



The Book

Number 1, November 1983

Newsletter of the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture
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A Note from the Editors

This is the first issue of *The Book: The Newsletter of the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture*. To be published semiannually by the American Antiquarian Society (AAS), it will bring to interested persons news of the Society's new Program as it develops, as well as news of related activities elsewhere.

Formally established in June 1983, the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture entails several activities, which may be implemented in stages. These activities include an annual lecture series, workshops and seminars, conferences, publications, and residential fellowships. The Program builds on the Society's long tradition of bibliographical and printing history research and can draw for resources on the unrivaled collections of pre-twentieth-century American imprints and related collections at AAS. At the same time, the Program aims to apply to the American setting the cultural perspective of European practitioners of *livre et société*.

We trust that this newsletter will be an effective means of communication between the Society's Program and its various constituents. Although the primary purpose of *The Book* will be to publish news of the AAS Program, we want to include news of related activities from other quarters, space permitting. The editors welcome contributions from readers, especially reports of work in progress and relevant publications.

For the time being, we plan to distribute this newsletter free of charge to all persons and institutions wishing to receive it. To be added to the mailing list, please contact the Society.

Response to Prospectus

In June, the American Antiquarian Society announced to an international audience the creation of the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture. That same month, the Society issued *Printing and Society in Early America*, a collection of original historical essays on the book trades, reading habits, and impact of printing in early America. It is the first publication of the new Program.

The Program builds on the Society's long tradition of bibliographical and printing history research and on the strengths of the AAS library's preeminent research collections in the field. From this heritage, it proposes a new way of looking at the history of the

book, an approach that not only draws richly for context upon social, cultural, and literary history, but also undertakes to encourage a broad reinterpretation of the history of the book.

Early this year, AAS circulated to American and European historians, librarians, and bibliographers a prospectus that set the new program in the context of European scholarship while identifying certain tasks of research and interpretation. We are grateful to the dozens of persons who responded to the prospectus, often with suggestions and advice that we shall try to heed as best we can.

Some of these responses deserve specific mention. Milton W. Hamilton, whose 1936 book *The Country Printer, New York 1790-1830* was a pioneering study of the printer and his social role, reminisced about his work in the field, adding that "my heartiest approval goes with you on this project." Robert Darnton, of Princeton University, urged the Society to build links to universities, libraries, and research centers throughout America and abroad.

Roger Chartier, one of the editors of *L'histoire de l'édition Française*, wrote (as translated) that two points seem essential for such a program.

"(1) The approach to early printing must combine textual bibliography, rigorous analysis of the materials themselves (using the techniques of physical bibliography, but not exclusively), and research into the ways in which they were read. In this combined approach, more than in the compilation of series statistics (always useful in their way), lies without doubt the purpose of a renewed history of the book.

"(2) A recognition of the ways in which books were received and of the various uses of different printed genres seems to me a fundamental objective. Hence, the central place of a history of *reading* in any history of the book. Hence, also, a necessary reflection on the circumstances allowing literacy, through the description of reading situations, and through a reinterpretation of the materials themselves as evidence that they were read."

Stephen Botein, of Michigan State University, had some trenchant observations about deficiencies in some of the research categories enumerated in the prospectus but applauded the ultimate importance of the Program. "For once," he wrote, "the rhetoric of the 'humanistic' cause [in the prospectus] is justified. At a time when the very future of reading and writing seems in jeopardy, I can't think of a more symbolically fitting enterprise. By

studying the history of books, we affirm their importance.”

Brook Hindle, a senior historian at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, urged us to “alleviate the tediousness of more words on words” by paying attention to “the concept that in addition to verbal communication, books also communicate non-verbally to reach and stimulate spatial thinking (as opposed to verbal, linear, logical, cause-effect thinking). You have a good collection of prints but I am not talking simply about book engravings used to embellish a verbal text. Some books are aimed primarily at spatial thinking. The best beginning of this is the great continental theaters of machines—that were not represented in England. We did however print English manuals and some of our own—where the verbal text takes more of a secondary role.”

From the west coast came a reminder that the Program ought not to foster too much of an east coast bias. We gladly acknowledge the reminder, while offering one of our own—that AAS was the first institution in the country to take the history of the *national* culture as its scope.

Several persons asked us if the work “book” in the title of the Program meant “book” literally, while others urged us to include every kind of printed matter—periodicals, newspapers, ephemera, and even job printing—within our purview. It was an oversight on our part not to say clearly in the prospectus that the Program would indeed encompass newspapers, periodicals, and the like. In choosing the term “book” as part of the Program's title, we were in our own minds using the term in a larger, more generic sense—that is, as it is meant in both an English translation of the French phrase *l'histoire du livre* and in the common library school course title “The History of the Book.”

Others who responded asked about the chronological boundaries of the Program. The American Antiquarian Society limits its collecting to the period before 1877, and the emphasis in the new Program will certainly fall on the two and a half centuries of American book history that precede this date. How or if we can deal with the years that follow remains to be determined, although we agree with the several of you who said that change and innovation within the past fifty years make that later period a crucial one to investigate.

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Editors: David D. Hall and John B. Hench
Assistant Editor: Sheila McAvey

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

Finally, Richard H. Brown, of the Newberry Library, offered the astute comment that the prospectus was describing both a *program* and a *project*. The project is a collaborative, multivolume history of the book in America; the program is one of research, education, and interpretation that undoubtedly will flourish on its own.

The enthusiastic response to our prospectus by scholars around the world has been most gratifying. To all who responded—with or without comments, suggestions, or criticisms—we owe great thanks.

Chairman, Advisory Board for Program Named

David D. Hall, professor of history at Boston University, has been named chairman of the American Antiquarian Society's Program in the History of the Book in American Culture. Hall is a member of AAS, a former AAS-NEH Fellow, and co-editor of the Society's recent book of essays entitled *Printing and Society in Early America*. He is the author of the essay “The World of Print and Collective Mentality in Seventeenth-Century New England,” in *New Directions in American Intellectual History*, ed. John Higham and Paul Conkin (Baltimore, 1979), which was a pioneering attempt to apply some of the French style of *histoire du livre* to the American setting.

Members of an Advisory Board and Executive Committee have also been named. Serving on the Advisory Board are: Thomas R. Adams, John Hay professor of bibliography, Brown University; James F. Beard, professor of English, Clark University; Terry Belanger, assistant dean, School of Library Service, Columbia University; Stephen Botein, associate professor of history, Michigan State University; Richard D. Brown, professor of history, University of Connecticut; Roger Chartier, maitre assistant, l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales; John Y. Cole, executive director, The Center for the Book, The Library of Congress; Richard Crawford, professor of music, University of Michigan; Gaylord Donnelley, honorary director, R.R. Donnelley and Sons; Everett Emerson, professor of English, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Bernhard Fabian, professor, Englisches Seminar, Westf. Wilhelms-Universität (Federal Republic of Germany); William J. Gilmore, associate professor of history, Stockton State College; Oscar Handlin, professor of history and librarian, Harvard University; Elizabeth Harris, curator, Graphic Arts Division, Smithsonian Institution; Jeremiah Kaplan, president, Macmillan Publishing Company; David Kaser, professor of library science, Indiana University; Marie E. Korey, rare book librarian, The Free Library of Philadelphia; Richard Landon, head, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto; D. F. McKenzie, professor of English, Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand); Mary Beth Norton, professor of history, Cornell University; Rollo G. Silver, histor-

ian of printing, Boston, Massachusetts; Roger E. Stoddard, associate librarian, Houghton Library; Michael L. Turner, head of conservation, the Bodleian Library; John William Ward, president, American Council of Learned Societies; James M. Wells, vice-president, The Newberry Library; Robert M. Weir, professor of history, University of South Carolina; Edwin Wolf, 2d, librarian, The Library Company of Philadelphia.

The members of the board's Executive Committee are: G. Thomas Tanselle (chairman), vice-president, John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation; Bernard Bailyn, Adams university professor of history, Harvard University; John Bidwell, reference acquisitions librarian, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles; Kenneth E. Carpenter, research and publications librarian, Harvard University Library; Robert Darnton, professor of history, Princeton University; Stephen Nissenbaum, professor of history, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Roderick D. Stinehour, president, Meriden-Stinehour, Inc.; Larzer Ziff, Caroline Donovan professor of English, the Johns Hopkins University.

Serving as members *ex officio* of the Executive Committee are the Society's director and librarian, Marcus A. McCorison, and the assistant director for research and publication, John B. Hench, in whose department the Program will be administered. The Society's Committees on Education (chaired by G. Thomas Tanselle) and on Publication (chaired by Harold T. Miller) share oversight of the Program.

David Hall Delivers First Wiggins Lecture

David D. Hall, the chairman of the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture, gave the first James Russell Wiggins Lecture in the History of the Book in American Culture on November 9 before an audience of 100 in Antiquarian Hall in Worcester. Hall's lecture was entitled "On Native Ground: From the History of Printing to the History of the Book."

Beginning with Isaiah Thomas's *History of Printing in America*, Hall traced the rise of American printing history through the generation of Joseph Sabin and John Russell Bartlett and the achievement of Charles Evans, Clarence Brigham, and Wilberforce Eames to Lawrence Wroth's *The Colonial Printer*. Divergent themes converged in Wroth's study: the utilitarian and the democratic, in contrast with aesthetic standards of high quality. The same tension, Hall suggested, could be seen in the emerging history of American literature, from the Duyckincks and Moses Coit Tyler to *The Literary History of the United States* and F. O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance*: was "literature" to include such lowly artifacts as the almanac, or only the great masters; and must ours be a *native* literature? Hall proposed that the history of the book in America

would turn away from aesthetic, nativist, and other limiting criteria in favor of a broad understanding of literature, printing, and society. In closing, he sketched several themes and topics that would characterize the history of the book: a concern for popular culture, viewed not as literary trash but as a complex arena of conservative and radical forces; the history of reading; the text as artifact; and an understanding of social forces that acknowledges the ambivalences of power.

The Wiggins Lecture will be an annual event. Each lecture will be published in the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* and will also be issued as a separate pamphlet, available from the Society's book distributor, the University Press of Virginia.

The lectureship honors James Russell Wiggins, of Brooklin, Maine, former editor of the *Washington Post*, former United States ambassador to the United Nations, and now editor and publisher of the *Ellsworth (Maine) American*. The president of AAS from 1970 to 1977, Wiggins is a longtime student of the history of printing and journalism and an articulate spokesman for the freedom of the press.



Russell Wiggins (l.) and Marcus McCorison

Prior to Hall's lecture, Marcus A. McCorison, AAS director and librarian, presented Wiggins with the framed original art of the calligraphic rendering of the initials "AAS/JRW," which was commissioned for use on the Wiggins Lecture invitations and pamphlets. The motif was designed and executed by Stephen Harvard of the Stinehour Press.

Germany's Paul Raabe To Speak at AAS

Paul Raabe, the director and librarian of the Herzog August Bibliothek (HAB) in Wolfenbüttel, West Germany, will speak twice at AAS on Monday, November 28. At noon he will talk at one of the Society's informal lunchtime colloquia on the present state of German scholarship on the history of the book. At

(cont. on page 5)

AAS Publishes New Book On Printing and Society

The Society published the first book issued under the auspices of the Program in June. *Printing and Society in Early America*, edited by William L. Joyce, David D. Hall, Richard D. Brown, and John B. Hench, is a collection of essays by leading scholars on the book trades, reading habits, and impact of printing in early America. Most of the essays were originally prepared for an October 1980 AAS conference of the same title.

Scholars contributing to the volume include David D. Hall, Stephen Botein, Elizabeth Carroll Reilly, Cynthia Z. Stiverson, Gregory A. Stiverson, Robert B. Winans, Richard Crawford, D. W. Krummel, Rhys Isaac, Nathan O. Hatch, Donald M. Scott, and Richard D. Brown.

Printing and Society in Early America is available at a list price of \$32.50 from the Society's book distributor, the University Press of Virginia, Box 3608, University Station, Charlottesville, Virginia 22903. Essays in this volume were written by Marcus A. McCorison, Stephen Botein, Richard Buel, Jr., Robert M. Weir, Willi Paul Adams, Janice Potter, Robert M. Calhoun, Paul Langford, G. Thomas Tanselle, and James Russell Wiggins.

The Society has for a number of years published bibliographical works that serve as instruments to aid scholars in researching topics related to printing and society in America. Among these, also available from the University Press of Virginia, are: *A Descriptive Checklist of Book Catalogues Separately Printed in America 1693-1800*, by Robert B. Winans (\$35.00); *A Bibliography of American Children's Books Printed Prior to 1821*, by d'Alté A. Welch (\$50.00); *A Calendar of American Poetry in the Colonial Newspapers and Magazines and in the Major English Magazines Through 1765*, by J. A. Leo Lemay (paper; \$17.50); *American Penmanship 1800-1850: A History of Writing and a Bibliography of Copybooks from Jenkins to Spencer*, by Ray Nash (\$17.50); *National Index of American Imprints Through 1800: The Short-Title Evans*, by Clifford K. Shipton and James E. Mooney (2 vols., \$55.00).

The Society's 1980 volume of essays, *The Press and the American Revolution*, edited by Bernard Bailyn and John B. Hench, has gone out of print in the original edition but is now available in paperback (\$9.95) and hardcover (\$24.95) reprint editions from Northeastern University Press, P.O. Box 116, Boston, Massachusetts 02117.



At the publication party for *Printing and Society in Early America* are (from left to right) editors John B. Hench, Richard D. Brown, William L. Joyce, and David D. Hall.

Raabe (cont. from page 3)

5 p.m. he will give an illustrated lecture on "The Herzog August Bibliothek as an International Independent Research Library."

Both events (which will take place in the Society's Goddard-Daniels House) are free and open to all. Persons attending the noontime session are encouraged to bring brown-bag lunches. The Society will provide coffee.

The HAB is a major research library specializing in European history and culture from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries. The history of the book is one of its primary interests. Among its many academic programs are two research programs of special importance for specialists in the field—the *Wolfenbütteler Arbeitskreis für Geschichte des Buchwesens* (Research Center for the History of the Book) and the *Wolfenbütteler Arbeitskreis für Bibliotheksgeschichte* (Research Center for Library History).

Dr. Raabe will give a Winship Lecture on the HAB at Harvard University's Houghton Library on November 29 at 5 p.m. and will address the staff of the New York Public Library the next day.

Fellowship Opportunities

One of the Society's fellowship programs is specifically intended to support research at AAS in the fields of early American bibliography and printing and publishing history. It is the Albert Boni Fellowship, which carries a stipend of \$1250 for a minimum of six weeks' residence in the Society's library. Other AAS fellowship programs—both short- and long-term—will also support research at the Society in the history of the book, though they are not restricted to the field. The Society intends to secure funding for additional fellowships specifically attached to the Program. These would include several more short-term fellowships, a year-long dissertation fellowship, and one or more long-term senior fellowships.

The deadline for 1984-85 AAS fellowships is January 31, 1984. For further information on the Boni award and other AAS fellowships, write or call John B. Hench at the Society.

A number of the Society's fellows and research associates for 1982-83 are working on topics related in one way or another to the field of the history of the book in American Culture. These scholars include: Stephen Botein (National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow), Michigan State University, "Expertise in Eighteenth-Century America"; Ronald J. Zboray (Albert Boni Fellow), Pace University, "A Fictive People"; J. Gary Williams (Samuel Foster Haven Fellow), University of Idaho, "The Cooper Edition of *Notions of the Americans*"; Andrea J. Tucher (Frances Hiatt Fellow), New York University, "The Power Press as an Agent of Change"; Laura C. Roe (Hiatt Fellow),

Yale University, "The Reproductive Print Trade in Colonial New England"; William J. Gilmore (Research Associate), Stockton State College, "The State of Knowledge on the Eve of the Industrial Revolution"; Christine Oravec (Research Associate), University of Utah, "The Rhetorical Criticism of American Discourse, 1810-1850"; and Kent P. Ljungquist (Research Associate), Worcester Polytechnic Institute, "The Aesthetic Categories as Represented in American Literary Periodicals, 1820-1860."

The Bibliographical Society of America also sponsors short-term research fellowships that will be of interest to historians of the book. The next application deadline for BSA awards is January 31, 1984. For further information, contact the Executive Secretary, Post Office Box 397, Grand Central Station, New York, New York 10163.

The editors of this newsletter welcome news of fellowship opportunities of special relevance for scholars in the field of the history of the book.

Notes from LC

Historical activities within the Library of Congress's Center for the Book are flourishing.

Alice D. Schreyer, a librarian and scholar, has been engaged by the Center to prepare a guide to the resources of LC for the study of the history of books. This guide should be important not only for the specific information it contains but also as a model and incentive for the preparation of additional guides to source material at both local and national levels. The Center for the Book has also taken a lead, in cooperation with AAS and the Bibliographical Society of America, in seeking to organize a project to index U.S. copyright records for 1790-1870, most of which are in LC's Rare Book and Special Collection Division. The ultimate achievement of such a goal would be a tool of incalculable value to all scholars interested in printing and publishing in nineteenth-century America.

Under John Y. Cole's direction, the Center for the Book continues to focus attention on the history of the book through such activities as those mentioned above, as well as through its numerous symposia, lectures, and publications. The most recent of these publications is *Literacy in Historical Perspective*, ed. Daniel P. Resnick (1983), which contains important essays by (among others) David Cressy, in which he extends his study of seventeenth-century England to New England, and Thomas W. Laqueur, who observes that literacy "was not simply a response to economic necessity, or the opportunity for social mobility," but something more complex: "the historical study of literacy must be a study of the interrelationship of reading and writing with culture; it must be essentially a study in cultural ecology."

New Editors for APHA Journal

The semiannual *Printing History: The Journal of the American Printing History Association* has new editors. Anna Lou Ashby, associate curator of printed books at the Pierpont Morgan Library, has been named editor, succeeding Susan O. Thompson, of Columbia University. Succeeding Ashby as book review editor is Francis O. Mattson, curator of rare books at the New York Public Library.

Printing History is devoted to the study of book arts, regardless of country or period. The editor wishes to encourage scholars working in the field to submit papers for consideration. Papers may be sent to Ashby at the Morgan Library, 29 East 36th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016. Books for review may be sent to Mattson at Box 515, Midtown Station, New York, N.Y. 10018. John B. Hensch, of AAS, is the vice-president for publication of APHA.

A Printer's Lament

Readers of this newsletter—especially those who have ever labored as printers or as wielders of editorial blue pencils—will be amused and comforted by the following lament of Isaiah Thomas, the great printer, publisher, bookseller, historian of printing, and founder of the American Antiquarian Society. The manuscript was found laid in the Society's copy of *A Catalogue of the Books and Pamphlets Issued from the Press of Joel Munsell, from the year 1828 to 1870 (Albany, 1872)*, now located among the Joel Munsell Papers in the manuscript department at AAS. Thomas wrote: "In printing for customers having crude notions of orthography, punctuation and capitalising, I very seldom interfered with their notions, if they were positive men, although their style was detrimental to my reputation. Not a few books therefore were printed in a manner utterly repugnant to my taste in such matters; finding it of no use to counsel or oppose their unlettered, inconsistent, but *settled* prejudices."

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

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