



The Book

Newsletter of the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture
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Letter from Göttingen

As the train from Frankfurt neared Göttingen, a fellow passenger pointed to the watchtowers on the range of hills to the east, and, in the near distance, to a fence on the other side of a small river. Both were remnants of the border that once divided East from West in a Germany that, since my participation in early September in a conference on the history of the book, has become one. The Göttingen conference, which took place at and under the sponsorship of the Max-Planck-Institut-für-Geschichte, drew the editors and/or planners of the several national histories of the book in progress or completed—the sole example of the last of these being, of course, *L'histoire de l'édition Française*. The calling of this conference had much to do with Robert Darnton's presence in Germany this past academic year, and his long-standing plea that the various national histories become explicitly comparative.

In the event, the conference unfolded as a series of reports, some more concrete, others retrospective or speculative. Lotte Hellinga and Ian Willison were on hand to detail the planning being done in Britain; Willison reiterated some of the suggestions about "critical theory" he had made in Worcester (and elsewhere in America) earlier in the year. Looking back on *L'histoire de l'édition Française*, Roger Chartier spoke about the topics that, from the perspective of 1990, it omitted or that deserved more attention. Chief among these was "literary property." Henri-Jean Martin reflected on the general development of book history. Reinhard Wittman reported on the six-volume history of publishing in Germany since 1870, a project being sponsored by the Historical Commission of the German Booksellers Association. I described the American series; Carole Armbruster of the Library of Congress helped conclude the conference with some comparative observations.

Certain themes and statements stand out in my notes of the discussion: Lotte Hellinga acknowledging the influence of the French, and their more social approach to book history, on the British bibliographical tradition; the suggestion by Hans Erich Bodeker (convenor of the conference) that comparative history should serve to clarify the identity of book history as a discipline; the exchange among German scholars about moral versus historical approaches to the period of National Socialism; Robert Darnton's plea that research, including oral history, be done immediately on the

state-centered system of literary production in what had been East Germany; the speculations of Rudolf Schenda on "people without a book"; Henri-Jean Martin's tart observation about the reluctance of French publishers to open up their archives; and (to come back to matters more strictly historical and bibliographic), Hellinga's expressed frustration with national bibliographies that impeded an understanding of imported books, specifically, the cultural contacts between England and the Continent in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. An Americanist, with an eye to our own culture from the beginnings of European settlement through the nineteenth century, could only agree, although, as Hellinga pointed out in responding to my remarks, the American project must do more to acknowledge this reality.

In the aftermath of the conference a newsletter may get under way (edited in Paris); and it may be that more focused conferences on specific topics will emerge. What seems certain is that the personal connection-making that has linked the French project to ours is now being supplemented by wider and equally promising relations.

D.D.H.

Notes on Research Tools

A CHILD'S GARDEN OF REFERENCE SOURCES

[Editors' note: We offer below a detailed survey of bibliographical tools available to scholars researching the field of American children's books. The Society is involved in a National Endowment for the Humanities-funded project to catalogue its holdings of post-1820 American children's books.]

As senior cataloguer of the Antiquarian Society's American Children's Books Project, I have helped researchers seeking portrayals of such diverse topics as slavery, reading, portraiture, sickness, and mother-daughter relationships in the pages of nineteenth-century juveniles. In my experience, I have found a growing variety of reference sources and secondary sources, many of which focus upon major authors, illustrators, and collections. In addition to these published sources, an increasingly useful source is emerging from the project records themselves. Since the inception of this NEH-funded project in 1985, project records have been loaded into the Research Libraries Information Network

data base (RLIN), which provides computerized access for subject, genre, publisher, printer, illustrator, engraver, physical characteristics (e.g., signed bindings), and place of imprint, along with the traditional entries for author and title.

Many of the recent users of the Society's nineteenth-century children's books located relevant titles through subject/genre searches of project records. Since 1987, project staff have produced a guide listing subject and genre headings used in project records. Originally compiled by cataloguer Susan Gordon, this guide links general topics to specific subject headings and genre terms. For example, social historian Burton Bledstein used the guide to locate children's books concerned with the health and sickness of children. Subject headings such as "sick children," "food," and "masturbation," were searched, along with headings describing specific diseases and handicapped children. These searches yielded a total of 192 relevant titles.

At present, all 5,400 records catalogued in the first phase of the project are now available in RLIN. This number will grow as records are now being produced for the later juvenile fiction titles published through 1876. NEH funding has been approved for cataloguing the Society's McLoughlin picture books and the pedagogical titles. Accordingly, the subject/genre guide is evolving to reflect the postbellum and pedagogical juveniles.

Basic author-title access is already available for several major juvenile literature collections in North America through printed catalogues and bibliographies. The two standard bibliographies of early American children's books are A. S. W. Rosenbach's *Early American Children's Books* (New York: Kraus Reprint Corp., 1966), and d'Alté A. Welch's *Bibliography of American Children's Books Printed Prior to 1821* (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1972). First published in 1933, *Early American Children's Books* contains bibliographic descriptions of A. S. W. Rosenbach's personal collection of 816 books printed in America for children between 1682 and 1836, now housed at the Free Library of Philadelphia. d'Alté Welch's comprehensive bibliography of pre-1821 American children's books describes titles in his own collection, as well as those held by AAS and other institutions. Two-thirds of the titles described by Welch are now represented in the AAS collection. Both bibliographies contain valuable indexes for printers and publishers.

In addition to these descriptive bibliographies, catalogues of three major institutional collections have been published: *Children's Books in the Rare Book Division of the Library of Congress* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1975), *Index to the Baldwin Library of Books in English Before 1900 Primarily for Children* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1981), and *Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books* (Toronto: Toronto Public Library, vol. 1, 1958; vol. 2, 1968). The Library of Congress catalogue provides author-title and date access to its special collection of some 15,000 juveniles published in the nineteenth and twentieth

centuries. The second source is a reproduction of the author-title catalogue designed by Ruth Baldwin for her collection of 40,000 children's books. Divided in half between English and American imprints, the collection is now owned by the University of Florida at Gainesville. The last catalogue is a selective listing of the collection established by Edgar Osborne and now maintained by the Toronto Public Library. It is perhaps the single strongest collection of early English children's books in North America. Entries are arranged by topical divisions. Illustrators and publishers are also indexed.

Many other institutions also maintain smaller, more specialized collections of juvenile literature. Basic information about these collections can be found in the directory *Special Collections in Children's Literature* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1982). Besides the main directory listing, collections are indexed by subjects, authors, and illustrators. It also provides a list of published guides to the various collections.

Although not always written for a purely juvenile audience, pedagogical literature can give the researcher a fuller picture of societal perceptions and expectations of young learners. Charles F. Heartman's path-breaking bibliographies, *The New-England Primer Issued Prior to 1830* (New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1934) and *American Primers, Indian Primers, Royal Primers . . . Issued Prior to 1830* (Highland Park, N. J.: Harry B. Weiss, 1935) remain the

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standard sources on early American primers. The U. S. Department of Education's early schoolbook collection is now partially indexed through *Early American Textbooks: 1775-1900* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Dept. of Education, 1985). About half of the collection's 12,000 volumes are represented in this catalogue, arranged by subjects such as art education, history, mathematics, and penmanship. The microfiche set, *American Primers*, provides the full text of selected primers, readers, spellers, alphabets, storybooks, and teaching manuals published between 1711 and 1943. Recently issued by University Publications of America (Bethesda, Md.), the set is accompanied by a printed guide featuring several indexes and an informative essay by Richard Venezky on the history of American pedagogical literature, as well as a pithy overview of secondary works.

A comprehensive biographical dictionary of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American writers awaits compilation. Two sources that partially fill this gap are *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), and *American Writers for Children Before 1900* (Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1985). *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature* is a dictionary compilation of brief articles on significant authors, genres, titles, and characters from King Arthur to Dr. Who. Its emphasis is distinctly English, although major American and European authors are included. The highly selective *American Writers for Children Before 1900* offers excellent coverage of trendsetting authors such as Noah Webster, Jacob Abbott, and Louisa May Alcott.

The pool of historical studies on the writing, reading, publication, and illustration of children's books has grown in variety and number, particularly over the last two decades. Although first published in 1932, F. J. Harvey Darton's *Children's Books in England*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) remains the "fairy godmother" of juvenile literature history, in that it unfolds in a single narrative the most comprehensive introduction to English-language children's books published through the early twentieth century. Two thought-provoking studies on the writing, reading, and publication of English Victorian juvenile fiction are J. S. Bratton's *The Impact of Victorian Children's Fiction* (London: Croom Helm, 1981) and Gillian Avery's *Childhood's Pattern* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975). Anne Scott MacLeod's *A Moral Tale: Children's Fiction and American Culture 1820-1860* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1975) is the best examination to date that uses children's books to obtain a clearer picture of antebellum America's expectations, hopes, and fears for its youth. In a similar vein, Ruth Miller Elson's *Guardians of Tradition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964) analyzes nineteenth-century American schoolbooks for their definition and treatment of such complex concepts as nature, race, and a socially-endorsed "American" identity.

A long underutilized source, juvenile periodicals are keenly scrutinized in Kirsten Drotner's *English Children*

and Their Magazines, 1751-1945 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988). Drotner's study examines the relationship between the expectations underlying popular themes found in English children's magazines and the social realities lived by their youthful audience. *Children's Periodicals of the United States* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984) does not have a unifying narrative, but it is a valuable reference source containing brief histories of 423 juvenile periodicals published in the U. S. between 1789 and 1980.

Nursery rhymes are also beginning to receive the scholarly attention they clearly deserve as cultural artifacts embedded with countless insights into play, childhood, and even political history. *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), edited by renowned collectors and researchers Peter and Iona Opie, contains verses, "traditionally passed on to a child while it is still of nursery age." Entries include the commonly known text of the rhyme, historical documentation, and descriptions of games played while reciting the rhyme. Gloria Delamar takes the Opies' pioneering effort a step further in her *Mother Goose: From Nursery to Literature* (Jefferson, N. C.: McFarland and Co., 1987). Delamar explores the historical context of Mother Goose rhymes in the aid of recitation, memorization, play, and child-parent bonding.

Children's picture books frequently offer marvelous visual testimony to scenes ranging from commonplace fact to ethereal fantasy. One of the best basic sources on nineteenth-century illustration is Geoffrey Wakeman's *Victorian Book Illustration* (Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1973). Wakeman lucidly examines the mechanical processes that allowed for the mass production of illustrated books. Although not expressly about children's books, Wakeman's study provides the historical background underlying the explosion of illustrated children's books published in the late nineteenth century. Brian Alderson focuses squarely upon children's book illustration in *Sing a Song for Sixpence: The English Picture-Book Tradition and Randolph Caldecott* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.) Alderson places Caldecott's art in historical context through his discussion of Caldecott's artistic influences from William Hogarth to Charles H. Bennett. Amply aided by pictorial examples, *Sing a Song for Sixpence* complements Wakeman's technically oriented study. Elegant examples of children's book illustration drawn from seventeen centuries dominate *Early Children's Books and Their Illustration* (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1975). French and English titles are particularly well represented in this catalogue, which was based primarily on the holdings of the Morgan Library and on the stellar collection of the late Elisabeth Ball. Barbara Bader's *American Picture Books* (New York: Macmillan, 1976) offers a critical look at the illustrators who have enriched and transformed the American picture book in the twentieth century. Bader also analyzes the impact of photography, social issues, and mass publishing techniques.

The future of juvenile literature as an increasingly utilized historical resource holds great promise. University Microfilms International has recently announced that it will microfilm the eclectic Opie Collection. Originally assembled by Peter and Iona Opie, the collection has been purchased by the Bodleian Library. Abundant in English and European imprints, this collection encompasses some 17,000 titles, ranging from eighteenth-century chapbooks to twentieth-century juvenile novels. Titles will be arranged by the topical divisions used in the Osborne catalogue, and will be released in annual installments over the next five years. The first unit is scheduled for release in early 1991. In addition, all titles will be fully catalogued and available in both OCLC and RLIN data bases. Projects like those at the Bodleian and the American Antiquarian Society will provide the wider accessibility so necessary to illuminate juvenile literature as a fascinating multifaceted historical resource.

Laura Wasowicz, American Antiquarian Society

In Brief

The lineup of speakers and topics for the Society's conference on "Iconography and the Culture of the Book," to be held on Friday and Saturday, June 14-15, 1991, is nearly

complete. Detailed information, with registration form, will be mailed in midwinter and will appear in the March issue of *The Book*. . . . Nina Baym, professor of English at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, has been selected to deliver the ninth annual James Russell Wiggins Lecture in the History of the Book in American Culture. The lecture, entitled "At Home with a History Book," will be given in Antiquarian Hall at 5:15 on Friday afternoon, October 18, 1991. Save the date. . . . The Society has recently received, as bequests, two large and significant collections of materials relating to James Fenimore Cooper. The first, bequeathed by Paul Fenimore Cooper, Jr., is an important collection of Cooper's literary manuscripts (including *Red Rover*, *The Bravo*, *Satanstoe*, and *Chain-Bearer*), personal correspondence, and legal and business papers. The related collection came from the estate of James F. Beard, Jr., the late Cooper scholar, and includes books, papers, and photocopies collected and used by him in his long career as editor of Cooper's works. . . . The application deadline for 1991-92 visiting research fellowships at the American Antiquarian Society is January 15, 1991, two weeks earlier than before. Both long-term (six- to twelve-month) and short-term (one- to three-month) fellowships are available. To receive a brochure and application forms, write the Society or phone (508) 752-5813.

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