



The Book

Newsletter of the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture
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The Collaborative History

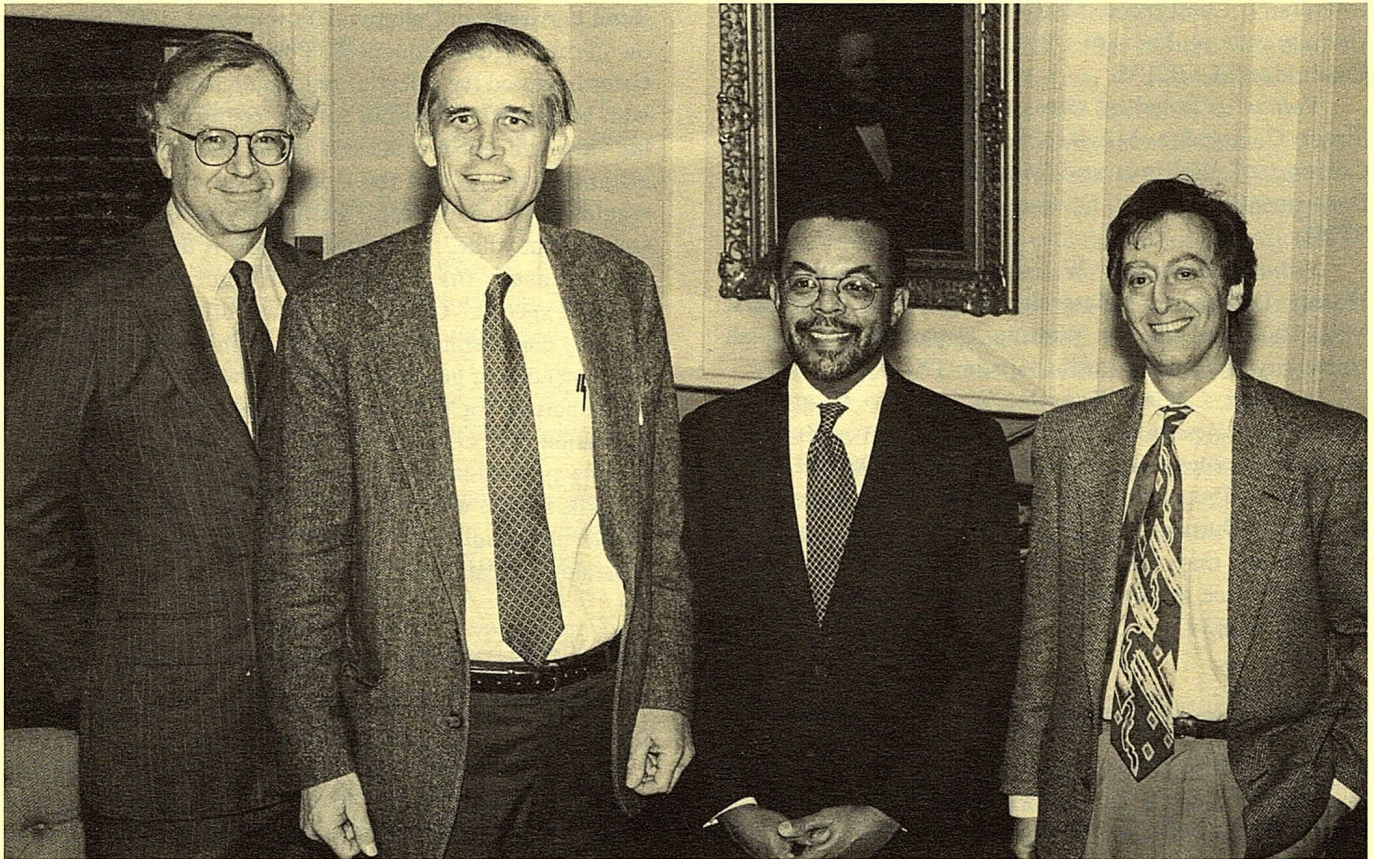
With funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and a publishing agreement concluded with Cambridge University Press, the AAS-sponsored collaborative work *A History of the Book in America* is well launched. The project's Editorial Board met in October and will convene again in June. What follows is a brief progress report.

VOLUME 1

An important way station has been reached for Volume 1 of *A History of the Book in America*: all of its parts have found authors. Now the editors of the volume, together with their fellow authors, can direct themselves fully to the

tasks of research and writing. As noted previously in the newsletter, the editors (and the contributors named below) welcome hearing from persons who possess expertise in any aspect of book history for the American colonies and states in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The chapters on the seventeenth century in Volume 1 are the responsibility of the two volume editors, Hugh Amory and David Hall. The contributors who will address aspects of the book trades, literary culture, politics, journalism, education, and libraries in the eighteenth century up to about 1790 are: Ross Beales (reading, readers, and libraries); John Bidwell (on suppliers of paper, type, etc.); Richard D. Brown (politics and the press); Charles Clark (journalism); James Green (the book trades in New York [to 1740] and the middle colonies and states;



Henry Louis Gates, Jr., AAS's 1993 Wiggins lecturer (third from left), with three previous or future Wiggins lecturers: David D. Hall (1983), Lawrence I. Buell (1994), and Robert A. Gross (1989). See article on p.2.

Marcus A. McCorison (the book trades in New England); James Raven (the British export trade in the eighteenth century); A. Gregg Roeber (the German-language press); David Shields (literary culture); David Watters (the *New-England Primer* and schoolbooks); and Calhoun Winton (the book trades in the southern colonies and states).

VOLUMES 2 AND 3

Plans are well advanced for the invitational planning conferences for Volumes 2 and 3 of *A History of the Book in America* that will be held in Worcester in January and February, respectively. Chaired each conference will be the volume editors: Robert Gross and Mary Kelley for Volume 2 (1790s to 1840s), Stephen Nissenbaum and Michael Winship for Volume 3 (1840s to 1880s). The planning conference for Volume 4 (1880s to our own times) was held last May. The conferences are funded under the NEH grant to AAS in support of *HBA*.

These editors, like those of the other volumes in the series, also welcome inquiries and suggestions from other scholars possessing expertise in the field.

LIST OF THE VOLUME EDITORS

Following are the names and addresses of the volume editors for *A History of the Book in America*:

Volume 1: Hugh Amory, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138; and David D. Hall, Divinity School, Harvard University, 45 Francis Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Volume 2: Robert A. Gross, Cabot House, 60 Linnaean Street, Cambridge, MA 02138-1560 (on leave from the College of William and Mary); and Mary Kelley, Department of History, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH 03755.

Volume 3: Stephen W. Nissenbaum, Department of History, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Amherst, MA 01003; and Michael Winship, Department of English, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX 78712.

Volume 4: Carl Kaestle, Wisconsin Center for Educational Research, 781 Education Sciences Building, 1025 West Johnson Street, Madison, WI 53706; and Janice A. Radway, Program in Literature, 104 Art Museum, Duke University, Durham, NC 27706.

Editors may also be reached through the central editorial office at AAS, 185 Salisbury Street, Worcester, MA 01609-1634.

1994 Summer Seminars Set

The American Antiquarian Society will offer two weeklong Summer Seminars in the History of the Book in American Culture in June 1994, one similar to last year's seminar and one entirely new.

Michael Winship will again lead a seminar on "Critical Methods in Bibliography and the History of the Book in the

United States." This session will run from Sunday, June 5, through Friday, June 10. Winship, associate professor of English at the University of Texas at Austin and editor of *Bibliography of American Literature*, has either led or otherwise participated in every summer seminar offered by AAS since the first one in 1985.

The new offering will follow the next week, when William J. Gilmore-Lehne will lead a seminar on "Regional Cultures of the Book." The dates are Sunday, June 12, through Friday, June 17. Gilmore-Lehne is associate professor of history at New Jersey's Stockton State College and author of *Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life: Material and Cultural Development in Rural New England, 1780-1835*.

Visiting faculty and AAS staff members will also participate in each seminar.

Full details of the seminars, together with application materials, will be available in January.

Gates Delivers Wiggins Lecture

Henry Louis Gates, Jr., W.E.B. Du Bois professor of the humanities, chair of Afro-American Studies, and director of the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Research at Harvard University, delivered the eleventh annual James Russell Wiggins lecture in the History of the Book in American Culture on November 4, 1993. Speaking on "Truth or Consequences: Putting Limits on Limits," Gates explored the effect of redefining the first amendment with an agreed-upon limit for the right of free speech. In his view, the apparent success of the feminist-conservative alliance has opened the door to the consideration of regulation of hate-speech. "Perhaps racist speech is hurtful and without value, . . . but tolerating it is the price we must pay to ensure the protection of other, beneficial and valuable speech," Gates said. "Being offensive is only one of many considerations that must weigh in the balance. The first amendment guarantees imply power and access which are important for the less empowered." He argued against regulation not because "speech has no power, but because it is always evaluated in relation to the goals it is serving."

The lecture will be published in the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* due out in April and as a separate publication shortly thereafter.

Buell to Give 1994 Wiggins Lecture

The twelfth annual Wiggins lecture will be given by Lawrence I. Buell, professor of English and American Literature and Language and dean for undergraduate education in the faculty of arts and sciences, Harvard University, on Friday, November 4, 1994, in Worcester and will be repeated at a second site (to be announced) in January 1995. The title of Buell's lecture will be "The Rise and Fall of the Great American Novel."

The History of the Book: Research Trends and Source Materials

[Editors' Note: Robert A. Gross read the following paper at the American Studies Association annual meeting in Boston on November 6, 1993, at a session entitled "Old Collections, New Questions—A Workshop on American Studies Research Opportunities at the American Antiquarian Society." Gross is chair of American Studies at the College of William and Mary and of the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture at AAS.]

When Isaiah Thomas launched the American Antiquarian Society back in 1812 and endowed the institution with his extensive library of books, broadsides, newspapers, and pamphlets, he not only provided the means "to enlarge the sphere of human knowledge, [to] aid in the progress of science, to perpetuate the history of moral and political events, and to improve and instruct posterity;" he also laid the foundation for a new scholarly field: the history of the book.¹

In the vast and varied archive Thomas and his successors have assembled at AAS headquarters in Worcester, Massachusetts, lie the imprints and manuscripts that are making possible a remarkable, new cultural history of the U.S. There once was a time when these documents were valued merely as sources, the obliging servants of scholarship that neither demanded nor deserved attention in their own right. But no more. Today, the medium has become the message, as scholars from diverse disciplines focus on the records themselves, gathered together at AAS and other research libraries. For the new history of the book, Thomas's legacy embodies the story of "print culture": the social form of communication, brought into being by Gutenberg's ingenious machine, through which a shifting cast of characters—authors, booksellers, editors, printers, publishers, librarians, teachers, newsboys, and common readers, among many others—has conducted the production, dissemination, and consumption of words and images in writing and print. Appropriately, this is the very approach that Isaiah Thomas, the most successful printer and publisher of his Revolutionary generation, pioneered long ago. "That art which is the preserver of all arts," he observed in *The History of Printing in America*, published in 1810, "is worthy of the attention of the learned and the curious." Coming on two centuries later, his insight is recasting the study of American society and culture.²

The rich holdings of AAS, together with the various bibliographies and research guides its staff has compiled or published over the years, form an indispensable starting point for charting the contours of print culture over the two and a half centuries from the beginnings of printing in North America in 1639 down to the Gilded Age, the *longue durée* spanned by the collections. Indeed, this comprehensive archive of printed works constitutes the fundamental data base of the field, without which we cannot pretend to know the main lines of book history. What were the char-

acteristic forms of print in different eras? On what scale were they made available, by whom, and in what cities and regions over time? Were they imported from abroad, pirated and reprinted on these shores, or made in America from start to finish? To pursue these questions, we must begin with the printed texts themselves, which, like the artifacts of material culture studies, contain the record of their production in their very physical form. For numerous genres of print, such as biographies, self-help books, and travel narratives, we still need basic descriptive histories. Much of the field remains *terra incognita*.

In recent years, historians of the book in both Europe and the U.S. have identified leading themes. One is a movement from scarcity to abundance in the dissemination of the printed word. That transformation is accompanied by the invention and proliferation of new genres for a large and diverse reading public in an increasingly urban, industrial society. Such trends represent a democratization of culture to some scholars and a triumph of literary capitalism and mass markets to others. Whatever the view, these notions give direction to the field, enabling researchers to make their way past the hundreds and thousands of volumes listed in bibliographies and collected at libraries like AAS.

While the broad outlines are visible in the production of print, the story of consumption—the actual reception and uses of texts in society—is only beginning to be explored. As college teachers know all too well, the simple fact of a book's purchase, or its withdrawal from the library, is no proof that it was read. Yet reading is "the heart of the matter": a cultural encounter between persons and texts, calling forth the application of acquired skills and sensibilities to the written and printed word and engaging issues of authority and autonomy in the construction of social meaning. Reading is a "mystery," says Robert Darnton, one of the premier scholars in the field.

Both familiar and foreign, it is an activity that we share with our ancestors yet can never be the same as what they experienced. We may enjoy the illusion of stepping outside of time in order to make contact with authors who lived centuries ago. But even if their texts have come down to us unchanged—a virtual impossibility, considering the evolution of layout and of books as physical objects—our relation to those texts cannot be the same as that of readers in the past. Reading has a history. But how can we recover it?³

Despite such mysteries, scholars in American studies are increasingly taking up the challenge and exploring what books and reading have meant to particular individuals and groups in the past. Recent works emphasize reading as a political act, an expression of resistance to domination. Cathy N. Davidson discerns such sentiments in the popularity of fiction in late eighteenth-century America. By scrutinizing the marginalia inscribed in the numerous copies of early novels that survive in the collections of AAS, Davidson has opened a window into the consciousness of female readers in a Revolutionary age, women intent upon claiming a place for themselves in an expanding world of

print. Through a different route, governed primarily by literary theory, Michael Denning reaches similar conclusions about the working-class readers of dime novels in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. In his view, the "blood-and-thunder" adventure stories churned out by the fiction factories of the day articulated deep-seated anxieties of workers in an industrial-capitalist age; they represented allegories of an artisan republic in peril.⁴

Such "readings" of past readers rely ultimately on the ingenuity of literary criticism. An alternative approach is to probe the diaries and letters of those individuals who kept records of their readings and wrote down their responses to various texts. The American Antiquarian Society holds a variety of such documents, which a few scholars, like Richard D. Brown, have investigated in depth. Brown's *Knowledge Is Power* employs these personal records to reconstruct the ways that information was communicated and authority sustained or challenged in the long passage from scarcity to abundance in the production of print. In contrast to Denning, Brown portrays a mid-nineteenth-century print culture marked by increasing diversity, autonomy, and choice.⁵

How might we negotiate among these claims? My purpose is to illustrate how the study of diaries can be supplemented by bibliographical analysis and thereby provide a wider view of the constraints and choices in the social system of print. Bibliography reconstructs the production and distribution of books; diaries and letters document the selections made by individual consumers in

the marketplace of ideas. In the interplay between supply and demand, we can find the dynamics of print culture.

The personal document on which I will focus is a manuscript in the collections of AAS: the journal of eighteen-year-old Edward Jenner Carpenter, which records one year in the life of a cabinetmaker's apprentice in the western Massachusetts city of Greenfield from March 1844 through June 1845. The brief entries, normally one or two paragraphs long, limn the works and days of a young man, raised in a small, rural town and now relishing the excitement and freedom of a bustling city. Reading is but one of his pastimes; in the course of the year, he occasionally goes to Sunday meeting, attends lectures at the lyceum and debates at the Literary Club, plays "wicket ball" on Fast Day, enjoys evening card games with friends, gawks at militia musters, tramps through the woods, and loafs on the streets. And when not at leisure, he is busy in the furniture shop, making bureaus and secretaries, grumbling at his work assignments, and resenting limitations on his own free time.

Our analysis of Carpenter's journal has been facilitated by historian Christopher Clark, who carefully edited and annotated the document for publication in the 1988 *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*.⁶ In his interpretive introduction, Clark emphasizes the apprentice's eager participation in a new youth culture among Greenfield's artisans and clerks. "Carpenter's diary," he writes, "was above all a record and celebration of this autonomy." Even so, as Richard Brown has perceived in his own foray into the diary, Carpenter was hardly isolated from the broader currents of his culture. He gained access to the same "information marketplace" as his better-educated, more privileged peers in distant cities, subscribing to the same literary weekly, the *Philadelphia Saturday Courier*, that regularly arrived in the homes of genteel families. Such access was no easy accomplishment. In another investigation of the journal, Ronald Zboray has noticed that the Greenfield teenager, with far less spending money than is available to his counterparts today, resorted to various ingenious strategies to obtain the reading matter he desired. He borrowed books from peers and from his boss, split the cost of a subscription with others, and exchanged newspapers with far-flung relatives and friends through the mail. When he did buy a book or two, he counted his pennies. He was delighted with the bargain offered by *The Omnibus of Modern Romance*, which contained six stories for only a quarter. But Carpenter's reading was not simply a function of financial necessity. He exercised a measure of choice about his personal expenses. If he passed up a lecture or concert for want of the price of admission, he spent the money thus saved on other, more costly items, like a \$3.25 vest and a \$.75 silk cravat, fashionable attire for promenading on Greenfield streets. Historians of the book may be interested in Carpenter's reading. He was more concerned to enjoy his leisure hours. In that personal perspective, books occupied

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only a small part of his time. He read a periodical or book once every nine days or so—and then it was often on Sundays, when he preferred to immerse himself in a novel, rather than hear a sermon in church.⁷

What novels and newspapers did Carpenter actually read? From the references in the diary, we can compile a list of eighteen books and several newspapers, all of which Christopher Clark has conveniently identified on our behalf. Standard bibliographical guides allow us to determine the likely editions that Carpenter possessed; the AAS staff can, in a short morning's work, put all of them in a scholar's hands. Viewing the actual books, as I recently did, is critical to comprehending Carpenter's world of print. The bulk of his reading consisted of novels, most of them reprinted from abroad. The cabinetmaker's apprentice read the popular novelists of Victorian England, if not Dickens himself, then his respectable counterparts, the historical romancer G.P.R. James and the seafaring storyteller Captain Frederick Marryat. But the versions he secured were not the nicely bound volumes aimed at the comfortable classes. A few titles, such as James's *Arrah Neil: or Times of Old*, resembled substantial paperbacks today; they were about the same size, nine by five and one-half inches, as the complete edition of Stephen King's *The Stand* and Anne Rice's *The Witching Hour*, two books on my teenage son's shelf, but the text was printed in two columns of small type, comprising 139 pages in all, and the copy at AAS is unbound. Nonetheless, the publisher, Harper and Brothers, included James's work in its well-advertised "Library of Select Novels." But more of Carpenter's literary fare consisted of cheap pamphlet novels, like T. S. Arthur's *Insubordination: Or. The Shoemaker's Daughters: An American Story of Real Life*, a seventy-seven-page story, two columns per page, published by R. G. Berford of Philadelphia, who advertised his bookshop, in copy appended to the text, as an "Emporium of Cheap and Elegant Literature. The Largest Establishment for the sale of Cheap Publications in the United States!" All of these novels poured forth from the steam-powered presses of publishing houses in Philadelphia, New York City, and Boston during the 1840s. Together with the "story papers" that flourished alongside them, the "cheap stories" wrought a literary revolution, bringing the working classes of the Northeast into the general reading public and generating a new phenomenon that has come to define our world as well as theirs: a modern mass culture, dominated by a few urban producers, catering to the tastes of tens and hundreds of thousands of ordinary people in all walks of life.⁸

Edward Jenner Carpenter was thus an active participant in the rise of "The Reading Million" to a prominent share of the literary marketplace. Young women in the early republic, who wept over sentimental novels like *Charlotte Temple*, stirred the first popular wave of novel reading in America. Young mechanics like Carpenter were typical of male readers in the second phase of this literary

revolution. In the early 1840s, publishers of story papers targeted "farmers and small tradespeople, skilled mechanics and petty clerks" for their sales. The strategy evidently worked; Jack Larkin has found that over half the novels sold in the Merriam family bookstore and printing office in Brookfield, Massachusetts, during the 1830s and 1840s were bought by the firm's own apprentices. In this perspective, Carpenter represents a case study in reader reception of the popular fiction that Michael Denning has identified with the working class of urban, industrial America in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Through the entries in his diary, set in bibliographical context, we can test whether Carpenter read his stories, as Denning argues, with a distinct "mechanic accent."⁹

My brief excursion into Carpenter's journal suggests an alternate interpretation. In his reading and his responses, Carpenter bridged two worlds: the literary culture of his father, a small-town doctor and bibliophile, and the popular culture of his fellow mechanics. The weekly to which he subscribed, the *Philadelphia Saturday Courier*, was a journalistic hybrid well suited to his mixed sensibility. The mother of all story papers, the *Courier* began in 1831 as "A Family Newspaper Neutral in Politics and Religion." A huge, blanket-sized sheet, almost impossible to handle today—it measures two and a half feet long by nearly two feet wide—the four-page paper crowded into eight columns of type on the front and last pages a succession of stories and serial novels pirated from English publications, reprinted *gratis* from American organs, and sometimes even bought from native authors. In the mid-1840s, the fiction eschewed sensationalism; it offered conservative bromides like T. S. Arthur's "Where There's A Will, There's A Way," which counseled workers, dispirited by economic depression, that nobody need go without a job, if he only looked hard enough. Carpenter approved of the piece, even though he personally knew "cabinet journeymen" who were suffering from "hard times." Interspersed with such stories was a variety of news items, bits of humor, "literary intelligence" (notices of authors and new books), a "Juvenile Department" with acrostics, riddles, and other puzzles, a "Family Advisor" on diet and health, and pieces of "useful information" like the recipe for curing burns that Carpenter copied into his journal. In effect, the *Courier* was the *Reader's Digest* of its day, and it achieved an equivalent success. By 1846, the *Courier* boasted a circulation of 51,000 copies a week, making it "the LARGEST and CHEAPEST Journal in the World."¹⁰

Carpenter was as respectable in his choice of novels as of newspapers. Though the apprentice could not afford to join the Greenfield Social Library, he read some of the same authors represented in such collections, which drew their subscribers from local professionals, merchants, and shopkeepers. Even when he took up what David Reynolds calls "dark-temperance" novels, he paid greater attention to the moral than to the depiction of men in the throes of

madness and vice. Upon completing a typical work of the genre, *Easy Nat: Or. Boston Bars and Boston Boys: A Tale of Home Trials by One Who Knows Them*, Carpenter summarized the message pertinent to his own circumstance: "It is the life of three boys during their apprenticeship[,] one of them was Easy Nat who was led into drunkenness & all sorts of dissipation by his brother apprentice set his masters house on fire & then cut his throat. This shows the evil of drunken Companions."¹¹

If he missed the lurid charms of *Easy Nat*, Carpenter succumbed to other versions of sensational literature, which were definitely not obtained by the social libraries. He was mesmerized by Eugene Sue's racy exposé of city life, *The Mysteries of Paris*, which spawned a host of imitators in the U.S., "dark adventure tales," Reynolds calls them, like *The Burglars. or the Mysteries of the League of Honor: an American Tale* by the prolific hack writer Justin Jones, and he read one work in an allied genre, a criminal biography of "Mike Martin the Highwayman," originally published a quarter-century before. Yet, the appeal of such fiction was ultimately, for Carpenter, no different from the novels of G.P.R. James. *Arrah Neil*, he confessed, was "a riveting thing; if a person begins it he don't want to stop till he finishes it." He felt the same way about James's fictional biography of *Attila*; seized by the "wild romance," he became so absorbed in the book that "I can hardly think of anything else." And notwithstanding his hostility to the "big bugs" and "aristocracy" of Greenfield, Carpenter passed up a political meeting of mechanics in order to spend his evening with the English author Leitch Ritchie's *Game of Life*.

In short, Carpenter's taste in fiction suggests not the discontented workingman of Denning's argument but rather the restless, yearning women in Janice Radway's *Reading the Romance*. Like the middle- and lower-class women in that study, Carpenter was eager to read exotic romances about distant times and places, London, Paris, Germany, ancient Rome, the vast sea—stories that would capture his imagination, hold him hostage to the plot, and grant release only when the tale was done. In such fantasies of escape, we may want to follow Radway's lead and seek the personal and social circumstances behind desires for flight. By this route, we may restore Carpenter to labor history, always remembering that his favorite novels appealed to the middle class as well. For all his immersion in a peer culture, the teenage apprentice responded to the currents of a wider world.¹²

Certainly, Carpenter belongs in the mainstream, when we consider the literature he shunned, as well as the books he embraced. Philadelphia, New York, and Boston: from these three publishing centers issued most of his intellectual fare. Not a single title from Greenfield's printers receives notice in his journal. Using AAS's computer files of American imprints and its files on printers, we can quickly discover that in the first three decades of the nineteenth century, the commercial center and seat of Franklin

County sustained an active publishing scene. Col. Ansel Phelps, owner and editor of the *Greenfield Gazette*, was the leading printer and bookseller in Greenfield for some fifty-eight years. Born in 1789, he served his apprenticeship at Northampton's *Hampshire Gazette* before setting up shop in Franklin County at the start of a new century. Not surprisingly, the titles he published reflected his origins in older, rural New England. Every year, Phelps issued one or two sermons or theological tracts, a political or Masonic oration, a schoolbook, a didactic work for children, even an original study of history—all invariably written by local authors. This combination of "devout and useful books" had been characteristic of printing in New England since the colonial days, and by Edward Carpenter's time, it was rapidly fading from view. Indeed, the only title Phelps ever sponsored that might have appealed to young Carpenter was a manual for his trade, *The Cabinet-Maker's Guide: or Rules and Instructions in the Art of Varnishing, Dying, Staining, Japanning, Polishing, Lackering and Beautifying Wood, Ivory, Tortoise-shell and Metal*, issued in 1825 in cooperation with publishers in Boston and New York. To judge by its title, the *Guide* was as irrelevant to Carpenter's chores in the shop as orthodox Calvinist sermons were to his religious practice. By 1844, under the strains of competition in an increasingly mechanized industry, the traditional system of apprenticeship was breaking down in furniture making, and instead of mastering the higher branches of his craft, the youth was assigned to turning out an unending series of cheap secretaries and bureaus. His products, like his reading, conformed to the new conditions of the mass market.¹³

Ironically, the only form of local printing to which Carpenter did attend, the two newspapers in town, promoted the cause of cosmopolitan culture. In the *Greenfield Gazette and Courier* and the *Greenfield Democrat* he could read advertisements of the latest novels and recommendations of *The Mysteries of Paris*, which was praised as "one of the most interesting romances of modern times." He could then proceed to the press office and buy copies of the cheap fiction the papers touted; in smaller communities, as Ronald Zboray has noted, printers often functioned as "periodical depots" for story papers and pamphlet novels. In the scramble for existence, Greenfield's printers advanced the very forces that were dictating their demise as arbiters of local culture.¹⁴

The printer-bookseller Homer Merriam, a scion of the Brookfield dynasty, tried and failed to run a business in Greenfield from 1838 to 1842. Looking back on his career, he blamed the decline of the country printer on the economic imperialism of urban publishers. Until 1845, he observed, the book magnates of Philadelphia and New York readily accepted rural imprints in payment of accounts; thereafter, they insisted on cold cash. The result was to relegate small-town publishers to the margins of the trade. This version of events looks plausible, until we reflect once more on Carpenter's journal. From the record

of his reading, it is evident that the cabinetmaker's apprentice had little interest in the conservative, religious culture that Ansel Phelps and Homer Merriam served. Edward Carpenter was part of a new market that rural printers could not or would not supply. He derived his literary tastes and cultural needs from the very urban publishers who satisfied his demands.¹⁵

Carpenter's future lay with the modern world of the press. Not long after finishing his apprenticeship, he abandoned cabinetmaking, moved north to Brattleboro, Vermont, and established a successful "periodical bookstore" and newspaper agency for the upper Connecticut Valley. The interests of his youth provided the foundation for his livelihood in maturity. And in later life, he would turn to preserving the materials he so loved; he became town librarian, serving Brattleboro for twenty-seven years. Carpenter's movement through the world of print is reminiscent of another erstwhile apprentice, Isaiah Thomas, who pioneered modern methods of producing and distributing books yet was more devoted than anybody to bequeathing to future generations the ephemeral products of his trade. Thanks to his philanthropy and to the professionalism of his successors at the American Antiquarian Society, we can read the journals of cabinetmaker's apprentices, reconstruct their record of reading, and explore the character of a culture.¹⁶

R.A.G.

NOTES

1. Clifford K. Shipton, *Isaiah Thomas: Printer, Patriot, and Philanthropist, 1749-1831* (Rochester, N.Y., 1948), 81.
2. Isaiah Thomas, *The History of Printing in America: with a Biography of Printers & an Account of Newspapers* (1810; rpt, New York, 1970), 3.
3. Robert Darnton, "First Steps Toward a History of Reading," in *The Kiss of Lamourette: Reflections in Cultural History* (New York, 1990), 135.
4. Cathy N. Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York, 1986); Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America* (London, 1987).
5. Richard D. Brown, *Knowledge Is Power: The Diffusion of Information in Early America* (New York, 1989).
6. Christopher Clark (with the assistance of Donald M. Scott), "The Diary of an Apprentice Cabinetmaker: Edward Jenner Carpenter's 'Journal' 1844-45," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 98 (1988): 303-94.
7. Clark, "Diary," 313; Brown, *Knowledge Is Power*, 230-35, 241, 274-75; Ronald J. Zboray, *A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the Reading Public* (New York, 1993), 12, 14, 73, 105, 119, 120.
8. David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville* (New York, 1988); Mary Noel, *Villains Galore. . . The Heyday of the Popular Story* (New York, 1954).
9. Noel, *Villains Galore*, 290-93; Davidson, *Revolution and the Word*; Jack Larkin, "The Merriams of Brookfield: Printing in the Economy and Culture of Rural Massachusetts in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 96 (1986): 68-69; Denning, *Mechanic Accents*, 27.
10. Noel, *Villains Galore*, 8-17, 41; T.S. Arthur, "Where There's A Will, There's A Way," *Philadelphia Saturday Courier*, August 10, 1844.
11. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance*. On one occasion, Carpenter borrowed the periodical, *Littell's Living Age*, from his employer James Lyons. The Greenfield Social Library, founded in 1820, had a regular subscription to the magazine, which was noted for its reprints from the serious British reviews and from second- and third-run English fiction. See F.M. Thompson, *History of Greenfield. 1682-1953*, 4 vols. (Greenfield, Mass., 1904-53) 1: 608-9, and Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, 5 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1938-68) 1: 308-9, 747-49. Five of the authors—G.P.R. James, Frederick Marryat, Leitch Ritchie, John Warner Barber, and George Wilkins Kendall—mentioned in Carpenter's journal were represented in the holdings of the Concord, Massachusetts, Social Library. See Robert A. Gross, *Books and Libraries in Thoreau's Concord: Two Essays* (Worcester, 1988), 400-2, 406, 421.
12. Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1984). My view of Carpenter as a figure who bridges social ranks is consistent with the cultural history of New England workers in the antebellum era, as described by David Zonderman in *Aspirations and Anxieties: New England Workers and the Mechanized Factory System, 1815-1850* (New York, 1992).
13. Thompson, *History of Greenfield*, 2:955-6; Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Colonial Experience* (New York, 1958), 297; *The Cabinet-Maker's Guide. . .* (Greenfield, 1825); Clark, "Diary," 310-11.
14. Clark, "Diary," 327, n. 13; Zboray, *A Fictive People*, 33.
15. Larkin, "Merriams of Brookfield," 65.
16. Clark, "Diary," 319.

NEH Magazine Features AAS and "HBA"

An article profiling AAS and its collaborative work *A History of the Book in America (HBA)* appears in the November/December 1993 issue of *Humanities*, published by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The article provides a sketch of the history of AAS and the scope of its collections, as well as an outline of the content and direction

of the four, possibly five, volume series. John B. Hench, director of research and publication, and David D. Hall, general editor of the series and co-editor of and contributor to the first volume, were both interviewed for this article.

News from the Field

The second annual conference of the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing (SHARP) will be hosted by the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., July 14-16, 1994. Proposals for papers dealing with any aspect of book history, broadly defined, are sought by December 10, 1993. Abstracts (no longer than two pages) should be sent to John Y. Cole, director, Center for the Book, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540.

American Periodicals seeks contributions for its 1994 issue. Especially welcome are papers that consult the primary source: the periodicals themselves. Two copies of a manuscript (double-spaced, MLA style) should be sent, along with an IBM 5.25" diskette, preferably in WordPerfect 5.1, to the editor: James T. F. Tanner, P.O. Box 5096 UNT, University of North Texas, Denton, TX 76202-5096.

The History of Reading Special Interest Group of the International Reading Association announces its annual competition for an outstanding thesis/dissertation in the

history of reading or reading instruction. The competition is open to dissertations completed between January 1992 and December 1993. The deadline for entries is January 15, 1994. The winner will be announced at the SIG meeting of the History of Reading in early May in Toronto. For further information write to Dr. Janet A. Miller, School of Education, Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights, KY 41099.

New England Book and Text Studies: A Report and Commentary on Primary Materials in Research, Theory, and Teaching has been established under the editorship of C. Deirdre Phelps. It will appear three times a year with "columns, reports, and reviews designed to promote awareness and understanding of the scope of interdisciplinary meanings and applications of physical books and manuscripts in academic practice." This new journal welcomes contributions from scholars anywhere on their own applications in research and in the classroom, and on materials and resources. News of projects, papers, publications, and programs, as well as payments for subscriptions (\$15 per year; £13 U.K. or \$20 other foreign), should be sent to New England Book and Text Studies, P.O. Box 1071, Cambridge, MA 02139. This new publication will be distributed without charge for one year to departments of English, history, and art history in New England with four-year programs in the field.

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