

In the Limelight: Jon Crumiller

Interviewed by Mark Capron

Please tell us a bit about yourself and your family.

A quick snapshot: I'm 64 years old and I live in Princeton, New Jersey with my wife. Jenny and I were married 43 years ago, and we have three children, ages 41, 40, and 36, and two wonderful grandchildren, ages 10 and 8. Plus two cats. We've been in the Princeton area for the past 40 years, and we also have a lakeside house in Canyon Lake, Texas, which we visit frequently for sun and fun. Although I greatly enjoyed my career as a consultant to top US and international companies, I am now happily retired from business, as of 2½ years ago.

Where did your story with chess begin? Who taught you to play?

My dad taught me the moves when I was seven or eight. At the time it was just another interesting game to learn. My dad and a few of his friends had an informal chess night, perhaps once-per-month, and at some point he let me tag along. So I played against them, and I think their egos might have become a bit deflated, because they disbanded their chess nights soon thereafter!

But I was basically a novice until the Fischer-Spassky match. At that point my interest in the game grew considerably, and I eagerly awaited the daily New York Times recap of each game. I played in my first tournament at age 13, I think, and after that came the true start of my lifelong chess interest.

A few early chess milestones helped fuel my obsession. At age 16 I won the Delaware high school championship, and I'm proud to say that my high school team won every single match during the time I was there. I won the state junior championship several times and then the state championship in 1976, and the University of Delaware championship in both chess and backgammon.

I saw you have a consulting company based in business optimization. Can you tell us a bit about that work? Do you find any crossovers between chess and consulting?

After college, my lifelong friend, Steve Sashihara, called me and asked, "Hey, I want to start up a consulting company. Want to join me?" By lifelong, I mean that Steve and I were in the same pre-kindergarten(!) class, and we've been good friends ever since. Steve was the best man at Jenny's and my wedding and I had the privilege of fulfilling that role at Steve and Jean's wedding. Just last Thursday night I headed over to his house for a glass (or perhaps two) of fine Burgundy! Incidentally, Steve also played on our undefeated high school chess team.

Our company, Princeton Consultants Inc, started up in 1981. Steve is a Princeton grad, so Jenny and I moved to the Princeton area in 1982, and the rest is history: Princeton Consultants Inc. is a world-class management and IT

consulting firm. Our geekiness clearly shows in our website address, princeton.com, which we picked when the internet was newly born. Our work encompasses cutting-edge technologies, such as machine learning and optimization models, as well as many other types of projects, such as Board-level and C-level assessments and operational improvement projects. I retired at the end of 2020.

Did any of your children follow in your footsteps from a career or chess standpoint?

My children (now adults, ages 41, 39, and 36) know the rules of the game, and once-in-a-while they'll catch the chess bug, resulting in a frenzy of online with their friends! And for Father's Day we had a family Zoom session, and their present to me was that they allowed me to show them one of my recent tournament games! So I did, and they asked good questions about alternative moves and variations. But while they were growing up, each child explored their own interests. Same with their careers; my daughter Susan is an attorney in Manhattan with her own law firm, aptly named Crumiller P.C. My son Marshall earned his PhD in Neuroscience, and lives and works in Richmond, VA. Our youngest, Evan, lives nearby to us, and is actually interested in pursuing the same career as my wife who, until she retired at the end of 2020, was an elected official here in Princeton, and Evan plans to pursue an elected office at some point in the near future.

What are some key lessons from chess that you have applied to your life outside the game?

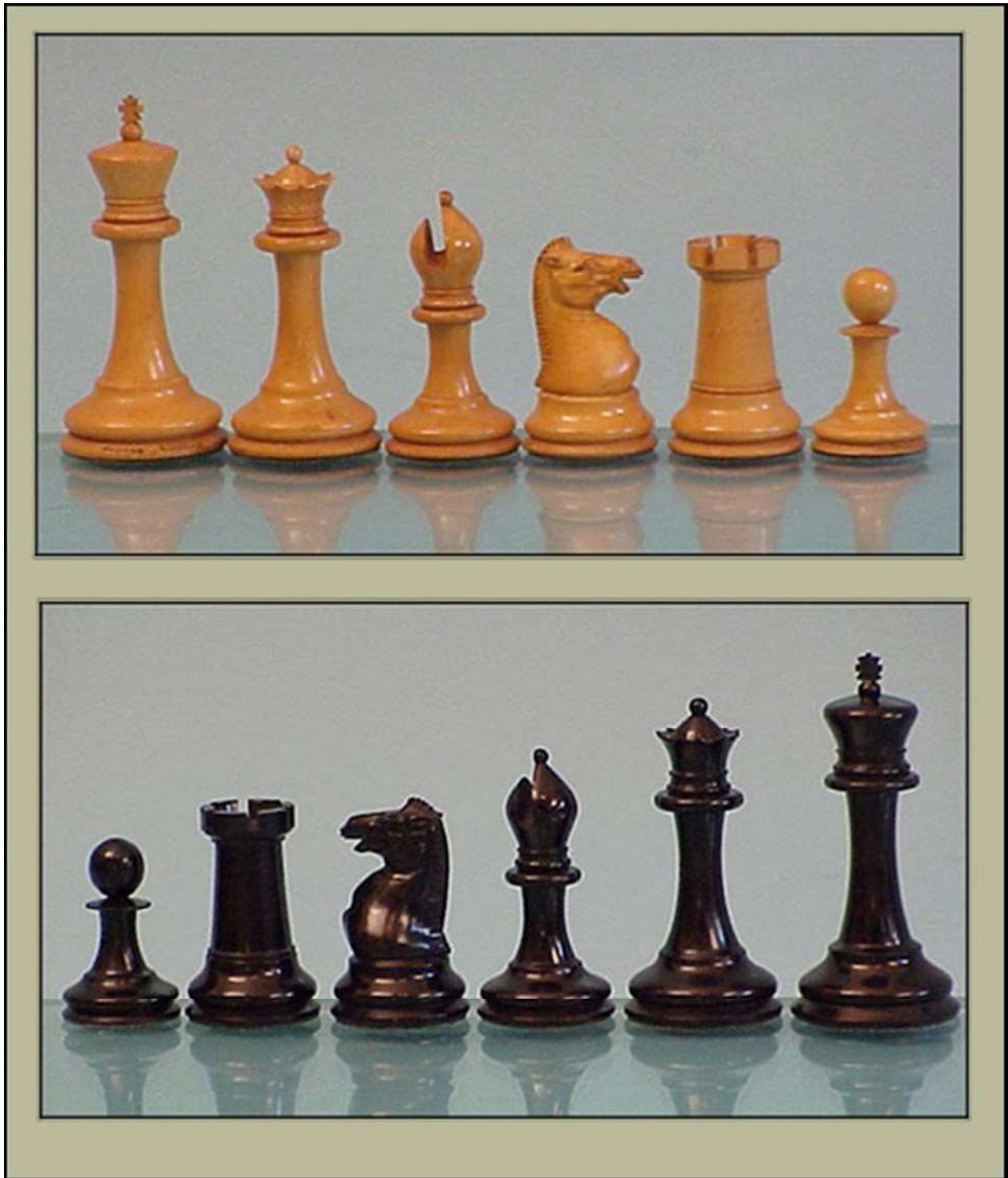
Chess has been described as a microcosm of life itself, and many of the lessons-learned are invaluable. Its lessons are also entirely positive: patience, perseverance, objectivity, foresight, how to compete, how to handle winning, how to handle losing, how to handle adversity, time management, pressure management, calculated risk-taking, sportsmanship, and a host of other character-building attributes.

I read that you purchased your first collectable chess set in 2002. What set was it and what drew you to it?

It was purely by accident. On a whim I was searching eBay, and I stumbled across a circa-1870 Jaques chess set. At the time I knew nothing about antique chess sets. And Jaques is considered to be the Rolls-Royce of chess sets. Those two factors proved to be irresistible, so I bid on it, and won!

Soon thereafter, another beautiful antique Jaques set appeared, so I bought it. Then another set... and another...

Here is a picture of the first set:



Since then you have amassed quite a collection of Chess Sets and are one of, if not the World's foremost Chess set collector. I am sure there is a story behind each and every Chess set, but would you elaborate on a few of them.

Over the past 20 years I've acquired approximately 600 antique chess sets. Initially I was drawn to Staunton—pattern sets, first and foremost sets by Jaques of London, then other manufacturers such as British Chess Company and FH Ayres. Soon, I noticed that there were other types of antique playing sets, many of which predated the Staunton pattern, and I was captivated by their history and beauty. Then the world of antique ornamental sets—chess sets that were not made for play, but rather for display—opened up to me, and my collecting career took a major step forward.

Most of the sets shown here are ornamental sets, because their beauty transcends chess, and indeed each set consists of thirty-two artistic sculptures.



Venus Bacchus Set
 Photo © Bruce M. White and the World Chess Hall of Fame

Venus Bacchus Set: This is a French Polychrome and Gilt-Heightened Carved Ivory Figural Set, 4th Quarter of the 19th century. The two sides feature the Roman goddess Venus and her son Cupid versus Bacchus and Bacchante and their cohorts.

From an artistic point of view the Venus Bacchus Set is amazing. I especially like the white bishop.

One of my all-time favorite antique sets. I won it in the famous Christie's Cholet auction, 2007-May-07, in London. <https://www.christies.com/auction/auction-5320-csk> That auction significantly changed the pricing/valuation benchmarks of antique chess sets.



Spanish Wooden Set Spanish Board
Photo © Jonathan B. Crumiller

Spanish Wooden Set Spanish Board: One of the oldest sets in my collection, this playing set hails from the 17th century (or early 18th), and is displayed on a 17th century Spanish board. Note that the starting position of the Ruy Lopez, a.k.a. the "Spanish Torture," is shown on the board!

Any significant meaning behind the fact that all pieces except the knight have a ball design on the top in the Spanish Wooden Set Spanish Board

Not that I know of, other than they're corroboration for an early dating of the set. There are several chess books from the 1500's and 1600's that have drawings of very similar sets. Those books are from Spain and Italy (I don't have them). A chess collector on Facebook said that there are very similar sets in modern—day Spain, so the attribution to that region is most likely correct.

John Company Set: I've been very fortunate to have acquired six sets made by the East India Company, commonly referred to as the John Company. This set is the smallest of them, but the intricate details are excellent. The set was made in Berhampur India, circa 1840.



Above: John Company Set; Below: Berhampur Green White Set
Photos © Jonathan B. Crumiller



Berhampur Green White Set: Chess sets from 19th century Berhampur were made for the export market, mostly the U.K. This set could be considered a playing set, because the pieces are strong enough to withstand game play, but was more likely displayed for its artistic beauty. This set was featured on the cover of *Chess Life* magazine, September 2013 issue.

What are the pieces made of in the Berhampur Green White Set? Such intricate work.

It's an ivory set. (I avoided the "ivory issue" in my earlier responses so it wouldn't be a possible distraction.) An article I wrote on East India Company ("John Company") sets has some excerpts from the Illustrated London News of April 26, 1851 (pages 4-6), which shows the primitive tools that were used by the master craftsmen. <http://chessreference.com/CCI/EastIndiaCompany/EastIndiaCompany.pdf> The Berhampur green & white set was made with a lathe, but probably along the same lines as the John Company sets: exquisite detail created by artisans with very simple tools.

The Berhampur set was featured on the cover of Chess Life, September 2013 issue: <https://tinyurl.com/rc6zpu9u> (The entire Chess Life article is here, <https://tinyurl.com/2bpnbatr>) The photo and article are © Chess Life 2013.



Bird Set
Photo © Garrick Coleman

Bird Set: The origin of this set is not known for certain, but an expert in Asian antiques has identified the pieces as looking very similar to small artifacts made in Japan in the latter 19th and early 20th centuries.



Above: Dieppe Set and Below: Dieppe Blue And White Set
Photos © Jonathan B. Crumiller



Dieppe Set and Dieppe Blue And White Set: Chess sets such as these were made in Dieppe France for centuries. Note the “fou” (fool) bishops, which were a standard feature of such sets. These two sets are both from the 19th century. I wrote an article about Dieppe chess sets, which can be found [here](#). This is one of fifteen such articles that I wrote for worldchess.com in 2015 and 2016.

Do the King’s and Queen’s faces in the 07_DieppeSet represent specific people?

I don't know, but my guess would be probably not, because the still—existing Dieppe sets don't have the same faces over and over, which one would expect if the pieces were modeled after specific people.

Some sets are clearly modeled after people. Here's an English set I have, and the king so closely resembles King Edward VII that I was able to find the photo that the carved king is based upon! (Not with absolute certainty but take a look.) Here's the set <https://goo.gl/photos/rmABkG4g8ViiRQxo9> and here's the photo <http://chessreference.com/Misc/KingEdwardComparison.jpg> (below). Even the markings on the king's robe are the same!



Islamic Pattern Set Photo © Jonathan B. Crumiller

Islamic Pattern Set: This 19th-century playing set shows the so-called Islamic pattern. At first I wasn't as interested in the Islamic pattern sets, but over time I began to appreciate their stunning beauty. Incidentally, according to my back-of-the-envelope calculations, the Islamic pattern is the second-most used chess set pattern in history. What is the first-most-used? Online computer chess icons! Nowadays many millions of chess games are played every single day, and the sum-total of those games exceeds the historical usage of any other pattern.

I also read that you collect antique books. What are a few of your most interesting books?

Most chess collectors focus their collections on one category of items: chess sets, or chess books, or chess stamps, to give the three most common categories. My own collection spans antique chess sets and chessboards as well as antiquarian chess books and other publications, and other chess ephemera, from the 19th and earlier centuries.

There are chess manuscripts and books that are dated to the tenth century, or even earlier, but the early chess books in my collection cover “modern” chess, i.e. in which the queens and bishops have their full present—day powers. The date of transformation from “older” to “modern” chess was circa 1480-1490.

All of the early chess books are historic and extremely rare. Here are a few of them in my collection.



Ruy Lopez

Photo © Bruce M. White and the World Chess Hall of Fame
Libro de la invención liberal y arte del juego del Axedrez, by Ruy López de Segura (1561)

The book analyzes 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5, although the opening first appears in Lucena's chess manual (1497). To put these dates in perspective: unlike the readers of Lucena's book, Ruy López's audience had the benefit of knowing that the earth revolves around the sun, rather than vice versa! Ruy López's book includes practical advice for chess players, such as: "...when playing if it is a clear day, and sunny, have your opponent facing the sun, because it will blind him; and if it were dark and playing by the light of fire, move with your right hand; because it disturbs the view, and the right hand will cast a shadow on the chessboard; so he will not be able to see where to play his pieces."

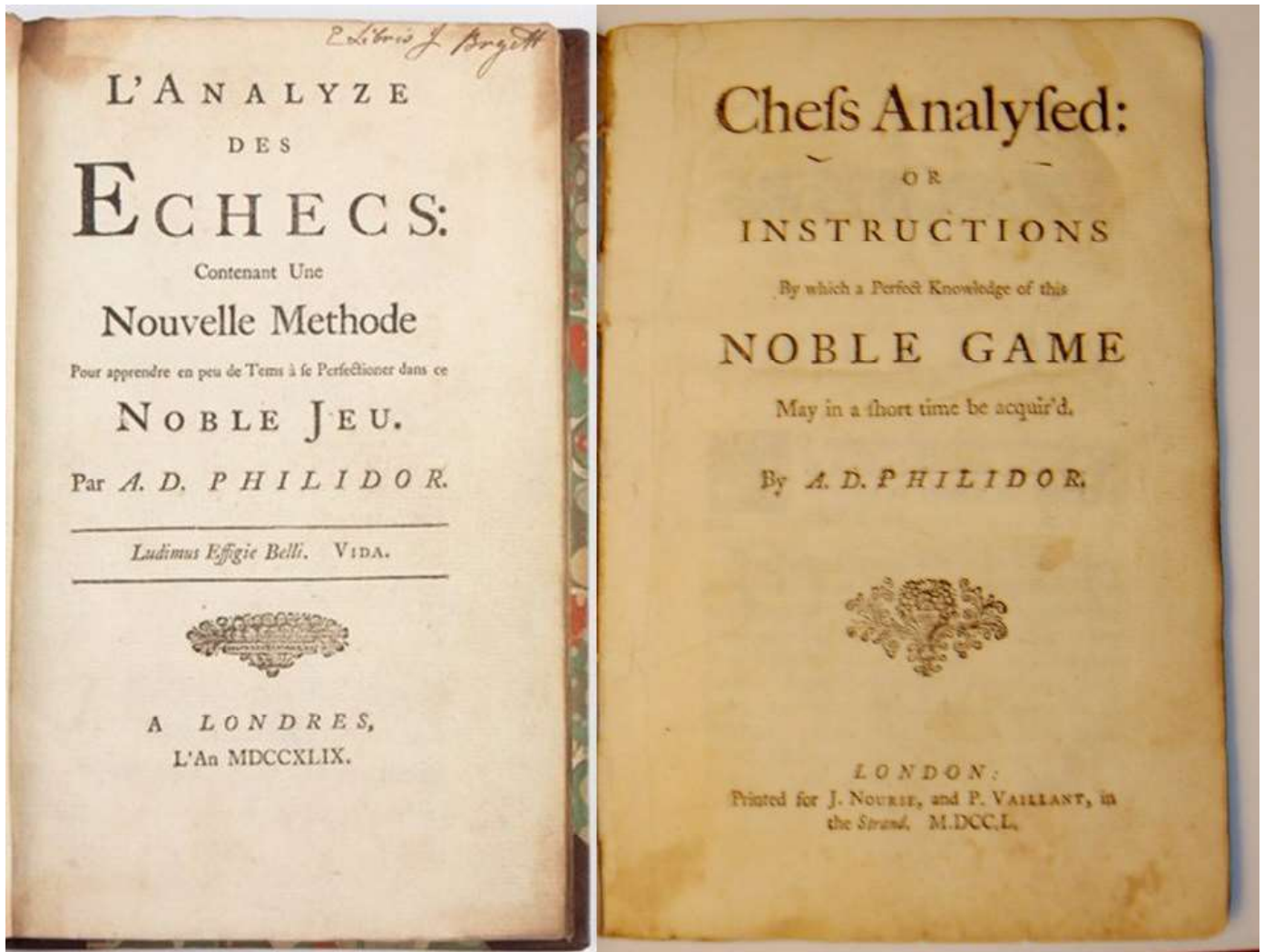


Damiano

Photo © Jonathan B. Crumiller

Damiano's first-edition chess treatise of 1512 was the first manual published in Italy for our “modern” game. In David DeLucia's In Memoriam he describes the first-edition Damiano as "...the rarest of all the Damiano editions and one of the rarest books written on the game of chess." The first Damiano edition was followed by seven more editions, dating from 1518 to 1564. These subsequent editions help explain the large gap in the timeline between Damiano's first edition and Ruy López's book in 1561. My chess book collection includes Damiano's fourth edition (the first undated edition), circa 1528. The title page shows a woodcut of two

chess players with a game in progress. This edition of Damiano's book, as well as the third edition dated 1524, included the first published set of helpful instructions for playing blindfold chess, with the title, "Arte de giocare alla mente" (Art of playing in the mind).



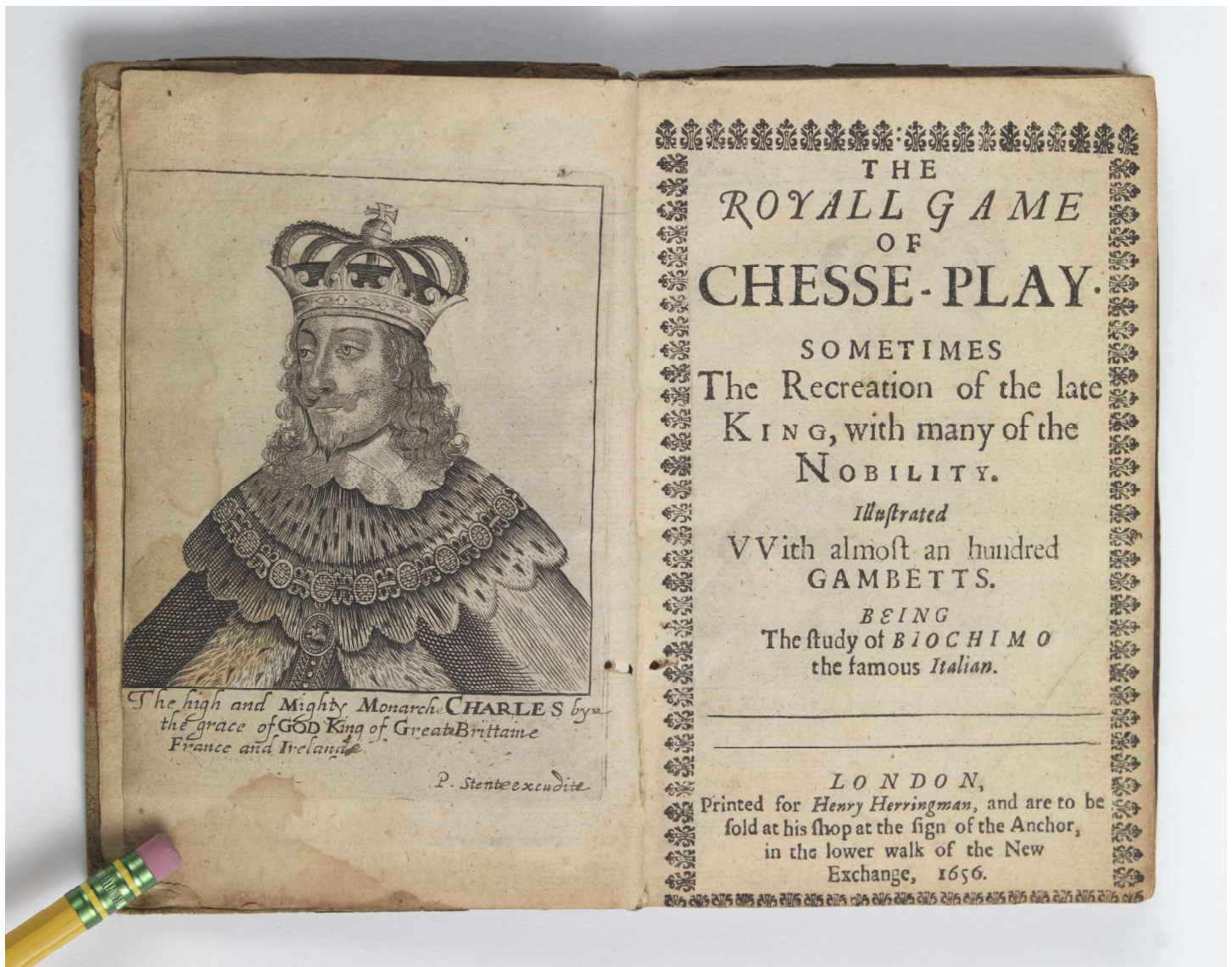
L'analyze des E'checs, 1749
Photo © Jonathan B. Crumiller

Philidor 1749_1750: François-André Danican Philidor's seminal chess work was published in Paris in 1749. It was quickly followed by an English edition in 1750. The above photo shows the two books side-by-side. Interestingly, the 1750 English edition is much rarer than the 1749 French edition. Two pirated, French copies of his book were also published in 1749, and I have them in the collection as well.

The Royall Game of Chesse-Play, 1656 London, England

The Royall Game of Chesse-Play was written by one of the first professional chess players, Gioacchino Greco. Greco is remembered for his bold, attacking, tactical style of play, and in his book he analyzed how these techniques could be used to break down an opponent's position.

**"Fair sport 'twas e'er the best of me; the world hath rook't the rest."
from *The Sonnets of Artemis***



Royall Game Of Chesse—Play
 Photo © Bruce M. White and the World Chess Hall of Fame

What is your overall Chess library like?

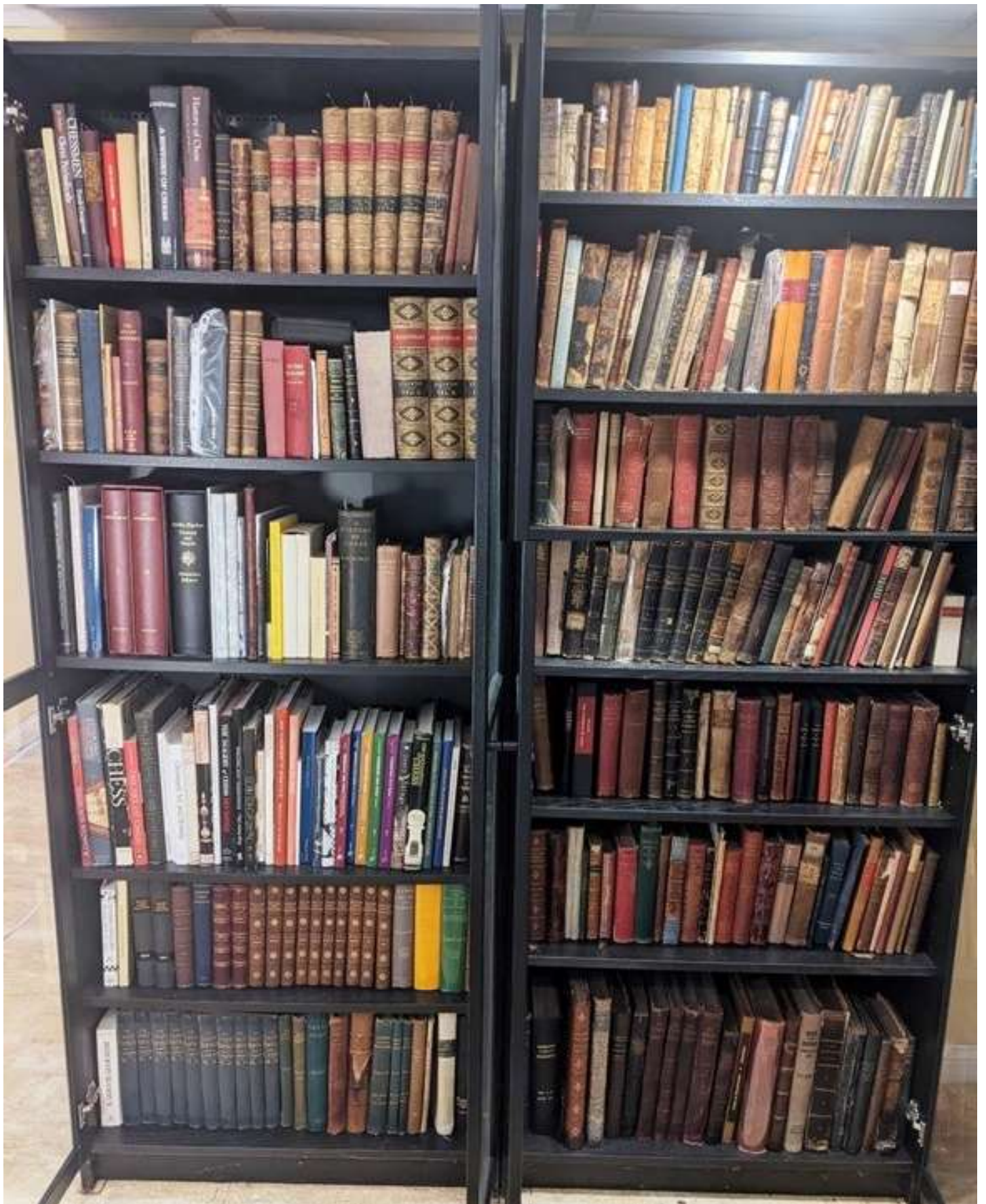
I've collected approximately 370 antiquarian chess books and magazine series. When it comes to antiquarian chess books, there aren't as many reference guides for collectors as there are for sets and boards. Really, only one: David DeLucia's two-volume *In Memoriam* is outstanding and invaluable.

My collecting focused on finding pre-20th-century books and publications; however, some 20th century publications are important to chess history, so when I was able to find one of them, I acquired it.

The number of books and publications in my collection, dated by century:

Century	#
1400's	1
1500's	10
1600's	12
1700's	49
1800's	246
1900's	51

The majority of my chess library is stored in temperature and humidity controlled cabinets. Here are some of them.



Chess Library
Photo © Jonathan B. Crumiller

What has been your greatest collecting challenge?

A general lack of knowledge within the collecting world about different types of chess sets, their histories, their provenances, their interconnections, etc. This challenge has been made much harder due to misinformation from the past as well as the present. Sets can be wrongly dated, geographically misattributed, and/or a plethora of other errors, sometimes intentionally, sometimes not. The solution to this dilemma has been to perform comprehensive research and to report the results to the worldwide chess-collecting community, so that the historical record can be corrected, slowly but surely.

Is there a specific set or book you are still searching for that would be very fulfilling to acquire?

I've been fortunate to have acquired many of the "classic" chess books of centuries past. There is one chess book for which any collector would climb the highest mountain and swim the deepest ocean: *Libre dels jochs partits dels schacs en nombre de 100* by Francesch Vicent. It is the very first chess book on "modern" chess, circa 1494. There's just one small problem: the last time that the book was ever seen was in 1796, and there are no known copies remaining!

Howard Staunton references the book, and its extreme rarity, in his *Illustrated London News* column of June 17, 1854:

ARRAGON —1. So rare is the work of Vicent (1495), that we never yet met with any person who had seen a copy. It is not improbable that some day a copy may be discovered in one of the old Spanish libraries; and, whenever this happens, the book will fetch a great price.

A gloomier verdict can be found in *The Chess Monthly* Vol. 3 (Sept 1881 - Oct 1882) edited by Hoffer and Zukertort:

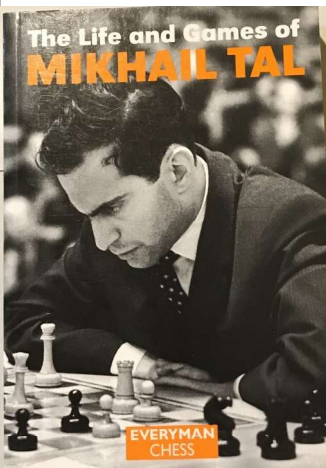
The only known copy belonged to the famous Abbey of Montserrat, near Barcelona; and it has hitherto been believed that it was lost in the Carlist War of 1834, when the conventual library was dispersed. We now learn, from the researches of Dr. Volger upon early Spanish printing, that the book was last seen for certain in 1796, and probably perished when the abbey was sacked by the French under Suchet in 1811.

The links between Vicent's book and the Lucena document(s) are fully explored in Jose A. Garzona's book, *El Regreso de Francesch Vicent (The Return of Francesch Vicent)*, published in 2005. At this point we can only hope that a copy of Vicent's book will someday be found.

Do you have a favorite chess book? If so, what is it?

Ruy Lopez 1561 is the book that comes to mind. It is such a joy to open the book and read chess material from 460 years ago. The book is written in old Spanish, so the spelling, syntax, and grammar differs from modern-day Spanish, which brings added enjoyment to the reading experience.

I also have hundreds of modern chess books, which I don't count as part of my collection, because I use them for study and enjoyment. Of those books, the most enjoyable for me has been *The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal*, an autobiography by one of the all-time great, attacking players.

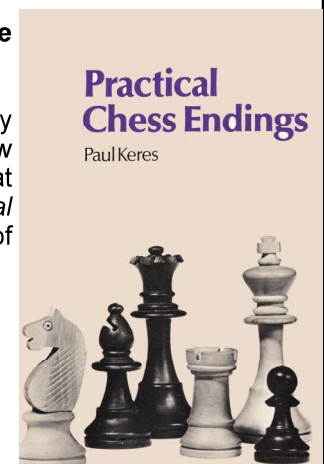


Is there a book that you read and your understanding of the game was greatly improved?

We are currently in a golden age of publication of high-quality chess books. The quality and quantity of truly outstanding, new chess books are at all-time highs. Having said that, the book that has contributed most to my understanding of the game is *Practical Chess Endings* by Paul Keres. A firm grasp of basic endings is of paramount importance to chess improvement!

[*The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal*](#)

[*Practical Chess Endings*](#)



If you read about Chess, what aspect draws you in most?

Most of my reading is with current chess events, games, and players. I keep up-to-the-minute with tournaments featuring the world's top players. I'm also interested in the history of the game and its top players.

The artistic and historical aspects of the Chess sets and books you have collected are quite inspirational. Please provide a bit about what you find inspirational or motivating?

Imagine that we are seated with an antique chess set in front of us. How many games have been played on that set? Probably hundreds. How many players have crossed swords using those pieces? If all of those players from the past centuries were present in the room with us, the crowd would fill the entire room, and probably extend well into the street! That's the inspiration I draw from the antique playing sets.

For antique ornamental sets, their artistic appreciation as well as historical appreciation affects me on a personal level. Each piece can stand alone as a unique sculpture, reflecting the artist's talent and creativity.

You co-wrote a coffee table book, *MasterWorks: Rare and Beautiful Chess Sets of the World*. How did you find the process of creating the book to be? Challenges? Fulfilling aspects?



The process was fairly straightforward. Dylan Loeb McClain asked me if I would be interested in writing (or co-writing) a coffee-table book, based on sets in my collection. I said, sure, but the book would be enhanced if some sets from several other collections could be included as well. Ultimately, the book contained photos of antique chess sets and boards from three different collections, most of them from my collection, but a nice number

of them from the other collections, and what sets they are! Spectacular. For the text, I wrote much of it, but partnered with others, and Dylan served admirably as chief editor. There are also several chapters with more modern sets, which were written by experts such as my friend Larry List.

[Masterworks: Rare and Beautiful Chess Sets of the World](#)

Was there a specific process or routine you used to co-write the book?

It was a step-by-step process. After gaining the interest of

the other two collectors, the task was to select which antique sets to use. Not an easy task at all! There were literally hundreds of jaw—dropping sets to choose from. We whittled down the list and eventually homed in on the final inventory. Then the professional photographers came to each location: Princeton (for my collection), Florida, and London. Next came the text of each chapter, then everything was put together into the flow of the book. I'd say the main "flow creators" were Dylan and me.

Do you have any future book plans?

Not at the moment. After Lev's and my book on the Carlsen—Karjakin match won accolades including the CJA Instruction Book of the Year, people have asked if we would be interested in co—authoring book(s) on the subsequent World Championship matches, but it's such a time and energy consuming process that we haven't done that. We did write a *Chess Life* feature article on adjournments, quite a fascinating and controversial topic. It was published in the February 2020 issue and won the CJA award as Feature Article of the Year.

Incidentally, the Carlsen—Karjakin book was subsequently published in Russian, and will soon be published in Mandarin by a Chinese publisher! As well as a Chinese edition of the *MasterWorks* book.



[Carlsen vs. Karjakin: World Chess Championship](#)

I enjoyed your article on adjournments. They were such a pain as a Tournament Director when trying to keep everything on schedule, but I do in a way miss them. The comradery with your second trying to solve the problem and find the best courses of action. Interestingly, about a year or so ago I was the TD at an event where the organizer had failed to realize we had to vacate by 10pm on Saturday night. I had to adjourn all the games that were still going.

Thanks. Yes, adjournments have down-sides, but their positives are very much undervalued. To analyze critical positions under the pressure of tournament play gives the players a chess lesson that they can't get any other way. The big question, of course, was whether today's supreme chess engines would render adjournments moot, and Lev

managed to fully convince me that their effect wouldn't be all that significant!

Is the website: [Jon's antique chess collection \(chessantique.com\)](http://chessantique.com) **the best place for others to go see some of the chess sets and other treasures your collection houses?**

It's a good place to see the depth and breadth of my chess—collecting efforts. My website hasn't been updated for quite a while due to my own recent inactivity, but it's still an informative site. Elsewhere, there are excellent professional photos of some of my sets from two exhibitions held at the World Chess Hall of Fame:

<https://worldchesshof.org/exhibit/prized-and-played-highlights-jon-crumiller-collection>

<https://worldchesshof.org/exhibit/encore-ivory-chess-treasures-jon-crumiller-collection>

and I've loaned chess items for three other WCHOF exhibitions, each of which have professional photos on the WCHOF website: The Staunton Standard (2018), Dare To Know (2020), and Mind, Art, and Experience (2022).

Do you have a favorite opening? Ending?

Lately, I've been updating my opening repertoire in order to get back into serious play. I favor combative openings such as the Sicilian Kan and Leningrad Dutch, and as white I usually open with 1.e4.

Rook endings were somewhat of a mystery to me, so I spent a lot of time learning about them with Lev Alburt, and they have become a favorite of mine.

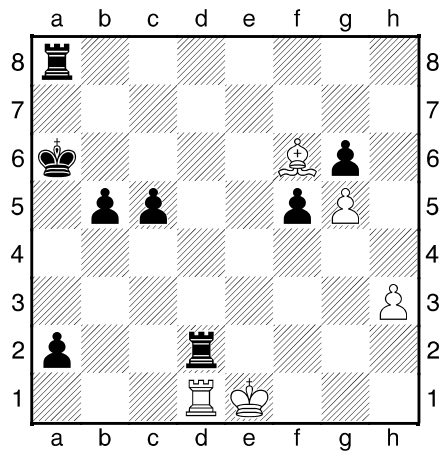
Do you have a favorite game anyone played?

Within World Championship play, my favorite game has to be Spassky—Fischer 1972, game 13. Mikhail Botvinnik proclaimed that game 13 was "the highest creative achievement of Fischer." David Bronstein was also captivated by it: "When I play through the game, I still cannot grasp the innermost motive behind this or that plan or even individual moves. Like an enigma, it still teases my imagination." Lev Alburt and I used this game to demonstrate the creative importance of adjournments, which used to be an everyday occurrence in bygone eras.

Spassky, Boris — Fischer, Robert J [B04]

World Championship, game 13, 10.08.1972

1.e4 ♟f6 2.e5 ♘d5 3.d4 d6 4.♟f3 g6 5.♙c4 ♘b6 6.♙b3 ♙g7 7.♘bd2 0-0 8.h3 a5 9.a4 dxe5 10.dxe5 ♘a6 11.0-0 ♘c5 12.♙e2 ♙e8 13.♘e4 ♘cxa4 14.♙xa4 ♘xa4 15.♙e1 ♘b6 16.♙d2 a4 17.♙g5 h6 18.♙h4 ♙f5 19.g4 ♙e6 20.♘d4 ♙c4 21.♙d2 ♙d7 22.♙ad1 ♙fe8 23.f4 ♙d5 24.♘c5 ♙c8 25.♙c3 e6 26.♙h2 ♘d7 27.♘d3 c5 28.♘b5 ♙c6 29.♘d6 ♙xd6 30.exd6 ♙xc3 31.bxc3 f6 32.g5 hxg5 33.fxg5 f5 34.♙g3 ♙f7 35.♘e5+ ♘xe5 36.♙xe5 b5 37.♙f1 ♙h8 38.♙f6 a3 39.♙f4 a2 40.c4 ♙xc4 41.d7 ♙d5 42.♙g3 ♙a3+ 43.c3 ♙ha8 44.♙h4 e5 45.♙h7+ ♙e6 46.♙e7+ ♙d6 47.♙xe5 ♙xc3+ 48.♙f2 ♙c2+ 49.♙e1 ♙xd7 50.♙exd5+ ♙c6 51.♙d6+ ♙b7 52.♙d7+ ♙a6 53.♙7d2 ♙xd2



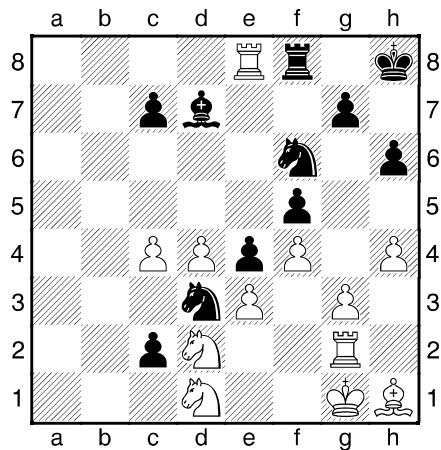
54.♙xd2 b4 55.h4 ♙b5 56.h5 c4 57.♙a1 g×h5 58.g6 h4 59.g7 h3 60.♙e7 ♙g8 61.♙f8 h2 62.♙c2 ♙c6 63.♙d1 h1♙ 64.♙×h1 b3+ 65.♙c3 ♙d5 66.♙d1+ ♙e4 67.♙b2 f4 68.♙c1 ♙d3 69.♙d1+ ♙e2 70.♙c1 f3 71.♙c5 ♙×g7 72.♙xc4 ♙d7 73.♙e4+ ♙f1 74.♙d4 f2 0-1

A game that might claim the #1 spot on my all-time list is Bogoljubow—Alekhine, Hastings 1922. After careful maneuvering by both players, Black slowly infiltrates White's position, then sacrifices his queen and rook – not for a quick checkmate, but for an unstoppable queen promotion that soon leads to zugzwang! Then after White is forced to weaken his position, Black sacrifices his second queen to promote yet another queen... and then sacrifices this third queen to reach a winning K+P ending, which Bogo resigned before Alekhine could promote a pawn to his fourth queen of the game! Utterly amazing.

Bogoljubow, Efim — Alekhine, Alexander [A84]

Hastings, 21.09.1922

1.d4 f5 2.c4 ♘f6 3.g3 e6 4.♙g2 ♙b4+ 5.♙d2 ♙xd2+ 6.♘xd2 ♘c6 7.♘gf3 0-0 8.0-0 d6 9.♙b3 ♙h8 10.♙c3 e5 11.e3 a5 12.b3 ♙e8 13.a3 ♙h5 14.h4 ♘g4 15.♘g5 ♙d7 16.f3 ♘f6 17.f4 e4 18.♙fd1 h6 19.♘h3 d5 20.♘f1 ♘e7 21.a4 ♘c6 22.♙d2 ♘b4 23.♙h1 ♙e8 24.♙g2 dxc4 25.bxc4 ♙xa4 26.♘f2 ♙d7 27.♘d2 b5 28.♘d1 ♘d3 29.♙xa5 b4 30.♙xa8 bxc3 31.♙xe8 c2



32.♙xf8+ ♙h7 33.♘f2 c1♙+ 34.♘f1 ♘e1 35.♙h2 ♙xc4 36.♙b8 ♙b5 37.♙xb5 ♙xb5 38.g4 ♘f3+ 39.♙xf3 exf3 40.gxf5 ♙e2

41.d5 ♖g8 42.h5 ♗h7 43.e4 ♜xe4 44.♜xe4 ♝xe4 45.d6 cxd6
46.f6 gxf6 47.♞d2 ♜e2 48.♞xe2 fxe2 49.♞f2 exf1♜+ 50.♞xf1
♞g7 51.♞e2 ♞f7 52.♞e3 ♞e6 53.♞e4 d5+ 0-1

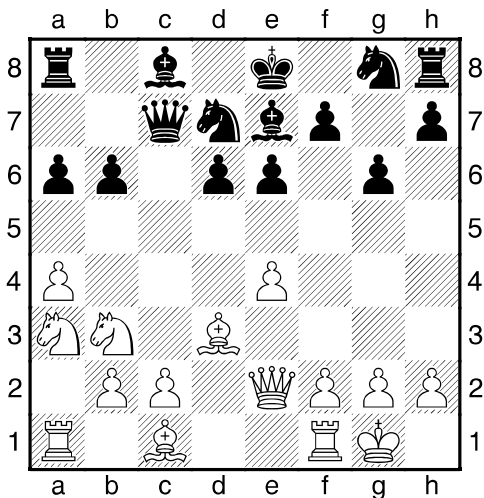
Do you have a favorite game you have played?

One game stands out as the most exciting game I've ever been part of: Nigel Short + Rajko Vujatovic versus Garry Kasparov + Jon Crumiller, at the Staunton Memorial in London, 2010. The partners on each team alternated making moves; no consultation was allowed. A crowd of hundreds surrounded the board, and it was broadcast live over the Internet.

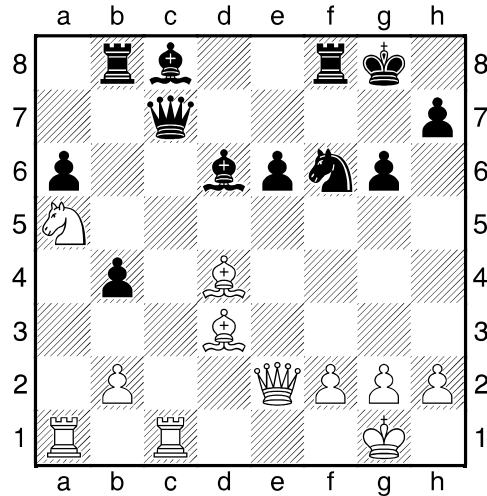
Short+Vujatovic — Kasparov+Crumiller [B42]
Staunton Memorial Game London, 08.09.2010

Colours chosen immediately before the game. CJ de Mooi with white pawn and black pawn hidden in his hands. I chose the hand with the black pawn. Rules — 1 hour per side, no increment. No consultation or communication allowed at all. Alternating moves, amateurs moving first for each team. Moves not recorded by the players, but were broadcast live over the Internet by TWIC ([The Week in Chess](#)) Live Games and the Playchess server. Umpire was Adam Raof, Arbiter was Sir Alan Fersht. Game was played on the oldest known Jaques Staunton set, club—size boxwood & ebony hand—signed #8 set.

1.e4 [Rajko Vujatovic] c5 [Jon Crumiller] 2.♠f3 [Nigel Short] e6 [Garry Kasparov] 3.d4 cxd4 4.♜xd4 a6 5.♠d3 ♠c5 6.♜b3 ♠e7 7.♞g4 g6 8.♞e2 d6 9.0-0 ♜d7 10.a4 b6 11.♜a3 ♝c7



[Contrary to some game scores, I played 11. ...♝c7 (not 11. ...♠b7) and Garry played 12. ...♠b7 (not 11. ...♝c7).] 12.♜c4 ♠b7 13.a5 b5 14.♜b6 ♜xb6 15.axb6 ♝xb6 16.♜a5 ♠c8 17.♠e3 ♝c7 18.c4 b4 19.e5 ♞b8 20.♠d4 f6 21.exf6 ♜xf6 22.c5 0-0 23.cxd6 ♠xd6 24.♞f1



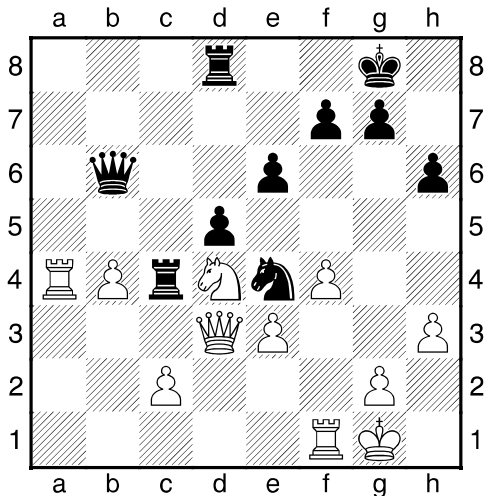
♠xh2+ 25.♞h1 ♞f4 26.♞xc8 ♝xd4 27.♞c4 ♝d6 28.♞d1 ♞h8 29.g3 ♝d5+ 30.♞xh2 ♝xa5 31.♝xe6 ♞h5+ 32.♞h4 ♝xd1 33.♠xg6 ♜g4+ 0-1

And here is a game that hasn't been in the public eye, but there's a neat story behind it. Back at the turn of the 21st century, my daughter Susan was a Tulane undergrad, and while we were visiting her in New Orleans, I decided to see if I could find US Senior Master Jude Acers' chess table in the French Quarter and play him a game. Jude is a very strong player, but I was in good practice at the time, and felt ready for the challenge. The night was foggy, and as I walked through the French Quarter, I began to lose hope of finding him. Then, miraculously, as I walked along, appearing out of the fog was Jude Acers, sitting at his chess table, looking straight at me! I sat down and paid his fee, and we started. No clocks. I'm sure he could quickly determine that I wasn't a novice, and my position slowly improved inch—by—inch. Just then, a group of drunken young men walked past, with one of them getting into a brief shouting match with Jude. My concentration broke, and immediately I made a mistake, losing the exchange. The game continued, but I felt an internal rage at the injustice of it all, and I tried hard to prevent a breakthrough on his part, while focusing my attention on finding something, anything, to turn the tide. That golden moment presented itself, and with an unexpected sacrifice I took the initiative. Jude pulled out a clock and said, "Fifteen minutes for the rest of the game?" I figured he was just playing a wild card to derail my momentum, but I couldn't lose the psychological battle either, so I said, sure. The clocks weren't a factor anyway; my initiative garnered a positional and material advantage, and after some tense moves, I was able to finish the game with a mating attack.

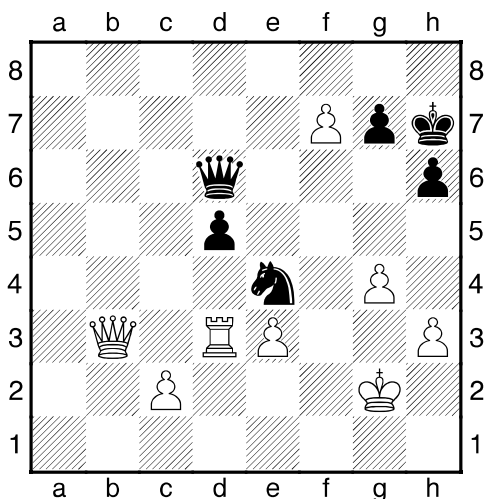
Acers,Jude — Crumiller,Jon [D01]

Casual game - no clocks until move 41, New Orleans French Quarter, 26.08.2000

1.d4 ♜f6 2.♜c3 d5 3.♠g5 ♜bd7 4.e3 c5 5.dxc5 e6 6.b4 h6 7.♠h4 ♠e7 8.♠b5 0-0 9.♜ge2 a6 10.♠a4 b6 11.♠c6 ♞a7 12.cxb6 ♝xb6 13.♠xd7 ♠xd7 14.a3 ♞c8 15.0-0 ♞ac7 16.♞d3 ♠b5 17.♜xb5 axb5 18.♜d4 ♞c4 19.f4 ♠d8 20.h3 ♜e4 21.♠xd8 ♞xd8 22.a4 bxa4 23.♞xa4



♖xb4? [Someone came up and was loudly hassling with Jude Acers, during which I made this mistake. Correct was 23...♗c3] 24.♖xb4 ♗xb4 25.♗c6 ♗b6 26.♗xd8 ♗xd8 27.♗d1 ♗h4 28.♗f1 ♗d6 29.♗f3 ♗f6 30.♗d4 ♗d8 31.g4 ♗a5 32.♗d1 ♗c3 33.♗d3 ♗c5 34.♗g2 ♗c4 35.♗e1 ♗d6 36.♗c3 ♗b6 37.♗b3 ♗a6 38.f5 ♗e4 39.fxe6 ♗d6 40.exf7+ ♗h7



41.♗h1 [clocks 15/game] 41...♗f6 42.♗d2? ♗xd2+ 43.♗d3+ ♗e4 44.c4 g6 45.♗c2 ♗xf7 46.cxd5 ♗xd5 47.♗c7+ ♗g8 48.♗b8+ ♗f7 49.♗c7+ ♗g8 50.♗b8+ ♗g7 51.♗c7+ ♗f6 52.♗f4+ ♗e6 53.♗xh6 ♗d1+ 0-1

There have been some special chess events in which you participated. Could you tell us about them?

I've had the amazing good fortune to be able to meet and hang out with many of today's top players. Some have become friends of mine; first and foremost amongst them is my friend and chess teacher, GM Lev Alburt. Nigel Short recently stayed at our Texas house, and he and I analyzed the games from his successful match vs Karpov in 1992. The list of special chess events seems like something out of a dream; I think of myself as the Forrest Gump of the chess world! Over the years I was able to defeat Walter Browne, Arthur Bisguier, and Yuri Averbakh in simuls, and held Magnus Carlsen to a draw in a 14-board simul he gave in Manhattan. I've given simuls myself, a 25-board simul and 3-board blindfold simul here in Princeton, amongst others. I've played one-on-one games versus Vladimir Kramnik, Magnus Carlsen (at the Marshall Club, NYC, on the table used by Bobby Fischer during his telex tournament!), Susan Polgar, Ray Keene, Lev Alburt, Nigel Short, and other top GMs. I've shared a bottle of vintage, 1827 Madeira with Anatoly Karpov. A two-on-two game with Garry Kasparov (my chess partner in the alternating-move, non-consultation game) in London versus Nigel Short and Rajko Vujatovic; and with Lev versus Mark Dvoretsky and his chess partner. I've had the privilege of attending the Carlsen-Karjakin (NYC) and Carlsen-Caruana (London) World Championship matches, and the 2014 Olympiad in Norway. This past April I was a guest on a TV show, *Most Expensivest*, hosted by American rapper 2 Chainz, as we took a close look at three antique chess sets in my collection. I am proud to be a member of the US Chess Recognition Committee and the FIDE Historical Committee. I've had solo chess lessons with Artur Jussupow, Alex Chernin, Yuri Razuvaev, Mark Dvoretsky, Genna Sosonko, Josef Dorfman, and – believe it or not – a four-hour lesson with Evgeny Sveshnikov, with Lev Alburt as my Russian-to-English translator! A lifetime of amazing chess experiences for me!



Jon Crumiller (R) vs. Magnus Carlsen, Marshall Chess Club