



# The Book

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

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## *Fourth Summer Seminar Examines American Literary Renaissance*

The Society's fourth Summer Seminar in the History of the Book in American Culture concluded on Tuesday, June 19, after its ten-day run of three-a-day seminar sessions and long hours of intensive work in the AAS library. Although the frenetic pace of this "humanities camp" (a label inspired by a recent *New Yorker* drawing) may have belied most likenesses between it and memories of childhood summers spent at Camp Hiawatha, there were camp-like experiences galore, such as uniform t-shirts, bunking in spartan but pleasant accommodations in a college residence hall, picnic lunches on the lawn of the Goddard-Daniels House, and perhaps even a bit of high camp as well, most notably seminar co-leader David Reynolds's renderings, after dinner one night around a citronella-candle campfire in John and Lea Hench's backyard, of his own country-and-western songs, which, he informed us, had once made the Top-80 charts. But mostly the twenty-two participants were engaged in examining a different sort of Top-80 chart—the records and remains of the vast corpus of printed output, American and

otherwise, that circulated through the mid-nineteenth-century United States and the fuzzy boundaries between pop(ular) culture and high, between the literary and the nonliterary, between the canonical and the noncanonical.

The focus of the seminar was on the period of the so-called "American Renaissance" examined from both critical and bibliographical perspectives, and the two co-leaders brought special though by no means exclusive strengths to each of these viewpoints. The versatile Professor Reynolds, of the City University of New York, described pertinent critical theories and the various schools of interpretation of the literature of the period and led analyses of several key works, most especially Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*. His co-leader, Michael Winship, of the University of Texas at Austin and editor of *Bibliography of American Literature*, explicated the most relevant aspects of the various branches of the book trade and conducted "laboratory" sessions that introduced the matriculants to many of the primary sources available to help understand the rich economic and technological context in which these works were produced, disseminated, and consumed. His demonstration and analysis of a number of edi-



*Pictured are matriculants, faculty, and AAS staff at the fourth Summer Seminar in the History of the Book in American Culture: (seated, left to right) Sheppard, Cook, Barnhill, Whittenberger-Keith, McGill, Kelley, Heller, Castagna, Moylan, Winship; (standing, left to right) Nissenbaum, Verduin, Laura Wasowicz (AAS) Kearns, Maxwell, Wright, Chaison, Groves, Joyce Tracy (AAS), Weiner, Cayton, Berger, Babette Gehrlich (AAS), Williams, Berninghausen, Buschman, Roberson, Reynolds, Douglas, Ginsberg, Gernes, Hench, and Wallace.*



tions of Whitman's works in the AAS library was a highly pertinent and useful adjunct to Reynolds's sessions.

Assisting the seminar leaders were two visiting historians—Dartmouth College's Mary Kelley, who led a session centered on Sara Payson Willis Parton ("Fanny Fern") and her novel *Ruth Hall*, and Stephen W. Nissenbaum, of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, who dealt with Parton's brother, the highly successful writer Nathaniel P. Willis—and many AAS staff members, including Georgia B. Barnhill, curator of graphic arts, who led the group through the intricacies of nineteenth-century book illustration and decoration, and head of readers' services Joanne Chaison and curator of manuscripts Sidney Berger, who helped identify and retrieve many of the raw materials for Winship's laboratory sessions.

The twenty-two college and university professors, librarians, and graduate students enrolled in the seminar came from all over the country, from as far away as Arizona and California and as nearby as the zip code just west of Antiquarian Hall. Most if not all of them brought fairly well-advanced research projects to the seminar and to the library. More of the participants in the three previous seminars seemed to seek a more introductory experience. The change may be due both to the quite focused topic of this year's offering and to a certain maturation of the field. In any event, this group made record-breaking use of the library and the expertise of the ever-cheerful staff.

The twenty-two attending were: Thomas F. Berninghausen, assistant professor of English, Clark University; John E. Buschman, assistant professor and librarian, Rider College; JoAnn E. Castagna, academic advisor, University of Iowa; Mary Kupiec Cayton, assistant professor of American studies, Miami University; Nancy Cook, instructor in English, Clark University; Jeffrey Alan Douglas, associate librarian, Knox College; Todd S. Gernes, Ph.D. candidate in American civilization, Brown University; Elaine K. Ginsberg, professor of English, West Virginia University; Jeffrey D. Groves, visiting assistant professor of literature, Harvey Mudd College; Lee E. Heller, assistant professor of English, Hampshire College; Michael S. Kearns, associate professor of literature, University of Texas of the Permian Basin; Margaret F. Maxwell, professor of library science, University of Arizona; Meredith L. McGill, Ph.D. candidate in English, The Johns Hopkins University; Michele Moylan, Ph.D. candidate in English, University of Minnesota; Susan L. Roberson, instructor in English, Auburn University; Jocelyn Sheppard, catalogue/reference librarian, Bethany College (W. Va.); Kathleen Verduin, associate professor of English, Hope College; James D. Wallace, assistant professor of English, Boston College; Bruce I. Weiner, associate professor of English, St. Lawrence University; Kari Whittenberger-Keith, assistant professor of communication, University of Louisville; Susan S. Williams, Ph.D. candidate in English, Yale University; and Paul M. Wright, editor, Boston office, University of Massachusetts Press.

As is apparent from the foregoing list, the great majority of the participants were denizens of English departments. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that such terms as "privileging," "foregrounding," and "multivocality" were murmured more than a few times over the course of the seminar, although Michael Winship and various of the staff members were always ready to counterpoise the theory and its attendant jargon with a material artifact or two. Little time was spent in the seminar specifically debating the continued relevance of the term "American Renaissance," although it is unlikely that many attending would shed tears over its demise. What emerged from the sessions and from the individual research of the participants was a view of a literary culture in America in the mid-nineteenth century that was extraordinarily pluralistic, complex, multilayered, cooperative, open, democratic, widespread, and national in scope and in operation. What was especially exciting was to see such a picture emerge from a variety of perspectives, including the critical, the historical, and the bibliographical.

It was also wonderful that so many of the participants apparently came away from the experience armed not only with newly tested or retested theoretical perspectives but also with new tools for analyzing and utilizing the bibliographical and printing-and-publishing history context in their work.

The Society's grant from the Charles E. Culpeper Foundation in support of the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture helped defray some of the costs of the

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*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

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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.

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seminar and to provide a pool of financial aid. Several of the librarians attending the seminar did so with the aid of fellowships granted by the Council on Library Resources. To both of these sources of support we offer our thanks.

J.B.H.

### *Next AAS Proceedings Number Features Articles on Book History*

The next issue of the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, due out in October, features several articles that should be of interest to a wide range of scholars at work in the history of the book in American culture. Joel Bernard traces the evolution and persistence of a text — the ballad of Sir John Barley-Corne — from its first appearance in England in 1624, through an American modification beginning about 1724, and up to its reappearance as the lyrics of a song by the rock group Traffic, with Steve Winwood, on their 1970 album entitled *John Barleycorn Must Die*. Maryemma Graham assays the theoretical underpinnings and development of the field of African American authorship from its earliest beginnings into the twentieth century. Jane Pomeroy traces the artistic development and business relationships of Alexander Anderson, America's foremost engraver and book illustrator during the 1790s, and provides a checklist of Anderson's output, including many new attributions based on an examination of manuscript sources.

A year's subscription to the Society's *Proceedings* costs \$40.00 and may be obtained by writing the Department of Research and Publication.

The Society recently appointed a Board of Advisors for the *Proceedings*. Its members are John Bidwell, Clark Library, UCLA; Richard Crawford, University of Michigan; Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Duke University; Robert A. Gross, College of William and Mary; Linda K. Kerber, University of Iowa; John McCusker, University of Maryland; Jules D. Prown, Yale University; and Barbara Sicherman, Trinity College.

The journal will also add the subtitle *A Journal of American History and Culture through 1876* to clarify its broad scope and its openness to contributions from scholars from all over. Although it does not limit itself to the field of book history and bibliography, it certainly has emphasized scholarship in that area and continues to do so. Readers of this newsletter are warmly encouraged to consider sending their best work for possible publication in the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*. Finally, the journal will begin to accept a limited amount of advertising, including exchange advertising, beginning with the issue to be published in October. Institutions and businesses (including publishers and booksellers) interested in advertising in the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* should contact the Society's director of research and publication, John B. Hench.

### *Call for Papers for Conference on Iconography*

The response to the notice in the July 1989 issue of *The Book* calling for expressions of interest in a conference to explore the iconography of the history of the book was gratifying. Now we are ready to issue a formal call for papers for the conference, which will take place in Worcester on Friday and Saturday, June 14 - 15, 1991.

The conference will explore the uses of visual imagery in the history of the book. How is the practice of reading represented in paintings, prints, and other kinds of art? In what kinds of settings do books appear, and how are different genres — say, newspapers, fiction, schoolbooks, professional materials, and the Bible — signified? How are the practices of distribution (for example, the newsboy and book shops) depicted? The conference will provide an opportunity to explore these and other questions relating to the iconography of the book in America (primarily before the twentieth century). Comparative (European) examples are also relevant.

Proposals are welcome from persons primarily interested in the use of such iconography in teaching courses in literature, bibliography, or the history of the book as well as from those whose goal is research toward publications.

AAS expects to publish papers given at the conference.

Proposals for presentations, together with a current curriculum vitae, should be sent to John B. Hench, Director of Research and Publication, American Antiquarian Society, 185 Salisbury Street, Worcester, Massachusetts 01609. The deadline for submission is November 1, 1990. Those who responded to the preliminary call of a year ago are encouraged to send an updated proposal if they wish, together with a c.v. Persons interested simply in attending the conference may also write to the same address for further information and registration materials.

### *Wiggins, Other Lectures, Events To Mark Newspaper Tricentennial*

As previously announced, Michael Schudson, professor of communications, University of California, San Diego, will deliver the 1990 James Russell Wiggins Lecture in the History of the Book in American Culture, the eighth annual lecture in the series, on the topic "Preparing the Minds of the People: Three Hundred Years of the American Newspaper." The date and time have now been set: Monday, November 12, 1990, at 5:15 p.m. in Antiquarian Hall, with dinner to follow (reservations required).

Schudson's lecture will do double duty as the fourth in a series of public lectures at AAS this fall to mark the 300th anniversary of the publication of the first American newspaper, Boston's ill-fated *Publick Occurrences*. Preceding Schudson's lecture will be lectures by three other scholars: "The Newspapers of Provincial America," by Charles E.



Clark, professor of history, University of New Hampshire, on Tuesday, September 25; "Newspapers and American Nationhood, 1776-1826," by David Nord, associate professor of journalism, Indiana University, on Tuesday, October 9; and "The Nineteenth-Century Origins of Modern American Journalism," by Gerald Baldasty, associate professor of communications, University of Washington, on Monday, October 22. The lectures will be presented at 8 p.m., except for Schudson's at 5:15.

The Society will mount a special exhibition, entitled "The Origins of the Modern American Newspaper, 1690-1900," of materials from its collections to coincide with the lecture series. A core exhibition will be on display from Monday, September 17, through Friday, November 16, in the regular exhibition room and in several cases spilling out into the reading room. In addition, special displays will be mounted on the evenings of the four lectures to illustrate each particular presentation.

Professors Clark, Nord, Baldasty, and Schudson will repeat their presentations in a symposium for professional journalists to be held on Wednesday, November 14, in Arlington, Virginia, at the headquarters of the Gannett Foundation. The foundation has made a grant to AAS to make the lecture series, symposium, and exhibition possible.

That's not all. A fifth lecture on the anniversary theme will be given in connection with the Society's annual meeting, on Wednesday, October 17. Scheduled for 4:45 p.m. in Antiquarian Hall and open to the public, the lecture, entitled "The American Journalist: Fiction versus Fact," will be on the image of the American newspaperman in popular culture and will be given by Loren Ghiglione, editor and publisher of Worcester County Newspapers, Inc., immediate past president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, and guest curator of the Library of Congress exhibition on "The American Journalist: Paradox of the Press," which runs until August 12.

## *Assessing the Current Bibliography in the History of the Book*

During the past decade, the American Antiquarian Society has become the primary study center for the history of the book in North America. The publications produced under the sponsorship of the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture and the Society's *Proceedings* compose a significant proportion of the published work in this area. This fact alone points up the potential difficulty of identifying the literature of this field: much of the best work is not produced within the conventional academic structure of disciplines and departments. Instead, it is often fugitive in nature, scattered in distribution, and difficult to capture by means of ordinary library research strategies.

This is a truism that can be applied to any new area of study that employs approaches and methodologies drawn from a variety of established academic disciplines. But book history is unusual even among interdisciplinary fields

in the humanities and social sciences: its center of attention, at least in the Anglo-American scholarly community, is indisputably a physical object, and it is an article of faith among practitioners that one must never lose sight, or touch, of the book itself. There are two corollaries to this: first, that the methodology of American book history remains firmly rooted in the traditions of descriptive and enumerative bibliography; and second, that the locus of this study is frequently not the place where the books are kept — the library — and many of its practitioners have jobs as librarians rather than as teachers.

What implications does this second corollary hold for the novice scholar of American book history? In addition to a body of monographic literature produced by the scholarly and academic presses, he faces a literature scattered across a wide range of journals or in library publications. Much of this material is captured in the standard indexes to the humanities and social sciences such as the Modern Language Association's *Bibliography*. Access to library catalogue records for monographs is available through the major national utilities, OCLC and RLIN, both of which now offer subject searching. The scholarly domain is carved up in other ways by annuals such as *The Eighteenth Century: A Current Bibliography*, where works relating to eighteenth-century book history are scattered in the sections on bibliography, history, and literature. However, in all of these very useful tools, the relatively small body of literature on the history of the book is lost among the vast quantities of literary and historical writing, and is effectively separated from the bibliographical literature that forms its intellectual base and to which it lends a broader context. The need for an index to the literature of the book in all its aspects is potentially filled by two international bibliographies, and the extent to which they satisfy this purpose, particularly from a North American perspective, is worth examining.

*The Annual Bibliography of the History of the Printed Book and Libraries (ABHB)* has been published since 1973 under the sponsorship of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). National committees are responsible for reporting the bibliographical scholarship for their countries to a central editorial office, which produces an annual compilation. The *Bibliographie der Buch- und Bibliotheksgeschichte (BBB)* is similar to *ABHB* in scope and arrangement, but it is the work of a single editor and is less explicitly international in its coverage. *ABHB* has been very thoroughly and ably reviewed by Lawrence J. McCrank in the *Journal of Library History* (19:4 [1984]), while *BBB* has been the subject of a series of reviews by B. J. McMullin in the *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* (79:2 [1985]; 80:2 [1986]; 81:1 [1987]). In both instances the considerable shortcomings of these indexes have been frankly discussed, and in the latter *ABHB* has been unfavorably compared with *BBB*.

The problems fall into several categories. Both indexes suffer from numerous typographical and indexing errors



and poor vocabulary. The editors of *ABHB*, in particular, have not always adhered to their publication schedule. Other faults are more fundamental. In both publications, a topical arrangement serves as the subject indexing, forcing the user to second guess the editors and contributors. Some exclusions that have been made since the beginning, particularly that of the manuscript book, now seem ill-considered. *ABHB* has the problems one would expect in an endeavor that depends on the cooperation of many individuals in a number of different countries: its coverage is uneven, and many countries are not represented at all.

Each volume of *ABHB* carries the following statement of scope: "This bibliography aims at recording all books and articles of scholarly value which relate to the history of the printed book, to the history of the arts, crafts, techniques and equipment, and of the economic, social and cultural environment, involved in its production, distribution, conservation, and description." There seems to be plenty of room for book history within this capacious definition. However, the statement was formulated before book history became a well-defined field. *BBB* does not contain an explicit statement of scope, but the presence of sections on "Der Autor" and "Der Leser" signal an intention to index the history of the book as it is very generally defined. In an effort to measure the extent to which the two bibliographies are capturing recent work in American book history, I checked twenty books and articles, all published between 1980 and 1987, against the indexes. Each yielded six citations, five of which were identical. The seven items were all AAS publications. Not listed were such works as Nina Baym's *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers* (1984), Jane Tompkins's *Sensational Designs* (1985), and Cathy Davidson's *Revolution and the Word* (1986), works that represent the intersection of literary and book history. Most of the articles that escaped both nets did so because they appeared in journals that are not indexed at all by either bibliography, *Feminist Studies*, *Critical Inquiry*, *Humanities in Society*, and *Communication Research*. Elizabeth Long's "Women, Reading, and Cultural Authority: Some Implications of the Audience Perspective in Cultural Studies" (*American Quarterly* 38 [1986]), failed to appear in the 1986 and 1987 volumes of *ABHB*, although that journal does appear on the List of Periodicals (it is not indexed by *BBB*).

This rather brief survey indicates that neither *ABHB* nor *BBB* is doing an especially good job of bringing American book history into its fold, nor is it clear that it is the intention of either editor to do so. The only work in this area that is being consistently recorded by both bibliographies is that sponsored by AAS, and even here there are differences in coverage. Of twenty-two relevant articles published in the Society's *Proceedings* in the years 1983-87, twenty-one appear in *BBB* and eight in *ABHB*. Cathy Davidson's "Ideology and Genre: The Rise of the Novel in America" (*Proceedings* 96 [1986]) was not listed at all. Again, this exclusion may indicate reluctance to approach the borderland of

book and literary history. However, some of *ABHB*'s exclusions are less explicable. It is not at all clear why David Grimsted's "Books and Culture: Canned, Canonized, and Neglected" (*Proceedings* 94, [1984]) is itself neglected by *ABHB*, while another article in the same issue, Joseph F. Kett and Patricia A. McClung's "Book Culture in Post-Revolutionary Virginia" is listed in the 1984 volume. One asks the same question about the 1985 volume of the *Proceedings*, from which G. Thomas Tanselle's "The Bibliography and Textual Study of American Books" was chosen for the 1985 volume of *ABHB*, while David D. Hall's "A Report on the 1984 Conference on Needs and Opportunities in the History of the Book in American Culture," and James Gilreath's "American Book Distribution" are absent. *ABHB*'s exclusions, when compared with *BBB*'s more comprehensive approach to a single periodical, may indeed be the result of a more restrictive definition of its own scope, but this is not made clear in the editor's prefatory statement, and it is difficult to find a consistent pattern in the choices that are actually made.

As noted above, the lack of subject indexing in both *ABHB* and *BBB* makes the user completely dependent on a topical arrangement, which is further subdivided by place and historical period. Known items can be tracked down by means of the author index, but the user is required to guess where the editors might have placed works on, say, the distribution and readership of popular literature, or the formation of literary canons, which do not have clearly labeled sections of their own. In an effort to determine where such works are gathered in both bibliographies, I noted the location of each of the seven citations from the original sample of twenty. This task was complicated by *ABHB*'s custom of noting in the index only the first occurrence of an item that actually appears in more than one section, and as a consequence I have almost certainly missed several citations that are unretrievable by means of the index. With this proviso, I found two citations in Section "D"—Layout, Composing, Printing, Presses, Printed Books, Incl. Incunabula, etc. of *ABHB*; two in "J"—Libraries, Librarianship, Scholarship, Institutions; three in "K"—Legal, Economic, Social Aspects; and one in "L"—Newspapers, Journalism. That hypothetical student of book history might reasonably be expected to check the latter three categories, but Section "D" seems an odd place to look for this material, and seems even odder when one considers what the two works are: two AAS-sponsored volumes, *Printing and Society in Early America* and *The Press and the American Revolution*. One suspects that this arrangement is based on a rather superficial inspection of the titles, and one hopes that these two works appear elsewhere in the same volume. In *BBB*, four citations appear in the general works category, one under newspapers, one under the category for bibliophily and private libraries, and one under editing. In general, *BBB*'s topical categories seem more hospitable to recent scholarship in the history of the book than do *ABHB*'s, but in both bibliog-



ographies retrieval is chancy and depends on considerable thought and effort on the part of the user.

All of these criticisms are based on the assumption that it is desirable to bring the scholarly literature of the history of the book together in one place, and, furthermore, that the international bibliographies of the history of the book are the most appropriate medium for this purpose. As the historical study of the book embraces new ideas and forms new alliances, it is most appropriate that the indexes that serve it follow the lead given to them by scholars. Restricting the scope of either tool to the intellectual terrain covered by twenty, or even ten, years ago would result in a separation of the most active research in book history from the more traditional bibliographical scholarship from which it draws its essential data and to which it lends purpose. However, it is difficult not to feel a little dismay at the prospect of yet another interdisciplinary discipline taking shape, its outlines hardening and eventually fossilizing. Improved bibliographic control over the literature of the history of the book will almost certainly lead to standard reading lists and syllabi, which will in turn contribute to a bland sameness among programs in the history of the book that contradicts their original spirit.

However, despite this rather curmudgeonly reservation, I do urge that it would be worthwhile to enlarge the scope of these two indexes to include the social and intellectual context in which people make and use books. As indexes to

the literature of the history of the book in America, *ABHB* and *BBB* are roughly comparable, with *BBB* maintaining a slight edge by virtue of its superior indexing and arrangement and its more thorough coverage of individual journals. But *ABHB* is in a transitional state. It has recently acquired a new general editor and will probably soon have a new contributor for the U.S. These events make changes and improvements quite feasible at both levels of editorial control. The new editor of *ABHB* faces the problems inherent in managing any collaborative project, of which imposing a consistent editorial standard on the contributions of many different people is the most wearying. The new U.S. contributor faces the task of introducing new strategies for identifying and recording an increasingly diffuse body of literature, and of staying close on the heels of changes in the field.

The *Annual Bibliography of the History of the Printed Book and Libraries* is published by Martinus Nijhoff under the auspices of the International Federation of Library Associations. Volumes 1-18, covering the years 1970-87, were edited by Hendrick D. L. Vervliet, as was volume 19 (for 1988), which is now in press.

The *Bibliographie der Buch- und Bibliotheksgeschichte* is edited and published by Dr. Horst Meyer. Volumes 1-7 have appeared to date, covering the years 1980-87.

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