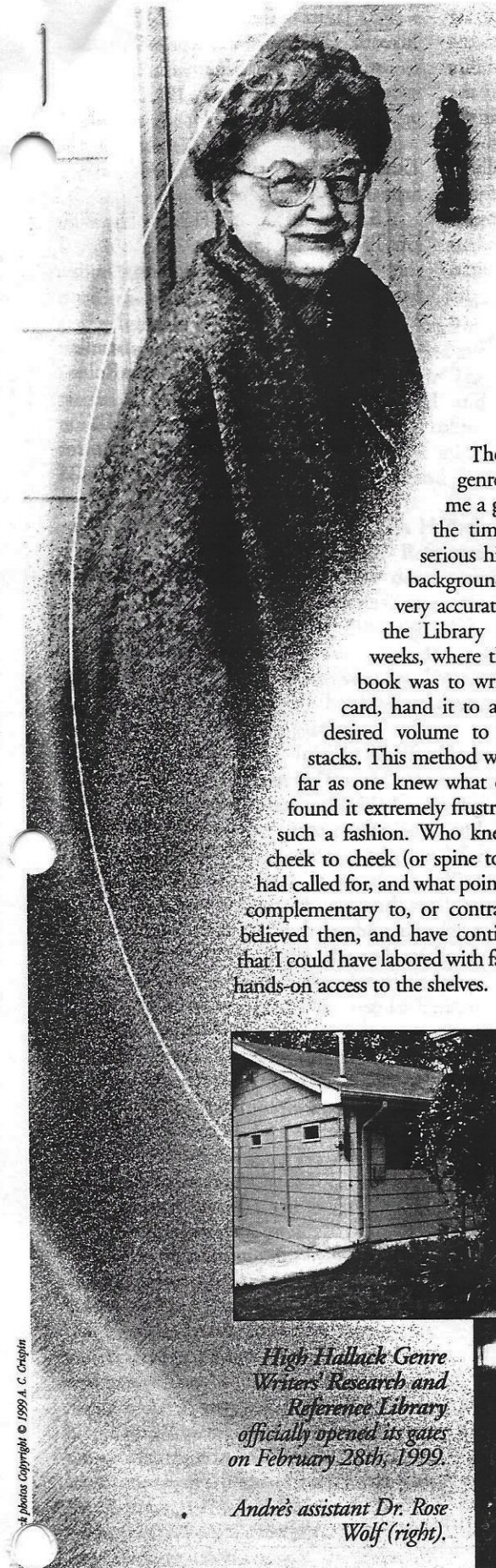


# High Hallack Library

## What It Is and Why

By Andre Norton



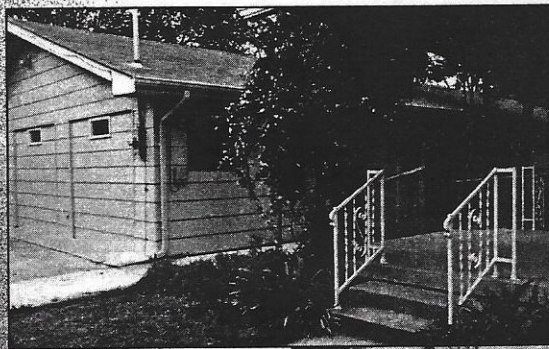
The idea of a library for genre writers first occurred to me a good many years ago. At the time, I was working on a serious historical novel for whose background it was necessary to be very accurate. I therefore patronized the Library of Congress for some weeks, where the ritual for obtaining a book was to write its title on a request card, hand it to a page, and wait for the desired volume to be retrieved from the stacks. This method was satisfactory only insofar as one knew what one wanted; I, however, found it extremely frustrating to work "blind" in such a fashion. Who knew which tomes resided cheek to cheek (or spine to spine) with the work I had called for, and what points of view they expressed, complementary to, or contrasting with, my own? I believed then, and have continued in the conviction, that I could have labored with far greater profit had I had hands-on access to the shelves.

A decade ago—by which time my own personal library had reached the goodly size of ten thousand volumes—I began to consider what might be done to create the archive of my dreams. This would be a research-and-reference facility for the use of those working seriously with popular—that is, non-academic—literature. It would cover the areas of fantasy, science fiction, horror, occult, mystery, romance, and Western writing. It would further contain not only outstanding examples of the fiction in each of these fields but also a generous selection of relevant non-fiction—biographies, diaries, and critical studies, for example—both to spark inspiration and supply accurate data to provide solid foundations for imaginative cloud-castles. The facility would be organized on a very informal plan designed to encourage browsing, with the fiction arranged alphabetically by author and the non-fiction only by subject.

At that point, I and my business manager at that time applied for, and were granted, a 501(c)-3 not-for-profit status; and the project began in earnest. When word got out to other writers, their support took the form of money gifts and encouragement, and—in two instances—entire private libraries were bequeathed. I myself set about purchasing books to enrich the selection in the areas to be offered; I also started to plan the building of not only the library proper but also a writers' retreat.

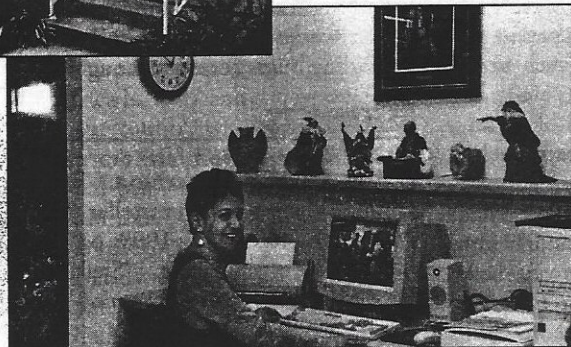
The vision of what became High Hallack held this shape for a number of years, and during that time I was persuaded to buy a large tract of land in the mountains of central Tennessee on which to place it. However, when legal difficulties arose concerning this property, it became necessary to downsize my dream and adapt

an existing structure for my purposes. An acquaintance who chaired a local science-fiction organization made me aware of a large house in the city of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and this home—which featured a three-car garage—proved ideal for the need.



*High Hallack Genre Writers' Research and Reference Library officially opened its gates on February 28th, 1999.*

*Andre's assistant Dr. Rose Wolf (right).*





Within eighteen months of the move, the garage, *a la* Aladdin's Palace, was en-"genie"-ered by a most dedicated contractor who doubled its size and designed the interior for its destined function. The thousands of books were sorted and shelved; a VCR and a large video collection were set ready for use; and a mini-gallery of appropriate paintings and figurines was placed on display.

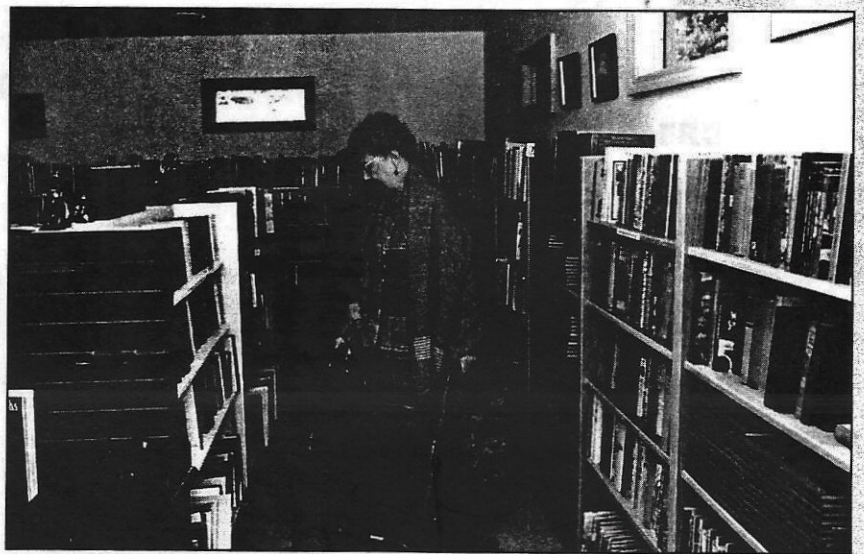
And then, at long last, High Hallack Genre Writers' Research and Reference Library officially opened its doors—or, given that its symbol is a Stonehenge-style trilithon, its *Gate*—on February 28th, 1999. This celebration was attended by professors from local universities, writers from an area workshop, bookstore owners, and other interested parties.

Following its initial liftoff, High Hallack has been out to "launch" ever since. The library has already provided a writing resource for seven genre professionals and has additional appointments scheduled for the next few months. It has also supplied answers posed by phone and mail to research questions such as the name for a certain part of a castle, the style of head-dress worn by one Native American tribe, and similar inquiries. On a regular basis, it further serves as a meeting place for a creative club from a neighborhood high school, whose members come for critique-and-technique sessions on short stories.

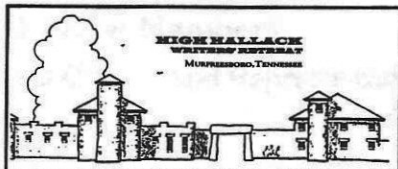
The archive itself is burgeoning, as well, as books keep on arriving. Among recent donations have been a large collection of Edgar Rice Burroughs' novels, including many obscure works; a group of vintage mysteries; a beautifully-bound array of L. Ron Hubbard's early tales in sev-

eral genres; and an irreplaceable selection of Golden Age SF magazines, courtesy of Forrest Ackerman. Contributions of art continue, too—a pair of signed prints by Frank Frazetta was a notable recent acquisition. (The prize pieces in that group, however, remain the two authentic ritual brooms donated by an eighth-generation Welsh white witch. We could not be more proud to display the Nimbus Two Thousand or Firebolt besoms of new fantasy hero Harry Potter, believing the Wiccan conveyances to serve as a far higher "transPotter.")

Sadly, our era is characterized by an increasing apathy—even a hostility—toward the crafts of writing and reading. For this reason, High Hallack is pleased and proud to serve our dimension as its namesake does the Witch World: as a repository of knowledge aloof from the shifting political currents beyond its walls but ever accessible to those who would learn—and share that learning.



## High Hallack



*Authors and researchers wishing more detailed information about High Hallack Library and its offerings, services, accommodations, and location are invited to e-mail the facility at [highhallack@mindspring.com](mailto:highhallack@mindspring.com). They may also write to Andre Norton or her assistant, Dr. Rose Wolf, at 114 Eventide Drive, Murfreesboro, TN 37130. Correspondents who send their "snail-mail" addresses will receive a brochure about the archive that should answer many of their questions.*