

Given at the Midwest BSI Canonical Conclave
Indianapolis, IN
April 26, 2025

THE ORIGINAL EIGHT

By Scott Monty

As I began thinking about the origins of scions, I thought I might get inspiration from the Book of Genesis.

You know, "In the beginning, God created..." etc. etc.

But I realized that that would position the BSI as the supreme being, which really isn't the case.

As Steve has repeatedly said, the growth of the Sherlockian movement was not top-down.

To quote the former president, the model here is more bottom-up and middle-out.

In the early 1940s, the Sherlockian movement was small, driven by word of mouth, bookmen, and newspapermen who had audiences. And that meant that after the first BSI dinner in 1934, it was up to local enthusiasts to keep the torch lit.

Beginning in 1940, a handful of groups sprouted across the country. And many of them are extant — societies that established local customs and traditions that fueled Sherlockian activity and interest in their geographic areas and beyond.

And rather than thinking about Genesis, I thought of the NHL. The National Hockey League has a group of six teams known as **The Original Six**: teams that were founded early, became the backbone of the NHL, and still exist today: the Montreal Canadiens, the Toronto Maple Leafs, the Boston Bruins, the Chicago Blackhawks, the Detroit Red Wings, and the New York Rangers.

Sherlockians have **The Original Eight**:

1. The Speckled Band of Boston (1940)
2. The Hounds of the Baskerville (sic) (1943)
3. The Scowlers and Molly Maguires of San Francisco (1944)
4. The Amateur Mendicant Society of Detroit (1946)
5. The Six Napoleons of Baltimore (1946)
6. The Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis (1947)
7. The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota (1947)
8. The Sons of the Copper Beeches (1948)

While they didn't (and don't) compete with each other like the NHL, there is **a common bond** in these groups — a common bond to be celebrated and strengthened in the years to come, as these groups hold a special place in Sherlockian history.

Together, we can **teach and learn, collaborate and coordinate, encourage and inspire**. All for the betterment of the Sherlockian community. All in the name of good fellowship and fun.

One of the great joys of my Sherlockian life is to be a member of The Speckled Band of Boston and the Amateur Mendicant Society of Detroit. The two have a special bond that

A Sherlockian Toast (posted 2025-5-6)

stretches **to this very date** 79 years ago — **April 26, 1946**, when the Mendicants held their first dinner and the two groups exchanged telegrams

The Cheetah of the Speckled Band, James Keddie, Jr. sent a telegram to Russell McLaughlin at the Amateur Mendicant Society that read:

"Good luck to your first meeting. While you are luxuriating in your warehouse, we are uncoiling in our lair."

May we all remember those early days of our movement, wherever we convene.