

## *Ex Libris* by Joaquin Ayala, Ph.D.

Hello and welcome to the *Ex Libris* article for February 2016!

In keeping with the “theme” that I had last month of starting at the beginning, seeing as it was the beginning of the year last month, this month I will be focusing on two books that are usually referenced together as being fundamental building blocks for card workers. Those two books are *Expert Card Technique* and *The Royal Road to Card Magic* by Jean Hugard and Frederick Braue.

Jean Hugard was born and raised in Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia and became interested in magic after seeing a magic show as a boy, and he later fully immersed himself in the art after reading the *Secrets of Conjuring and Magic* by Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin. Frederick Braue was born in Alameda, California and was a professional journalist by trade, not a magician. He contributed to various magic publications over the years and eventually served as a column writer and editor for Hugard’s Magic Monthly publication. His last name is pronounced as “BROW-ee”.

In 1940 Hugard and Braue joined forces and compiled a book with material from various magicians and contributors, the majority of which was Charlie Miller. It was entitled *Expert Card Technique*. The book was published by Carl Jones and is split into six parts: (1) *Sleights*, (2) *Flourishes*, (3) *Technique*, (4) *Tricks*, (5) *Miscellaneous* and (6) *Misdirection and Presentation*. It is suspected that Miller was a ghostwriter for almost half of the book and it is said that he contributed the vast majority of the original material. Miller also supposedly divulged material from Dai Vernon to Braue which was not supposed to see publication, but it was included anyway. Vernon was reportedly unhappy about the inclusion and much of the material in the book was not specifically credited to anyone, however most of it is contributed to Dai Vernon and Charlie Miller. The third edition of the book (published in 1950 by George Starke) saw the inclusion of a section by Dai Vernon called ‘A Lesson in Card Handling’ and in that edition, he was given special crediting for his contributions, current and past. It also included ‘The Side Steal and Some of its Finer Points’ by Dr. Jacob Daley. The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> editions were published in 1940, 1944 and 1950, respectively. In 1951, Faber & Faber issued a reprint of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition; in 1974 the Dover paperback was released and finally in 1977, Coles released it as the ‘Complete Guide to Card Tricks and Techniques’.

1948 saw the publication of another book by Hugard and Braue – *The Royal Road to Card Magic*. It was intended as a precursor to the earlier *Expert Card Technique*. The material contained in this book provided one with the basic techniques in card handling leading up to the more advanced material in the aforementioned *Expert* book. The 1st edition was published by Harper & Brothers in 1948, followed by the World Publishing Company of Cleveland, Ohio in 1951 and Dover finally picked it up in 1999, releasing a paperback edition which was based on the 1951 edition from the W.P.C.

Hugard and Braue co-authored six other books together whilst living on the opposite sides of the United States – Braue in California and Hugard in New York. The co-authors wrote their books via correspondence.

Have a great month folks and enjoy the lovely Spring that we are having this Winter!

J.M.A.