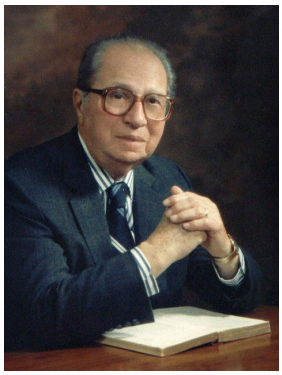
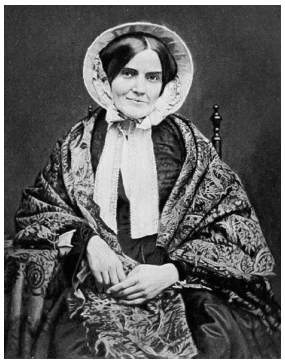
Shakespeare Skeptics Honor Roll[1]

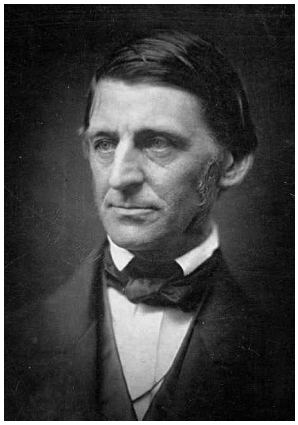
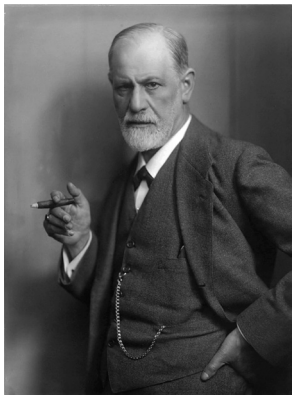
Mortimer J. Adler 	"Just a mere glance at [his] pathetic efforts to sign his name (illiterate scrawls) should forever eliminate Shakspere from further consideration in this question — he could not write." "Academics err in failing to acknowledge the mystery surrounding 'Shakespeare's' identity … They would do both liberal education and the works of 'Shakespeare' a distinguished service by opening the question to the judgment of their students, and others outside the academic realm." — Letter to Max Weismann, Director, Center for the Study of The Great Ideas, November 7, 1997. Mortimer J. Adler (1902 – 2001) — University of Chicago philosophy professor, prolific author. Adler was series editor of the Great Books of the Western World, co-founder of the Center for the Study of The Great Ideas, and a long-time Chairman of the Board of Editors of the Encyclopedia Britannica. His seminar on "Six Great Ideas" became a popular PBS television series, hosted by Bill Moyers. Adler's *Syntopicon: An Index to The Great Ideas* is a valuable tool for many researchers.

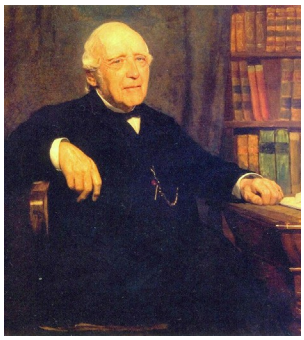
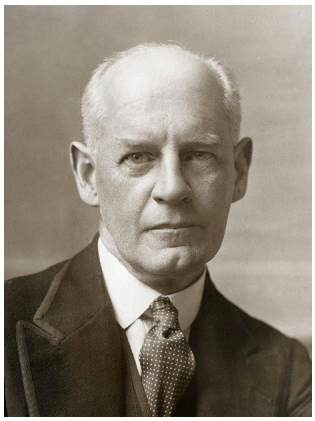
[1] Compiled from sources including the Listing on Doubtaboutwill.org. The persons represented in this "Hall of Fame" are mostly but not entirely "post-Stratfordian" – i.e., those who, having examined the evidence, find significant reason to doubt the official biographies of the businessman from Stratford as the real author (e.g., Adler, Twain, Chaplin). Included also are some others (e.g., Coleridge, Dickens, Smith) who, while they might or might not define themselves in such company, have at one time or another through their public or private remarks acknowledged the strange and sometimes absurd deficiencies or contradictions of the orthodox biography. Still others (e.g., Freud, Galsworthy, Jacobi or Londré) have read the Oxfordian literature well enough to be convinced that not only is there ground for doubt, but that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, was the real author.

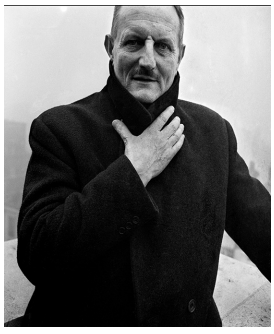
Delia Bacon 	"How can we undertake to account for the literary miracles of antiquity, while this great myth of the modern ages still lies at our own door, un- questioned? . . . For, here the critics themselves still veil their faces, filling the air with mystic utterances which seem to say, that to this shrine at least, for the footstep of the common reason and the common sense, there is yet no admittance."—*Putnams Magazine*, Jan., 1856. Delia Bacon (1811–1859), the charismatic author of *The Plays of Shakespeare Unfolded* (1857), lived a brilliant but troubled life. At one time among the most popular female public lecturers in New England on a broad range of historical topics, her quest to discover the real author of the works came to tragic conclusions partly due to the machinations of Robert Grant White and other orthodox university Shakespeareans who prevented the publication of her second article on Shakespeare in Putnams. To Walt Whitman, she was the "the sweetest, eloquentist, grandest woman…that America has so far produced…and, of course, very unworldly, just in all ways such a woman as was calculated to bring the whole literary pack down on her, the orthodox, cruel, stately, dainty, over-fed literary pack—worshipping tradition, unconscious of this day's honest sunlight."
Harry A. Blackmun 	"The [doubters] have presented a very strong — almost fully convincing — case for their point of view. The debate continues and it is well it does. We need this enlightenment in these otherwise somewhat dismal days. If I had to rule on the evidence presented, it would be in favor of the [doubters]." — Letter to Charlton Ogburn, following a moot court trial of the authorship of the works, in which Blackmun participated, at American University in Washington, D.C., in 1987. His letter is quoted in the prefatory matter to Ogburn's *Mysterious William Shakespeare* (Second Edition, 1992, vi). Harry A. Blackmun (1908 – 1999) — Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court from 1970 to 1994. A lifelong Republican, he was appointed to the court by Richard M. Nixon. He is best known as the author of the majority opinion in the Roe v. Wade decision on abortion.

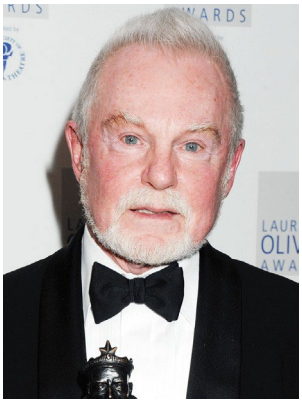
Charlie Chaplin 	"In the work of the greatest geniuses, humble beginnings will reveal themselves somewhere, but one cannot trace the slightest sign of them in Shakespeare … I am not concerned with who wrote the works of Shakespeare … but I can hardly think it was the Stratford boy. Whoever wrote them had an aristocratic attitude." — My Autobiography, 364 Charles "Charlie" Chaplin (1889 – 1977) — Charles Spencer Chaplin, Jr., was one of the most creative, famous and influential personalities of the silent film era. Among the finest mimes and clowns ever, he acted in, directed, scripted, produced and, later in life, even scored his own films.
Michael Chiklis 	"Go and read Edward de Vere's letters When you read his letters, every hair on your body will stand on end, 'cause that's the bard's voice…. de Vere's story is phenomenal and matches up perfectly with the plays" — "Actor Michael Chiklis Comes Out as an Oxfordian," *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* (Summer 2015), 24–25. Michael Chiklis, actor, director, producer, holds a BFA from Boston University's College of Fine Arts. He has starred in many award-winning pro-ductions, including The Commish (1991–96) and The Shield (2002–08).
Samuel Taylor Coleridge 	"What! Are we to have miracles in sport? Does God choose idiots by whom to convey divine truths to man?" *Notes on Shakespeare*, 1811. With William Wordsworth, Coleridge (1772-1834) is credited with founding the Romantic Movement in English poetics. A member of the "Lake poets" from Cumbria in Northwest England, Coleridge lectured and wrote extensively about Shakespeare. His position on authorship remains unclear, although he formulated the concept of "negative capability."

Richmond Crinkley 	"Doubts about Shakespeare came early and grew rapidly. They have a simple and direct plausibility. The plausibility has been reinforced by the tone and methods by which traditional scholarship has responded to the doubts. . . . If the intellectual standards of Shakespeare scholarship quoted in such embarrassing abundance by Ogburn are representative, then it is not just authorship about which we have to be worried . . . The anti-Stratfordians were "lesser breeds without the law." This baffled me. One did not, after all, have to agree with heterodoxy to accord it intellectual courtesy, or, for that matter, to represent it accurately. Charlton Ogburn chronicles a sorry record of abuse from the orthodox, much of it directed at assertions never made, positions never held, opinions never expressed. authorship about which we have to be worried. . . ." Crinkley, Richmond. "New Perspectives on The Authorship Question." *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 36, no. 4, 1985, pp. 515–22. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/2870328. Accessed 8 Feb. 2025. Fullbright scholar and theatrical producer Crinkley (1940-1989) founded the Folger Library's Theatre group and directed it from 1969-1973. At the time of his death in 1989 he was, according to his NYT obituary, a trustee of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and a member of the advisory board of the National Society of Arts and Letters, Washington chapter.
Charles Dickens 	"It is a great comfort, to my way of thinking that so little is known concerning the poet. The life of Shakespeare is a fine mystery, and I tremble every day lest something should turn up." 1847 Charles Dickens (1812-1870) is of course generally considered the great- est 19th century British novelist. His works are read and admired around the world for their richness of human detail, comedic pathos, and quiet protest against the abuses of power and folly of human nature. Some lists of authorship doubters have removed Dickens from on the grounds that he elsewhere signals his agreement with Shakespearean orthodoxy and even served on the Stratford Birthplace Trust Board of trustees. Others believe the words written here speak for themselves, making Dickens at least an honorary member of the post-Stratfordian school. What do you think?

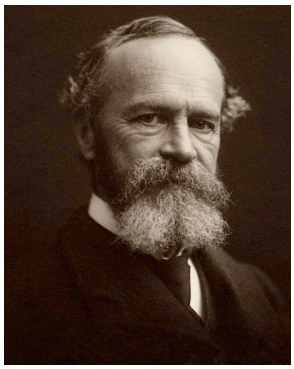
Ralph Waldo Emerson 	"The Egyptian verdict of the Shakespeare Societies comes to mind; that he was a jovial actor and manager. I cannot marry this fact to his verse. Other admirable men have led lives in some sort of keeping with their thought; but this man, in wide contrast. Had he been less, had he reached only the common measure of great authors, of Bacon, Milton, Tasso, Cervantes, we might leave the fact in the twilight of human fate: but that this man of men, he who gave to the science of mind a new and larger subject than had ever existed, and planted the standard of humanity some furlongs forward into Chaos,—that he should not be wise for himself;—it must even go into the world's history that the best poet led an obscure and profane life, using his genius for the public amusement." — *Representative Men* (1850) Works, 4:218 Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 – 1882) — American essayist, poet, and original formulator of the philosophy of Transcendentalism. A Harvard- educated Unitarian minister, his "Collected Essays: First (1841) Series and Second (1844) Series," is considered one of the greatest books of all time.
Clifton Fadiman 	"Count me a convert… This [book's] powerful argument should persuade many rationale beings, who, well acquainted with the plays, have no vested interest in preserving a rickety tradition." — *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* (Second Edition, 1992), Charlton Ogburn, front jacket. Clifton Fadiman (1904 – 1999) was a noted intellectual, author, radio and television personality, oft-quoted wit. A Columbia University graduate, he became chief editor at Simon & Shuster, later head of *The New Yorker's* book review section, and later a judge for the Book of the Month Club.
Sigmund Freud 	"I no longer believe that William Shakespeare the actor from Stratford was the author of the works that have been ascribed to him." — *Autobiographical Study* (1927), 130 "It is undeniably painful to all of us that even now we do not know who was the author of the Comedies, Tragedies and Sonnets of Shakespeare, whether it was in fact the untutored son of the provincial citizen of Stratford, who attained a modest position as an actor in London … " — Speech accepting the Goethe Prize, 1930. Quoted in *Shakespeare's Lives* (1970) 609. Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939) — Viennese psychotherapist, commonly referred to as "the father of psychoanalysis." His work popularized concepts such as the unconscious, defense mechanisms and Freudian slips, and it has greatly influenced literature, film, literary criticism, philosophy, etc.

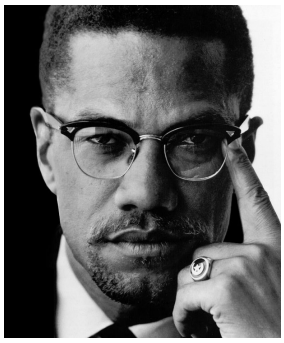
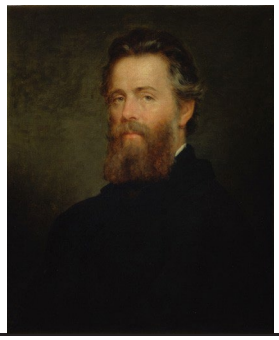
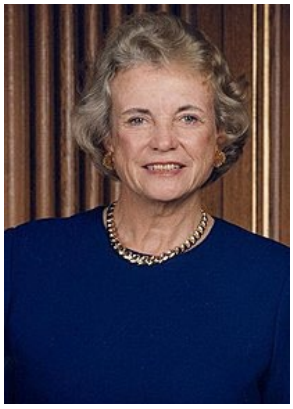
W.H. Furness 	I am "one of the many who has never been able to bring the life of William Shakespeare within planetary space of the plays. Are there any two things in the world more incongruous?" — Letter to the Honorable Nathaniel Holmes, printed in Holme's *Authorship of Shakespeare* (1866). William Howard Furness (1802-1896), an American theologian, abolitionist and reformer, was the father Horace Howard Furness (1833- 1912), the influential editor of the Variorum Shakespeare.
John Galsworthy 	Described J.T. Looney's *"Shakespeare" Identified* as "the best detective story" he had ever read. – Quoted in *Shakespeare's Lives*, Schoenbaum (1970) 602, in a chapter on authorship doubters. "The affair purported to prove that William Shakespeare was really [an alternative authorship candidate]." – Soames, a character in Galsworthy's *The White Monkey* (1924), recalling a book he happened to read (probably Looney's) that mentioned Soames's mother's maiden name: Golding. John Galsworthy (1867 – 1933) — English novelist and playwright, winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1932. He is best known for *The Forsyte Saga* and its sequels. *The Forsyte Saga* was filmed for MGM in 1949, and adapted for TV by the BBC in 1967, and by Granada in 2002.

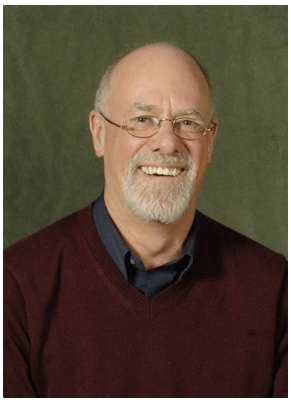
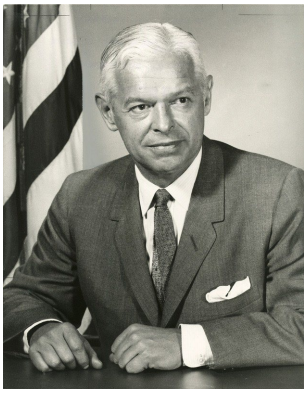
Sir John Gielgud 	In 1996, while serving as president of the World Shakespeare Congress, Gielgud signed a petition (along with more than 400 others), which reads as follows: "We, the undersigned, petition the Shakespeare Association of America, in light of ongoing research, to engage actively in a comprehensive, objective and sustained investigation of the authorship of the Shakespeare Canon …" Sir John Gielgud (1904 – 2000) — English theatre and film actor, widely viewed as one of the greatest British actors in history. He starred and directed in many Royal Shakespeare Company productions at Stratford- upon-Avon, often performing the roles of the great characters brilliantly.
Sir Granville George Greenwood 	"It is quite true that around the name of 'Shakespeare' there has grown up a mountainous mass of literature—of criticism, of illustration, of theory, of conjecture, of dogmatism, of assertion, of allusions, real or supposed, etc., etc.—which is perfectly appalling in its extent and variety; but notwithstanding that the whole world has been ransacked for evidence, and notwithstanding that lives have been devoted to the subject and an incredible amount of labour bestowed upon it, we find it as true today as it was when the late J. R. Green published his History of the English People [1880] that 'of hardly any great poet do we know so little.'" — From the forward to *Ben Jonson and Shakespeare*, 1921. Sir George Greenwood (1850 – 1928) was a British lawyer, politician (MP), cricketer, animal welfare reformer and leading advocate for the Shakespeare authorship question, who wrote twelve books and numerous articles on the authorship issue.
Sir William Tyrone Guthrie 	"But what if it turns out, as it just possibly might, that William Shakespeare of Stratford was not the author of the plays ascribed to him? . . . There is a theory, advanced by reputable scholars, seriously and, in my opinion, plausibly, that Shakespeare merely lent his name as a cover for the literary activities of another person … If, by some terrible chance, this theory should be proved, then straightaway Stratford's tourist status would dwindle." — *New York Times Magazine*, April 22, 1962, 60-61 Sir William Tyrone Guthrie (1900 – 1971) — Tony Award-winning British theatre director who established Canada's Stratford Festival, and the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Stage director Sir Peter Hall wrote that "Guthrie was a towering figure in every sense. He showed how to run a company and administer a theatre … he was a brilliant and at times great director."

Henry Hallam 	"All that insatiable curiosity and unwearied diligence have hitherto detected about Shakespere serves rather to disappoint and perplex us, than to furnish the slightest illustration of his character. It is not the registry of his baptism, or the draft of his will, or the orthography of his name that we seek. No letter of his handwriting, no record of his conversation, no character of him drawn with any fulness by a contemporary has been produced." Henry Hallam (1777-1859), a member of the Royal Society and the British Museum, received the gold medal for history from George IV. The author of *The Constitutional History of England* (1827), and *Introduction to the Literature of Europe, in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (1837), he is considered one of the outstanding historical thinkers of 19th century Britain.
Kristin Linklater 	"I cannot, in all conscience, end this book which trumpets so loudly and so often the word "Truth" without bowing my head and my knee in the direction of Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford. Whenever I say in public that I am "an Oxfordian," I find myself either defensively jocular or in tears. Nothing in the Shakespeare establishment arouses so much ridicule and rancor as the suggestion that 'the man from Stratford' did not write the plays. — *Freeing Shakespeare's Voice* (209). Professor Emerita, Columbia University Theatre Arts, Kristin Linklater is a world-renowned Shakespeare voice coach and author of *Freeing Shakespeare's Voice: The Actor's Guide to Talking the Text* (1992).
Sir Derek Jacobi 	"I have taken part in thirty-one of the plays so far, and I can imagine—I can feel—someone behind the words whose education and life experiences, whose knowledge of all strata of society, whose relationships and temperament simply do not fit the grain hoarder, the money lender and the entrepreneur, but chime accurately, and at times indelibly, with what we know about de Vere. And it's not enough to say, 'Oh, but the words of Shakespeare survive, whoever wrote them; it doesn't therefore matter.' Yes it does! The disclosure of the real author would enhance not only the historical significance but also the contemporary excitement of these treasures for both actors and spectators; and it shouldn't be regarded as potential professional suicide, heresy, or an actor's silliness to come out and say so." —Letter from Sir Derek Jacobi to the Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference (11/1/2016). Twice awarded the Laurence Olivier Award, Sir Derek Jacobi is widely regarded as among the greatest of 20th and 21st century Shakespearean actors. A founding member of the

	Royal National theatre, he has starred in several successful television series, including *I Claudius* (1976) and *Caedful (1994-1998)*, as well as performing in leading Shakespearean roles all over the world, on film and on stage. Jacobi is a founding member of the Shakespeare authorship coalition "Declaration of Reasonable Doubt."
Henry James 	"I am 'sort of' haunted by the conviction that the divine William is the biggest and most successful fraud ever practiced on a patient world." — Letters of Henry James Henry James (1843 – 1916) — American-born author, literary critic, and major figure in trans-Atlantic literature. He became a British subject later in life. He wrote 22 novels, 112 tales, several plays and essays, and often contributed to *The Nation, Atlantic Monthly, Harper's* and *Scribner's*. He is also the author of the 1903 post-Stratfordian short story, "The Birthplace" a thinly veiled account of the real experiences of Joseph Skipsey (q.v.).*
*On the complicated history of the reception and intent of this remark see esp. Ogburn 181, 264 or Hope and Holston, 46-52. In a letter to Mrs. Hunt accompanying a copy of George Greenwood's *The Shakespeare Problem Restated* James described the work as "an extremely erudite, fair, and discriminating piece of work." In other words, James was not being ironic when he called the Stratford myth "the biggest and most successful fraud ever practiced on a patient world."	

William James 	"We [William and Henry] went to Stratford for the first time. The absolute extermination and obliteration of every record of Shakespeare save a few sordid material details, and the general suggestion of narrow- ness and niggardliness which ancient Stratford makes, taken in com- parison with the way in which the spiritual quantity 'Shakespeare' has mingled into the soul of the world, was most uncanny, and I feel ready to believe in almost any mythical story of the authorship. In fact, a visit to Stratford now seems to me the strongest appeal a Baconian can make." — Letter to Charles Eliot Norton, May 2, 1902 William James (1842 – 1910) — Pioneering American psychologist and philosopher, brother of Henry James. He spent his entire career at Harvard, establishing its department of psychology, and writing seminal works on religious experience, mysticism and the philosophy of pragmatism.
Helen Keller 	"Research led me to the conclusion that Shakespeare of Stratford is not to be even thought of as a possible author of the most wonderful plays of the world. The question now remains: 'Who was William Shakespeare?'" Helen Keller (1880-1968) was an American author political activist, and lecturer as well as the first deaf-blind person to obtain a Bachelor of Arts Degree. Her story and the story of her gifted teacher Anne Sullivan were made famous through Keller's 1903 autobiography, *The Story of My Life*.
Felicia Hardison Londré 	The attribution of the world's greatest plays to the actor/grain merchant William Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon is supported primarily by two factors: the weight of a 350-year tradition, and the romantic notion that dazzling artistry and erudition can burst full-blown from the meanest environment. . . [With] Edward de Vere, the seventeenth Earl of Oxford, suddenly everything clicked into place. The dates, the personality, the educational formation, the intimate knowledge of the court, the stylistic data, everything we know about the author from the works themselves fits perfectly when we attribute the works to Oxford. Felicia Hardison Londré is Curators' Professor of Theatre at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC). Her published work includes over 60 scholarly articles, 25 journalistic publications, 100 book and theatre reviews, and 14 books, among them a Routledge volume on the critical history o*f Love's Labour's Lost* (2001).

Malcolm-X 	"Another hot debate I remember I was in had to do with the identity of Shakespeare... The King James translation of the Bible is considered the greatest piece of literature in English… They say that from 1604 to 1611, King James got poets to translate, to write the Bible. Well, if Shakespeare existed, he was then the top poet around. But Shakespeare is nowhere reported connected with the Bible. If he existed, why didn't King James use him?"— *Autobiography of Malcom-X*. Human rights activist and Muslim minister Malcolm-X (1925-1965), born Malcolm Little, is considered, with Martin Luther King, one of the most important American civil rights activists of the 20th century.
Herman Melville 	"Do not think, my boy, that because I impulsively broke forth in jubilations over Shakespeare, that, therefore I am of the number of the snobs who burn their tuns of rancid fat at his shrine" — Letter to Evert Duyckinck The author of *Moby Dick* and at least eleven other novels, Herman Melville (1819-1891), is today widely considered one of the greatest of 19th century American novelists and creative writers. His final novel, *Billy Budd*, includes a character named Captain Edward Fairfax Vere,
Sandra Day O'Conner 	Sanda Day O'Conner is a signatory of the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt. The first woman to ever sit on the US Supreme Court, Justice O'Conner is today a retired Associate Justice, who served from her appointment in 1981 by Ronald Reagan to 2006.

Paul Nicholson 	"The Shakespeare authorship question is a great mystery, and I love great mysteries…. I'm proud to have the opportunity to sign the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt." Paul Nicholson retired in 2012 as Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Executive Director in December after 33 years with the company. He is a signatory of the "Declaration of Reasonable Doubt."
Paul H. Nitze 	"I believe the considerations favoring the [alternative author] hypothesis… are overwhelming. … It's fashionable today to declare 'the death of the author;' the author's life and experience count for naught. Any consideration of the author's intention or meaning is rejected. Rejected, too, is any thought that the author was communicating something important to the spectator or the reader. For those afflicted by this fashionable myopia, who Shakespeare was, how he lived and what he was trying to tell us are irrelevant. But fashions come and go, and I am told there are signs that the negation of authorial intention in academic literary criticism has peaked." — From the Foreword to *Shakespeare: Who Was He?* By Richard Whalen (1994) Paul H. Nitze (1907 – 2004) — High-ranking U.S. government official who helped shape Cold War defense policy through numerous presidential administrations, co-founder of the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University.
Lord Henry John Temple, Third Vis- count Palmerston 	"Viscount Palmerston, the great British statesman, used to say that he rejoiced to have lived to see three things—the re-integration of Italy, the unveiling of the mystery of China and Japan, and the explosion of the Shakespeare illusions." – Diary of the Right Hon. Mount-Stewart E. Grant. Quoted in *Shakespeare's Lives*, Schoenbaum (1970) 553, in a chapter on authorship doubters. — Lord Palmerston — Henry John Temple, Third Viscount Palmerston (1784 – 1865) — British statesman who twice served as prime minister of the U. K. during the mid-nineteenth century. He is best remembered for directing Britain's foreign policy while it was near the height of its power.

Lewis F. Powell 	"I have never thought that the man of Stratford-on-Avon wrote the plays of Shakespeare. I know of no admissible evidence that he ever left England or was educated in the normal sense of the term. One must wonder, for example, how he could have written The Merchant of Ven- ice." — Letter to Charlton Ogburn, following a moot court trial of the author- ship of Shakespeare's works at American University in Washington, D.C., in 1987. Powell's letter is quoted in the prefatory matter to Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* (Second Edition, 1992, vi). Lewis F. Powell, Jr. (1907 – 1998) — Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court from 1972 to 1987. Like Blackmun, he was a life- long Republican nominated by Richard Nixon. He was regarded as a judicial moderate, and as a master of compromise and consensus-building.
Keanu Reeves 	***Q.*** If you could time-travel to any period in time, when would it be and why? ***A.*** I've always wanted to know who really wrote the plays of Shakespeare. So I want to be there at that moment which "Shake-speare" [Reeves uses air quotes] because I don't think it was "William Shakespeare"—I'm an Edward de Vereian…[I think] the Earl of Oxford [wrote the plays], so I'd like to be there, in the 1600s, when "Shakespeare" was writing *Hamlet*. —"Keanu Reeves Plays With Puppies While Answering Fan Questions." The video was stamped 12,650,654 views•May 17, 2019 (per 11/8/2019). Keanu Reeves is a Canadian actor and musician who has starred in numerous high-profile movies and series, including *My Private Idaho* (1991) and *The Matrix* (1999). Before that Reeves turned down a lead role in *Speed 2: Cruise Control*—giving up an offered $11 million check—in favor of touring with his band and playing the title role in the 1995 Manitoba Theatre Centre production of *Hamlet* in Winnipeg.

Vanessa Redgrave 	There has grown up to be a kind of merchandising of 'Shakespeare' which has benefited, over the centuries, quite a few people. People wouldn't be dashing off to Stratford if they became convinced that Stratford had very little do with the man who wrote Shakespeare (Last Will, 23:27). "[Shak- spere] sued someone for 14 pence up in Stratford in his last years, and then he dies and leaves not library — he hasn't even got a Bible." Vanessa Redgrave (b. 1937) is a 2003 American Theatre Hall of Fame inductee who first gained wide attention through her 1961 performance of Rosaline in the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of *As You Like It*. She has subsequently starred in more than 35 productions in London's West End and on Broadway as well as numerous films including the part of Queen Elizabeth I in *Anonymous*.
Anne Rice 	"I'm falling love with this idea that the real Shakespeare was Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford. It is astonishing what the Edward de Vere camp has turned up in the way of research to explain all kinds of mysteries of the plays and the life of the so-called Shakespeare. Very, very interesting stuff." — Message to readers, 22 April, 1997.
Don Rubin 	"We all need to understand what this experience tells us about future moves to not just "turn" the media and the academic world to neutral, but to actually "turn on" and excite them about a serious and important area of inquiry. These are crucial questions to answer if we are to move [the authorship case] forward." —"Sisyphus and the Globe: Turning (on) the Media," *Brief Chronicles VI* (2015). Don Rubin, Professor of Theatre Studies at Toronto's York University. A founder of the Department of Theatre, he is a former Chair and Director of the Graduate Program (MA and PhD). Rubin is the General Editor of Routledge's six-volume *World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre* and was the founder and editor for eight years of Canada's national theater quarterly, *Canadian Theatre Review*. President of the Canadian Theatre Critics Association, he is a member of the Editorial Advisory Board and Book Review Editor of the web-journal *Critical Stages* (Criticalstages.org).

Sir Mark Rylance



Sir Mark Rylance is a signatory to the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt (Doubtaboutwill.org) who has appeared in several documentaries about the authorship question, including *Last Will. & Testament* and a wonderful interview series produced by Steve Orme and available on Youtube.

Mark Rylance (b. 1960) is an English actor, artistic director, playwright and political activist who served as the first artistic director of London's New Globe theatre (1995-2005). He is said to be only one of eight actors to win two Tony awards for the best actor and was nominated for the Tony for his leading roles in both *Richard III* and *Twelfth Night* (2014).

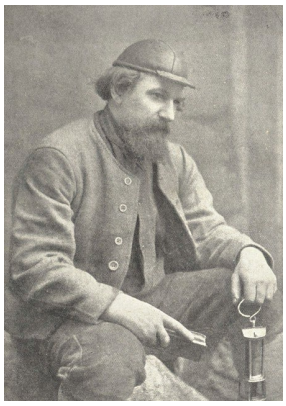
Antonin Scalia



"My wife. . . thinks we Oxfordians are motivated by the fact that commoner could not have done something like this, you know, it's an aristocratic tendency. It's probably more likely the pro-Shakespearean people are affected by a democratic bias than the Oxfordians are affected by an aristocratic bias." — "Justice Stevens Renders an Opinion on Who Wrote Shakespeare's Plays," *Wall Street Journal* (April 18-19, 2009).

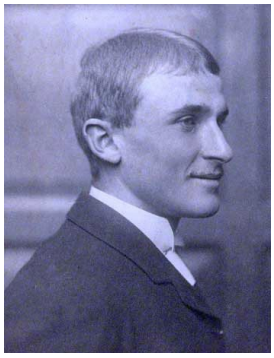
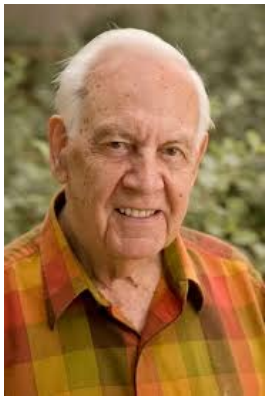
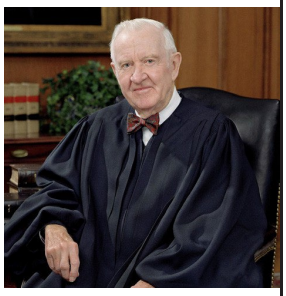
Antonin Scalia, associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court from 1986 to 2016, after his appointment by Ronald Reagan.

Joseph Skipsey

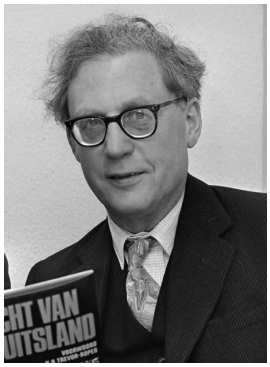


"I had gradually lost faith in the so-called [Stratford-upon-Avon] relics which it was the duty of the custodian to show; and, if possible, to explain to the visitors at the birthplace. This loss of faith was the result of a long and severe inquiry into which I was driven by questions from time to time put to my wife and me by intelligent visitors; and the effect of it on myself was such as to almost cause a paralysis of the brain." — from Skipsey's letter to J. Cuming Walters, May 12, 1893, explaining the reasons for his resignation as Stratford Birthplace Trust caretaker (Hope and Holson 50).

Joseph Skipsey (1832-1903) was a gifted Northumberland poet and songwriter who became affiliated with the pre-Raphaelite movement before being hired for the Victorian poet's dream job as the caretaker of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, from which post he resigned in dismay within six months (per James, Hope and Holston 50). Henry James's "The Birthplace" is a thinly fictionalized account of Skipsey's experiences and conclusions that the Stratford tourist industry was fraudulent.

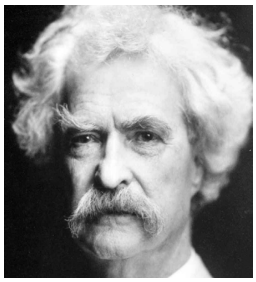
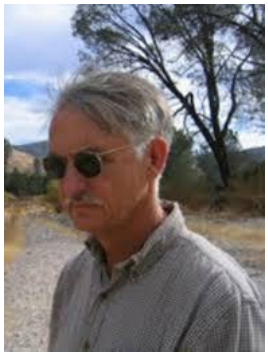
Logan Pearsall Smith 	"Even the high priests of this established Shakespeare worship seem to betray, now and then, an uneasy consciousness of something equivocal about the object of their devotion; of things to be hushed up, and the need of whitewash. This business of proving and reproving and proving over again." "On Not Reading Shakespeare," from *On Reading Shakespeare* (1933). An American-born British essayist and critic, Smith (1865-1946) in 1933 published his classic *On Reading Shakespeare*. According to Wikipedia, Smith's *Words and Idioms* "made him an authority on correct English language usage" (accessed 6/9/2019).
Peter Sturrock 	"As a scientist, I have learned that (in the words of Thomas Gold) 'If we look over the history of science, there are very long periods when the uncritical acceptance of established ideas was a real hindrance to the pursuit of the new.' And that 'science as practiced is not a strictly intellectual activity; like other professions it has an important sociological component.' If this is true of science, may it not be true also of non-scientific studies?" Peter A. Sturrock is emeritus professor of Applied Physics and emeritus Director of the Center for Space and Astrophysics at Stanford University and winner of awards from the American Astronomical Society, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Cambridge University, and many more. He has published five edited volumes and three hundred scientific articles and is the author of *Aka Shakespeare: A Scientific Approach to the Authorship Question* (Exo Science 2013).
John Paul Stevens 	"The suspicion that there is an autobiographical element in *Hamlet* increases when one recognizes the parallel between Hamlet's relationship with the fair Ophelia—the daughter of Polonius—and the fact that at the age of twenty-one de Vere married Anne Cecil, the daughter of Lord Burghley. These are, of course, only tiny fragments from the text of the Shakespeare Canon. They are sufficient, however, to lead us to the third canon of statutory construction." — from "The Shakespeare Canon of Statutory Construction," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* (140: 4, April 1992). John Paul Stevens (b. 1920) was an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court from 1975 to 2010. One of the three justices who participated in the 1988 American University Moot court on the authorship question, he went on in this influential 1992 article to declare a strong sympathy with the Oxfordian case.

Hugh R. Trevor-Roper



"The available evidence that the plays and poems were the work of William Shakespeare of Stratford is weak and unconvincing . . . not a shred of solid evidence connects the man with the works during his lifetime. . . and the posthumous association of them, in the First Folio and in the Stratford Tomb, is inconclusive since there are legitimate questions concerning the motivation and production of the Folio and the original form of the Tomb. There are many suspicions legitimately adhering to all the later statements associating the man with the works, including the statements of Ben Jonson. Altogether, I consider the evidence of association to be slender, weak and implausible. There is not a single testimony which could not easily be re-interpreted if solid evidence were to turn up that the works were written by another man…"

— Letter to Charlton Ogburn, Jr., 21 February 1981
Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, Baron Dacre of Glanton (1914 – 2003), was an English scholar and historian of early modern Britain and Nazi Germany and Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford University. Trevor- Roper was a conversationalist, polemicist and essayist on a wide range of historical topics, particularly England in the 16th and 17th centuries and Nazi Germany. He established a reputation for succinctly defining historical controversies.

Mark Twain 	"So far as anybody actually knows and can prove, Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon never wrote a play in his life." … "Shall I set down the rest of the Conjectures which constitute the giant Biography of William Shakespeare? It would strain the Unabridged Dictionary to hold them. He is a Brontosaur: nine bones and six hundred barrels of plaster of Paris." "Isn't it odd, when you think of it, that you may list all of the celebrated Englishmen, Irishmen, Scotchmen … clear back to the first Tudors — a list of five hundred names, shall we say? — and you can … learn the particulars of the lives of every one of them. Every one of them except one — the most famous, the most renowned — by far the most illustrious of them all — Shakespeare!" — *"Is Shakespeare Dead?" My Autobiography* (1909). (The entire book is a sweeping rejection of Stratford's Mr. Shakspere as the author.) Mark Twain (1835 – 1910) — Pen name of Samuel Langhorne Clemens, the famous American writer, humorist, satirist, lecturer. He is best known for Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, and The Adventures of Tom Sawyer. William Faulkner called Twain "the father of American Literature."
David Rains Wallace 	"The suburb's fun Bard evaporated when I got to college. Freshman English spent weeks on a sonnet, and Shakespeare criticism comprised a daunting part of the library. An inviting monument became a forbidding monolith carved over with cryptic cuneiforms" (12). David Rains Wallace is a leading American nature writer who has published more than twenty books on conservation and natural history and is the winner of a 1979 National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship and a 1990 Fulbright Creative Writing Fellowship. His *Shakespeare's Wilderness* (2017) explores the themes of nature and wilderness in the plays from the Oxfordian perspective.

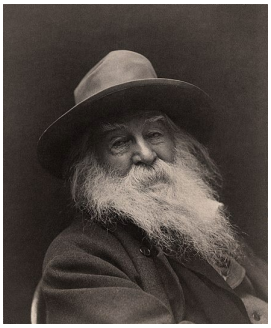
Orson Welles



"I think [an alternative candidate] wrote Shakespeare. If you don't, there are some awfully funny coincidences to explain away." — *Persona Grata*, Cecil Beaton and Kenneth Tynan (1953) 98

Orson Welles (1915 – 1985) — American radio, theater and film producer, director and actor. Only the third person to receive the American Film Institute's Lifetime Achievement Award, he directed and starred in highly acclaimed productions of several of Shakespeare's greatest plays. Welles subsequently voiced support for the traditional Stratfordian attribution, but the quote given here shows that he at one time at least harbored significant doubts about the matter.

Walt Whitman

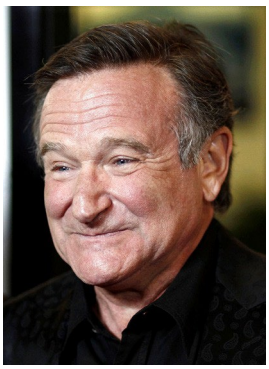


"I am firm against Shaksper — I mean the Avon man, the actor." — Table Talk with Horace Traubel

"Conceived out of the fullest heat and pulse of European feudalism — personifying in unparall'd ways the medieval aristocracy, its towering spirit of ruthless and gigantic cast, its own peculiar air and arrogance (no mere imitation) — only one of the 'wolfish earls' so plenteous in the plays themselves, or some born descendent and knower, might seem to be the true author of those amazing works — works in some respects greater than anything else in recorded history." — *November Boughs*

Walt Whitman (1819 – 1892) — American Romantic poet, essayist, journalist and humanist. He is most famous for his Leaves of Grass, which Emerson praised in a letter to the poet, saying "I greet you at the beginning of a great career," and for his poems mourning the death of Lincoln.

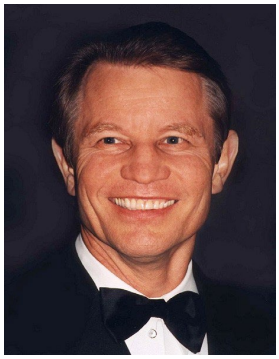
Robin Williams



"You think about William Shakespeare, you think a man basically with a second-grade education wrote some of the greatest poetry of all times? I think maybe not."

Robin Williams (1951-2014), a leading standup comic and supremely gifted comedic actor, appeared in over fifty television series and films and won multiple Golden Globe, Emmy, Grammy and (*for Goodwill Hunting*) Oscar awards. He played Osric 1st Gravedigger in Kenneth Branaugh's 1996 *Hamlet*.

Michael York



"In more recent times Henry James saw Shakespeare as the 'monster and magician of a thousand masks.' Indeed, his fascination for theatrical camouflage and sleight of hand is used constantly to dramatic advantage, notably in *Henry IV* in the pivotal banishment scene. Just as Hamlet uses the actor's art to unmask reality, so Hal and Falstaff resort to role playing to cover the pronouncement of unpalatable truths. Elsewhere, and especially in the comedies, cross-dressing provides disguises that, at the same time profound and amusing, reveal as much as they conceal."—*A Shakespearean Actor Prepares* (2000), co-written by Michael York and Adrian Brine. Michael York is a signatory of the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition's "Declaration of Reasonable Doubt."

Actor and author Michael York (b. 1942) joined the British National Theatre under the leadership of Laurence Olivier before starring as Lucentio Zeffirelli's screen adaptation of *Taming of the Shrew* (1967) and in Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet* (1968) by the same director. He has since appeared in over forty films.