

# THE BOOK

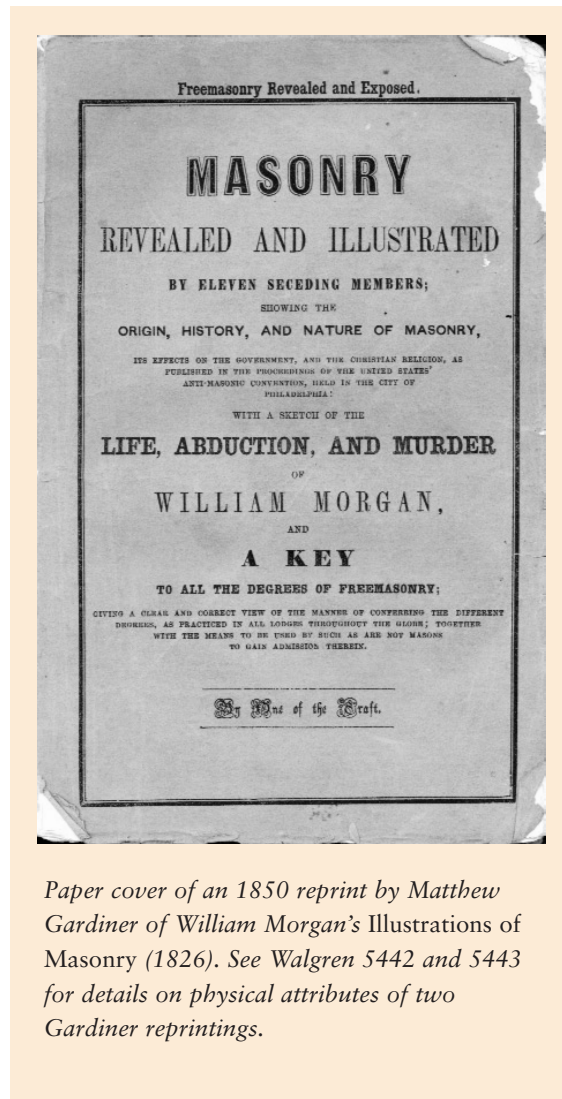
JULY 2003, NUMBER 60

## Remembering Kent Walgren, Bibliographer of American Freemasonry

I first met the late Kent Walgren at the American Antiquarian Society in June 1995, when he was preparing his *Freemasonry, Anti-Masonry, and Illuminism in the United States, 1734-1850: A Bibliography*, a work issued by the Society this spring. In the introduction, he describes his time as a Peterson Fellow at AAS as “the best month of my life.” Our first lunch together was memorable. In the course of our conversation, he pulled out the first few pages of his work in progress.

Although I was fairly certain that I knew just about everything Masons had published in the years before the Revolution, I almost immediately noted a piece of which I knew nothing. Next, it was his turn to be surprised. When Kent asked me what I was doing after completing my book on early American Freemasonry, I replied that I had begun work on another topic. He looked at me with incredulity. He could never, he declared, stop studying the fraternity. This passion was particularly impressive in a man who was neither a Mason nor a professional historian. He was a lawyer and an antiquarian book dealer.

When Kent asked me to write one of the introductions to his bibliography, I agreed, having had further opportunities to see the work (and to hear other people praise it). The time I spent with a later draft further increased my admiration. He had assembled and created indexes for an amazingly complete and detailed bibliography. It describes 5,760 imprints related to Masonry printed in America from 1733—when brother Benjamin Franklin reprinted the first Masonic constitutions—to 1850—when the fraternity had recovered from the powerful assault of the Anti-Masonic movement of the 1820s and 1830s and was poised to enter another period of sustained



*Paper cover of an 1850 reprint by Matthew Gardiner of William Morgan's Illustrations of Masonry (1826). See Walgren 5442 and 5443 for details on physical attributes of two Gardiner reprintings.*

growth. Ranging across every part of the expanding nation, the imprints include not just materials about famous brothers such as George Washington and Andrew Jackson, but also Masonic works by non-members such as the radical pamphleteer Tom Paine and *Godey's Lady's Book* editor Sarah Josepha Hale.

Walgren's work provides the clearest evidence yet of the numerous and strong ties between the fraternity and the American press. Although Masons closely guarded their secrets and their meetings, their fraternity was a pioneer in the uses of print. No other early group outside of governments and churches issued so many imprints. Even when reform societies turned to publishing as a primary means of action in the 1830s, Masonry had already made its mark, since they were deeply influenced by the Anti-Masonic movement (whose printed materials also appear in Walgren's bibliography), not least in its reliance on the press.

A checklist compiled from other sources would have been helpful in tracing these still relatively underexplored developments. But Walgren's work pushed far beyond standard sources. One out of every six of its pre-1801 imprints does not appear in Evans; nearly one out of every three of its 1801-20 entries was overlooked by Shaw and Shoemaker. For the less-studied years after 1820, comprising most of Walgren's entries, more than half fail to occur in the continuations of the American Bibliography series.

Walgren's bibliography is as deep as it is broad. Drawing upon examination of more than 96 percent of the surviving imprints, Walgren makes valuable distinctions that earlier works

ignored or simply failed to confront. The bibliography tracks and clarifies the tangle of different Masonic groups in Louisiana, where French and English languages and loyalties made fraternal organization more complex than anywhere else in the United States. Walgren also traces the publishing history of William Morgan's *Illustrations of Masonry*, the ritual exposé that set off the kidnapping of its author and thus led to the enormous Anti-Masonic movement. Walgren expertly distinguishes between the twenty editions of Morgan that appeared in the first fifteen months after its initial 1826 printing.

Sadly, the compiler had time to taste only the first fruits of his labor. After taking an early retirement from his legal position and moving to Paris, Kent followed the progress of the large-format, two-volume work through the press. When I told him about seeing the first shipment of books at AAS this spring, he wrote to me happily of the pleasures of improving his French and examining the development of Masonic ritual. Kent passed away soon afterwards, even before seeing the volumes on which he had labored so long. The person delivering him the first copies found him dead of a heart attack. His bibliography forms a lasting and fitting legacy.

Steven C. Bullock  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

**Kent Logan Walgren, *Freemasonry, Anti-Masonry, and Illuminism in the United States, 1734-1850: A Bibliography* (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 2003), 2 vols., cxvi, 1136 pp.; cloth; \$195; ISBN 1929454-08-8. Available from Oak Knoll Books (<http://www.oakknoll.com>).**

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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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## News About Wiggins Lectures

“Ornithology and Enterprise: Making and Marketing John James Audubon's *The Birds of America* is the title of the twenty-first annual James Russell Wiggins Lecture in the History of the Book in American Culture. This year's lecture will be presented on Thursday, November 6, 2003, in Antiquarian Hall at 7:30 p.m. The speaker, Gregory H. Nobles, professor of history, technology, and society at Georgia Institute of Technology, will draw on his current research on birds in America.

Central to Nobles's discussion will be John James Audubon's double elephant folio edition of *The Birds of America* (4 vols., 1827-38), a work that still stands as one of the most remarkable artistic and scientific achievements in the history of the book. It is a massive work of natural history that offers the reader an innovative interplay between image and text. For Audubon, though, producing this “Great Work” proved to be as much about enterprise as ornithology, and *The Birds of America* became the family business for more than three decades. Nobles will consider the popular perception of Audubon's birds from his time to our own, exploring the connection between the cultural and commercial significance of this big book about birds that represents both an investigation of nature and an investment in art. The various ways people have valued Audubon's work leads to the question of whether *The Birds of America* is—or should be—a book at all.

This lecture will be published in the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*. Richard Ohmann's 2000 Wiggins Lecture, “Epochal Change: Print Culture and Economics,” has now been published and for those who are not subscribers to the *Proceedings*, copies may be purchased directly from the Society. In his lecture, Ohmann describes ways in which the book publishing industry changed dramatically from the 1960s on, as through a series of mergers and takeovers trade books became for the most part a product of media conglomerates. This transformation accompanied a broader one in which the larger, stable, “Fordist” corporations that had dominated the American economy since 1900 gave way after 1970. These new, “agile” companies, most of them multinationals, appeared to exhibit much greater flexibility in product design, labor strategies, and marketing. Trade book publishing, in Ohmann's view, neatly instances the shift from one epoch to another in the history of capitalism.

## Kudos to *The Book's* Designer

Graphic designer Kim Cutler has won the Holland Award for Creative Excellence from the Ad Club of Worcester, Massachusetts. The Holland Award is the major award in the fields of advertising and marketing in central New England. Although the award is for a logo she created for an exhibition at the Worcester Craft Center, this recognition affords an occasion to congratulate Kim and call readers' attention to the good work that she does for *The Book*, *Almanac*, and AAS program announcements. [Ed.]



Front row from left, Ratner-Rosenhagen, Kaplan, Hochman, Sumner, Lindemann; second row, Rineer, Kopacz, Roberts, Peterson, Colatrella, Rivera, Homestead; third row, McGill, Poremski, Davis, Stewart; fourth row, Bond, Blum, Hawley, Baker.

## Reading and Everyday Life: Books, Texts, Histories The 2003 Summer Seminar in the History of the Book

Among the principal insights to come out of the last twenty-five years of reading history is that different readers read differently. They read in different places; they read for different reasons; they read different things; and when they do read the same things they understand them to have different meanings. This year's AAS Summer Seminar, "Reading and Everyday Life," considered the reading of two books by two very different, though both very popular, authors of the 1850s: Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and pulp novelist George Thompson's autobiography, *My Life; or, The Adventures of Geo. Thompson*. Our purpose was to think about who read these books, how they read them, and why. We also wrestled with the problem of consequences: the effects of such reading, directly in acts of reading themselves, and more broadly in the everyday lives of readers. In addition to the primary texts, readings included a range of representative scholarship, criticism, theory, and contemporary materials such as diaries and prescriptive literature. Along the way we raised questions about our own reading practices, our goals, and methods.

Twenty-one people participated in the five-day seminar, including the seminar leaders. The group was quite evenly divided between historians and literary critics, professors and advanced graduate students. One rare book librarian also attended. The format varied from day to day. With the invaluable help of Joanne Chaison and the AAS staff we arranged

three library workshops on illustration, on serialization, and on the reading of Edward Carpenter, a young cabinetmaker who kept a record of the books and newspapers he read in the mid-1840s. The workshop on Carpenter's diary, led by guest speaker Robert Gross, provided an important touchstone for our conversations throughout the week. Mary Kelley, another guest, led a discussion and offered new thoughts on the question of sentiment and the history of reading Harriet Beecher Stowe. Of course, what makes or breaks an event like this are the seminar meetings themselves. These were nothing short of riveting, and for this full credit must go to the participants. The diversity and creative energy of the group (not to mention the members' eloquence, openness, and willingness to take risks) made for plenty of intellectual fireworks.

David Stewart,  
National Central University, Taiwan, and the McNeil Center  
Barbara Hochman,  
Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel

### MATRICULANTS

Anne Baker, assistant professor of English, North Carolina State University; Hester Blum, assistant professor of English, Pennsylvania State University; J. Arthur Bond, assistant professor of English, Valparaiso University; Carol Colatrella, associ-

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ate professor of literature and cultural studies and co-director of the Center for the Study of Women, Science, and Technology, Georgia Institute of Technology; Abigail Davis, Ph.D. candidate in American literature, University of Minnesota; E. Haven Hawley, Ph.D. candidate in history, technology, and society, Georgia Institute of Technology; Melissa Homestead, assistant professor of English, University of Oklahoma; Catherine Kaplan, assistant professor of history, Arizona State University; Paula Kopacz, professor of English, Eastern Kentucky University; Cheryl Lemus, Ph.D. candidate in American history, University of California, Santa Cruz; Richard Lindemann, director, Department of Special Collections and Archives, Bowdoin College; Michael McGill, Jr., Ph.D. candidate in communication studies, Bowling Green State University; Beverly Peterson, associate professor of English, Pennsylvania State University, Fayette; Karen Poremski, assistant professor of English, Ohio Wesleyan University; Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen, assistant professor of history, University of Miami; Carla Rineer, instructor of English, Millersville University; Ann Rivera, instructor of English, State University of New York at Buffalo; Kyle Roberts, Ph.D. candidate in history, University of Pennsylvania; and Margaret Sumner, Ph.D. candidate in American history, Rutgers University.

### MATRICULANTS' PERSPECTIVES

As a graduate student participating in the AAS's Summer Seminar, I found it a wonderful opportunity to work with a range of talented scholars wrestling with the same types of questions I am. Not only were seminar participants willing to share their own ideas and try out new ones, but the wonderful staff at the AAS bent over backwards pulling out all manner of material from the collections to inspire us. To be able to talk about *Uncle Tom's Cabin* with both the original serial publication and the first American and English editions in front of you is an experience rarely duplicated in the grad seminar. After the day's workshops ended, learning continued in informal conversations that took place back in the dorms. As I ponder a future career in academia, it was great to hear the "battle stories" from participants who are now junior and senior faculty—not just on how to engage students in the classroom, but also how to negotiate the hiring process and transition from student to teacher.

Kyle Roberts

Probably like all the participants, I arrived at the seminar eager to learn new ways in which print culture studies could enrich my research. I had come to a point in my work where I was tired of wrestling with questions about the elusive history of meaning and was ready for some provisional terra firma. I wanted to know, for example, how to handle the structural and material aspects of book production and consumption so as to illuminate (not overshadow) the ideas presented in the text. I wondered how to treat reading itself as a form of authorship

without turning texts into empty vessels. As in all great seminars, I left with more questions than answers. But I also emerged from a week of invaluable dialogue and debate with the recognition that thinking at its best, like reading at its most satisfying, is a form of collective action. And though questions about the history of reading remain, I return with a greater appreciation of laboring in uncertainty in order to say—"Eureka!"

Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen

The Summer Seminar met my expectations and then some. This program was an ideal opportunity to learn more about the AAS, to become acquainted with its incredible staff, and to appreciate more than ever the Society's commitment to scholarship and learning. The seminar also provided me with the opportunity to meet with and to observe close-hand scholars from various disciplines applying their craft, and to engage them in conversation. As a librarian, understanding trends and approaches in scholarly research is essential to my work building research collections and making them available to readers. The intense, intimate Summer Seminar experience deepened that understanding immeasurably; it also demonstrated the importance of the book (writ large) as the nexus for thought and learning among the various scholarly disciplines regardless of their different vocabularies and approaches to research. We are indeed a diverse community of readers—the seminar helped me to become a better listener, too.

Richard Lindemann

The 2003 AAS Summer Seminar provided a much-needed shot of intellectual excitement for me. Although I treasure my students and enjoy researching and writing, I need to participate in seminars with peers to stay current and to communicate in real-time with others interested in American literature and cultural history. While electronic communication via lists and messaging has helped to encourage timely correspondence among scholars, there is simply no substitute for a thoughtfully conceived, well-coordinated seminar with top quality discussants with diverse perspectives. The opportunity to spend five plus days among colleagues in the history of the book was a privilege and a pleasure. Credit for the seminar's success goes to leaders Barbara Hochman and David Stewart for organizing a terrific set of readings considering the conditions of text production and reception for mid-nineteenth-century sentimental and sensational literature. Credit is also due my wonderful fellow participants whose energies never flagged and whose incisive, probing comments will spur me on as I continue engaging issues that brought us together in the remarkable research environment of the AAS.

Carol Colatrella

### THE SYLLABUS

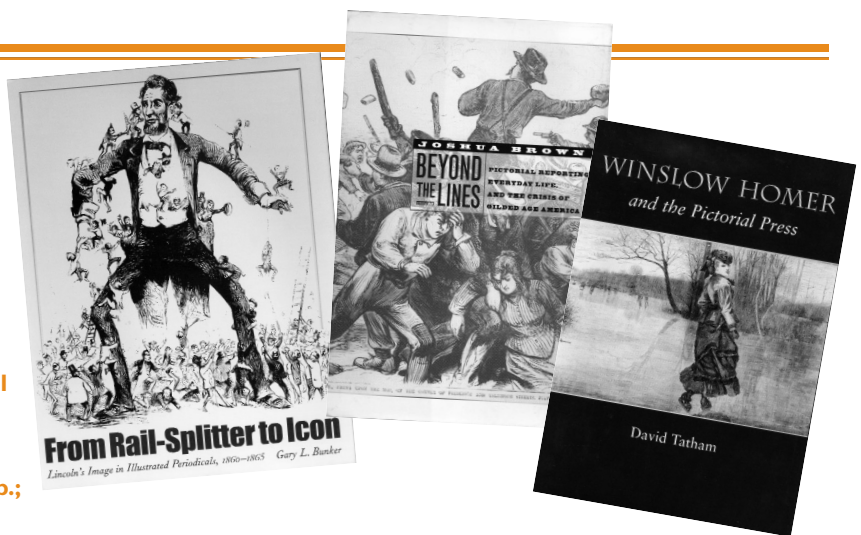
The syllabus may be found on the Society's website: [www.americanantiquarian.org/sumsem03syl.htm](http://www.americanantiquarian.org/sumsem03syl.htm)

## Book Notes

**Gary L. Bunker, *From Rail-Splitter to Icon: Lincoln's Image in Illustrated Periodicals, 1860-1865* (Kent, Ohio, and London: Kent State University Press, 2001), 387 pp.; cloth; \$55.00; ISBN 0-87338-701-5.**

**Joshua Brown, *Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crisis of Gilded Age America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 361 pp.; cloth; \$49.95; ISBN 0-520-23103-1.**

**David Tatham, *Winslow Homer and the Pictorial Press* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 256 pp.; cloth; \$39.95; ISBN 0-8156-2974-5.**



These three books are very different in subject matter, but each of the authors successfully exploits the contents of the illustrated pictorial press for their particular purposes. I doubt that any of the authors have thought consciously about the concerns of the history of the book as a discipline, but those interested in the history of periodical publication and the ways in which editors and publishers used illustrations make these volumes of particular interest to readers of *The Book*. These are copiously illustrated books in which the authors explain very well the process by which the illustrations in the popular press were produced. Moreover, in all of these works, the illustrations are the driving force. They serve as the point of departure for the authors, not just as illustrations to their texts.

Gary Bunker is an experienced and thoughtful interpreter of images in the popular press; an earlier effort is *The Mormon Graphic Image*, published in 1983. *From Rail-Splitter to Icon* explores the image of Abraham Lincoln in the very narrow time frame of his national political career in both the comic press and illustrated newspapers. In the introduction, Bunker provides copious historical details about his sources. Throughout his text he weaves editorial material from the magazines with his own commentary on the images, so that the contexts and meanings of the images are revealed. The volume is generously illustrated and contains images from the southern pictorial press as well. This study could serve as a model for other studies on important historical concerns in the period 1850 to 1880 when the pictorial press flourished. Bunker's bibliographical essay contains valuable information on the publication histories of the magazines that he used, and he notes the libraries where he found runs of them.

Joshua Brown's book, *Beyond the Lines*, is an excellent example of using the pictorial press to survey social history from 1855 to 1890. Brown, executive director of the American Social History Project at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, looks at social history mainly through the pages of Frank Leslie's *Illustrated Newspaper*, although images from *Harper's Weekly* and the *New York Daily Graphic* also serve as his sources. Among the issues of particular interest to him are the ills of urban life for the poor, the employment of women, political and social reconstruction of the South, and labor unrest. Brown shows conclusively that the images accompanying text descriptive of poverty, for example, enhance the literary content significantly. He also explores the

complicated situation that exists when the subjects of some illustrations were also readers of the magazine, as in riot scenes on the streets of New York, and he suggests that society shaped the practice of illustrated journalism. He attempts to understand the readers of illustrated journals through the images.

In a previous study of Homer, *Winslow Homer and the Illustrated Book* (1992), David Tatham showed his interest in discovering the working relationship between the artist, and the authors, editors, and publishers involved in his project. His new book on Homer and the periodical press expands this interest. Homer, of course, was noted for his images of the Civil War and leisure. He worked as a "special artist" for *Harper's Weekly*, but later went on to produce charming vignettes of life in resorts such as the White Mountains and the Adirondacks. His representation of American life differs significantly from the artists whose works form the substance of Brown's book. One factor that Tatham examines is the importance of Homer's work as an illustrator to his financial stability that allowed him to pursue a career as a painter. Tatham identifies Homer's independence as an illustrator as being important to his later success as an artist. Homer continued to use his extraordinary powers of observation that had been honed while working for *Harper's Weekly* to create works of art that spoke for themselves, as did his illustrations for the pictorial press that generally were not linked to text.

The pictorial press as portrayed in these books flourished for a relatively brief period—1840 to 1890. Both Brown and Tatham agree that the coming of the half-tone photograph brought the world of the woodblock artist and engraver to an end. Tatham would probably also agree with Brown's statement "that images are not the antithesis of print culture but an intrinsic part of its nineteenth-century practice: the wood engraving, with its innovative capacity to be set with movable type, was predicated on a popular reading culture even as it relied on a unique visual language to enunciate views in a different manner than does the word" (pp. 4-5). The thematic focus used by Bunker and Brown creates works that are very different from Tatham's narrative about Homer, but all three books provide a wealth of imagery and suggestions about how to read and appreciate this aspect of nineteenth-century American visual culture.

Georgia B. Barnhill  
Andrew W. Mellon Curator of Graphic Arts

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## The Catalogue of American Engravings (CAEP): On the Web and Easy to Use

The Catalogue of American Engravings (CAEP), long available as part of the AAS catalogue, has a newly designed, easy-to-use, web-based format. (The acronym CAEP is derived from the name of the National Endowment for the Humanities-funded project that began in 1979.) Whether seeking a list of engravings published in 1770s New York or an image depicting eighteenth-century reading groups, researchers will find using the new on-line CAEP extraordinarily profitable. CAEP includes more than 16,800 entries describing engravings issued as separate publications or as illustrations in books and periodicals from the early eighteenth century through the year 1820. More than 80 percent of the items catalogued are in the AAS collections.

Scholars have depended on CAEP to locate early American images since it first appeared on the Internet as a gopher site in 1992. Georgia B. Barnhill's article "The Catalogue of American Engravings: A Manual for Users" that appeared in the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* (April 1998)

discussed searching strategies and explored applications for its use. For those who prefer a handbook for ready reference, copies of the booklet are still available from the Society ([www.americanantiquarian.org/Offprints/order.htm](http://www.americanantiquarian.org/Offprints/order.htm)).

The newly designed, web-based format enhances previous search navigation and capabilities. The basic search screen enables users to perform not only title and subject searches but also searches by engraver, illustrator, place of publication, year of publication, printer, publisher, host item author, host item title, and genre. A second search screen, the guided search screen, offers the opportunity to perform keyword searches using Boolean logic.

**To connect to the Catalogue of American Engravings, select "Search the Catalog" from the AAS homepage, [www.americanantiquarian.org](http://www.americanantiquarian.org).**

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On-line Services Librarian

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