



The Book

Newsletter of the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture
Published by the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts

Gross To Succeed Hall as Program Chair

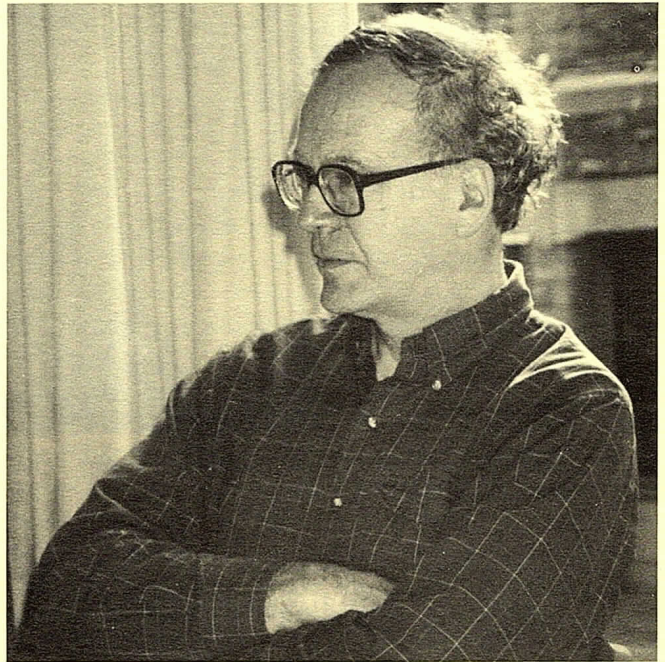
Robert A. Gross, professor of American studies and American history at the College of William and Mary, will succeed David D. Hall as chairman of the American Antiquarian Society's Program in the History of the Book in American Culture, effective January 1, 1993. He will serve a four-year term.

Hall, professor of American religious history at the Harvard Divinity School, is stepping down in order to devote all of his AAS-related time to his other duties as chairman of the Editorial Board of the multivolume AAS collaborative history of the book in American culture. He has served as chairman of the Program since its establishment in 1983. Kenneth E. Carpenter, associate director for research resources at the Harvard University Library, will continue to serve as chairman of the Program's Executive Committee.

David Hall has played an absolutely pivotal role in the development and progress of the Program throughout its near decade-long existence. He has provided the Program with inspired intellectual leadership as well as much common-sense advice about its various activities. He has presided over many a conference and symposium sponsored by the Program. He delivered the first annual James Russell Wiggins Lecture in the History of the Book in American Culture in 1983—a statement that has informed the development of the Program and the field ever since. In addition, he led the 1988 AAS Summer Seminar in the History of the Book in American Culture. All of us involved in the Program and in the field generally are indebted to him for his steady leadership. We can look forward to continued close relations with him, for several more years to come, on the collaborative history.

Bob Gross will bring his own strong intellect, fertile imagination, and high energy to the position of Program chairman. He is no stranger to the Program himself. He too has participated in numerous activities of the Program and was the 1989 Wiggins Lecturer at AAS. He has been serving as a member of the Executive Committee of the Program and the Editorial Board of the collaborative history project and is co-editor, with Mary Kelley, of Volume 2 of the history. He is author of *The Minutemen and Their World* and of two articles on books and libraries in Thoreau's Concord, published in the *AAS Proceedings*.

J.B.H.



David D. Hall

The Collaborative History

Some twenty-five scholars and staff gathered at AAS on September 18-19 to present work in progress and discuss the structure of the first volume of the collaborative history. The conference, which was funded in part by a grant to AAS from the National Endowment for the Humanities, benefitted greatly from the presence of three editors of the British series (David McKitterick, Michael Turner, and Ian Willison), and from the mixture of disciplinary perspectives among those presenting papers. A mere handful of these can be singled out for notice here.

An initial session on the book trades included Hugh Amory's re-analysis of the Boston bookseller Michael Perry's inventory (1700) in the light of conflicting interpretations (Stephen Foster's and Stephen Botein's) of the relative importance of imported and domestically produced books; Amory used to advantage information in the inventory about the quantities and pace of sales of books in sheets, in contrast to bound books that figured in the London trade. Jerome Anderson analyzed the printing history of Samuel Willard's *Compleat Body of Divinity* (1726), from the earliest proposals for this, the first folio to emerge from the colonial press, to



Members of the Editorial Board of the collaborative history project at its meeting in Cambridge in September: (left to right) Philip F. Gura, Stephen W. Nissenbaum, and Mary Kelley

AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY
 a national library of American history
 185 Salisbury Street
 Worcester, Massachusetts 01609-1634
 Telephone (508) 755-5221 or 752-5813
 E-Mail: BM.AAH@RLG.BITNET

Ellen S. Dunlap, President
 Nancy H. Burkett, Librarian
 John B. Hench, Director of Research and Publication
 David D. Hall, Chairman, Program in the History
 of the Book in American Culture

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
 Kenneth Carpenter, Chairman
 Lawrence I. Buell, Loren F. Ghiglione,
 Robert A. Gross, Mary Kelley, Marie E. Korey,
 Deanna Marcum, David P. Nord, Michael Winship
*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: David D. Hall and John B. Hench

The editors welcome all news relevant to the interests of the
 Program in the History of the Book in American Culture.
 The Program in the History of the Book in American Culture is
 supported in part by a grant from the Charles E. Culpeper
 Foundation, Inc.

Copyright © 1992 by American Antiquarian Society

the final presswork; he was able to demonstrate that the two
 printers who divided up the task worked simultaneously, with
 resulting inconsistencies of pagination and format; and that
 they made certain changes in Willard's text. In both papers,
 bibliographical analysis became the basis for important
 reflections about social and cultural history.

David Shields presented a wide-ranging paper on the
 uses of manuscript among literary and political figures; this
 much neglected subject came to life as he explained—in rela-
 tion to politics in the province of New York—the “public”
 uses of this more “private” medium at moments of press cen-
 sorship. The categories of “public” and “private” as well as
 those of “market” and “author” were the starting point for
 reflections by Michael Warner on the manifold possibilities
 that each of these terms represented in this period. Thus he
 posed the question, how many books were, like Willard's
Body of Divinity (underwritten by subscription), only partially
 of “the market.”

Collectively, the papers and the discussions that followed
 have prompted a redrafting of the master plan for Volume 1.

Further conferences lie ahead, most immediately a plan-
 ning conference for Volume 4 on the twentieth century under
 the leadership of Carl Kaestle and Jan Radway, and, down the
 road, similar conferences for Volumes 2 and 3.

As always, the editors are eager to learn of work in
 progress.

D.D.H.

Ellen Dunlap Becomes AAS President, Succeeding Marcus A. McCorison

Ellen S. Dunlap, former director of the Rosenbach Museum and Library of Philadelphia, became president of the American Antiquarian Society on November 1. She succeeds Marcus A. McCorison, who retired after more than three decades of service to AAS—and to scholarship in the Americanist fields generally—as librarian, director, and president.

The first woman to head the Society, Ellen Dunlap took degrees in the humanities and in library science at the University of Texas at Austin, where she specialized in textual criticism and bibliography and rare books and manuscripts. Before going to the Rosenbach, she served in several posts at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at her alma mater. She will serve as an ex officio member of the Executive Committee of the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture.

In a reminiscence published in the most recent issue of the *News-Letter of the American Antiquarian Society*, Mark McCorison listed the establishment of the book history program as among the high points of his long stewardship here. A couple of generations of AAS readers and scholars in the field of American history and culture generally are greatly in Mark's debt for many other achievements as well, including his imaginative and determined cultivation and development of the AAS library collections, the establishment of the AAS fellowship program, and his pioneering application of the computer to the cataloguing of rare books and other specialized library materials.

Mark and his wife, Janet, will be spending the 1992-93 academic year in southern California, where Mark will be in residence at the Huntington Library working on his edition of Isaiah Thomas's manuscript catalogue of his own library, which became in 1812 the basis of the Society's collections.

J.B.H.

Appointments to Program Offices

Several scholars have been appointed recently to positions on various bodies of the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture. Joining the Executive Committee of the Program this year is Deanna Marcum, dean of the School of Library and Information Science at the Catholic University of America. Two new members have been added to the roster of the Program's Advisory Board. They are Richard D. Brown, professor of history at the University of Connecticut, and Joan Shelley Rubin, associate professor of history at the State University of New York at Brockport. Rubin has also been added, along with three other individuals, to the Editorial Board supervising the collaborative history project. The other three are James N. Green, curator of printed books at the Library Company of Philadelphia; Mary Kelley, John Sloan Dickey Third Century professor of the social sciences at Dartmouth College; and Stephen W. Nissenbaum, professor of history at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Willison Discusses 20th Century In 1992 Wiggins Lecture at AAS

Ian Willison, one of the general editors of the history of the book in Britain series now in progress, delivered the tenth annual James Russell Wiggins Lecture in the History of the Book in American Culture at AAS on September 23 on the subject "The History of the Book in Twentieth-Century Britain and America: Perspective and Evidence."

In his lecture, the goal of which was "to help set the agenda for further, coordinated research in the history of the book in twentieth-century Britain and America," Willison traced the late nineteenth-century shift in the balance of power in the trans-Atlantic book world from Britain to the United States and delineated as well the key characteristics of the twentieth-century British-American book scene: the increasing involvement of conventional book publishing with the mass media and high-risk corporate financing and the increasing mutual involvement of the British and American book worlds. "Such increasing involvement with supranational changes in both media and institutions," Willison said, "means that the history of the book becomes part of general history."

Willison's lecture will be published next April both in the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* and as a separate pamphlet in the Wiggins Lecture series.



Ian Willison

Research Notes

READING IN ANTEBELLUM AMERICAN CULTURE

What did antebellum Americans think reading was for? This was the large, naive question that brought me to the American Antiquarian Society on a fellowship earlier this year with the intention of surveying antebellum reading instruction texts—primers, alphabets, readers. To become a shrewd-enough reader of the primers of the later decades, I needed to know what they had “grown up” out of as well. Thus, I spent much of my time at AAS reading alphabet books, primers, and a wide range of children’s literature before 1800.

This summer the AAS installed the first version of its MaRK on-line catalogue, an immense practical boon to readers. Downloading from MaRK to disk allowed me to include in my own notes on any given document AAS bibliographical data, as well as RLIN records of related material. Through MaRK, I pursued such categories as Primers and Alphabets for the pre-1801 period. Materials from 1801 to 1820, not yet on-line via the American Children’s Book Project, have two points of entry: card catalogues and the on-line Catalogue of American Engravings (CAE). CAE brought important illustrators to my attention and, in general, cued me to the fact that significant images of reading occur in a broad range of genres beyond the predictable primers and alphabets, just as my research was making me progressively more sensitive to the interaction of text and image. For works after 1820, I explored the schoolbook drawer and the on-line American Children’s Books catalogue, a deep and detailed resource, with an intelligent and intelligible array of ways into it, which also provided riveting mini-histories that often seemed to anticipate my questions.

Even before 1800, children had become what amounts to the first mass-market audience for books. From primers and alphabets to fables and abridgements of adult novels to storybooks and readers, the very copiousness of children’s literature, so notable at AAS, is in itself meaningful. Notions about the development of literary genres in America will have to be somewhat revised once we fully account for the way generations of consumers were trained up by this rowdy company of imported and home-grown books, with the range of ideologies, images, and attitudes they carry.

Experts on the AAS staff helped me to understand what I was seeing when I looked at these books, each one of which tells a rich and surprising story not only in text and image but in the traces left by owners. Many of these books were clearly what psychology calls “transitional objects,” their pages velvety with use, their ripped leaves hand sewn, their covers replaced with wallpaper or fabric, their bindings carefully repaired with scraps of leather or muslin, their flyleaves often elaborately inscribed by teachers, friends, parents, aunts and uncles, or merely as “His Book” or “Her Book,” sometimes descending through a whole family of children. Many primer and storybook engravings have been selectively hand-painted, evidence of the imaginative collaboration of reader,

image, and text that characterizes these books. It’s not possible accurately to recover the situation between reader and book of which these marks are the trace, and one wants to resist the impulse to sentimentalize these artifacts, as much as they seem to have been objects of their owners’ now illegible sentiments. But it would be just as foolhardy to ignore or gainsay the forceful existence of something like an “aura” to which these marks contribute. Walter Benjamin thought that the mechanical reproduction of the work of art “withers” its aura (*Illuminations*, p. 221). I wonder whether we might think of readers’ unique marks on these early mass-market products as signaling a recovery or regeneration of the aura which disappears with, in Benjamin’s phrase, the “shattering of tradition.”

Both as material artifacts and as literature, these books offer a nearly transparent window into some of the mechanics of cultural transmission. While as artifacts they reveal certain charged attitudes towards reading, as texts they are interesting hybrids of traditionally high and low cultural forms; the capitalist printers freely drew on any materials to hand, mingling rhetorical and collegiate conventions with folkloric and popular-sensationalist genres.

What I expected to find in these books was, among other things, the emergence of an American *paideia* dedicated to Christian values and republican virtue, carrying the banners of Rousseau, Jefferson, Rush, et al. What I saw instead, even in notoriously ideological works like *The New England Primer*, was the invention of the American mass market. Certainly high-culture theories influenced these texts: their narratives become increasingly democratic, enjoining everyone to learn a trade, for example, and not to count on a stable social position; their visual images become increasingly secular and utilitarian so that ordinary objects referring to nothing beyond themselves mix in with religious and moral emblems; their lessons begin to employ Rousseauian techniques of internalization and to convey messages of civic duty à la Rush. But these elements vie within these books with two powerful forces: folklore, or oral tradition, and merchant capitalism. A reader is therefore as likely to encounter an image of a bookseller urging the young buyer to come spend at his store or an image with a centuries-old folk provenance, such as a cat playing a fiddle, as she is to encounter exhortations to read the Bible or to live by the golden rule. And the exhortations, it must be said, rely for their transmission, for their very appearance in print, on the old carnival fun of the fiddle-playing cat and the enterprise of the capitalist-printer.

As for the question I started with—What was reading for?—so far the answer appears to depend on your point of view: if you’re Isaiah Thomas, reading produces a new market for goods; if you’re Mother Goose) reading keeps the ancient rhythms and rituals of oral culture alive in a new medium; if you’re Benjamin Rush, reading enforces civility; if you’re Susan Warner, reading can earn you a living and help other young women learn how to survive in a persistently menacing and unstable world.

Patricia Crain, Columbia University

Financial Support for Program

A substantial contribution for support of the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture during 1992-93 has been received from the School of Library and Information Science of the Catholic University of America. Other recent contributions have been made by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and by Grantland S. Rice, of Brandeis University. We are most grateful for this assistance and shall gladly accept additional contributions.

Two New Centers Established

Two new university-based centers in the field of the history of the book have been established recently. Under the joint sponsorship of the University of Wisconsin—Madison and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, the Center for the History of Print Culture in Modern America has been set up “to help determine the historical sociology of print in modern America in all its culturally diverse manifestations.” With its emphasis on book history in “modern America,” the new Wisconsin center complements the pre-1877 collecting focus of AAS. The center was formally launched on October 26 when Ian Willison repeated his AAS James Russell Wiggins Lecture (see article elsewhere in this issue) in Madison. Co-directors of the center are Wayne A. Wiegand, professor in the university’s School of Library and Information Studies, and James P. Danky, assistant librarian for research and development at the historical society. For further information on the center’s goals and programs, contact Danky at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 816 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

Another new entity is the Center for the History of the Book, which has been established at Pennsylvania State University at University Park. To be formally inaugurated in the autumn of 1993, the Penn State center will be under the direction of Prof. James L. W. West III of the Department of English. Affiliated with the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress and with the Pennsylvania Center for the Book in Harrisburg, this interdisciplinary center will offer undergraduate courses and graduate seminars, host conferences and summer institutes, and organize lectures and exhibits. In cooperation with the center, the Penn State Press has launched the Penn State Series in the History of the Book focusing on scholarly monographs in such areas as publishing history, author-publisher relationships, and the compositional history of particular literary works. Further information may be had from West, Department of English, Burrowes Building, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania 16802.

MLA and AHA Sessions Set

Roger Chartier’s *L’Order des Livres*, previously noticed in this newsletter, will be the subject, or springboard, of three overlapping sessions at the forthcoming Modern Language Association convention in New York City; a session on December 28 with Chartier himself, Robert Darnton, and Lynn Hunt; and, on succeeding days, two workshops (at which Chartier will be present) dealing with author/text relationships and the organization of knowledge.

AAS, the American Printing History Association, and the American Historical Association are jointly sponsoring a session at this year’s AHA meeting in Washington on “Almanacs and the Unification of Early American Culture.” Papers will be given by Claudia L. Bushman (Columbia University), Peter Eisenstadt (Encyclopedia of New York City), and William Pencak (Pennsylvania State University). Richard D. Brown (University of Connecticut and an AAS-NEH Fellow this year) will chair the session, which will take place on Monday, December 28, from 2:30 to 4:30 in the Marshall Room of the Sheraton Washington Hotel.

Miscellany

The Bibliographical Society of Canada has issued a call for papers for next year’s annual conference on the theme of the history of the book in Canada. Papers should be approximately forty-five minutes long, and may be considered for publication in the *Papers/Cahiers*, the society’s refereed journal. The 1993 conference will take place in Hamilton, Ontario, tentatively on June 16. Inquiries and proposals (deadline January 15, 1993) should be sent to Eric L. Swanick, Legislative Library, P. O. Box 6000, Fredericton, N.B. E3B 5H1. . . . AAS has just published a revision of the 1987 guide to its collections and programs. The new edition is entitled *Under Its Generous Dome: The Collections and Programs of the American Antiquarian Society*. Material in the first edition has been revised and updated (especially regarding cataloguing access), several new sections have been added, and the index has been substantially enlarged. The price is \$12.50. The book is available at AAS. Mail orders should be addressed to the Society’s book distributor, the University Press of Virginia, Box 3608 University Station, Charlottesville, VA 22903-0608. Add \$3.00 postage and handling for the first book, \$.75 for each additional copy. Virginia residents must add 4-1/2 percent state sales tax. Visa and MasterCard accepted. . . . The date has been set for the eleventh James Russell Wiggins Lecture in the History of the Book in American Culture, to be given by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., of Harvard University: Thursday, November 4, 1993. Details in due course.

Books Received

Books received recently by the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture include:

Armstrong, Robert. *Nevada Printing History: A Bibliography of Imprints and Publications*. University of Nevada Press, 1991.

Davis, Donald G., Jr., ed. *Reading & Libraries: Proceedings of Library History Seminar VIII, 9-11 May 1990*, Bloomington Indiana. Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Texas at Austin, 1991.

The Gehenna Press: The Work of Fifty Years, 1942-1992. Paperbound. University Press of New England for the Bridwell Library, Southern Methodist University, 1992.

Olmert, Michael. *The Smithsonian Book of Books*. Smithsonian Books, 1992.

Reese, William S., and George A. Miles. *Creating America: An Exhibition at the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library*, Yale University. Paperbound. Yale University Library, 1992.

Rouse, Roscoe, Jr. *A History of the Oklahoma State University Library*. Oklahoma State University, 1992.

Stevenson, Louise L. *The Victorian Homefront: American Thought and Culture, 1860-1880*. Twayne Publishers, 1991.

Wilson, Robert A. *Modern Book Collecting*. Paperbound. Lyons & Burford, Publishers, 1992.

Ziff, Larzer. *Writing in the New Nation: Prose, Print and Politics in the Early United States*. Yale University Press, 1991 .

Another Seminar Planned for Summer 1993

The seventh AAS Summer Seminar in the History of the Book in American Culture will be held from Sunday through Friday, June 6-11, 1993. Michael Winship, associate professor of English at the University of Texas at Austin and a principal figure in the AAS sponsored collaborative history project, will again serve as leader of the seminar, which will deal with critical methods in bibliography and the history of the book.

A flyer giving full details of the seminar will be sent to constituents early in January, when application forms will also be ready.

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

Address Correction Requested

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 416
WORCESTER, MASS. 01609
