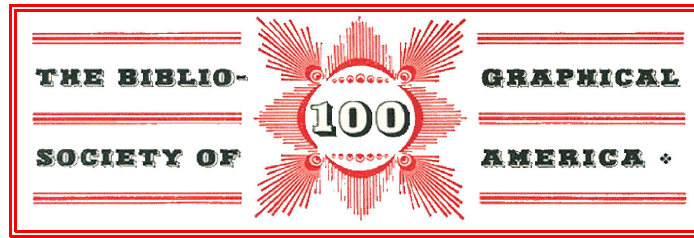


“It’s wonderful, isn’t it?” W9JC Chester Thordarson: Scientist and Bibliophile
Extraordinar - By Pat Powell.



Following recorded from State of Wisconsin Academy Review Vol 26, Number 4 - Back in the 1930's the Bibliographical Society of America held some of its meetings in conjunction with those of the American Library Association. At one of these meetings in 1933 - We believe the members of the Society were invited to meet Mr. Thordarson and see his library at his electrical and manufacturing plant on East Ohio Street in the heart of one of Chicago's warehouse and industrial districts.

The group went through a dimly lighted passageway alongside machinery and up a staircase to a room where we were greeted by a gray-haired man well on in his sixties, rather slight of build, who nervously began to show us his treasures.

OH! WHAT treasures they were! The elephant folio of Audubon (he told me later that it cost him two hundred dollars a volume to have it bound in England.) The binder advised Mr. Thordarson never to send another volume as he had great difficulty in getting skins big enough to cover them.

There was a Coverdale Bible (Great Bible) of 1535; a complete set of Gould's magnificent monographs on the birds of the world, a set quite as valuable as the Audubon; and many, many others of less magnitude, even though of greater rarity. The eyes of even the more distinguished members of the Society almost popped out of their heads that night and Mr. Thordarson's nervousness began to abate as he realized their admiration for his achievement in bringing such a collection together.

Our host began to open an occasional book to his favorite passage, which he had lightly ticked with a pencil mark and read it aloud, almost always with the comment; "It's wonderful, isn't it?" It was easy to see that he loved his books and knew them intimately.

Chester W9JC was none other than the great transformer and electrical inventor with main offices in Chicago, The Thordarson Corporation. W9JC from the 1929 Call Book Magazine.