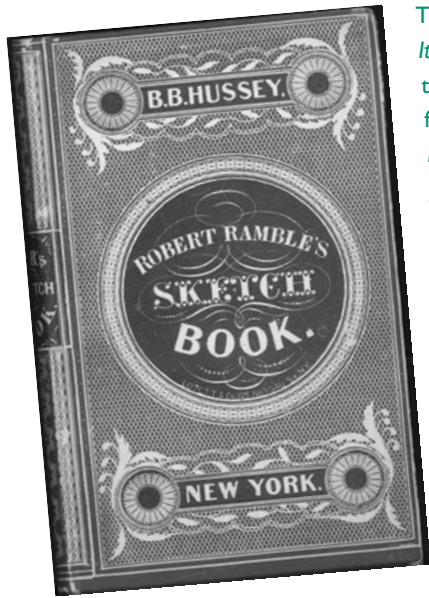


THE BOOK

MARCH 2003, NUMBER 59



The on-line version of *Under Its Generous Dome* is illustrated with many examples from the collections. *Robert Ramble's Sketch Book* by John Frost, which accompanies the description of the bindings collection, was published by B.B. Hussey in New York in 1836. In pristine condition, the boards of this volume are printed in shades of blue, brown, and yellow.

The Digital AAS Guidebook: Version 3.0

In 1987 AAS published a guide to its collections as *The Collections and Programs of the American Antiquarian Society: A 175th Anniversary Guide*. When Marcus A. McCorison retired from the Society in 1992 as librarian, director, and president, a second edition was published with a new title, *Under Its Generous Dome: The Collections and Programs of the American Antiquarian Society*. This edition has been available on our website for the last several years. Recently, staff has fully updated this electronic edition of the guidebook, truly taking advantage of its web format.

John Hench, vice president for collections and programs, writes in the foreword, "The 1992 text has been on the AAS website for some time, but this version represents a substantial revision and updating of the basic text, and supplies some digital bells and whistles as well—enough to warrant calling it the Third Edition, or maybe, since it is digital, Version 3.0. Being digital, this electronic guidebook to AAS is not now nor will it ever be finished in the same way a printed book is."

Among the sidebar enhancements to the essays are many illustrations from the collections, hot links to in-house finding aids and checklists, links to other institutional websites, and comments from scholars who have worked at AAS that highlight the research significance of particular collections for their projects. Of special importance is a grid that provides quick access to information about the current cataloguing status of all collections described in the book. As John Hench further notes, "Version 3.0 will give way, before too long, to Version 3.1, and then 3.2, without much further ado."

We invite you to view this ongoing "work in progress" at www.americanantiquarian.org/guidebook.htm. Subsequent issues of *The Book* will explore the range of finding aids found in various essays, such as manuscripts and archives, graphic arts, children's literature, and tracts. We hope you find Version 3.0 another exciting example of "AAS on the digital doorstep."

Joanne Chaison and Caroline Stoffel

New Publications in the History of the Book from AAS

A project that began with a letter from Rick Kennedy of Point Loma Nazarene University to AAS Curator of Manuscripts Tom Knoles inquiring about the notebook kept by Walter Price, A.B. 1695, during his student years at Harvard, has culminated in the publication of *Student Notebooks at Colonial Harvard: Manuscripts and Educational Practice, 1650-1740*. Kennedy's interest was in the Ramist catechism by Increase Mather, *Catechismus Logicus*, that also appears in the notebook kept by John Clark, A.B. 1690. As Knoles tells it, "Rick and I agreed soon afterwards to produce a 'short note' on the Mather work and the note quickly grew into a larger study." In all, four essays

relating to Harvard student manuscripts emerged, appearing originally in the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* (Volume 109).

"In Usus Pupillorum": Student-Transcribed Texts at Harvard College Before 1740" by Thomas Knoles and Lucia Zaucha Knoles describes a Harvard education during the college's first century, when many of the texts used in instruction were manuscripts and were transmitted in manuscript form only. Lucia Knoles, who joined the project as it developed, is professor of English at Assumption College. In "Increase Mather's 'Catechismus Logicus': An Analysis of the Role of a Ramist

Student Notebooks at Colonial Harvard:
Manuscripts and Educational Practice,
1650-1740



by
Thomas Knoles, Rick Kennedy,
and Lucia Zaucha Knoles

AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

Catechism,” Rick Kennedy and Thomas Knoles describe the brief Latin logic catechism that was produced in 1675 for the use of undergraduates at Harvard College. Intended for students to copy into their blank books, the work exemplifies the kind of rudimentary Ramist textbook used in seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century New England. “Increase Mather’s ‘Catechismus Logicus’” is these authors’ edited and annotated translation of the 1675 manuscript. “Student-Transcribed Texts at Harvard College Before 1840: A Checklist” prepared by Thomas Knoles is a list of all known surviving manuscript notebooks containing manuscript transcriptions, with indexes of texts and their transcribers.

The book may be purchased from Oak Knoll Books (www.oaknoll.com), the Society’s distributor.

Three articles that appeared in the first part of Volume 110 of the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* are now available as offprints from the Society. John L. Brooke’s essay, “To be ‘Read by the Whole People’: Press, Party, and Public Sphere in the United States, 1789-1840,” addresses the question of whether the press in the early and antebellum republic was adequate to the task of imparting sufficient political information to the American people. Brooke

identifies broad patterns that suggest a “general crisis” in political communications in the 1830s. He observes that the configuration of party, press, public sphere, and popular audience changed in very different ways and at such different rates in the various regions making up the antebellum United States that “one has to ask whether the nation was comprised of fundamentally different political systems.” Brooke is professor of history at the Ohio State University.

“Separated at Birth: Text and Context of the Declaration of Independence” is a study of the evolution of the iconic text of the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Starr, associate professor of graphic design at Northeastern University, traces the circulation of the printed document and its recasting as a manuscript, which divorced the text from its context in print culture. This essay originated as a presentation at the 1999 SHARP Conference hosted by AAS in Worcester. Starr describes the way in which the calligraphic form took on a life of its own, but in visual rather than verbal terms, and explores the implications of this form of representation.

Ernest Freeberg, whose book *The Education of Laura Bridgman: First Deaf and Blind Person to Learn Language* was published in 2001 by Harvard University Press, is the author of “The Meaning of Blindness.” It is an exploration of how men and women who were educated at special schools for the blind took an active role in shaping these institutions and created cultural space for themselves by publishing their life stories. While it was expected that the blind would be simply passive recipients of charity, Freeberg shows that instead, by producing these personal narratives, blind people began to define the meaning of blindness themselves. Much of the research for this study was done at AAS, where Freeberg held an AAS-American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Fellowship. For the Laura Bridgman book, Freeberg won the 2001 John H. Dunning Prize of the American Historical Association.

All AAS offprints may be ordered through the Society’s website, www.americanantiquarian.org/Offprints/authorindex.htm.

The Book On-Line

Readers of this newsletter may not be aware that it is now available on-line as soon as it is printed (www.americanantiquarian.org/Thebook/). Back issues will be posted as the schedule permits. If you are not yet a subscriber or if you would prefer an electronic subscription, please go to www.americanantiquarian.org/Thebook/subscribe.htm to sign up.

Book Notes

Reading Acts: U.S. Readers' Interactions with Literature, 1800-1950. Barbara Ryan and Amy M. Thomas, eds. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2002) 289 pp.; cloth \$36; ISBN 1-57233-182-8.

Book history scholars have for some time been at pains to debunk the notion that readers are passive, docile consumers who ingest the works set before them according to textual schematics and/or the dictates of experts. Barbara Ryan and Amy Thomas's *Reading Acts: U.S. Readers' Interactions with Literature, 1800-1950* takes up that crusade, demonstrating decisively that the defining feature of non-professional reading practice across the centuries may be best described as high-spirited unruliness. Essays by Elisabeth Nichols, Alison Scott, and Mary Kelley focus on women readers in the antebellum period; Leon Jackson, Thomas, and Barbara Sicherman look at diverse nineteenth-century print consumers; and Ryan, Jane Greer, Regina Kunzel, Jennifer Parchesky, and Joan Shelley Rubin treat (primarily, but not exclusively) women readers grappling with a modernity embodied in popular texts. Though predominately female and almost exclusively white, all of these readers gesture to the presence of a reading culture inflected by economic and regional, as well as historical, differences. Somewhat ironically, they are bound together by their very diversity. Within *Reading Acts*, genteel ladies, middlebrow fans, working girls, and unwed mothers alike all "wrestle" and "challenge" (7), "negotiate" (67), "defy and re-defy" (176), and "resist and defend themselves against authorities who [seek] to regulate their reading lives" (189). Individually and collectively, the essays demonstrate convincingly what Mary Kelley notes in her essay on antebellum "learned women": "ideology—served more as a point of departure than as a determining end in the lives of read[ers]" (56).

This recurring theme in *Reading Acts* organizes the wide-ranging inquiries into a useful whole, and a shared sense of scholarly self-consciousness among the writers further unifies it. The book does an excellent job of depicting detailed, colorful instances of real readers engaged with texts in a variety of historical moments. It would make a delightful addition to any U.S. book history or print culture class, particularly one that moves chronologically, as the essays present concrete variations on many of the recurring themes and questions in the field. The pieces devoted to antebellum reading practices all note the difficulties of finding and using "evidence" of historical reading, then go on to make creative use of letters, diaries, marginalia, and reportage. They prove definitively that evidence of reading exists, but that imaginative, interdisciplinary, and theoretically astute scholars are required to recognize that evidence and make it into scholarship. This sense of self-consciousness about archives, disciplines, and the place of theory in book history is present as well in the articles that trace reading practices from the Victorian period into the twentieth century. Working with bounded archives—collections of letters from readers about their reading, for the most part—these essays grapple with the question of how genuinely representative mail from fans and other self-selecting populations can be. The authors astutely make that issue moot by

using reader letters for subtle, targeted purposes, revealing the complexity of author-reader relationships, the presence of class fractions, and the interplay between print culture and other institutions.

The editors' introduction gives brief mention to some of the key figures who have shaped the study of "real readers" in the U.S., among them, William Gilmore, David D. Hall, James Machor, Janice Radway, and Barbara Sicherman. The contributors clearly see themselves as inheritors to a scholarly tradition established by these figures. The presence of such a clear genealogy is a nice element of the volume, as the essays are in many ways the practical workings-out of some of the conceptual macro-questions laid down by those pioneers in the field of historical or ethnographic reader-research. But even as the imaginative and far-flung subjects of those essays demonstrate the field's maturation, their thematic consistency raises questions about its future. Readers read for a variety of dynamic, multifaceted, and often contradictory reasons, sometimes collectively and sometimes alone, and rarely in accord with the institutionalized pedagogies (themselves diverse and inconsistent) that the powerful seek to impose upon them. Scholarly work like that in *Reading Acts*, building on an earlier generation of questing, contesting research, has made this much quite plain, and the essays in the volume leave that resounding, satisfying claim ringing in the air. The result is a rich and happy euphony...so rich and happy, in fact, that it begs a discomfiting question: "What next?"

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The editors welcome all news relevant to the interests of the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture.

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“To Read My Heart”: The Journal of Rachel Van Dyke, 1810-1811. Lucia McMahon and Deborah Schriver, eds. (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000) 440 pp.; cloth \$59.95; ISBN 0-8122-3549-5.

Milcah Martha Moore’s Book: A Commonplace Book from Revolutionary America. Catherine LaCourreya Blecki and Karin A. Wulf, eds. (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997) 361 pp.; cloth \$55.00, ISBN 0-271-01690-6; paper \$18.95, ISBN 0-271-01691-4.

“Read this *important book*,” seventeen-year-old New Jersey native Rachel Van Dyke wrote on the inside front cover of the third of twenty-three journal volumes she filled between May 1810 and June 1811 (p. 41). And the recently published *“To Read My Heart”: The Journal of Rachel Van Dyke, 1810-1811*, makes it both possible and desirable to do so. Her journal reveals the active and rigorous interior life of a young woman who came of age during an era from which we have scant first-hand evidence about women’s intellectual pursuits. For historians of books and literacy, the journal is especially noteworthy, because the diarist regularly identifies and describes what she is reading. Particularly compelling are her responses to her reading.

The transcript begins with Book 2 (Book 1 is apparently lost), just as Van Dyke completed her formal education at New Brunswick’s Female Academy. The journal appears to be part of a larger plan to continue learning through self-study; the young woman reads philosophy and poetry, translates Latin, conducts chemistry experiments, and writes daily in her journal, the last usually late at night. Van Dyke reveals her intellectual ambitions through the range of subjects and her rigorous study schedule. Special Latin classes with Ebenezer Grosvenor, her teacher at the academy, necessitated late hours. Grosvenor’s lessons were rigorous, and for months his young scholar labored to translate Virgil. The poet vexed her: “Plague take old Virgil—he caused the tears to roll down my cheeks.” He also motivated her: “I will not give him up,” she wrote. “I will go on and have my revenge for the many fretful moments and laborious hours he has cost me—for as I go on, I murder him by inches...” (p. 89).

Van Dyke held a number of other writers in more affectionate regard. She describes Johann Zimmerman’s treatise on solitude as both “precious” and “invaluable” (p. 75). James Thomson and Petrarch pleased her enormously. Her remarks—positive and negative—reveal an active mind continually in search of sustenance, which she found in a wide range of books—novels, plays, poetry, and philosophy—borrowed from the local library, exchanged with friends, received as gifts, and purchased (locally and regionally) either through a vendor, or by subscription. Her journals certainly suggest the scope of available reading materials; they also offer a window into the web of book exchanges that made possible the acquisition of knowledge.

Rachel Van Dyke’s intellectual ambitions were actively encouraged by two men in her life, Grosvenor and her brother Augustus. Five years her senior, Augustus had become a physician under the tutelage of the renowned Dr. Benjamin Rush. Augustus provided Rachel with chemistry and botany books, the tools and supplies to carry out experiments, and steady doses of direction and support, either in person or by letter.

Grosvenor supplied his own motivations. At the beginning of

the transcribed journal, Rachel is still attending his classes and perhaps even keeping the journal at his urging. Early on, Grosvenor (referred to as “Mr G-” in the journal) suggests an exchange of journals. At first, the young woman is reluctant. “Mr. G- this evening said he expected to have the privilege of perusing one of my journals. I don’t think you will Sir,” she wrote and underlined on May 21, 1810. Soon thereafter, however, the two began regular exchanges. The result is a conversation through which Rachel and Mr. G- forge both intellectual and emotional ties. Mr. G- inserts comments throughout, sometimes correcting Rachel, other times encouraging her, and often teasing. Yet despite his more advanced education and position as her teacher, Rachel holds her own. She banters and cajoles. “[H]e has cheated me,” she writes after one journal exchange. “To read my journal [is to] read my heart—his is merely a register of time.... False, wicked prophet!” (p. 73). Rachel’s dependence on Mr. G-’s intellectual stimulation becomes most evident in the lethargy she exhibits after he left New Brunswick in December 1810. Although Rachel kept the journal for several months after his departure, the entries lack the intellectual vigor of those she knew her teacher and suitor would read and comment upon. The journal concludes when Rachel’s father dies unexpectedly; her ultimate fate is unknown.

Co-editor Deborah Schriver wrote the volume’s introduction, an essay that situates Rachel Van Dyke within her family and the community of New Brunswick, N.J. The other co-editor, Lucia McMahon, provides a longer interpretive essay. In it, McMahon argues that the confusing and often contradictory cultural prescriptions about women and their intellects are precisely what made it possible in the 1810s for Rachel Van Dyke to fashion an active intellectual life. McMahon reminds us that the relationship between prescription and practice is always contingent and Rachel Van Dyke’s journal allows us to see how one young woman negotiated it.

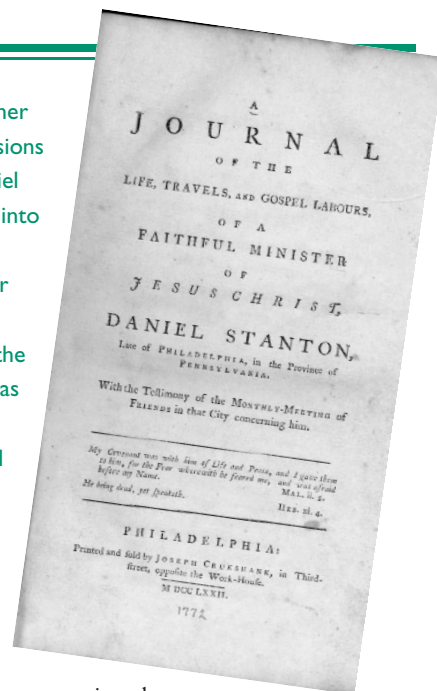
“To Read My Heart” includes six appendices. The least helpful is the section entitled, “Friends and Family Mentioned in Rachel Van Dyke’s Journal.” Individuals are listed in several sub-sections (for example, one entitled “Immediate Family,” and another called “Rachel’s Closest Friends”), which makes it necessary to know the relationship between Van Dyke and the person before s/he can be located in one of the lists. Also, individuals listed in this section are not necessarily included in the index; nor are relationships described in footnotes. In fact, both the footnotes and the index are inadequate for anticipated readers of the volume, specialists and students whose interest in the journal will undoubtedly be scholarly. Footnotes do include references to nearly all of the books, poems, and periodicals referred to in the journal. The editors have done an excellent job of integrating Ebenezer Grosvenor’s comments into the text, achieving an appropriate balance between voices that exemplifies the “conversations” that took place between Van Dyke and

Grosvenor through diary exchanges. Some readers, and I count myself among them, may find fault with the editors' practice of silently altering end-of-sentence punctuation and other marks "at moments that appear to be 'slips of the pen'" (p. vii). Historical authenticity demands the dashes and "slips"; scholars and students rely on them for interpretive clues and ought to have the opportunity to determine, for themselves, their significance. Notwithstanding these formal criticisms, *To Read My Heart* is an important addition to the small but growing number of published personal documents written by women in the early republic.

Milcah Martha Moore's Book: A Commonplace Book from Revolutionary America is another important contribution to our understanding of women's intellectual lives, particularly the applications for women's literacy during an era of political and social upheaval. Edited by Catherine LaCourreya Blecki and Karin A. Wulf, the book includes prose and poetry transcribed by Philadelphian Milcah Martha Moore in the late 1770s into a manuscript intended to circulate among family and friends. The commonplace book, a literary form familiar to eighteenth-century readers, might make its way formally, with selections read at group gatherings. More informal exchanges took place among a circle of friends who simply passed the commonplace books around, a much more likely scenario during the Revolution, when the war disrupted the usual rounds of sociability.

Moore's Book attests to the vitality of women's literary production in the late eighteenth-century; among the 126 pieces, more than 100 are attributed to female authors, most notably Susanna Wright (1697-1785), Hannah Griffiths (1727-1817), and Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson (1737-1801), all friends of Moore's. In fact, this commonplace book is the only source for many of these women's writings; had Moore not transcribed the literary productions of these women, they would likely be lost to us. For this reason alone, its publication is a signal event: it forces us to reconsider our understanding of early American literature, and women's contributions to its contours. Beware, however, of drawing conclusions about the subjects Wright, Griffiths, and Fergusson address. To be sure, friendship, love, and death are prominent themes in their work. But so is politics. In "The Review of past & present Times in Pennsylvania June 1776," Hannah Griffiths chastises colonial politicians for "remov[ing] the Standard of Justice from the Laws... & suffer[ing] the Hand of Oppression to bear Rule in the Land... The Wisdom of Heaven presides not in yr. distracted Councils," she warns, "nor will the Blessings of the 'God of yr. Fathers' attend yr. Ways" (pp. 260-62). Moore's inclusion of this and other politically charged pieces reminds us that the lines between public and private, female and male, and the personal and the political are best considered permeable and fluid. *Moore's Book* also reminds us of the importance of religion to our historical and literary heritage. Most interesting are the selections through which the writers try to understand God, through meditations on the Bible, devotions, and elegies. In poems, elegies, and letters, these very intelligent and educated women examine their beliefs and experiences through highly individualized literary expression. The result, captured in Moore's manuscript, is a glimpse of the impact of religion on individuals that will help us to

Moore and Hannah Griffiths, her cousin, both transcribed versions of a memorial poem to Daniel Stanton. Moore copied hers into her commonplace book, but Griffiths used the flyleaf of her personal copy of Stanton's memoirs. The inscription in the AAS copy indicates that it was also owned by a woman, Clemency Willits, who noted that it was "gladly received from that noted worthy friend Israel Pemberton of Philadelphia," in April 1772.



rethink the all-too-common assumption that religion is ultimately subversive to women's best interests.

Both editors have contributed introductions. Following the conventions of their respective disciplines, Blecki, an English professor, and Wulf, a historian, examine the literary and historical merits of Moore's writing. Blecki's essay goes a long way toward locating it in the late eighteenth-century republic of letters. She argues that the manuscript reflects both the conflicts Americans confronted in the late 1760s and 1770s, and the emerging nation's "sense of literary and cultural identity" (p. 69). In this sense, the book is distinctly American. It is also distinctly female. Karin Wulf links literacy and gender in an introduction that illuminates the intimate links between women who shared "intellectual sympathies" (p. 29). While men gathered in formal organizations to exchange ideas and express affinities, intellectually inclined women shared their mutual interests in poems, essays, and letters passed from writer to reader as time and circumstance permitted. Only occasionally did a transcriber preserve the literary products. By doing so, this commonplace book represents rare testimony to the importance of reading and writing to late-eighteenth-century women.

Blecki points out the care with which Moore copied her literary selections, placing her writing in such a way as to make it both highly readable and aesthetically pleasing. The editors' efforts are similarly effective. Editorial intrusions and emendations are minimal and easily identified; the result is a text that retains the author's eighteenth-century sensibilities yet assists twenty-first-century readers, particularly students. Footnotes are thorough and appended supplemental information provides tools for literary and history scholars. Available in paperback, *Milcah Martha Moore's Book* is a welcome addition to the few collections of eighteenth-century women's documents and could be readily integrated into literature and history courses.

Individually and together, *To Read My Heart* and *Milcah Martha Moore's Book* allow us to see eighteenth-century women reading, writing, and thinking.

Betsy Homsher
Kettering University

Facsimile of *The Weaver's Draft Book* Reissued

Until the 1970s *The Weaver's Draft Book and Clothiers Assistant* was known only through a 1792 advertisement announcing its publication that Charles Evans recorded in his bibliography in 1914. And then, two copies were acquired by research libraries; AAS was one of them.

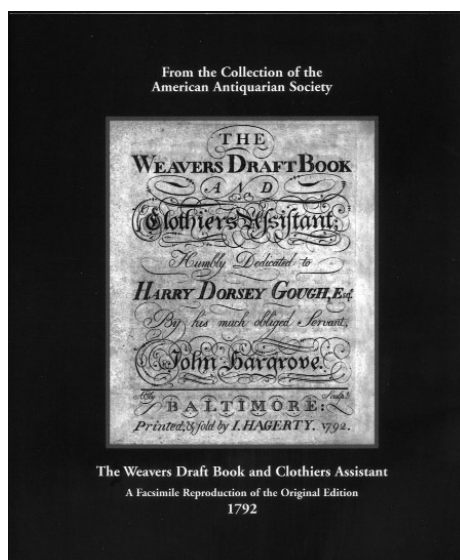
With its engraved weavers' drafts (or patterns), this handbook for weavers has important links to early printing and politics in Maryland. The original pamphlet of thirty-six pages offered fifty-two patterns produced as copperplate engravings by Alexander Ely and a brief text with recipes for sizing and dyeing cloth. The work, according to the 1792 advertisement, was "compiled by an experienced weaver of Harford County, in this state. . . containing a choice collection of 52 drafts in the figured line of weaving, with proper directions how to draw in, tie up, and tread down each figure, and to size cotton warps; together with some valuable receipts in the dying-line, all performed with American materials. The dying-receipts

are valuable, and the whole calculated for the domestic use of the farmer and manufacturer."

The introduction to the first facsimile edition written by Rita Adrosko, now curator emerita of the textiles collection at the Smithsonian Institution, has been included in the current edition.

Adrosko's remarks are addressed to weavers interested in adding historical patterns to their repertoire. A new introduction by Caroline Sloat, director of scholarly programs at AAS, traces the linked stories of the four individuals named on the book's cover: Hargrove, the self-styled mechanic whose weaving expertise is the subject of the book; Ely, the engraver; Harry Dorsey Gough, the patron; and John Hagerty, the publisher.

The new facsimile edition has been produced for AAS in collaboration with Piper Publishing LLC, which is also its distributor. Copies may be obtained by accessing www.piperpublishing.com.



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