

## *“A Collection of Antique Books”*

Cody Bens

George Bernard Shaw once said “a child only educated at school is an uneducated one,” and my mother was a firm believer in those words. She felt that our educations were important, but also felt that you could learn so much outside of just what is taught in school. In her opinion, books were an excellent way of procuring knowledge, so she surrounded me with books. At an early age I began reading adult level books, and I took a quick interest in history – especially American history.

Christmas my freshman year in high school was when my book collecting began. A family friend, who was aware of my passion for books and history, gave me *The True Story of George Washington*. She told me that it was the perfect book because not only was it rich in history from detailing the life of our first president, George Washington, but it being an antique book made it a piece of history as well. I became totally fascinated by the book, and set out to find more old and antique books that reflect upon the history of the United States or the world.

James Oliver Curwood is an author whose books make up a significant portion of my collection. The first Curwood books I purchased were *Kazan* and *Baree – Son of Kazan* and *The Grizzly King*. I read them all cover to cover in the span of two days. I was engrossed in the language Curwood used and the imagery he created. Curwood was truly a master of the pen. Since that point, I have made it my goal to eventually own a copy of everything he has written.

Most of the books that I have I have picked up from used book stores or garage sales. They are always great places to find hidden treasures. While most of my books have some type of historical aspect to them, there are some books in my collection that are purely just for a literary purpose, such as the Shakespeare and Dickens volumes. However, even those books are able to paint a picture of the time period that they are written during and about. Every detail on a page tells you something about the people, the place, and the time. Every book in my collection is a small piece of history captured within its pages. Currently my collection numbers in 100's of books, and I have no intention of stopping any time soon.