



Print Page | Contact Us | Report Abuse | Sign Out

COMMUNITY SEARCH

Enter search criteria...

Search »

HOME

ABOUT

MEMBERSHIP

JOIN US!

GROUPS

FORUMS

MEMBER SEARCH

KEYWORD SEARCH

COMMUNITY BLOGS

SERVICES DIRECTORY

ONLINE STORE

NOW! FEED

CONTACT US



Why I Self-Published - Your Story

UNSUBSCRIBE

RSS

Search all posts for:  Find

Top tags: [Alicea Patterson Fellowship](#) [Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award](#) [JA MacGahan](#) [Newsday](#) [Paris Commune](#) [passion](#) [Shah of Iran](#) [Watergate](#)

Add New Post

What's good for the goose is good for the chicken



Posted By *Wanda Shapiro*, Wednesday, April 14, 2010

Source: Wanda Shapiro

Did you know that Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman both published their own work? I didn't until I started researching self-publishing but amazingly, it has quite a history.

Henry David Thoreau, on the advice of Ralph Waldo Emerson, printed 1000 copies of his own first book. When we talk about his time on Walden Pond, no one talks about the book he had printed during those years. He only sold 300 copies of A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, and ended up in debt from the adventure. Unfortunately, there was no print-on-demand in 1846.

Another little known fact is that Walt Whitman printed the first 795 copies of Leaves of Grass. And again, when we talk about Walt Whitman, no one talks about self-publishing. He had more success with his self-published work than Thoreau did, but both went on to become icons of American literature and poetry.

And they are not the only icons who have dabbled in self-publishing at one time or another. Various sources refer to the self-publishing endeavors of Mark Twain, Upton Sinclair, Anais Nin, T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, Lewis Carroll, George Bernard Shaw, Edgar Allan Poe, and Rudyard Kipling. It's not easy to find the details regarding their ventures but you see them mentioned when people write about self-publishing.

Thankfully, for American kitchens everywhere, it wasn't just the creative types who published their own books. Without self-publishing we might not have The Joy Of Cooking – a mainstay in many homes. We know it as the most-published cookbook in America but no one ever talks about how Irma Rombauer published the first edition herself in 1931. By 1936 it got picked up by a commercial publisher and has been continuously in print since. When she printed the first 3000 copies of the first edition of The Joy Of Cooking, I doubt Irma Rombauer expected to sell more than 18 million copies.

I own one of those 18 million copies of the Joy of Cooking and from where I'm sitting I can see it and Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass. I've carted those two books from apartment to apartment for years, not knowing how much I had in common with their authors. I move a lot so I frequently pair down my book collection but those two books always come with – no matter how far I move. It just goes to show how an amazing book can start with self-publishing.

I'm thankful for the advent of print-on-demand since I didn't have to pay to print the first 795 or 1000 or 3000 copies of Sometimes That Happens with Chicken but I feel like I'm in good company all the same. And as I get ready to start selling Chicken, I like to think about those who strode before me. I'm sure it wasn't as easy for them – they couldn't just press buttons on a laptop and magically produce a book. They didn't have high speed internet and Adobe InDesign and they didn't have Google to answer their every question. But they did have a book to sell and for what ever their reasons, they decided to do it themselves.

Three cheers for doing it yourself!

*This post has not been tagged. (add +)*

Permalink | Comment on this Post

SHARE

Going "Indie": Rebranding the New Wave of Authors



Posted By *AiA Administrator*, Wednesday, April 07, 2010

MY PROFILE

- » Profile Home
- » Manage Profile
- » Groups
- » Networks
- » Files & Links
- » Favorites
- » Messages (0 New)
- » Connections (0 New)
- » Membership Info
- » Refer a Friend

LATEST NEWS

MORE

4/14/2010  
Self-Published Titles Hit 764,000 in 2009 as Traditional Output Dipped

3/29/2010  
Self-published e-books to make it to Apple's iPad for almost no cost

3/20/2010  
AiA member wins Puleteriatist first anniversary blog contest

CALENDAR

MORE

4/15/2010 » 6/11/2010  
Blog Tour, Lee Libro

5/6/2010 » 5/9/2010  
Asian Festival of Children's Content

6/1/2010  
Summer Release: Dereliction of Duty, Jon Renaud

10/10/2010 » 10/17/2010  
First Annual Author Workshop Cruise

6/1/2012 » 8/1/2012  
AiA Inaugural Conference 2012

ONLINE SURVEYS

- » Inaugural AiA Conference 2012
- » Member Profiles - Private or Public
- » Your Publishing Experience