt with "The Raven" on it, but even that is not the entire text.

Todd Karr | 10/16/15 12:40 AM | link | filter

Thank you to Richard Hatch and Richard Wiseman for great leads, suggestions, and support. Hopefully, all the Erdnase scholars here downloaded my Erdnase documents while I had them up. I've since found more strong evidence about Charles E. Andrews, 
including more about his gambling, and I will keep you posted when I've written up more of the story.

Todd Karr | 10/17/15 05:52 PM | link | filter

The Charles E. Andrews I've been researching is buried in Patton Cemetery in Laporte, Indiana, Lot W, N-4, Plains 237.

Bill Mullins | 10/18/15 01:21 AM | link | filter

One of the articles shared by Todd is from the Chicago Inter-Ocean of 8/27/1907. It includes a picture of what presumably is Charles Andrews's handwriting.

Of likely no relevance whatever, but interesting to me, is the second line of the letter. 
Bill Mullins wrote: One of the articles shared by Todd is from the Chicago Inter-Ocean of 8/27/1907. It includes a picture of what presumably is Charles Andrews’s handwriting.

Of likely no relevance whatever, but interesting to me, is the second line of the letter. It includes a glyph for the word "and", where it is written diagonally downwards on the line, almost as small as a single character. Why is this worth mentioning? Because the only other place I’ve ever seen this is in the handwriting of Dai Vernon!

I told you.........................

Hi, Bill: The handwriting is Inda Ethel Blaine’s, although the words are Andrews'. He was dictating to her at the time he shot her, as detailed in many of the articles.

Charles Andrews was in showbiz early in his career. I've uncovered several articles and notices about his tours, and of course at the end he absconded with money and disappeared.

Bill Mullins wrote: Hi, Bill: The handwriting is Inda Ethel Blaine’s, although the words are Andrews'. He was dictating to her at the time he shot her, as detailed in many of the articles.

Thanks, Todd. I’ve downloaded your articles, but haven’t studied them. The whole business with Gallaway and Thompson over the last few months has sucked some of the Erdnase wind from my sails, and I haven’t dived in like I normally would have. I spent too much time and energy arguing and not enough enjoying the discussion.

Ask a Stupid Question Department: I’m only up to page 66 of 111 on this thread, but can someone let me know: How did we conclude definitively that S.W. Ernase is an anagram? Who first mentioned this, and when was is commonly agreed that this is
Bill Mullins | 10/19/15 02:54 PM | link | filter

Not at all a stupid question.

Leo Rullman, in *The Sphinx* Nov 1928, says "In this connection one must not forget that excellent treatise by W. S. Erdnase [sic] (E. S. Andrews), "The Expert at the Card Table," being an exposition of artifice, ruse and subterfuge at the gambling table."

This is the first place in print I know of that makes the Erdnase-Andrews connection.

Three months later (*Sphinx* Feb 1929), he writes: "It has been said that his real name was E. S. Andrews, which in reverse order produces the pen-name under which he wrote."

Rullman doesn't source this, so we don't know if it is a conclusion he came to, something that he was told second-hand, or if he had firm knowledge that this was the case. This was soon enough after publication of *Expert*, however, that if he were wrong, the author or someone who otherwise knew about the book could have corrected him.

Different people have different levels of confidence in the assertion. As you read through the thread, you'll see that Chris Wasshuber believes in a literal interpretation of the name. Advocates for W. E. Sanders believe it to be an anagram rather than a reversal. The origin of "Erdnase" as a pseudonym is not proven by any stretch, but I think that most people since Rullman have accepted what he said as probably true.

supremefiction | 10/19/15 08:50 PM | link | filter

Thanks for the helpful response!

lybrary | 10/19/15 11:25 PM | link | filter

*Bill Mullins wrote:* As you read through the thread, you'll see that Chris Wasshuber believes in a literal interpretation of the name.

That is not a particularly good characterization of what I believe. I believe that the reverse spelling theory - in the form where E.S. is being interpreted as the real name of the author - has little merit. There are a number of other valid explanations for the name. Even if you want to go with E.S. Andrews then it is much more likely that this was a cover name of the author rather than his real name. It has to be, because Erdnase's real name was Edward Gallaway
Bill Mullins wrote:  As you read through the thread, you'll see that Chris Wasshuber believes in a literal interpretation of the name.

That is not a particularly good characterization of what I believe.

My apologies, and I'm glad you stepped in to correct it.

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Todd Karr | 10/20/15 03:03 AM | link | filter

Amidst a flood of new information I've found, literally hundreds of articles, it looks like Charles E. Andrews may have been itself an alias of Charles L. Andrews. Please note that I previously traced the name and age of Charles E. to another 1859-ish Midwest Charles E., whose father was an English editor, which sounded like a good fit. Proper history should mean not being attached to any outcome, just the facts, and it looks like Charles L. Andrews is the real name, and his birthdate was 1860.

If it turns out all this is correct, it also looks like I've uncovered his show business career, more of his words, some great connections to the Expert, a lot more colorful crimes, his family and many wives, and his Indiana gambling house. This man's life was truly spectacular: a smart cad with major flair.

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Bill Mullins | 10/21/15 10:45 PM | link | filter

Tom Sawyer is now taking orders for his upcoming Erdnase book.

And if you've got any money left, you might want this.

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Todd Karr | 10/21/15 Yesterday 12:03 AM | link | filter

I'm pretty sure I've got my man.

Charles L. Andrews aka Charles E. Andrews was later William G. Andrews, advance man for Alexander Herrmann, and wrote extensive articles describing card moves and effects in language and terms matching The Expert.

I'm arranging my hundreds of documents into a complete timeline with documentation.

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Roger M. | 10/22/15 Yesterday 12:13 AM | link | filter
Tom notes that he's only printing 100 copies, of which only about 80 will actually be for sale.

Roger M. | 10/22/15 Yesterday 12:19 AM | link | filter

*Roger M.*

*Roger M.* wrote: I’m pretty sure I’ve got my man.

Charles L. Andrews aka Charles E. Andrews was later William G. Andrews, advance man for Alexander Herrmann, and wrote extensive articles describing card moves and effects in language and terms matching *The Expert.*

I'm arranging my hundreds of documents into a complete timeline with documentation.

Will you be offering your own detailed editorial as well Todd, or only the documents and notes?

Not that the documents and notes aren't plenty ... but I've always enjoyed your writing, and there would certainly be interest in a book related your research?

Todd Karr | 10/22/15 Yesterday 01:14 AM | link | filter

*Todd Karr* wrote: Roger: There seem to be more Erdnase books than candidates these days (and yes, I ordered Tom Sawyer's, too!), but it will definitely take an entire book to properly tell this labyrinthine tale.

mam | 10/22/15 Yesterday 11:42 AM | link | filter

This was launched today:

http://explore.chicagocollections.org

It’s a joint effort by more or less all archival institutions in Chicago, to make their materials available online. I have not yet looked at it myself, just wanted all of you to know, since there may be all sorts of interesting things hiding in there. For example, among tens of thousands of images, you can filter on work activities such as "Printing".

Tom Sawyer | 10/23/15 Today 04:15 AM | link | filter

*Tom Sawyer* wrote: 

The website mentioned by mam above is quite interesting. This post is based on information from that website.
This link appears to show a more-inclusive version of a picture mam posted on this thread a little while back.

It plainly shows a two-story building across the street from the Leiter II Building. From other information on this thread, I would assume that this building was torn down and the three-story building replaced it.

From the foregoing, it seems clear (to me) that Bill Mullins's analysis (in this post) of the photo was correct. (I had previously thought that the "mam" photo probably portrayed a three-story building.)

This link seems to me to show the same building from a different era (earlier, I suppose).

--Tom Sawyer

mam | 10/23/15 Today 04:29 AM | link | filter

Here are some nice pictures of people playing cards:

http://explore.chicagocollections.org/r...ying+cards