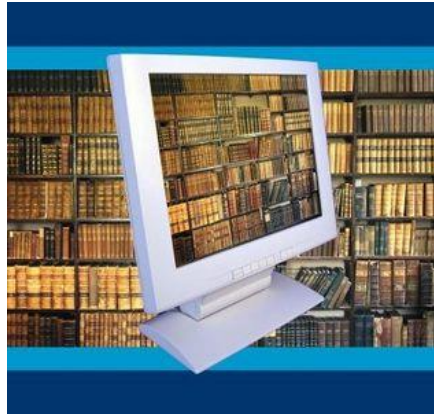




*I find television very educational.
Every time someone switches it on
I go into another room and read a good book.*

Goucho Marx

Two years after Chicago's "Great Fire" of 1871, Charles Montgomery Barnes made a life-changing decision. Instead of being a preacher, he would become a book seller.

It wasn't the first time Barnes—known as C.M.—had changed the path of his life. A scholar who graduated from Knox College (in 1856) and Chicago Theological Seminary (in 1859), he'd been a chaplain during America's Civil War. When post-war health problems beset him, he worked for the postal service.

An Illinois resident, Barnes decided to move his family to Wheaton where a new college was employing an old friend (his mentor, Jonathan Blanchard). Formerly president of Knox, Blanchard—a staunch abolitionist—was the first president of Wheaton College.

Charles, his wife Ellen and their children lived at the corner of Cross and Lincoln Streets. It was in that Wheaton home—just blocks away from the College—where Barnes first opened his shop, in 1873.

He sold used books, starting with volumes from his own library, to college students. By the following year, a new public school had opened in Wheaton. Barnes now had two institutional customers, and his fledgling business began to thrive. Before long, he was also selling new books and stationery.

We can track the growth of Barnes' business by reports in The American Stationer. A few years into his book-selling life, Barnes moved his shop to Chicago which was rebuilding after the fire. When he outgrew his space at 23 LaSalle Street, he moved to State Street.

These were exciting times, when technological advances like copy machines could duplicate twenty letters a minute. Mimeographs, formerly operated by hand, were now "automatic." Table shears made cutting safer, while the Racine Steel Press—able to "revolutionize the work"—could save its owners "100 per cent."

By January of 1896, Barnes announced a major sale at his State Street location. He was moving again...this time to a 15,000-square-foot space on Wabash. The "continued prosperity of the house" made that move necessary. His ads let people know he was selling used school books at a 60% discount.

The next month—on February 13th—The American Stationer reported that the company—by this time called C.M. Barnes Company—had "phenomenal" sales of secondhand schoolbooks. Recognized then as a "sterling concern," the business was ultimately purchased by one of Barnes' employees—C.W. Follett—and would come to be known as Follett Corporation.



For nearly 140 uninterrupted years, Follett has distributed educational tools and books to schools (and libraries) throughout the United States and Canada. At the forefront of technology breakthroughs, throughout its long history, Follett is now leading another revolution: The delivery of digitally based learning tools for today's digital-native students.



How it all took place is an awesome story unto itself. And ... in case you're wondering whether "Barnes" has anything to do with "Barnes and Noble," the answer is ... it certainly does.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Follett-Delivers>

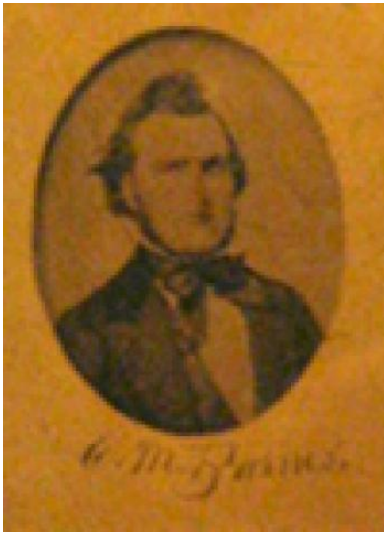
See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Follett-Delivers>



2 Follett

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/>



Charles Montgomery Barnes

Image of Charles Montgomery Barnes, online courtesy Knox College.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Charles-Montgomery-Barnes>



1 Follett

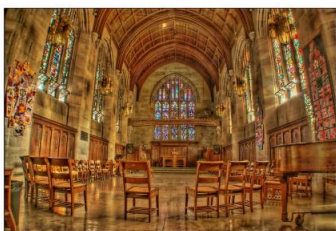
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Knox College - Old Main

Image online, courtesy Knox College.

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Chicago Theological Seminary - C.M. Barnes

Image of Chicago Theological Seminary by Jay Shrestha, online courtesy Blogspot.

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Jonathan Blanchard - Mentor of C.M. Barnes

Image online, courtesy Wheaton College.

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Copy Machines - 19th Century

Image online, from *The American Stationer*, courtesy Google Books.

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Mimeograph Machine - 19th Century

Edison ad, published in *The American Stationer*, online courtesy Google Books.

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Table Shears - 19th Century

Advertisement online, courtesy Archive.org.

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Racine Steel Press - 19th Century

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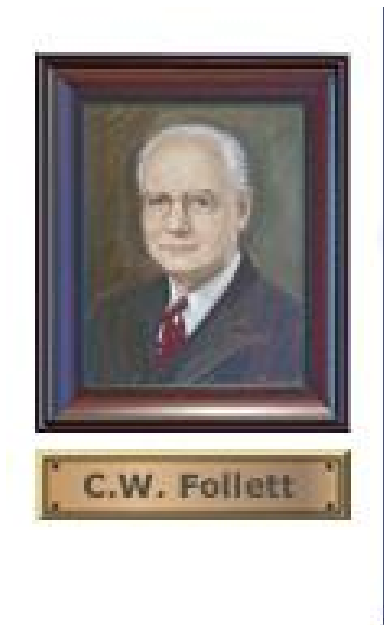
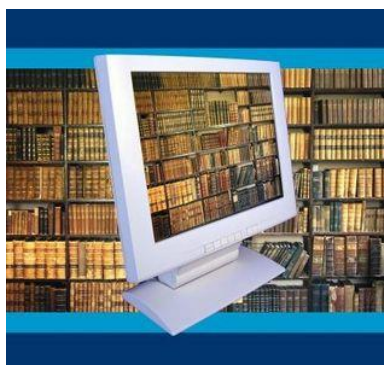


Image online via Follett Corporation.

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