



# The Book

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## *Teaching the History of the Book*

As a teaching field, the history of the book has long existed in departments of English (under the guise of bibliography), library schools, and schools of journalism. The wider enthusiasm for "book history" is beginning to take the form of new and different courses in departments of history and English—or so we surmise from inquiries and occasional syllabi that come to our attention. We are very interested in assisting the development of such courses in the liberal arts curriculum and in professional schools. To this end, we are planning a workshop, to occur in June 1987, on how to teach book history. We invite you to let us know informally if you would like to participate; we also welcome information about syllabi and course materials that could serve as a basis for discussion. You may wish to note that the 1986 issue of the *Intellectual History Newsletter* (available by sending \$5 to IHN, Department of History, Boston University, Boston, Mass. 02215) contains a syllabus prepared by Robert Gross (Amherst College) for a graduate course he taught at Brandeis University in 1985. It is likely that future issues of *this* newsletter may contain syllabi, or that the Program will make them available in some other fashion.

D.D.H.

## *Notes on Research Collections*

### THE KEMBLE COLLECTION

As early as 1827 Agustin V. Zamorano, the first printer in California, began printing letterheads and government documents (so-called sealed paper headings) with a badly worn font of type and poorly cut wood blocks. At the same time, a rigidly controlled number of books were imported into California under the supervision of the Catholic church and the Mexican government. From these crude beginnings, California has blossomed into one of the finest and most vital centers of the book trade in the United States, a development that is documented in the book, ephemera, periodical, photographic, and manuscript holdings of the Edward C. Kemble Collections on Western Printing and Publishing, a special collection of the California Historical Society Library. The Kemble Collections are a rich resource for scholars interested in printing, publishing, bookselling, typefounding, and

papermaking. This article will briefly mention some of the more notable pre-twentieth century manuscript collections about the book trade.

Among the most important manuscript collections are those that document the careers of California printers, and one of the cornerstones of the Kemble Collections is the *Alta California* account book (1849-50). The *Alta California* (1849-92), founded by Edward C. Kemble, Edward Gilbert, and George C. Hubbard, was the first daily newspaper in California; the office of the *Alta* was the first substantial commercial printing office in the state. The account book shows the daily debits and credits of the newspaper and the job office. A similar account book (1857-59) is available for O'Meara & Painter, an early San Francisco printing firm. James Weld Towne was a contemporary of John O'Meara and Jerome B. Painter and one of the most typographically and financially successful printers in San Francisco in the 1850s and 1860s. He was a partner in two well-known printing firms, Whitton, Towne & Company (1852-58) and Towne & Bacon (1858-68), before becoming the East Coast representative of the paper firm of Blake, Robbins & Company (1868-). The Towne Papers contain four letterbooks, which include nearly all of the outgoing correspondence generated by Towne (and, at times, his partners) from June 1856 to January 1873. Accompanying the letterbooks is the correspondence that Towne received in 1865 and the weekly "workman's bills" for 1865. The records of another San Francisco (and Sacramento) printing firm, H.S. Crocker & Company (1856-), contain a roster of the names of its employees from 1887 to 1901. This roster also notes the date hired, wages per month or week (with the amount in code), and the date the employee left or was discharged.

Another cornerstone of the Kemble Collections is the Taylor & Taylor Archives, one of the largest and most comprehensive assemblages of materials in the world concerned with the history of a single printing firm. Taylor & Taylor (1896-1961) was a commercial letterpress printing firm that established an international reputation for the use of elegant typefaces and sparse ornamentation. The more than 450 boxes of the archives contain a variety of materials: work docket; correspondence; detailed accounting records; production records, charts, and schedules; plant inventories and layouts (including a scale

model of one of the plants); legal papers; advertising and promotional materials; awards; printers' devices (such as the 1915 Taylor & Taylor device that was designed by Frederic W. Goudy); information about the firm's library; and samples of the company's work.

Related to the manuscripts about printing are those concerned with journalism and publishing. One such holding is the diary (May 1826-April 1860) of Ferdinand C. Ewer (1816-83), in which Ewer briefly describes his activities on the staffs of the San Francisco *Pacific News*, the Sacramento *Transcript*, and the San Francisco *Prices Current*. The diary also describes his work as editor of *The Pioneer*, a notable literary magazine. The history of the *Argonaut* (1877-1958), a weekly San Francisco magazine, is well documented in the records of the Argonaut Publishing Company, which include a transfer journal (1880-1902) that shows changes in stock ownership, lists of dividends paid by the company (1881-93), and financial records (1893-95, 1901-2). Also included here are the Jerome A. Hart Papers, which contain a listing of staff salaries and the amounts paid to contributors for each issue of the *Argonaut* (June 1878-December 1905, April-December 1906) and notes about the editorial column (1892-97).

Ever since the first bookstore was established by John Hamilton Still in 1849, California has always had a large number of bookstores, as can be discerned from the thousands of booksellers' labels in the Kemble Collections, the premier collection of such labels in the state. The core of this collection was assembled by Harold C. Holmes, of the Holmes Book Company. One of the earliest California booksellers to use labels was Epes Ellery (1830-94), who established the Antiquarian Bookstore in 1854, a shop known for its carefully selected stock. Among the items in the Ellery Papers are the diary (August-October

1852) that he kept on his voyage from New York, miscellaneous personal and professional papers, and his letterbook (November 1853-July 1863), which not only illustrates the kinds of books Ellery was selling but also sheds light on many other aspects of nineteenth-century book-selling (such as cash discounts, payment of orders, transportation problems, and insurance costs). The Kemble Collections also contain the professional and personal papers of Benjamin F. Butler, who was another early bookseller, although he is better known as a lithographer.

Manuscripts about typefounding and papermaking are one of the strengths of the Kemble Collections. One of the most important changes in typefounding in the nineteenth century was the standardization of type measurement, brought about by the adoption of the point system. The history of the development of the American point system is documented in the Nelson C. Hawks (1840-1929) Papers. Materials in this collection include: fifteen diaries (January 1855-August 1856, January 1862-December 1863, April 1868-December 1880, April 1882-March 1896); two letterbooks with tissue copies of Hawks's business correspondence (June 1875-September 1876, and February 1882-January 1883); a third letterbook with the correspondence Hawks received from the principals of Marder, Luse & Company (February 1876-December 1881); two scrapbooks; and one of three known copies of *Explanation of the Point System of Printing Type* (1918). For a slightly later period, the Kemble Collections contain an account book (May 1893-April 1906) of A. Foreman & Son, typefounder. Andrew Foreman was a master typefounder who learned his trade at the Miller & Richard typefoundry in Edinburgh. The manuscripts about typefounding are supported by one of the largest collections of type specimen books in the United States. The Kemble Collections include specimen books of most pre-Civil War foundries, as well as a fine selection of those leading foundries from the 1860s to the end of the nineteenth century, including the only known copy of the earliest surviving local type specimen, *Specimens of Roman & Display Letter Manufactured by the California Type Foundry* (ca. 1868).

The subject of papermaking is represented by the records (1876-93) of Blake, Moffitt & Towne (1868-). Established as Blake, Robbins & Company in 1868, this firm was the leading nineteenth-century paper merchant in San Francisco, and the forty-three volumes in this collection include references to every major printer, bookbinder, stationer, and typefounder in the Bay Area. Complementing the Blake, Moffitt & Towne collections are the records (1885-1906) of the Pioneer Pulp Company, in Towles Station, Placer County. The collection consists of financial records and legal documents.

This article has highlighted the pre-twentieth-century manuscript collections about the book trade that are in the CHS Library. There are also a number of materials for the twentieth century period in the Kemble Collec-

American Antiquarian Society

185 Salisbury Street

Worcester, Massachusetts 01609-1634

Telephone (617) 755-5221 or 752-5813

Marcus A. McCorison, Director and Librarian

John B. Hench, Associate Director for Research  
and Publication

David D. Hall, Chairman, Program in the History  
of the Book in American Culture

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Assistant Editor: Sheila McAvey

The Editors welcome all news relevant to the interests of  
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tions. Among these are records from the Union Lithograph Company and the firm of Britton & Rey. Another major component of the Kemble Collections consists of the papers of Haywood Hunt (1888-1974), one of San Francisco's master printers. Other present-century holdings include the American West Publishing Company Archives, the Frederick Pease Fairfield Papers, the Lehman Lithograph Company Records, and the Somervilles' Archives. There are many others related to printing, publishing, bookselling, typefounding, papermaking, and ancillary subjects such as book collecting, librarianship, and book organizations. A checklist of manuscripts pertaining to the book trade has recently been compiled and will be published in the next issues of *The Kemble Occasional*, the journal of the Kemble Collections.

Glenn E. Humphreys, Kemble Collections

## Research Notes

### THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF THE BOOK TRADES

Eighteenth-century studies, which for many British historians would have been no more than a three-word bridge between the tumult of civil war and the vigor of industrialism and empire, has in recent years become a minor cottage industry. In the history of the book, Nichols's century has been transformed from one highlighted by elegant, often anecdotal surveys to one littered by bibliographical databases, online searches, and all the other issue of computers whirring away at best-forgotten expense.

Increasing productivity is even encouraging an export line. Having utilized new bibliographical material to complete a study of the literary portrayal of business in Georgian Britain, and then having joined the chip-set myself to produce an annotated catalogue of mid-eighteenth-century fiction, a Peterson Fellowship from the AAS enabled one-and-one-half month's transatlantic research relating to the commercialization of the book trades in Britain and North America.

My primary goal has been to gather material for a section of an eventual book on the economics of the eighteenth-century book trades that will consider British-American dealings in books, pamphlets, and stationery. Completed sections discuss the shifting commercial base of book publication in Britain from subscription to open market enterprise, the extension of bookselling networks, later provincial book publishing, and the expansion of a competitive market after midcentury. The rate of increase in book production was matched only by the number of booksellers' bankruptcies and the swelling in the personal fortunes of the few successful traders. As it emerges, the chapter on exports to the colonies suggests surprising parallels with the expansion of trade in the British provinces. The main search, however, is for answers to questions already raised in a number of distinguished studies. Was

the transatlantic trade as troublesome to London dealers as so many surviving testimonies of traders conclude? How important was the colonial trade to key publishers, printers, and wholesale stationers? Did certain firms really use the colonies as a dustbin for unwanted and unsellable titles? How much trade was conducted by personal correspondence with Britain rather than through leading American dealers?

One clear task is to learn more about individual importers established in the American seaport cities. Having isolated many of these by references from British sources, the printers' file, as well as a range of finding guides at AAS, proved invaluable. Other manuscript account books and correspondence relating to book and stationery imports and distribution that are held at Antiquarian Hall are also revealing, while still others available on film provide a wide selection of comparative material. For the actual operation of business, many sources—notably correspondence between booksellers—are reprinted in early proceedings of local American historical societies, which, alas, do not enjoy transatlantic travel. Hopefully, this will also lessen dependence on the extensive Hall-Strahan communications.

As any who have worked in this area will know, official British customs records of the trade are little more than bare total valuations of shipments. In recovering actual titles and details of other goods transported. I have used two types of material in conjunction with sources in London and some provinces. Even though few survive, booksellers' accounts can tell much about individual orders placed by colonial customers. Retail and auction catalogues issued by the booksellers can reveal much about what was thought to be good to import, how up-to-date the books were, and what was clearly surplus London stock. Here Robert B. Winans's *A Descriptive Checklist of Book Catalogues Separately Printed in America, 1693-1800* (1981) has been of immense help in locating the lists.

In addition to this, the AAS resources have enabled new consideration of the relationship between print and trade—the subject of a monograph now in the final stages of completion. Business was serviced by the printer in many ways. Newspapers created and developed marts for local goods and services, job-printing provided an array of blanks of increasing specialization to simplify and extend business transactions, and books passed on practical skills from navigational techniques to bookkeeping and also served as continuing desk top guides in timetabling, negotiating, and reckoning. Stephen Botein has already suggested the importance of print as a medium for transmitting expertise to and within the American colonies. My preliminary and explorative colonial study put together while at the AAS has shed new light upon the British study, as well as serving as an instructive companion piece.

J. R. Raven, Pembroke College, Cambridge

### *Fellowships Awarded in Field*

Eight of the seventeen scholars granted American Antiquarian Society fellowships for 1986-87 will be researching topics related to the history of the book in American culture.

Fellows awarded NEH grants include Sacvan Bercovitch (Harvard), "The Literary Market in Nineteenth-Century America, 1820-1890" and Michael D. Warner (Northwestern), "The Letters of the Republic."

Among those fellows awarded Kate B. and Hall J. Peterson fellowships whose work bears on the history of the book are Michael L. Carlebach (Miami), "The Origins of Photojournalism in America"; Karen Halttunen (Northwestern), "Printed Accounts of Murders in America, 1650-1850"; and Paula E. Petrik (Montana State), "Paraphernalia of Childhood: Advice on Toys and Play, 1844-1900." Those awarded Albert Boni fellowships are James N. Green (Library Company of Philadelphia), "The Book Distribution Network of Mathew Carey, 1785-1820"; and Michael Hackenberg (Chicago), "New England Origins of Nineteenth-Century Subscription Publishing."

### *Cathy N. Davidson Named Fourth Wiggins Lecturer*

Readers of this newsletter should mark their fall calendars for the fourth annual James Russell Wiggins Lecture in the History of the Book in American Culture, which will be held in Antiquarian Hall at the Society at 5 P.M. on Wednesday, October 29, 1986. The speaker for this year's lecture is Cathy N. Davidson, professor of English at Michigan State University. Her talk will be entitled "Ideology and Genre: The Rise of the Novel in America." Further details about the lecture, and the reception and dinner following, will appear in the July issue of *The Book*.

AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY  
185 SALISBURY STREET  
WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01609-1634

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