

THE BOOK

MARCH AND JULY 2000, NUMBERS 50 AND 51

Ohmann Delivers Wiggins Lecture in 2000

Richard Ohmann, professor of English emeritus at Wesleyan University, was selected to deliver eighteenth annual James Russell Wiggins Lecture in the History of the Book in American Culture at AAS by a committee of book history scholars convened by the Society for this purpose. The title of his November lecture was "Epochal Change: Economics and Print Culture."

Following the Society's custom, the lecture will be published in the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* and in a separate reprint in the Wiggins Lecture series in approximately a year. Ohmann's study of the evolution of consumer society and the culture industry that made whole new categories of consumer goods and consumers for them was published in 1996 and titled, *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets, and Class at the Turn of the Century* (Verso).

SHARP 2001 Call for Papers Extended

Proposals for individual papers and entire sessions for the ninth annual conference of the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing must be submitted to Robert A. Gross, chair, by December 15, 2000. The conference will take place July 19-22, 2001, in Williamsburg and Richmond, Virginia, under the sponsorship of the Library of Virginia and the Virginia Center for the Book in Richmond and the American Studies Program and the Earl Gregg Swem Library of the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg. Convening in the historic capital of the Virginia colony and the contemporary capital of the twenty-first century state, the conference will span the centuries of book history.

In the SHARP tradition, proposals are welcomed for individual papers and entire sessions dealing with the creation, diffusion, or reception of the written or printed word in any historical period or place. The conference organizers also seek to draw on the particular interests and strengths of the conference's institutional sponsors in Virginia by offering a special welcome to proposals for papers and sessions on "Books and Libraries in the New Millennium." With every aspect of communications undergoing change in the electronic age, the SHARP meeting offers an occasion to reflect on the present and future condition of the print medium.

Proposals for individual papers should be no longer than one page, giving the paper title, a short abstract, and brief biographical identification. Session proposals should include a cover sheet explaining the theme and goals and each paper should be described on a separate page. The deadline for submissions is December 15, 2000. Proposals should be sent by e-mail, if possible, to Robert A. Gross at ragros@facstaff.wm.edu. Proposals submitted by regular mail should be directed to: Robert A. Gross, SHARP 2001 Program Chair, American Studies Program, College of William and Mary, P.O. Box 8795, Williamsburg VA 23187-8795, U.S.A.

Sessions will take place both in the state-of-the-art Library of Virginia and at the College of William and Mary, adjacent to Colonial Williamsburg, the outdoor museum of eighteenth-century Virginia history and culture. Participants will have the opportunity to visit the historic sites, including the printing office and book bindery. Among the featured speakers will be David Baldacci, the best-selling author of suspense thrillers (*Absolute Power*), talking about writing for the mass market. The conference will also be highlighted by a special airing of "The Book Guys," a Public Radio show devoted to book collecting and history, which will be presented before the "live" and lively SHARP audience. A "book collectors" tour of the region, beginning in Charlottesville before the conference and culminating in Washington, D.C. (and the Library of Congress) thereafter, is also being planned.

SHARP offers a limited number of travel grants to graduate students and independent scholars (that is, those with no institution to fund their travel). Those intending to apply for a grant should indicate this when submitting their paper proposals.

More information about SHARP can be found on the SHARP web page at <http://www.indiana.edu/~sharp/>.

Kudos to Casper

Constructing American Lives: Biography and Culture in Nineteenth-Century America won for Scott Casper the 2000 SHARP Book History Prize. Casper is associate professor of history at the University of Nevada at Reno. The book's publisher is the University of North Carolina Press. Casper's cultural history of biography began as his Yale doctoral dissertation for which he received a Peterson Fellowship for research from AAS. Since completing this book, he has held a second Peterson Fellowship for a new project on American presidents at home.

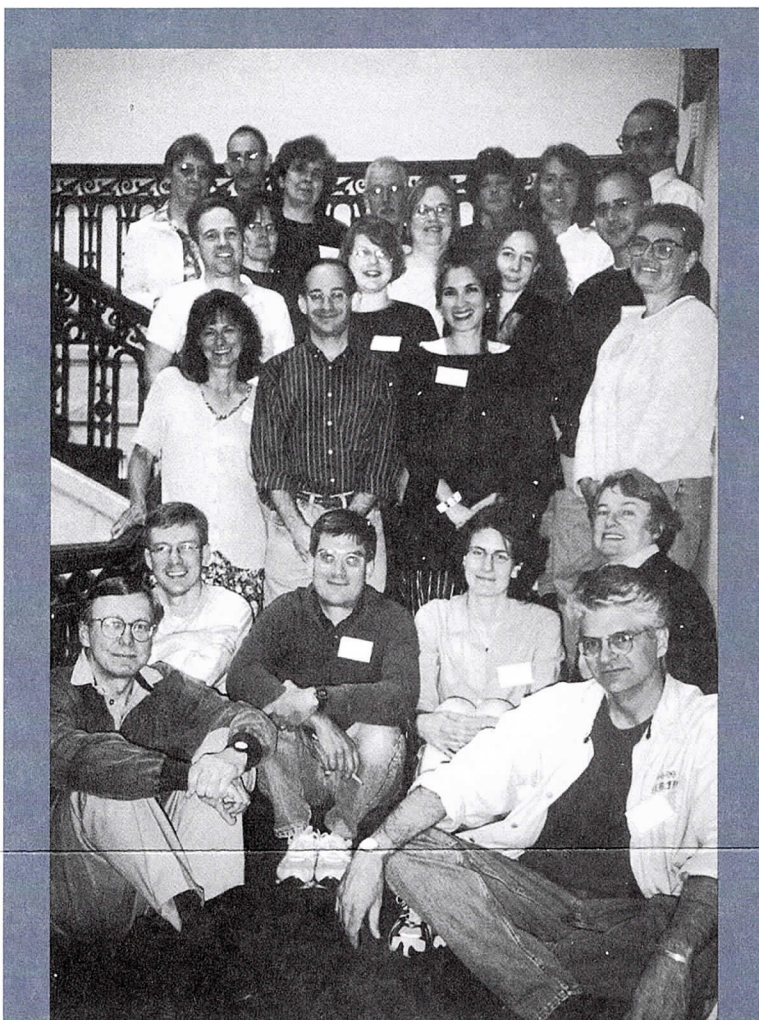
Teaching the History of the Book: The 2000 AAS Summer Seminar

How can we move book history from the archive to the classroom? To explore this question, college faculty, graduate students, and librarians from the United States and Canada converged on Worcester for a week in June.

Our guiding principle was that book history is hands-on history: that an artifactual approach brings the field's scholarly arguments to life for students at all levels. Thus we began with two workshops designed as "first-day-of-class" projects: "Making and Breaking Books," in which participants created books from materials available at the local hardware store and dissected books from the local Goodwill shop; and "Composing a Book Biography," in which materials from the AAS collections formed the basis for presentations about what the artifact itself can reveal. In subsequent sessions matriculants considered how to use different sorts of materials in teaching book history—ranging from autobiographies such as Benjamin Franklin's to evidence of readers (library records, fan letters, diaries, and letters) to artifacts of authorial celebrity (editions, advertisements, "Authors" game cards).

The human dimensions of book history—particularly the labor of making books—formed another central theme. In sessions on Franklin's autobiography, mid-nineteenth-century print technologies, and the late nineteenth century (the latter led by Ann Fabian, American studies, Rutgers University), we considered book history from within the print trades. A field trip to the National Yiddish Book Center (NYBC) in Amherst introduced the world of ethnic publishing and reading, an essential counterpoint to Anglo book history. Founder Aaron Lansky discussed the NYBC's current mission, making turn-of-the-century Yiddish books available in reprint editions and digitally.

Although every session returned to the question of teaching, some focused explicitly on pedagogical issues. Susanna Ashton



*AAS Summer Seminar 2000
Seated: Hench, Pratt, Moran, DeLombard, Kox, Sloat; standing row 1: Lane, Casper, Gilbert, Taraba; row 2: Linn, Todd, Anderson, Jones, Wolff, Front; top: Youngberg, Spencer, Dobson, D'Aniello, Cook, Howarth, Groves.*

(English, Clemson University) discussed the opportunities and challenges of a book-history approach to literature surveys. A brainstorming session, joined by AAS Vice-President for Academic and Public Programs John Hench, considered building one's own teaching collection—using everything from local used bookstores to on-line auctions. Examining book-history syllabi sparked discussion of how different approaches might apply to different sorts of courses, at institutions with varying levels of archival collections. Ultimately, matriculants' own seminar projects centered on teaching: using six sets of materials from the AAS collections (from abolitionist artifacts to bookselling guides and samples), teams devised ways to use primary artifacts in the undergraduate classroom.

Members of the AAS staff led sessions throughout the week. Research Librarian Joanne Chaison directed two workshops on resources for studying book history that encouraged many participants to create

wish lists for their own institutions' libraries. In "Working with Images," Andrew W. Mellon Curator of Graphic Arts Georgia Barnhill introduced the distinctions between nineteenth-century methods of illustration, complete with lithographers' stones and a chromolithographer's sketchbook. John Hench shared his experience of collecting Armed Services Editions and other World War II publications on eBay. Nicholas Basbanes spent a late-afternoon hour reflecting on the "gentle madness" of book collecting, sharing some of his collection. Behind the scenes, many others made sure we were kept delighted with great materials and refreshments.

Above all, the participants themselves made this a dynamic week—and only the beginning of an ongoing conversation. Veteran and novice faculty, graduate students, librarians, and AAS staff members shared their own teaching methods and ideas, considered how they might tailor the approaches we presented to their

own classes, and discussed the teaching partnerships among departmental faculty, librarians, and book-arts specialists. Since the seminar, we have set up an e-mail list for the group, where we've continued to share ideas and references.

Scott Casper, University of Nevada, Reno
Jeffrey A. Groves, Harvey Mudd College

A GRADUATE STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

With the friendly and expert leadership of Scott Casper and Jeff Groves, the AAS summer seminar was well grounded with real teaching techniques that had actual classes in view—the somewhat infamous “Making and Breaking Books” session springs immediately to mind. For those of us who are likely to be teaching book history as a sub-theme in more general courses in history or literature, the seminar also offered up much practical advice. As an historian of ideas, for instance, I was struck by the potential of book history to provide undergraduate students with a meaningful foreground for the study of the dissemination and impact of ideas. Another practical lesson was that book history sources are not always rare and expensive, and to keep an open mind when thinking about book history material that might advantageously be introduced into the classroom.

For me, an eighteenth-century scholar, the seminar's nineteenth-century focus was equally eye opening. I saw that these two periods share many of the same problems of method and evidence, but approaching my eighteenth-century questions from the perspective of new (to me) scholarship, was enlightening. The Seminar's multi-perspective approach to book history was complemented wonderfully by the choice in guest speakers (Susanna Ashton, Nicholas Basbanes, and Ann Fabian, as well as memorable presentations by AAS staff Georgia Barnhill, Joanne Chaison, and John Hench) and also by the stunning array of academic backgrounds and interests represented by the seminar participants themselves. Participating in “Teaching the History of the Book” was a rewarding experience.

Mark Spencer, University of Western Ontario

A LIBRARIAN'S PERSPECTIVE

When I heard that a seminar on “Teaching the History of the Book” was being offered at the American Antiquarian Society, I jumped at the chance to sign up. As a special collections librarian at an academic institution, I knew that professors liked to bring their students in to learn more about working with primary sources. But while some professors have a clear sense of how to incorporate collection materials into their classes, others welcome suggestions, and I hoped this course would give me more good ideas.

Jeff Groves and Scott Casper were ideal seminar leaders. They are incredibly knowledgeable about book history, very experienced in teaching with unique materials, and their enthusiasm about the topic is contagious. Well-planned from the outset, Jeff and Scott's course assigned thought provoking readings and scheduled several group projects that allowed individual participants to get to know one another, share expertise, and model the collaborative process

that is at the heart of understanding book history: books do not spring whole from the mind of the author, they are created through the collaborative interaction of numerous people and cultural forces.

It was a bright and varied crowd of participants—seemingly equally divided between professors and librarians with specialties ranging from eighteenth-century European philosophy, to American cultural studies, to electronic library resources. This made for some tricky seminar facilitation. Since there were so many college professors, and since it is their great strength to hold forth, the less vocal librarians and their more practical interests were sometimes lost in the lively debate over literary, historical, and cultural issues. Jeff and Scott were mindful of this and consciously sought to create an atmosphere in which everyone was included and all strengths appreciated. What we have in common is that we are all, in one way or another, facilitators of learning.

I left the seminar with a gold mine of materials including Joanne Chaison's “Bibliographic Reference Sources for Research in the History of the Book,” numerous syllabi, classroom assignments, and models for presentations. But the most important thing I came away with was a reinvigorated sense of purpose. Spending a week thinking with professors about new ways that special collection materials are being made meaningful to an upcoming generation of scholars, provided an exciting new context for my work. It was a reminder of the necessary interdependence of scholars and librarians, and renewed my desire to foster these relationships with great care and mutual respect.

Rachel Howarth, University of Texas at Austin

MATRICULANTS

Jill Anderson, lecturer, American Studies, California State University, Fullerton; Nancy S. Cook, associate professor of English, University of Rhode Island; Charles D'Aniello, associate librarian, coordinator for collection development, Lockwood Library, SUNY-Buffalo; Jeannine DeLombard, assistant professor of early American literature, University of Puget Sound; Joanne Dobson, associate professor of English, Fordham University; Christopher R. Front, Ph. D. candidate, American history, Northwestern University; Ellen D. Gilbert, social sciences librarian, Alexander Library, Rutgers University; Rachel Howarth, head of the reading room, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin; Barbara Jones, coordinator, Special Collections Division, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; Christopher Kox, periodicals librarian and instructor in library technology, City College of San Francisco; Ann Marie Lane, curator of rare books, University of Wyoming; Mott R. Linn, Jr., coordinator of archives and special collections, Clark University; James David Moran, director of outreach, American Antiquarian Society; Lloyd Pratt, Ph. D. candidate, English, Brown University; Mark Spencer, Ph. D. candidate in history, University of Western Ontario; Suzy Taraba, head of special collections and university archivist, Wesleyan University; Emily Todd, assistant professor of English, Westfield State College; Katherine Wolff, Ph. D. candidate, Boston University; Karin Youngberg, professor of English, Augustana College.

THE SYLLABUS

To obtain a copy of the syllabus for "Teaching the History of the Book," send a request by e-mail to csloat@mwa.org, and it will be sent as an attachment (in Microsoft Word). To receive hard copy, write, enclosing a self-addressed stamped envelope (\$.34 postage after January 1, 2001, please), to Summer Seminar Syllabus, American Antiquarian Society, 185 Salisbury Street, Worcester, MA 01609.



A New Look for The Book

The introduction of *Almanac* as the Society's general newsletter, with its distinctive contemporary design, has prompted a revamping of the design of this newsletter of the Program of the History of the Book. Although several issues of *Almanac* have already appeared, the decision was made to introduce the new look if *The Book* with issue number 50. By waiting, we can also introduce the Society's new logo representing the "generous dome," under which Worcester author Esther Forbes and thousands of other fellows and readers have engaged in productive research. The development of this logo was prompted in part by the redesign of the Society's website, to which readers are invited to refer at www.americanantiquarian.org.



A Checklist of American Newspaper Carriers' Addresses

New on the bookshelf of AAS publications is *A Checklist of American Newspaper Carriers' Addresses, 1720-1820*. It was compiled over a period of nearly sixty-five years by Gerald D. McDonald, Stuart C. Sherman, and Mary T. Russo. Mary Russo, who before her retirement was curator of broadsides at the John Hay Library of Brown University, brought the work to completion under the guidance of an advisory committee that included Roger E. Stoddard of the Houghton Library and curator of rare books at Harvard, Samuel Allen Streit, assistant university librarian for special collections at Brown University, and John B. Hench of AAS.

This compilation of carriers' addresses represents the first century of the existence of this popular form, albeit one eschewed by Isaiah Thomas and his successors at the *Massachusetts Spy* until 1824, too late for inclusion in the current volume. The earliest known address by a carrier of an American newspaper to his customers has not survived in broadside form, but was anthologized by its author, Aquila Rose, in *Poems on Several Occasions* (1740) with the note that it was one of three "wrote by him for the boys who carried the weekly newspapers for their master's customers, in Philadelphia, to whom, commonly every New Year's day, they present verses of this kind." The earliest surviving carrier's address is from 1735 and is in the AAS collections.

This volume provides scholarly access to a body of American poetry that includes signed poems by William Biglow, William Cobbett, Benjamin Franklin, Philip Freneau, and the "Connecticut Wits," among others. Topical and political satires

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Robert A. Gross, Chairman, Program in the
History of the Book in American Culture

The Book: Newsletter of the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture (ISSN 0740-8439) is published in March, July, and November by the American Antiquarian Society at the above address.

Editors: Robert A. Gross and John B. Hench

Managing Editor: Caroline Sloat

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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appeared on some occasions. Other new year's greetings offer commentary on the political and cultural events of the preceding year. From time to time, these verses provide glimpses of the youthful carriers themselves.

Even after more than half a century of research that uncovered some 940 American carriers' addresses and 61 that appeared in Canadian newspapers, more examples have come to light. Addenda will appear in the pages of the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, to which those with knowledge of omissions are asked to contribute by calling them to the attention of the editor.

Oak Knoll Books is the distributor of AAS books and orders (\$35.00 per copy plus \$4.00 handling) should be directed to them at 310 Delaware Street, Newcastle, DE 19720, (302) 328-7274, or <oakknoll@oakknoll.com>.

Book Note

Margaret Welch, *The Book of Nature: Natural History in the United States, 1825-1875* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998).

In this important book Margaret Welch explores the interactions between illustrated natural history books and their readers in mid-nineteenth century America. Rather than presenting a strict history of science, Welch offers a social history of natural history. In so doing she elevates individual response over institutional development arguing for the central role played by books and printed works in the transmission and reception of natural history. Her inclusive approach considers genres to date neglected in natural history study, namely children's literature, textbooks, general periodicals, and material culture. As a result, Welch offers new insights into the operation of scientific networks, the transmission of natural history ideas across print genres, and the reception of natural history among different segments of nineteenth-century American culture.

Her study is divided into two sections. The first considers the evolution of illustrated natural history monographs in America. Welch emphasizes the development of "life histories," a blend of taxonomic, behavioral, and environmental description, as a distinctly American approach to American species. Welch also traces the simultaneous progress of American natural history illustration, a tradition that portrayed the specimen in its environment exhibiting typical behavior. The resulting interplay between text and image, she argues, characterized American natural history books of the nineteenth century and greatly determined the manner in which Americans thought about and approached the natural world. The second section considers the reception, response, and interpretation of American natural history texts. Here Welch focuses on the transmission and translation of natural history from disciplinary monographs to textbooks, children's literature, periodicals, biblical natural histories, ladies' flower

books, and material culture. Natural history, a specialized discourse, was rendered approachable by authors and editors who expunged Latinate terms while retaining the life history format and visual conventions. She argues that this popularization process and the many ways in which images and text were "recycled" in these genres extended natural history's reach to audiences beyond the learned and even the literate.

For those interested in print culture or the history of the book, Welch's study will be most useful in her discussions of readership networks and the role of print technologies in the dissemination of natural history. Welch demonstrates how the prohibitive costs of natural history books produced exchange networks and correspondence circles. These networks led its members to collaborate and to produce their own texts. Her careful examination of marginalia and personal journals suggests some ways in which natural history books were read and studied. The economics behind print technologies also affected the dissemination of natural history. Wood engraving, an inexpensive form of visual reproduction, revolutionized the transmission of natural history imagery. Images created by John James Audubon for example, financially inaccessible for most Americans, were copied into wood engravings and recycled over and over again in periodicals and popular natural history books. The repetition of these images in print granted them iconic status. This process Welch registers through a survey of textbooks and children's literature and a creative examination of natural history images in material culture artifacts, textiles in particular.

Utilizing illustrated books and print materials as her evidentiary base, Welch sheds light on some ways in which naturalist/artists represented American nature and how nineteenth-century Americans consumed these representations. But Welch's conscious decision to place natural history institutions outside her critical lens leaves questions to be answered. What role did organizations play in the distribution of books and print? Likewise, her decision to exclude the journals of these organizations leaves one wondering about the place of scientific literature in natural history discourse and print culture. Welch also intimately connects interest in natural history to a print explosion after 1825. Yet articles on natural history subjects were commonplace in newspapers and literary magazines from the end of the American Revolution forward. A consideration of these sources would have made for a stronger and more comprehensive argument.

These reservations aside, Margaret Welch provides a wonderful examination of the role natural history texts played in nineteenth-century American approaches to the natural world. It is hoped that more work on this neglected but important field of human activity will be prompted by her engaging work.

Andrew J. Lewis
Yale University

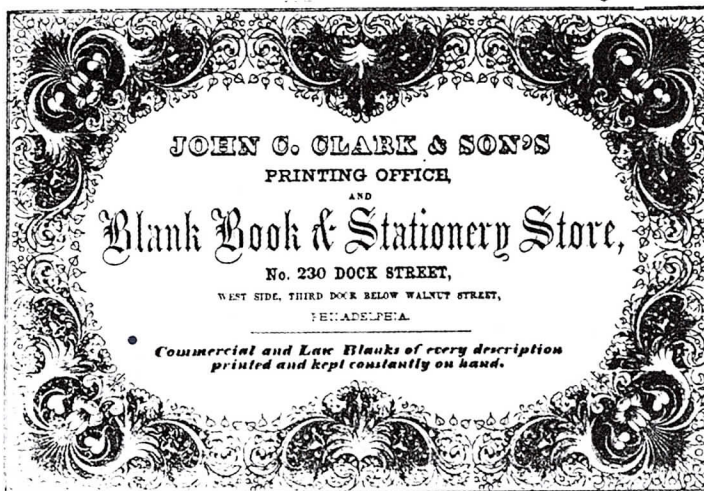
Notes on AAS Research Collections

BOOK TRADE RECORDS OF JOHN C. CLARK AND SON OF PHILADELPHIA

AAS recently acquired a major collection of records relating to the printing, book-selling, and stationery business in nineteenth-century Philadelphia. Sixteen account books of the firm of John C. Clark and Son illustrate the company's activities in the period from 1825 to 1866 in considerable detail. The company was founded in 1817 as the partnership of Clark (1787-1882) and Matthias Raser (1784-1832).

After Raser's death, Clark carried on the firm alone for more than two decades, entering in partnership in 1856 with his son John Ross Clark.

Although the account books do not constitute a complete set of business records, they provide a great deal of information about the full range of the company's activities. Sales books and



ledgers show job printing (including printing of many books and pamphlets) and sales of books, stationery, and other related supplies. Additionally, there are order books listing thousands of printing jobs and expense books showing payments for wages, ink, freight, and supplies. Four pressman's bill books provide very detailed accounts of printing work, including charges for composing and correcting.

This collection was purchased with the De Puy and Stoddard funds and adds to the Society's rich collection of manuscripts dealing with the book trades and printing history.

Thomas G. Knoles, AAS

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