



The Book

Number 17, March 1989

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

Conference Plans Advance

Plans for the June 27 AAS conference on "Work in Progress in the History of the Book in American Culture" are nearly set, although the steering committee members still welcome hearing from persons interested in speaking on their current research. The program for the day-long conference, with registration form, will be sent to subscribers to this newsletter about May 1. Anyone else wishing details should contact John Hench at AAS.

UK Launches Project for 6-Volume History of Book

A project to publish a multiauthored, six-volume *History of the Book in Britain* has been launched in England. The project, which originated in a proposal from Donald McKenzie made at the Book Trade History Group's inaugural meeting, will be guided by an advisory group and volume editors who will work with one or more general editors.

In a proposal submitted to the publisher, Cambridge University Press, the volume editors stated that the concept of "the book" will be a broad one and would include studies in several areas: the history of authorship, literacy, and the reading public; libraries and the organization and distribution of knowledge; the technologies, economies, and sociology of the book trades; the relations between the book and other forms of text such as newspapers, maps, music, prints, and ephemeral printing, as well as the role of manuscript and print in relation to oral modes of communication; and the interdependence of the British and overseas book trades.

As currently conceived, the scope of the work will span the period from about 600 AD to the present. The following is a general description of the proposed subjects of each volume.

Volume 1, *The Early Manuscript Book, ca. 600-1200*. The development of book production by the English from the seventh century on was derived from the wider Latin culture of Europe, particularly the Roman and Christian heritage. This volume will examine the fundamental characteristics and principles of book production that evolved by the twelfth century. It will consider various design aspects of the book, the relationship between authors and book production and circulation of texts, literacy and the vernacular languages in Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman

England, the formation of English libraries, Continental influence, and the evolution of particular genres. Three seminal reference tools will complete the volume: an edition of the extant pre-Conquest library lists; a revised and updated version of the Gneuss Handlist of manuscripts written or owned in England up to 1100; and an index of books and authors known to the English in this period.

Volume 2, *Script and Print: From the Late Medieval Book to 1557*. This volume will consider the uses of books by a series of new reading publics—scholarly, religious, and secular. It will first concentrate on manuscript books, which had a definable audience, and will then examine the ways in which market forces, the demand for books, grew after the introduction of printed books in the second half of the fifteenth century. Particular attention will be given to identifying and analyzing the books known to have been used in Britain and their readers.

Volume 3, *Above All Liberties: Politics and Press, 1557-1695*. This volume will study the history of the Stationers' Company. Incorporated in 1557, the Company filled two urgent needs: as an agency of the Crown, it served to police the press, and as a trade association, it functioned to protect its own privileges. This volume will trace the evolution of this monopolistic institution. In its original function to control the press, all political, religious, and commercial opposition was defined by the Company as subversive of government and trade, but eventually internal and external constraints, as well as the lapse of the Licensing Acts in 1695, led to the breakdown of that function and control. The development of a national literature and two political revolutions also contributed to the resulting freedom of the press.

Volume 4, *The Period of Expansion, 1695-1830*. The main theme of this volume will be the expansion of the trade in printed matter following the lapse of the Licensing Acts in 1695. Work will focus on the evolution of the book trade into a system that defined the concept of the publisher and established "industrial modes of production" to meet the demands of a relatively free press in a period of mass literacy. Other subjects to be studied include overseas expansion of the trade, the rise of the newspaper, and the role of print in the development of the realistic novel, the periodical essay, and other literary genres.

Volume 5, *The Nineteenth Century*. The central purpose of this volume will be to explore the effect of print in all its

forms in an industrialized, politically educated society, where by 1900 the British book was a mass-market product and, by 1914, literacy was assumed to be an essential social tool. Topics to be studied include professionalization in the book trades and authorship, the creation by means of the printed word of the national concept of empire, changes in the appearance of books and in the visual presentation of other texts, the development of the information industry, commercial and public libraries, and the preservation of printed materials through copyright deposit.

Volume 6, *1915 to the Present*. This volume, the most open of the series, will assay the effects that global communication and the "electronic revolution" have had on the book trade as a business, a cultural and political tradition, a means of expression in a universe of diversity. Among the issues discussed in this volume are technological and marketing changes, the further spread of education, the expansion of libraries—particularly institutional ones, changes in reading tastes, and the place of London in the book trade world. This volume will take up the debates regarding the timing and scope of these changes, that is, whether past traditions continued into this century and whether such evolution marked the end of the insular tradition of the book in Britain.

Michael Turner, Bodleian Library

Book Notes

TWO BOOKS ON THE MARKETPLACE

Two books on writers, readers, and the marketplace in the first half of the nineteenth century, one of them fresh from the publisher, afford an opportunity to reflect on a theme that is increasingly current in literary and cultural history. That these two books proceed about their business very differently is an additional incentive for such reflection.

R. Jackson Wilson is a cultural historian, someone who is comfortable with texts but who wants to place creative writing and creative writers in the context of the social history of cultural production. His thesis in *Figures of Speech: American Writers and the Literary Marketplace, from Benjamin Franklin to Emily Dickinson* (Knopf, 1989) is that the five writers he surveys—Franklin, Irving, William Lloyd Garrison, Emerson, and Dickinson—each invented or constructed a figure of "author," or of "what it meant to be a writer" (p. 9). Indeed the *oeuvre* of these writers is centrally "about being writers" (p. 9). This said, Wilson goes on to insist on the artful nature of this construct; in the very process of creating an identity for themselves as authors, these writers are attempting to deceive us. In Wilson's hands the practice of cultural history becomes the practice of disclosure or unmasking: we learn how to recognize the maneuvers meant to throw us off the trail; we watch as each writer pursues his or her improvisations. To this end, Wilson employs elements of biography as refracted through a commonsense psychology. And he looks within certain texts

themselves for evidence. But a key interpretive resource is a series of assumptions about the social history of publishing and the literary marketplace. The central assumption is this, that his five writers were caught up in the emergence of a new kind of literary marketplace, one that promised writers "an audience that was practically and immediately limitless. . . [and that] seemed also to offer writers a radical autonomy, a liberating independence from the requirements of authorities or institutions" (p. 12). Wilson goes on to argue that this very promise was a snare and a delusion, for what the market truly represented was the possibility of "failure" (p.14). The flip side of independence was therefore "fantasies of alienation and solitude as urgent as the contrary, expansive fantasies."

Here is a formula in which we can recognize a long-standing vein of cultural history: nothing is quite fixed or certain, the writer is caught in the swirl of ambiguity and anxiety, and such private emotions somehow reveal or reflect the culture as a whole. In the old days, the anxiety stemmed from the fluidity of status in a democratic society and the perplexing doubleness of a provincial culture in which writers felt at once independent and dependent. Wilson updates this schema, which has fallen on hard times, by shifting to the factor of marketplace. His is not, however, in any way a detailed study of the shifting contours of the book trade. The "marketplace" looms as something of an abstraction, a given that is like an ideal type. That the literary marketplace was a highly mediated and pluralistic structure in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries—one that offered writers an array of options and identities—weakens, for this reader, the interpretative power of Wilson's argument. A further limitation (though to some it may appear as a strength) is the absence of critical theory. What

American Antiquarian Society

185 Salisbury Street

Worcester, Massachusetts 01609-1634

Telephone (508) 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

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

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.

Copyright © 1989 by American Antiquarian Society

there is to admire in these essays is the voice of a skillful-teacher teasing hidden or surprising meaning out of his five writers.

Jon Klancher, who comes to the subject well armed with critical theory, writes about the changing structure and significance of "the reader" in *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1987). His formal proposition is that "the English Romantics were the first to become radically uncertain of their readers, and they faced the task Wordsworth called 'creating the taste' by which the writer is comprehended" (p. 3). As it is for Wilson, so for Klancher the early nineteenth century is an "inchoate cultural moment" that "compelled a great many writers to shape the interpretive and ideological frameworks of audiences they would speak to." Crucial to the tensions of this period is the conflicting "collective awareness" embodied, on the one hand, in "class," and on the other in "audience" (pp. 3-4).

The historical materials to which Klancher turns are periodicals: hence the plural of his title, "reading audiences." In some of these journals he discerns the creation of a "middle-class" reading audience; in others, a "mass" audience, and in still others a "radical" version. All this adds up to a quite different sociology of culture from the one-dimensional "marketplace" of *Figures of Speech*. Klancher's close reading of certain journals—always interesting and indeed a large step beyond how we usually go about analyzing periodicals—should stimulate a parallel inquiry for America.

D.D.H.

Notes on Research Collections

TICKNOR AND FIELDS COLLECTION AT UNC

In the summer of 1987 the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill acquired an important collection of imprints of the nineteenth-century Boston publishing firm of Ticknor and Fields. The collection was assembled over a twenty-year period by John William Pye, a book dealer in Boston. It contains more than 2,600 titles, 130 manuscripts, and a small number of photographs, engravings, and ephemera. The materials cover the period from the founding of the firm in 1832, through several name changes and reorganizations, until its dissolution and eventual absorption by Houghton Mifflin in the late 1880s. During much of this period Ticknor and Fields was the major literary publisher in the United States, and the collection reflects this in its exceptionally strong holdings of Ticknor authors such as Hawthorne, Emerson, Thoreau, Lowell, Holmes, Stowe, Whittier, Longfellow, and a host of lesser figures. The collection also contains an abundance of printings of the British writers (among them, Dickens, Thackeray, Scott, and Tennyson) for whom Ticknor served as the authorized American publisher.

Mr. Pye sought to document every aspect of the firm's publishing activities. In addition to literary output, there-

fore, the collection reflects the Ticknor interest in areas as diverse as medicine, children's literature, travel books, and religious works. The firm was also active in periodical publication, and the collection contains very strong runs of the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Our Young Folks*, *Every Saturday*, and *The North American Review*. The collection also has substantial holdings of series issued by the firm, most notably the famous Blue and Gold Series.

One of the most striking features of the collection is its bibliographical density. Most titles are present in first editions, but the scholar will also appreciate the many variant issues and states and the abundance of later printings. The collection is especially rich in variations of bindings and of inserted publisher's advertisements. Indeed, much of the interest in the collection will be in the physical evidence of the books. Such evidence complements that of manuscript sources in documenting not only the history of individual texts but also the evolution of a major publishing company and its production practices.

The collection has many interesting presentation and association copies. Among them is a large paper copy of the first edition of *Evangeline* (1848), inscribed by Longfellow to Hans Christian Andersen; a copy of *May-Day* (1867, in presentation binding, with two manuscript corrections) inscribed by Emerson to Julia Ward Howe; and a copy of Hawthorne's *Twice Told Tales* (1866) inscribed to Charles Dickens by James Fields, the publisher. Indeed, Mr. Pye was particularly interested in Fields and his wife Annie, and the collection contains not only Mr. Fields's own writings but also books from their library, many of them presentation copies from the authors. Notable among these is a splendid copy of Longfellow's translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* (1867), presented by the translator to Mrs. Fields.

The importance of the collection clearly lies in its impressive accumulation of the published output of the firm, but the nonbook portions also contain much of interest. Among the manuscripts, for instance, are eighty-three letters between Fields and various correspondents, including Ticknor authors such as Hawthorne, Holmes, Whittier, Lydia Maria Child, and Thomas Bailey Aldrich. The collection also has a number of photographs and engravings. These include portraits of Fields and several of the major Ticknor authors, engraved representations of the Old Corner Bookshop, and most importantly, a splendid proof copy (one of twelve) of the large engraved portrait of Lincoln by William Edgar Marshall, published by Ticknor and Fields in 1866.

Cataloguing of the printed materials is well under way and will be completed by the end of 1989. Inquiries concerning the collection should be addressed to the Curator, Rare Books Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27599-3936.

Charles B. McNamara
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

AAS Names Botein Fellow and Others Working in Book History

The American Antiquarian Society has named James N. Green as the Stephen Botein Fellow and has chosen several other scholars working on topics related to the history of the book as fellows in residence during 1989-90.

Green, who is curator of printed books at the Library Company of Philadelphia, is working on "The Transformation of the American Book Trade, 1785-1825." His fellowship is funded by the income from the Stephen Botein Memorial Fund, which was established by family and friends of the late Steve Botein. The Botein Fellowship is to support research in American book history. Last year, the Fund's income was used for scholarship aid to persons attending AAS summer seminar.

Other scholars plowing some part of the book history field, broadly defined, who were awarded AAS short-term fellowships include Philip F. Gura (English and American studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), "The Reverend Nathan Fiske and the Cultural Transformation of Central Massachusetts"; Mason I. Lowance (English, University of Massachusetts at Amherst), "*Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the New England Sermon Tradition"; Franciszek Lyra (English, M. Curie-Sklodowska University, Poland), "Revising the Canon of the First Two Centuries of American Literature"; Michael B. Winship (editor, *Bibliography of American Literature*), "Publishers' Trade Sales in the Nine-

teenth-Century United States"; and Lee Ellen Heller (English, Mercer University), "The Family and the Novel in Context: Historical Origins of the Novel in England and America." All of these scholars were awarded Kate B. and Hall J. Peterson Fellowships, except Heller, who will be the AAS-Northeast Modern Language Association Fellow.

AAS Publishes Pamphlet on Isaiah Thomas Printing Press

With the wooden printing press of Isaiah Thomas (1749-1831) on prominent display this spring in the New York Public Library's exhibition *Revolution in Print: France, 1789*, the American Antiquarian Society has published a small, well-illustrated pamphlet on the subject, *Old "No. 1": The Story of Isaiah Thomas and His Printing Press*. The twenty-four-page pamphlet describes for the general reader the operation of Thomas's English-made common press, on which he learned his trade as a young apprentice boy in Boston, and his relationship to that old press, which he later inventoried as "No. 1" and bequeathed to the Society that he founded.

Old "No. 1" is available for sale at the retail sales shop of the New York Public Library, at the AAS sales desk, and at other fine stores. The price is \$2.50. A trade discount is offered to booksellers. Mail orders may be sent to the Department of Research and Publication at AAS. Customers should add \$.50 postage and handling.

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

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
P A I D
PERMIT NO. 416
WORCESTER, MASS. 01609
