

Historical novel based in England

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"While this is not the book he claims to be 'too lary to write,' I hope he will

appreciate my version of the facts," said the author. He also received great assistance from the Walken Public Library and

the National Coal Board, and he spent several days tracing the course of the Duke's Canal with his cousin, Paul St. Pierre.

There are two detailed sketches in the book showing the waterways of England in 1760, the canal to Manchester and the setting of the novel, including the various buildings.

Mrs. Pendleton's cottage, where a good deal of the book takes place is shown, as well as the entrance to the underground canal, Delph, where George met with his accident and his adventures began.

Cross writes so that the reader is transported to 1760, is in the mines with George, struggles with him, feasts with him on Christmas and carols with him that evening.

George and the duke are not the only characters that are drawn well. There's also the eccentric engineer, James Brindley, and Mr. Winstone, the theater troupe's manager, who is the first to befriend George.

And the distaff side isn't forgotten, with Mrs. Pendleton and her daughter, Peggy, the spunky village girl who works side-by-side in the mines with the men and the boys, but still manages to retain her femininity, in spite of the coal dust.

"I felt this kind of story would appeal

to children, because they're always interested in how things are done. And I always combine in my novels information I have detailed knowledge of, be it the theater, spies or espionage," said Cross.

HE ADDED, "Theater is my specialty and I dig in byways rather than the mainstream. I'm interested in offbeat, less-known daily occupations of people rather than the grandiose. The canal, for example, was an extraordinary undertaking in pragmatic engineering."

Although this is Cross' first children's book, he has several books to his credit. A novel he wrote under the pen name Jon Winters, entitled "The Drakov Memoranda" (Aven Books, 1969), concentrates on spies and espionage, in the Ian Fleming vein.

It was reviewed as a "dyscedly clever and entertaining spy novel," and a "well-written thriller" when it came out. The success encouraged Cross to write a sequel, which will be released in December. It's called "The Catenary Exchange."

Cross, who has been teaching at Eastern Michigan University since 1966, is a native of Manchester, England. He received the distinguished faculty award in 1981, and in 1982 chaired a business meeting at the American

Theater Association Convention where he delivered a paper on his latest work, "Spectacular Things at the Adelphi Theatre."

Together with another professor at Eastern, Alfred Nelson, Cross is recording the history of the London stage in the early 1800s, gleaming the data from old play bills from the Adelphi Theatre. The two professors also are following through and discovering how many times a particular play was performed at the theater, who the actors were, who directed and wrote the plays, following the different actors and plays through each season. Their research is so thorough, that they've even listed the changes in the casts.

AT PRESENT they are deep into the research of the Adelphi Theatre and haven't decided which way their findings will be published, as a text or a popular work.

The theater and its background has been Cross' avocation for as long as he can remember. "A fascinating search," he replied when asked about his Adelphi undertaking. He holds membership in the American Society for Theater Research (England).

His other areas of specialization are folklore and (of course) creative writing. He earned his doctorate at the Uni-



The cover of Gilbert Cross's novel gives a hint of the suspense that the leading character, a 14-year old orphan, encounters.

versity of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where he makes his home with his wife, Peggy, who teaches in Ann Arbor. They have two children, Robert and John.

Born in England, Cross is now an American citizen. His parents and a brother and sister still live in England.

"A Hanging at Tyburn" is written with good humor, wit, suspense and adventure, and is a natural for Christmas giving.

Orford Quartet deserves attention

By Avigdor Zoromp
special writer

Among the world's top string quartets that deserve attention is the Orford String Quartet. If this name so far has not been as frequently mentioned as some of the other renowned quartets, this situation is rapidly changing.

This group was founded in 1965 in Quebec. It adopted its name from Orford Arts Centre of Jeunesse, which in turn adopted its name from Mount Orford in that area (which probably, in turn, adopted its name from a person named Orford).

It isn't only Canada's most prominent string quartet, but it is internationally recognized as one of the top groups. It has received rave reviews in major publications in this country, including the New York Times, as well as in Canada and Europe. Some of its extensive repertoire has been recorded on labels such as CBC, London, RCA/CBC and others.

Present members of the group are violinists Andrew Dawes and Kenneth Perkins, cellist Denis Broitt and violist Terence Helmer.

Dawes and Perkins were born in Western Canada, while Helme was born in Northern Ontario and Broitt in Montreal.

All of them have studied at the most distinguished Canadian and U.S. schools, and some have received degrees and awards in Europe.

The Orford String Quartet is scheduled to appear in Orchestra Hall on Saturday. The sponsoring series is the Chamber Music Society of Detroit, which is renowned for its fine chamber programs here. This is the 40th season of this series.

The program will feature selections from Bach's "Art of the Fugue," Bartok's third string quartet and Beethoven's late string quartet op. 131. By all accounts, it is an event to look forward to.

Concertgoers get taste of borsht

Those who attend the 11 p.m. Nightcap with Mozart concert Friday at Birmingham Unitarian Church, 651 Woodward at Lone Pine, Bloomfield Hills, will be treated to a sample of Mishla Rachlevsky's hot Russian borsht.

This December tradition has helped bring in the spirit of the holidays for the past five years at Nightcap. The New Heritage String Quartet

will perform the String Quartet No. 2 by Beethoven as well as a movement from the Mendelssohn String Quartet No. 3, Op. 44.

Doors open at 10:30 p.m. Complimentary beverages will be served before and after the concert. For ticket information, call 62-MUSIC (626-8743) for information.

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