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What Is an ‘American Book’?

REVIEW ESSAY

WILLIS G. REGIER

A History of the Book in America

Vol. 1: *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, ed. Hugh Amory and David D. Hall

Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press / American Antiquarian Society, 2007. Pp. xxiv, 638. Cloth: ISBN 978-0-8078-3404-6. Paper: ISBN 978-0-8078-5826-4, US\$34.95.

Vol. 2: *An Extensive Republic: Print, Culture, and Society in the New Nation*, ed. Robert A. Gross and Mary Kelley

Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press / American Antiquarian Society, 2010. Pp. xxii, 688. Cloth: ISBN 978-0-8078-3339-1, US\$60.00.

Vol. 3: *The Industrial Book, 1840–1880*, ed. Scott E. Casper, Jeffrey D. Groves, Stephen W. Nissenbaum, and Michael Winship

Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press / American Antiquarian Society, 2007. Pp. xix, 539. Cloth: ISBN 978-0-8078-3085-7, US\$60.00.

Vol. 4: *Print in Motion: The Expansion of Publishing and Reading in the United States, 1880–1940*, ed. Janice A. Radway and Carl F. Kaestle

Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press / American Antiquarian Society, 2009. Pp. xvii, 669. Cloth: ISBN 978-0-8078-3186-1, US\$60.00.

Vol. 5: *The Enduring Book: Print Culture in Postwar America*, ed. Joan Shelley Rubin, David Paul Nord and Michael Schudson

Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press / American Antiquarian Society, 2009. Pp. xvi, 618. Cloth: ISBN 978-0-8078-3285-1, US\$60.00.

Readers depressed by epitaphs for the book will find solace in volume 5 of this set. 'Is the book disappearing? No. Even in an age dazzled by the Internet and distracted by hundreds of television channels, the book endures in something very much like the form it acquired centuries ago' (5.1).

To relate the history of the book in America over four centuries required a diverse assembly of expertise. *A History of the Book in America* (hereafter *HBA*) has 111 contributors: professors of American studies, anthropology, communications, education, English, history, journalism, law, literature, marketing, political science, religion, sociology, and women's studies; librarians; editors; a curator; and a museum director. With so many involved in covering so much, there are high and low spots, dramatic scenes and yawning stretches, found gems, lost opportunities, occasional redundancy, and incomplete indexes.¹ Carpers will carp, niggers will niggle, but never mind. The set is a model of scholarly publication and institutional cooperation. It is a timely achievement and a great one. Smart and sober, it provides statistics and is suspicious of them. Its many engravings and photographs lie like stepping-stones across deep parts. *HBA* fills an immense gap in American history. In fact, it fills several.

HBA is vastly more comprehensive, better researched, and better annotated than its notable precursors, and it is, of course, more up to date. Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt's *The Book in America*² remains a touchstone, but time and scholarship have much advanced since its publication. John Tebbel's formidable four-volume *History of Book Publishing in the United States*,³ for all its faults, towers over its critics. Tebbel was a hasty and indefatigable historian of American print culture who also published comprehensive histories of American magazines and newspapers. His volumes have held the field for a generation because they are long, assertive, and packed to bursting with information. Tibbel's *History* remains richly rewarding, but it is, after all, one man's hurried work based on limited sources.⁴ Lehmann-Haupt and Tebbel are rarely mentioned in *HBA*, presumably to avoid unnecessary repetition, yet in the history of the American book the three histories help each other. *HBA* loses track of jobbers; Lehmann-Haupt and Tebbel do not. *HBA* abounds in illustrations (note especially Georgia B. Barnhill's 'Transformations in Pictorial Printing,' 2.422-40); they have none. They concentrate on trade publishing and book sales; *HBA* counters that the

two leading sponsors of American books have long been American government and American religion.

HBA is many kinds of history, with plenty of substantive data, stirring themes, and strong characters. Its five volumes forgo continuous narrative in favour of a series of topical essays, beginning with Hugh Armory's survey of what 'the book in America' has meant. David S. Shields notes that the term 'American' first came into general use in the first decade of the eighteenth century, lumping together the thirteen revolutionary colonies. 'Until the projection of American identity in the patriot writings of the Revolution, Americanness remained tenuous and occasional' (1.436). Ever since, what constitutes an 'American' book has been tenuous, too. For *HBA*, 'America' means the United States and the thirteen colonies. For the history of the book north of the border, readers will need the three-volume *History of the Book in Canada*.⁵ No comprehensive study of the history of the book in French America or Spanish America yet exists.

From the start 'American' was regionally inflected, a point previously emphasized by Tebbel.⁶ The powers of London 'imposed an aggregate "American" identity upon the colonies, and the colonies resisted,' asserting their differences (1.435). At first there were at least three distinct regions—New England; the Middle Colonies (New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania); and the Atlantic South—with different immigration patterns, different charters and forms of government, different economic development, different views on education—in short, different cultures with different books.

Not only Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, but also Richmond and Charleston and a host of lesser towns—Worcester and Pittsfield, Hartford and Litchfield, Hudson and Trenton, Lancaster and Baltimore, along with a dozen others—were publishing centers by the time that Thomas Jefferson entered the White House. In contrast to Britain and France, there would be no single capital and nucleus for American print culture. The consequences were profound: the new republic could never sustain a single national, unified, elite culture. (2.61)

Then there was North and South and war between them. Then there was this old story: in 1876, when major American publishers were touting their canon of major American authors, nearly all so honoured 'hailed

from or resided in New England' (3.27). Then there was globalization. By 2003, 'five of the eight largest publishing firms with U.S. operations were owned by foreign conglomerates' (5.34).

For *HBA*, American books are first and foremost the books Americans read (including Shakespeare and Dickens) and the books Americans published (including and especially the Bible). In 'Homes, Books, and Reading' (3.319–31), Louise Stevenson samples nineteenth-century American mass merchandise and finds engraved portraits and plaster busts of authors; a Shakespeare card game; candlesticks depicting characters from *The Last of the Mohicans*; figurines of characters from Sir Walter Scott; and spoons, mugs, and plates showing authors' homes or scenes from novels. Offered a choice between Charles Brockden Brown and Sir Walter Scott, Americans overwhelmingly preferred Scott. Joan Shelley Rubin quotes Clifton Fadiman's flattering opinion that 'despite what some communications tycoons believe, Americans respond more eagerly to the best than to the worst—provided the best is offered to them' (5.413).

'Book' is as slippery as 'American.' Ellen Gruber Garvey asks, 'What is a book? Is it the physical object . . . or the text in whatever form it takes?' (4.171). David D. Hall pursues the question in 'Bibliography and the Meaning of "Text"' (5.245–55), chronicling the history of textual criticism. David Reinking tells us that 'books provide authoritative information' (5.491) and that 'a book is a genre of writing that encourages authoritative, linear, serious, and abstract arguments' (5.496), idealized definitions that would exclude many of the books discussed in *HBA*. To understand the 'American book,' *HBA* takes up dime novels, broadsides, pamphlets, sheet music, magazines, trade and professional journals, government reports, and newspapers, newspapers, newspapers.

Volume 4 claims to broaden the series' focus 'to include magazines, newspapers, and other forms' (4.1; also 4.19), though every other volume does the same. Chapter 10 of volume 1 is devoted entirely to 'Periodicals and Politics.' The emergence of book publication from colonial journalism runs throughout the volume. Chapter 9 of volume 2 is dedicated to 'Periodical Press: Newspapers, Magazines, and Reviews'; chapter 7 of volume 3 treats 'Periodicals and Serial Publication' between 1840 and 1880, when enterprising publishers used their magazines to sell their books and promote their authors. Chapters 6, 7, and 8 of volume 4 are exclusively devoted to magazines and newspapers; chapter 12 summarizes

American publication of science and technical journals. Volume 5 includes David Abrahamson and Carol Polsgrove's 'The Right Niche: Consumer Magazines and Advertisers,' James L. Baughman's 'Wounded but Not Slain: The Orderly Retreat of the American Newspaper,' Jane Rhodes's 'The Black Press and Radical Print Culture,' Polsgrove's 'Magazines and the Making of Authors,' and James P. Danky's 'The Oppositional Press.' This last discusses leftist, feminist, and gay and lesbian publications, with a look to the right's Robert Welch and the John Birch Society.

Purists might protest that *HBA* departs too often and too long from books. Let them rave. *HBA* makes a series of strong arguments tying books to other modes of communication so that books' tangled history isn't falsified by focus. Why so much about newspapers in these books about books? Nine reasons, at least:

1. *Religion*. From the beginning, the American book trade was largely financed by religious organizations—churches, charities, denominational colleges—and their leaders. Churches were the first American reading communities, and they, too, relied more on magazines and newspapers than on books to advance and sustain their activities. Because denominations could publish nationally and for large numbers, their printing technologies led the way for the trade (2.9). For some, 'relationships within a textual community surpassed fellowship in a geographically specific place of worship' (3.270).
2. *Commerce*. Books have never been more than a fraction of the reading materials published and read in America. To eke out a living, colonial printers relied on pamphlets, broadsides, newspapers, and pocket almanacs. In the colonies and the early republic, readers bought what they could afford, and few could afford to build up libraries. In the colonial period, readers in some places had to borrow books from stocks 'kept in places such as taverns and general stores' (1.399). Information became big business before independence. 'Newspapers had become the largest single item of production in the Boston trade by 1765, a trend that was accelerating throughout the colonies on the eve of the Revolution' (1.479). Distribution and marketing channels developed for magazines and newspapers opened the way for books.

3. *Technology*. The higher demand for newspapers and magazines promoted advances in printing speeds and quality that were quickly convertible to book printing. Demand for paper stimulated more production of more grades. Sizes, qualities, quantities, and nomenclature of paper were finally standardized in 1932 (4.77).
4. *Politics*. Since so much colonial publishing depended on political patronage, newspapers and pamphlets often followed the money. Printers' affiliations carried over into the publication of books. Campaign biographies have fuelled American politics since the republic began to vote.
5. *Law*. Before its enshrinement in the First Amendment, press freedom had been tested under fire, with printers defying English repression for decades. Brown provides a fine summary of colonial aspirations for freedom of the press (1.366–76) and the legal grounds for it. The Sedition Act of 1798, the first serious attempt by the fledgling federal government to curtail press freedom, raised such a storm that 'official efforts to regulate newspapers faded. In contrast to Britain and France, the new republic forswore the state powers customarily employed to police opinion' (2.19). In 'The Black Press and Radical Print Culture' Jane Rhodes writes that 'the history of African American publishing in the United States is inextricably linked to an enduring tradition of protest and resistance' (5.287).
6. *Culture*. John Nerone writes that Americans viewed newspapers as 'the necessary vanguard of print culture' (3.231). For large numbers of Americans, newspapers and magazines were all the reading they could afford. Sally M. Miller's 'Distinctive Media: The European Ethnic Press in the United States' (4.299–311) is all about newspapers. The South and West had far fewer book publishers than the Northeast, but they had plenty of newspapers, and newspapers served many of the functions that books served elsewhere.
7. *Literature*. The religious and political factions that supported newspapers supported and promoted writers willing and able to carry a controversy. Pointed satire and venomous polemics were staples from the start. Nineteenth-century newspapers serialized novels, gave writers a start, contacts, and experience, and launched many into fame. Franklin was an early case. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, newspapers 'reviewed, advertised, and

serialized books and served as a training ground for authors . . .

Walt Whitman, John Greenleaf Whittier, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mark Twain, William Dean Howells' (3.230); Janice A. Radway adds Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, Frank Norris, Jack London, Ambrose Bierce, Kate Chopin, and Abraham Cahan (4.215), and Polsgrove's 'Magazines and the Making of Authors' (5.256–68) adds James Agee, Hannah Arendt, James Baldwin, Joan Didion, Norman Mailer, Gay Talese, Diana and Lionel Trilling, Gore Vidal, and others. Newspaper publication was especially important in the South, where bookstores were few and scattered, and for African Americans and other minorities whose literary careers were thwarted by bias (4.351).

8. *Iconography*. The frontier printer. The woman poet. The media tycoon.
9. *Science and the professions*. Newspapers gauged American progress relative to the rest of the world, looking especially to England and Germany. Trade associations and scholarly societies defined themselves through their newsletters and journals.

Like rum-running bravos, the editors of *HBA* have smuggled a history of American newspapers into their history of the American book.

Tebbel and Lehmann-Haupt concentrated on printers, publishers, and booksellers. *HBA* looks intently at consumption—schools, churches, clubs, libraries, even individual readers—opening a broad and sometimes breathless view on the place of books in America. There are plain facts aplenty, for instance: 'Books were marketed through general stores, printing offices, and local notables, particularly, ministers and postmasters working on commission' (2.25); 'Bound volumes were barred from the mails until 1851' (3.187); what we now know as the *Congressional Record* was privately printed until 1873 (3.191); 'Simon and Schuster's first publications in the late 1920s were softbound crossword-puzzle books' (4.78); publishers of dime novels enticed customers with 'tie-ins such as cigars, chewing tobacco, and soft drinks named after books' (4.175).

Events such as the Mexican War, the Civil War, and the Great Depression are subordinated to perduring themes: literacy, libraries, copyright and piracy, competition, funding, access to production, and the tension between metropolis and hinterland. The clamour of politics, self-righteous nativism, the cultural divide between North and South,

the consequences of slavery, and war after war are unavoidable pains in a history of the American book. The power of print fed the fear of it; press freedom often suffered censors and bonfires.

Slavery and its legacy run through volumes 2, 3, and 4. Slavery affected everything, including paper: 'by the 1840s, cotton had become more common as a source of fiber than linen in the paper used for books, making up 65 percent of the fiber content' (3.50). Grey Gundaker's 'Give Me a Sign: African Americans, Print, and Practice' (2.483–95) begins at the start of the republic, with African American Benjamin Bannaker's *Almanac* (twenty-eight editions between 1792 and 1797) and Robert Roberts's *The House Servant's Directory* (1857), 'the first commercially published book by an African American' (2.488–83). Before and after Roberts, slave narratives took up the American cry for freedom. Jeannine Marie DeLombard's 'African American Cultures of Print' (3.360–73) takes slavery through the Civil War to Reconstruction, a period in which pamphlets and an emergent African-American press played major roles. James J. Danky's 'Reading, Writing, and Resisting: African American Print Culture' (4.339–58) hails the makers and brokers of African-American literature from W.E.B. Du Bois to the 'New Negro.' No heroes in the history of the American book are braver than the African-American authors and publishers who defied John Calhoun and Jim Crow.

There is inspiration here, high art and hard labour. National and civic leaders presumed that literacy was vital for a vigorous democracy and thus fought for better schools. Among the most important books in *HBA* are Noah Webster's *American Speller* and the McGuffey readers ('the demand for primers, readers, and spellers was fundamental to the expansion of publishing in the early republic': 2.270). Higher literacy rates increased demand for books and created market niches. The drive for efficiencies led to technological innovations and consensus on standards.

The five volumes of *HBA* also treat evangelism, competing elites, and the tastes, aspirations, and pretensions of a self-conscious middle class. Whatever else they are, books have also been totems and furniture: 'Regardless of education, income, occupation, or residence, most Americans did not read books' (4.514).

Studding volumes 2 and 5 are case studies in which *HBA* allows more room for narrative. I most appreciated Scott Casper's 'Harper & Brothers'

(2.127–35) and Priscilla Coit Murphy's 'The *Silent Spring* Debate' (5.447–58). Jeffrey L. Pasley's 'Have Pen, Will Travel: The Times and Life of John Norvell, Political Journalist' (2.190–97) tucks a concise biography into *HBA* to illustrate how long in bed lay editors and politicians. Founder of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Norvell was rewarded by Van Buren with a federal post in Detroit. Norvell helped Michigan campaign for statehood, and in 1835 he entered the US Senate, one of thirty-two members of Congress who were editors, printers, or publishers—a representation second only to lawyers (2.196–7).

Most readers will prefer some volumes of the *HBA* over others. Choose any part of any volume as a starting point and go from there. A taste will become a feast. If you begin at the beginning, here's what you'll get.

READING THROUGH FIVE VOLUMES

The *HBA*'s first step was a mighty stride. Volume 1, *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, was originally published by Cambridge University Press in 2000 and set a high standard for the series. The *HBA* immediately took precedence over Tebbel and Lehmann-Haupt, presenting a much broader, more detailed, and livelier view of publishing in the colonies. The colonial book trade showed many features of the business that remain with us—wholesaling, remainders, returns, co-publication, subscription printing, pirated editions, demanding patrons, unhappy authors, and the need to keep up with technology.

In the colonial period, most American books were printed in London. With caveats about interpreting the available data (customs records, shipping manifests, business accounts, private papers, and surviving copies), James Raven estimates that as late as the 1760s, Americans imported twice as many books from England as were purchased from American printers (1.197–8). 'When Thomas Jefferson drew up a list of books in 1771 as recommended reading for a young cousin, he relied on the catalogue of Thomas Waller, a London bookseller' (1.390). Because much of the cost of books involved shipping, importers came to prefer unbound sheets, which for a while made bookbinding an important craft in eighteenth-century New England (1.317–9). Bookstores were rare and precarious, competing with other retailers who sold books as a sideline. Cutlers, drapers, and stationers sold used and imported books.

The first American printers were dependent on a few powerful clients. Books published by one or another government (towns, governors, and colonial legislatures) accounted for 90 per cent of early imprints (1.155). Until more than one press was active in a locale, competition was moot. William Bradford found himself caught between two factions of Pennsylvania when 'one requested him to print a document which the other suppressed' (1.202, 207–9).

When there was more than one printer, they aligned with different factions, a precedent for today's racket. Factionalism, whether of church or state, 'was good for printers and booksellers' because it stimulated demand (1.160). Prudent printers 'were impartial by ignoring controversy ... they could not afford to antagonize any faction, certainly not the government' (1.223).

Competition for patronage gave colonial potentates the power to raise or ruin a printer. In one case, a colonial government tried to *compel* purchases and encountered colonial resistance: 'Connecticut resolved that every family should buy a copy of the 1673 Laws, but even with this mandate, the constables were unable to collect' (1.112).

American readers preferred British books, and American authors preferred British publishers, if they could get them. The American Revolution traumatized the American book trade. In the years immediately prior to the Revolution, 60 per cent of England's book exports were bound for American ports (1.185); when war cut off that trade, English printers as well as American ones begrudged King George.

Volume 1 relates the careers of early American printers: Robert Wells in South Carolina; William Parks in Maryland; William Bradford in New York; Samuel Keimer, David Hall, and Benjamin Franklin in Pennsylvania. James Green points out that Franklin succeeded where others failed by refusing to side with either of Pennsylvania's political factions and instead adopting an 'even-handed, modest, and consensus-seeking posture' (1.254).

Robert Bell, 'the first American literary publisher' (1.288), emigrated from Scotland and brought with him an appetite for the works of the Scottish Enlightenment, arriving in time to rationalize the American Revolution. Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* was 'clearly the first American best-seller,' going through twenty-one editions in eleven towns in 1776 alone. 'It was also the first American book to make enough money for the author and publisher to quarrel over it' (1.295–6).

The virtuoso finale of volume 1 begins with 'Practices of Reading,' five co-authors in four essays that set up topics carried throughout the *HBA*: literacy and schoolbooks; the trade market; libraries; and modalities of reading. Donald D. Hall's 'Learned Culture in the Eighteenth Century' is but one of his many excellent contributions to three of the volumes. David S. Shields's 'Eighteenth-Century Literary Culture' explains why 'the literary culture of Anglo-Americans during the eighteenth century operated on premises largely unfamiliar to us, and not easily comprehensible' (1.434). Note his plural: 'Print permitted the emergence of publics' (1.446).

We had to wait a decade for volume 2, *An Extensive Republic*, which plugs a gap and completes the set. Volume 2 begins with three exemplary pieces: Robert A. Gross's introduction to the volume, Richard D. Brown's 'The Revolution's Legacy for the History of the Book' (2.58–74), and James N. Green's 'The Rise of Book Publishing' (2.75–126). In volume 1, Americans aspired to publish in London for several reasons: prestige, desire for influence, a larger market, and the protection of copyright. Those aspirations still aspire in volume 2. 'The provincial American literary marketplace was so small-scale, decentered, and dependent on British imports and reprints that it was unprofitable for American authors with literary aspirations until the 1820s' (2.356). Well into the 1800s, most publishers 'got their start by importing books' (2.79).

Like volume 1, volume 2 is well planned and executed, each section introduced with a summary by Mary Kelley or Richard A. Gross. The sequence proceeds neatly from the spread of local printing to the attempts to create national distribution networks. The wittiest essay in all five volumes is Andie Tucker's 'Newspapers and Periodicals' (2.389–408); it is also one of the most data rich.

In ways visual and visceral, volume 2 breaks with volume 1. The visual: the University of North Carolina Press improved the jacket and text design. The visceral: women finally get a break. There is little about women in volume 1 and not much by them either: women readers get eleven pages in volume 1, women authors get ten, women printers one. Only two women contributed to volume 1, and both have male co-authors. Twelve of the thirty-two contributors to volume 2 are women, however, and only one shares credit with a guy. Volume 2's chapter about women authors, by Joanne Dobson and Sandra Zagarell,

starts in 1790 with Mercy Otis Warren, Sarah Wentworth Morton, and Judith Sargent Murray; briefly touches on Susanna Haswell Rowson (whose *Charlotte Temple*, published in 1794, was 'America's first best-selling novel,' 2.371), Phillis Wheatley, Catherine Maria Sedgwick, and Francis Alexander; then moves to the influential anti-feminist Sarah Josepha Hale.

Elizabeth Barnes's 'Novels' (2.440–9) takes a more detailed look at Rowson and at other early American novelists struggling for an income. Another case study, Mary Kupiec Cayton's 'Harriet Newell's Story: Women, the Evangelical Press, and the Foreign Mission Movement' (2.408–16), scans one narrow path open to women authors: Christian martyrdom. In 1812, nineteen-year-old Newell died, on Mauritius, in a failed attempt to evangelize Burma. Published as memoirs, her letters and journals made her an iconic figure, and her *Memoirs* served as 'a new archetype of female evangelism that included sentiment, drama, pathos, heroism, and an exotic setting, all in the name of God' (2.414).

Volume 2 engages the staggering riches of its period: a nation doubling in area, trebling in population, quintupling its colleges; the election of Jefferson; the Louisiana Purchase; the Lewis and Clark Expedition of Discovery (whose delay in publication created opportunities for bogus reports and piracies of them, 2.254); the election of Jackson; the introduction of steel engravings, enabling large circulations of illustrated magazines; and lithography, making profitable illustrated gift books possible (2.431–7). Volume 2 covers a time of tremendous improvements in roads, canals, and stagecoach lines. The first railroads and steamboats steadily increased the number of markets and distribution nodes. Richard R. John's 'Expanding the Realm of Communication' (2.211–20) emphasizes the importance of the Post Office Act of 1792, the precedent for federal encouragement of the wide and rapid spread of information.

Quarrels between free states and slave states kept publishers busy. Literacy increased, but unevenly, impeded in the South by a belief that education should be a family affair, a mother's duty, not something to be supported by taxes (2.69). Membership libraries were ubiquitous in the Northeast after independence but were rare in the South; Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, and Georgia had none (2.274). The South had fewer printers, fewer newspapers, fewer books.

At the core of volume 2 is the creation of a national literature and the knitting of networks to print, promote, and sell it. Dona Brown's 'Travel

Books' (2.449–58) and Scott Casper's 'Biography' (2.458–64) describe how their genres asserted national pride. In 'The Learned Word' (2.247–65), David S. Shields recalls a national embarrassment. The Linnaean Society of New England

became a laughingstock in the press when it dispatched a committee to investigate rumors that a strange sea creature had been discovered off the coast of Gloucester, Massachusetts. The members quickly determined without ever seeing a specimen that a new species had been found to the greater glory of American science. With much solemnity, they named it *Scoliophis Atlanticus*. But their official report evoked widespread derision. (2.261)

The scholar as laughingstock is a joke that never gets old.

Rather than a chronicle of steady progress, volume 2 recognizes bumps, resistances, and reversals. John L. Brooke's 'Print and Politics' (2.179–90) disputes common wisdom about the influence of newspapers:

In both the 1840 and 1844 presidential elections, areas of the rural South, where literacy was weak and printers were few and far between, had relatively high voter turnout. By contrast, many northerners, particularly in New England, which enjoyed almost universal literacy and an abundance of media, were less likely to show up at the polls ... barbecues worked as well—and sometimes better than—newspapers at getting out the vote. (2.188–9)

Robert A. Gross concludes, 'this volume undercuts inflated claims about "an Age of Print" by documenting the perpetuation of older modes of expression and communication in the small-scale face-to-face settings of everyday life and their alteration in tandem with print by the gathering forces of social and economic change' (2.517–8).

Barry F. O'Connell's 'Literacy and Colonization: The Case of the Cherokees' is the *HBA*'s sole essay on the effects of print culture on Native Americans. A. Gregg Roeber's 'Readers and Writers of German' (2.471–82) resumes his discussion from volume 1 (1.298–313). From volume 2 on, each volume has at least one chapter focused on African-American readers, authors, printers, and publishers.

Volume 3, *The Industrial Book, 1840–1880*, is well named, chronicling the vast changes in book production and distribution made possible by industrialization. The twenty-one contributors to volume 3 deal with

their topics so concisely they sometimes seem pinched. The most compact volume of the series, it describes the impact of steam-driven printing presses, the advent of the telegraph, and the rapid extension of railroads. Widespread stereotyping and electrotyping made reprinting inexpensive, allowing books to retain uniformity and remain in print longer. In this period it became common practice for publishers to sell their books already bound and to use bindings to distinguish their wares. The first photographic illustration in an American book appeared in late 1853. By 1880, 'virtually all of the paper used for printing was machine made' (3.50). Significantly, 'printers boasted the earliest and most durable trade unions in nineteenth-century America' (3.76).

There is very little on the role of books leading up to the Civil War. John Nerone's 'The Civil War: A Moment of Change?' compresses that war into two pages, and even then the focus is on newspapers rather than books. The longest treatment of the war is in Amy M. Thomas's 'Literacies, Readers, and Cultures of Print in the South,' which details the difficulties printers in the Confederacy had in obtaining paper and equipment (3.381–4) and the post-war popularity of memoirs and biographies of Civil War commanders. Ann Fabian's 'Amateur Authorship' notes the vogue for accounts of former prisoners of war (3.411–2).

Michael Winship wrote three very fine sections, 'Manufacturing and Book Production,' 'The International Trade in Books,' and 'Distribution and Trade.' In the last he discusses the motives for the formation of the New York Publishers' Association in 1855 (which endured) and of the American Book Trade Association in 1874 (which collapsed). The motives were the same: to control prices, discounts, and distribution. Winship notes that 'the dedicated bookshop remained the most important site' for book sales throughout the nineteenth century, but 'the general stock was chiefly shelved behind counters and not accessible for browsing' (3.128). Customers wanting to page through a book had to ask a clerk for access.

Volume 4, *Print in Motion: The Expansion of Publishing and Reading in the United States, 1880–1940*, covers the heyday of print—'proliferating, ubiquitous, nearly inescapable print' (4.15)—up to the dawn of television, that mesmerizing villain. Volume 4 is at once the longest and the most uneven of the five, hammering the unsurprising thesis that print culture is complex and diffuse. Editor Carl F. Kaestle's 'Seeing the Sites: Readers, Publishers, and Local Print Cultures in 1880' is itself a diffuse, pointillist

FIGURE 1. D. Lothrop & Co.'s bookstore in Boston, 1876 (courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society). Patrons had to ask a clerk to show books to them. For more on Lothrop see Lehmann-Haupt, *The Book in America*, 230; Tebbel, *A History of Book Publishing*, 2.275–7.

history. Section introductions and an epilogue scatter statistics that would have been better gathered in a single place. Yet set in the brass are some wonderful essays.

Book designers and production managers will much appreciate the sweep and detail of Megan Benton's 'Unruly Servants: Machines, Modernity, and the Printed Page' (4.152–69). Marketing managers, advertising managers, and publicists will find in Ellen Gruber Garvey's 'Ambivalent Advertising: Books, Prestige, and the Circulation of Publicity' (4.170–89) a solid historical foundation for what they do and why they do it. Anyone at all interested in the history of American scholarly publishing, and especially those in research universities, will benefit from Janice A. Radway's 'Learned and Literary Print Cultures in an Age of Professionalization and Diversification' (4.197–233).

Charles A. Seavey and Caroline F. Sloate's 'The Government as Publisher' (4.260–75) gives due attention to the largest publisher in

American history, whose importance goes far beyond issuing reports to Congress. Federal agencies such as the Census Bureau and the US Archives published works vital to social science and social history.

Volume 4 introduces the American Publishers' Association (formed in 1900), the American Booksellers' Association (formed in 1901), and the limited-liability corporation, a legal change that led to much greater concentration of capital. This period saw the birth of book clubs and the rebirth of the paperback, the debut of literary agents, the first American university presses, the first pictorial dust jackets, the first best-seller lists (in *Bookman* in 1895), extravagant ad campaigns, and the first rights sales to Hollywood, 'the most significant source of subsidiary revenue' and a means of attracting new readers to popular authors (4.87). In another of his fine essays, Winship describes 'The Rise of a National Book Trade System in the United States.' He remarks that 'growth brought about a need for increased capital to what had traditionally been an under-capitalized business, causing many firms to reorganize as private corporations: Lippincott in 1885, Harper in 1896 and again in 1900, Appleton in 1900, Scribner in 1904, and Houghton Mifflin in 1908' (4.57).

As the firms' names attest, publishing remained largely a man's business, but in the nineteenth century domestic reading was women's sphere. Parallel essays—Elizabeth Long's 'Aflame with Culture: Reading and Social Mission in the Nineteenth-Century White Women's Literary Club Movement' (4.476–90) and Elizabeth McHenry's 'Reading and Black Pride: The Literary Activism of Black Clubwomen' (4.491–510)—show that women of both races worked toward similar goals: education and a broadening of culture, certainly, but also practice in decorum and public expression, discussion of all kinds of social problems, and an excuse for organizing. Active clubs not only read together but pressed for change together. Their agendas were markedly different, however, the white clubs tending to be conservative and intent on attaining or sustaining elite status, while African-American women dealt with job discrimination, the convict lease system, and anti-lynching laws.

Volume 4 redresses a number of matters previously deferred. Most importantly, in 'Hispanic Print Cultures in What Became the Mainland of the United States' (4.312–38), Nicolás Kanellos tries to cover the better part of five centuries in less than thirty pages, most of which are devoted to Spanish-language newspapers. He reminds readers of other important 'firsts': the first printing press in North America was in Mexico City (1539); the first schools in what would become the United States were

in Spanish Florida and Georgia; the first archives, libraries, and universities in North America were Spanish; and the first book in American literature was Cabeza de Vaca's *La Relación* (1542). *Nota bene*.

Kanellos's assignment gave him little space to differentiate Puerto Ricans who immigrated to New York from Mexicans who abruptly became a minority in the Republic of Texas or the State of California, but he is able to indicate why those differences matter. When Franco seized power in Spain, and Pinochet in Chile, the exiles in the United States were socialists; when socialists took over Mexico and communists took over Cuba, the exiles were counter-revolutionary.

The final essay of volume 4 is Joan Shelley Rubin's 'Making Meaning: Analysis and Affect in the Study and Practice of Reading,' a survey of research on American readers during the period. It shows, on the one hand, the emergence of reading as focus of study, and, on the other, the pesky recurrent problem of obtaining data beyond anecdotes and case studies.

The data problem also afflicts volume 5, *The Enduring Book: Print Culture in Postwar America*, which culminates with 'New Reading and Writing Publics' and a note on tables and statistics. Though there is no shortage of numbers gathered by one book research group or another, their aggregations are beset by omissions and irregularities. The history of late-twentieth-century book publishing still lies in the primary documentary stage, in the files and servers of publishers, printers, authors, and agents. In their introduction to volume 5's statistical appendix, Laura J. Miller and David Paul Nord warn that 'statistical trend data on the print media are not very reliable, especially when they stretch over half a century' (5.503). In the first place, there are definitional problems: What is meant by a 'trade' book? How many books does a retailer have to carry to become a bookstore? If a novel appears in cloth, paperback, audiobook, and large-print editions, is it one book or four? In the second place, much of the information about distribution and sales is proprietary and obtainable only by inference. Paul J. Gutjahr reports that

although Bowker had reported only 6,206 new religion titles for 2000, for 2004 it reported 14,009 new titles, and later it revised that 2004 figure to 21,669! This astonishing increase had more to do with changes in methods of reporting than changes in reality, but some reality was involved as well ... Yet, even so, religious book sales continued to fly under the radar of industry trackers. (5.378–9)

In the third place, statistics on library usage are sketchy. Even so, Miller and Nord do their best to provide what statistics they can, and cautiously interpret them, demonstrating the enormous expansion of the book industry since 1950 in terms of new titles and the radical concentration of that growth within the largest corporations.

Ilan Stavans's 'Bilingual Nation: Spanish-Language Books in the 1960s' (5.389–406), like the Kanellos essay in volume 4, presumes the need for deep background and starts with Cabeza de Vaca. Stavans pays tribute to Kanellos for his efforts at Arte Público to create more publishing outlets for Spanish-language writers and is one of the rare contributors who pay any attention to literary agents.

Volume 5 brings the series into the world of superstores, Web sites, and the Kindle. Some contributors to this volume speculate, many ask questions that only the future will answer, and a few dare to prophesy. The leitmotif of volume 5 is the most dramatic change in the period it covers: the rapid consolidation of the book industry in the 1980s and 1990s. By 2002, more than 80 per cent of all book sales were made by the fifty largest firms (out of 3570), and more than 41 per cent by the four largest (5.510). Beth Luey's 'The Organization of the Book Publishing Industry' is an excellent introduction to the current industry and establishes a broad context for the essays that follow.

In 'Selling the Product,' Laura J. Miller reviews the era of mall stores, their eclipse by Borders and Barnes & Noble, and the volcanic rise of Amazon, all of which decimated independent booksellers and shifted the balance of power away from publishers and toward the remaining vendors. We still have much to learn about the effects of media conglomerates on book culture, their intentions and neglect, and their tendency to treat books as a sideline to more profitable media.

Very welcome in volume 5 are two case studies that examine the influence of particular books: Trysh Travis's 'Reading the Language of the Heart: The "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous' (5.432–46) and Priscilla Coit Murphy's 'Books and the Media: The *Silent Spring* Debate' (5.447–58). Travis's essay exemplifies the unseen and unremarked world of specialty publishers and their readers—in this case, Alcoholics Anonymous, with its multimillion-dollar enterprise based on a single book. Murphy's essay is a powerful reminder that a book can still make a wide and lasting difference.

A group of essays describe books' uses and purposes: as raw information, for social formation, and as coveted tokens of private ownership. Robert DeMaria Jr.'s 'Book Collecting and the Book as Object' (5.472–84) turns 180 degrees from Lehmann-Haupt's *The Book in America*. Lehmann-Haupt looked at book collecting from the desks of the dealers;⁷ Demaria looks at collectors, sixteen of them, and their clubs. Elizabeth Long's 'The Chat-an-Hour Social and Cultural Club: African American Women Readers' (5.439–71) picks up from McHenry's 'Reading and Black Pride' in volume 4, reinforcing the value of reading clubs as a site of social activism. Harvey Teres's 'The Critical Climate' tallies the shortcomings of the New York elite who, in 1952, were more concerned about the dangers of mass culture than about race relations, abuses of corporate power, or McCarthyism. Teres writes,

The problem is that, for all the elevation of taste and the collapse of "brow" levels over the past fifty years, and despite the claim that consumers exercise choice over their aesthetic experiences, a half dozen multinational corporations . . . now wield the power to produce, distribute, and promote culture in the United States. (5.242–3)

Dan Simon's and Tom McCarthy's 'Editorial Vision and the Role of the Independent Publisher' (5.210–22) focuses on the late great Pantheon and the doughty Dalkey Archive Press.

More than a history of books, *HBA* describes the history of America *via* books, a history that after 3250 learned pages still reaches for more.

TOPICS

HBA's organization encourages a topical approach. If reading through five volumes doesn't suit your calendar or body chemistry, sample a little of what *HBA* says about issues that now occupy book publishing. Emulating Todorov emulating Bakhtin, I'll pretty much let *HBA* speak for itself.⁸

Censorship

The *HBA* records episodes of mob rule and book burning. 'As Americans threw off the yoke of monarchy in 1775 and 1776, they also destroyed the presses of their loyalist adversaries' (2.62). 'Republican partisans in the Wilmington (Delaware) Library and Young Men's Association objected to the acquisition of Charles Brockden Brown's

1809 *Address to the Congress* denouncing Jefferson's embargo as "incompatible with truth" and rather than return or sell the outrageous work, had it burned' (2.277). 'On 29 July 1835, a group of men, styling themselves patriots in the tradition of the Boston Tea Party, broke into the post office at Charleston, South Carolina, and hauled off bags of abolitionist mail from New York. The next night, before a cheering crowd, they burned it' (2.243).

Paul S. Boyer's 'Gilded-Age Consensus, Repressive Campaigns, and Gradual Liberalization: The Shifting Rhythms of Book Censorship' (4.276–98) covers the hegemony of what he calls 'the genteel code,' which exercised censorship on all levels. The American Booksellers Association and the American Library Association 'rarely protested censorship in the 1920s, and indeed sometimes denounced the publishers and authors' (4.294). When pressed into law, the genteel code led to prosecution of publishers and authors who dared discuss contraception, abortion, socialism, or pacifism. "'Banned in Boston" became a national byword' (4.295).

Wartime censorship was extreme. In 1918, 'several public libraries in Iowa tossed all German-language materials into their library furnaces'; local libraries followed an 'Army index' to remove books perceived as pro-German or pacifist (4.447). Communist advances in Europe and China aroused American anxiety, the McCarthy hearings, and fear of books. In capitals and county seats, book banning was dutiful and patriotic. 'Private groups from the American Legion to the Daughters of the American Revolution sought to save the country by determining what was fit to read' (5.138).

'In the early 1950s, libraries all over the nation were mired in censorship battles' (5.329). The concentration of power given to distributors of paperbacks in the 1940s and 1950s also gave them the power to censor the books and authors that reached the stores. 'Distributors raised objections to works by William Faulkner, Norman Mailer, and James Baldwin, among others' (5.44).

Volume 5 devotes one full chapter and much of another to twentieth-century censorship: Donald A. Downs's 'Government Censorship since 1945' (5.135–50) and Jonathan Zimmerman's wonderful 'Where the Customer Is King: The Textbook in American Culture' (5.312–24). Downs focuses on key Supreme Court cases, including *Burstyn v. Wilson*, which, in 1952, dealt with blasphemy for the first time and declared it protected under the First Amendment. He concludes that 'unfettered

discourse has continued its steady historical expansion' (5.149). Zimmerman makes two sharp comments worth quoting: 'The postwar textbook debate has largely ignored teachers, except to insult them' (5.323), and 'A multicultural nation needed singularly bland texts ... because any controversial issue was certain to antagonize one culture or another. The cost of diversity in American society was monotony in American textbooks' (5.324). The coverage of censorship in *HBA* is vastly better than Lehmann-Haupt's, but it supports his conclusion that 'in times of war and emotional stress of any sort the careful newspaper becomes the voice of the people. In the face of this fact theories regarding the liberty of the press become matter for academic discussion.'⁹

Children's Books

After first enjoying sales to adults, Michael Wigglesworth's *Day of Doom* (1662) ended its popular career as a children's book (1.108). 'Signaled in some of the spellers that the colonists imported from overseas and signaled, as well, in the English bookseller John Newberry's pocket books for children,' the movement for children's books 'would not take hold in America until after 1800' (1.398).

Harper Brothers imported a British publishing strategy, combining books in series, with common bindings, such as the School Library. Series were sold, complete with bookcase, in lots to the schools of America. The Boy's and Girl's Library of thirty-two volumes were targeted toward young people 'between childhood and the opening of maturity, when trifles of the nursery and the simple lessons of the school-room have ceased to exercise their beneficial influence' (2.128–34). In 1909 the H.W. Wilson Company issued the first edition of its *Children's Catalog*, intended as a guide to the best reading for young people, 'frequently overlooking local publishers and publishers outside the dominant culture' (4.441). World War II, or, rather, the children born soon after it, led to significant expansion in the publication of children's books. 'Random House found a gold mine in Dr. Seuss ... Golden Books, launched with twelve titles in 1942, was selling a hundred million books annually by 1957' (5.35–6).

Co-publication

Colonial printers could buy into editions printed in London or Edinburgh or buy sheets and add their own title pages. When markets grew, the practice worked within the colonies. Benjamin Franklin printed

1500 copies of *Poor Richard's Almanack* for 1744 with an Annapolis title page for Jonas Green (1.242). To reach the expanding western market, some eastern publishers co-published with printers in Cincinnati (2.121).

'British books had accounted for 40 percent of the general books on the Holt list in the 1920s, and as late as the 1940s half of Harper's mystery authors were English; by 1965, however, British publishers were buying twice as many books from American publishers as they were selling to them' (5.31).

Copyright

Meredith McGill's 'Copyright' (2.198–211) launches the *HBA*'s set of essays devoted to copyright, from its beginnings in colonial adoption (or defiance) of English law through the first US Copyright law of 1790, the significant expansion of it in 1831, and American opposition to international copyright. In the early republic, the value of copyright 'was diminished by the great demand for the kinds of texts that could freely be reprinted. It was also limited by the decentralization of publishing' (2.199).

In March 1891, the United States finally agreed to recognize international copyright. The steps taken toward this decision are described in volume 3 in Jeffrey D. Groves's 'Courtesy of the Trade' (3.139–48) and McGill's 'Copyright' (3.158–78). In 'Copyright in Transition' (4.90–101), Peter Jaszi and Martha Woodmansee recapitulate the thinking behind American attitudes toward copyright and the forces that combined to legislate it. Ellen Gruber Garvey adds that 'without the protection of an international copyright law, many [publishers] believed that advertising was not profitable' (4.171).

Marshall Leaffer's 'American Copyright Law since 1945' (5.151–66) steps into the twenty-first century, in which contract law (licensing) occupies more and more of 'the space once owned by copyright law ... The traditional balance between private ownership and public access, for centuries the hallmark of copyright law, may be tipping' (5.166)

Distribution

The American preference for books printed in London lasted well into the nineteenth century, giving the North Atlantic coast favourable places of trade.

FIGURE 2. The American Book Trade Association exhibit, Philadelphia, 1876 (courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society)

Until the late nineteenth century, book fairs in the United States imitated German ones: publishers gathered to trade wares and extend their markets.

At the fairs, books were routinely sold unbound in quantities of more than one hundred with six months' credit at discounts of 33 percent or even more. Those who bought a considerable fraction of an edition could get as much as 50 percent off and become a joint publisher. Just as important as these wholesale purchases were exchanges of books, bound or in sheets, calculated at retail equivalent, so that one could get books of other publishers at essentially the cost of production. (2.93)

By the time of the American centennial, book publishing had become an industry eager to display its grandeur.

Among America's first booksellers were itinerant salesmen like Parson Mason Locke Weems, inventor of the tale of George Washington and the cherry tree. Parson Weems was 'the greatest book marketer in the early republic' (2.87–8), crisscrossing the Chesapeake selling books. Despite his toil, and despite the success of his *Life of Washington*, he eventually fell hopelessly in debt.

The *Chicago Defender* achieved national distribution by recruiting railroad porters (4.351), and African-American authors were championed by door-to-door and church-to-church booksellers (4.350, 4.491). When Bantam Books and Pocket Books began their paperback experiment in the 1940s, they relied on the distribution system developed by magazine publishers (5.43).

Electronic Publishing

The coincidence of the iPad's appearing in the same year that the *HBA* publishes its last volume is so well timed it looks uncanny, like some old Greek's idea of fate. Think of it: 2010 was the turning point, and you were there!

The rise of online bookselling was a mixed blessing for publishers. Sites such as Amazon.com helped sell new books but also helped flood the market with used books . . . instructors in higher education turned to electronic delivery of class material, including electronic reserves and course Web sites. (5.40)

The competition for eyeballs just gets stiffer. By 1997, the United States had approximately 34,000 pornographic Web sites (5.146).

Libraries

The editors of all five volumes have been attentive to the roles libraries have played in American book culture. 'The first formally organized public library was the 291 volumes of Anglican theology sent by the English clergyman and philanthropist Thomas Bray from 1699 to 1703 to form a parish library at Christ Church' in Philadelphia (1.221). Subscription and circulating libraries followed, providing the first substantial evidence of the different tastes of categories of readers. Libraries supported by fees or dues permitted readers more choices, and their choices affected library acquisitions.

The demand that library books lead to moral improvement slowly relaxed but never let go. Civic leaders' ideas about what was good for the public often conflicted with public tastes. Because Harvard's and Yale's libraries wouldn't provide fiction, their students joined literary clubs that would (2.324). Circulating libraries, which appealed to lower incomes and to women, favoured history and fiction; in April 1772, 86 per cent of the books borrowed from the Bradford circulating library

in Philadelphia were fiction (1.403). The growth of public libraries in the 1850s was accompanied by distrust of fiction, but fiction accounted for 70 per cent of the holdings of the Mercantile Library of New York, supported by members' dues. The annual reports of the Boston Public Library 'indicate that circulation declined when public libraries sought to force the reading of "higher" literature by cutting back on fiction' (3.307–9). At the turn of the twentieth century, when the American Library Association recommended that public libraries restrict fiction to 16 per cent or less of their holdings, fiction still accounted for about 70 per cent of their circulation (4.437, 4.444, 4.448).

Kenneth E. Carpenter's two-part 'Libraries' (2.273–86, 3.303–18) traces the change from membership and commercial libraries to public libraries. In 1790 Harvard's library, with 10,000 volumes, 'was the largest in the country but tiny in comparison with European collections, even private ones' (2.285). Everywhere the establishment of libraries had to deal with issues of funding and control over selection. By 1880, only eighteen states permitted municipalities to fund libraries through taxation (3.311). Throughout the nineteenth century, college and university libraries largely depended on cash bequests and donations of private collections by faculty and alumni. 'The Library of Congress between 1840 and 1880 had almost no funds for purchases' (3.318).

Wayne A. Wiegand's 'The American Public Library: Construction of a Community Reading Institution' (4.431–51) is one of the rare essays to hint that Americans have a sense of humour: see the 'Fiction Song' (4.435–6). His essay begins with the formation of the American Library Association in 1876 and quickly moves to describe its accomplishments and dilemmas. Should libraries devote their resources to encouraging reading, or to selecting what ought to be read? 'The debate reflected a complex set of gender, race, creed, and class biases' (4.433).

Phyllis Dain's 'The Great Libraries' (4.452–70) describes the appearance of large libraries in the United States in the late nineteenth century, when a combination of wealth, need, vanity (including civic and national pride), and dedicated leadership (Ainsworth Rand Spofford, Herbert Putnam) at last created collections that could compare with the best of Europe. The Library of Congress led the way when it moved into its monumental new building in 1897 and began to exert national influence on cataloguing and other practices. At the same time 'university presidents and trustees were persuaded to regard libraries as a measure of

academic excellence' (4.457), and their libraries rapidly expanded. Inter-library loan was standardized in 1917. Pioneering work in conservation began in the 1930s.

Kenneth Cmiel gets in the last word on libraries in 'Libraries, Books, and the Information Age' (5.325–46). Cmiel asserts that public libraries became concerned about serving the public only in the 1940s. He gives a fine synopsis of the transformations of libraries by the computer, observing that as early as 1962 Marjorie Griffin of IBM forecast that future libraries would be 'filled with people and not with books' (5.332).

Literacy and Education

German emigrants in the 1770s 'boasted a literacy rate that approached 90%' (1.301). It took a while ('Nearly 40 percent of merchant seamen registered in Philadelphia between 1798 and 1840 were unable to sign their names': 2.295), but the rest of the country eventually caught up. 'By 1850, about as many white women as men could read, an unusual circumstance at the time' (3.280).

Section 3 of volume 2, 'Educating the Citizenry' (2.269–346), is a concise introduction to the basis of the American educational system, from schools and schoolbooks to colleges, seminaries, and libraries. Emancipation and immigration created a national crisis over illiteracy, used on the one hand to improve public education and on the other to deny suffrage (3.180–2).

Overproduction

'It is certain that unsaleable titles or "rum books" were sent out' by London printers and dumped on the American market (1.187). James N. Green describes a 'glut' in the early nineteenth century: 'There were so many books around they became a kind of currency, and in the process of endless exchange, by a kind of Gresham's law, the worthless titles drove the valuable ones out of the market' (2.96).

Publishers were already pulping in the 1750s (1.280), and returns were already honoured (1.40, 188, 197, 280). Returns became standard practice in the second half of the nineteenth century (3.124).

Patronage

'The best available patron was the U.S. Government, which did provide employment for writers from Philip Freneau and Irving to Hawthorne, Walt Whitman, and Herman Melville' (2.356).

In addition to the patronage of church and state, colonial book culture depended heavily on the patronage of the wealthy. The libraries of the first colleges would have been meagre were it not for gifts, including Thomas Hollis's donations to Harvard and George Berkeley's gift of books and funds to Yale (1.412–4). John Jacob Astor's 1848 bequest to found a library in New York City 'was momentarily important. Here for the first time was a library of learning established to serve the public' (3.313). The New York Public Library was formed by combining the Astor Library and the Lenox Library and adding funds from the estate of the late governor Samuel J. Tilden; its branches were supported by massive donations from Andrew Carnegie. Founded and managed by 'a self-perpetuating board of trustees made up of rich, prominent, white, mainly Anglo-Saxon, Protestant men, mostly attorneys and bankers,' it was nevertheless 'profoundly democratic in its intellectual hospitality and open access' (4.463). Other great American libraries—the Folger, the Huntington, the Newberry, the Pierpont Morgan—retain the names of their wealthy founders, and numerous college and university libraries bear the names of benefactors.

Important fields of study owe their origins to wealthy scholars willing to invest their own money to advance their fields. Edward E. Salisbury, a professor at Yale, taught Arabic and Sanskrit without a salary and founded the American Oriental Society in 1842. Salisbury personally paid the salary of William Dwight Whitney, who founded the American Philological Association in 1869 (3.353).

The fine line between patronage and philanthropy vanished with Andrew Carnegie's all-important gift of '\$41 million to construct 1,679 public library buildings in 1,412 communities in the United States,' a program that strongly encouraged standardization of architecture and acquisitions and the professionalization of public libraries (4.438).

The continuing importance of patronage is confirmed by the five volumes themselves. The research for and publication of the set were assisted by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Elisabeth Woodburn Fund of the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America, the American Booksellers' Association, the James J. Colt Foundation, the John Ben Snow Memorial Trust, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the Richard A. Heald Fund, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Spencer Foundation, the Unidel Foundation, and the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress.

Piracy

In the colonial era, American printers commonly pirated English books; in 1725 Samuel Keimer of Philadelphia pirated American ones, the almanacs of Titan Leeds and Jacob Taylor (1.252). American book-sellers sold pirated editions from Ireland until British law repressed Irish printers, who emigrated 'by the dozen to the leading seaboard cities' of the United States (2.23).

The profitability of piracy (alias 'reprinting') was a key reason that the United States was slow to ratify international copyright:

Numerous literary forms and formats flourished under the culture of reprinting: eclectic magazines produced regional versions of the British quarterlies; newspaper 'extras' reprinted entire novels, ecclesiastical histories, and scientific manuals in quarto-size, blurring the line between disposable literature and books that were worth preserving . . . Neither simply a bar nor a boon to American publishing, the uneven disposition of property rights in texts, upheld by custom, law, and politics, helped to make the literary marketplace of the early republic unusually expansive, innovative, and volatile. (2.209–11)

Religious Books

Lehmann-Haupt admitted that he had no room to do justice to religious publishing in the United States. Each of Tebbel's four volumes, on the other hand, follows religious publishing in the United States,¹⁰ and all five volumes of *HBA* pay close attention to the power, range, nimbleness, and good intentions of American religious publishing. Churches led the way in promoting schools, universities, libraries, and national distribution networks.

In all of *HBA*'s five volumes, religious publishing counterpoints commercial publishing. For decades colonists had no choice but to import Bibles, psalters, catechisms, devotionals, and sermons (peaking in the 1720s). The first book published in Britain's American colonies was *The Whole Booke of Psalmes Faithfully Translated into English Metre* (1640), now known as *The Bay Psalm Book*. Though church patronage was no more secure than any other, printers worked hard to get it and to keep it. Their skills and equipment improved thereby.

From a publisher's point of view, the Great Awakening of the 1740s was a highly successful book tour, featuring the British evangelist George Whitfield. From 1740 to 1742, Benjamin Franklin 'printed some forty-three books and pamphlets relating to Whitfield or religious enthusiasm in general' (1.260). Franklin befriended Whitfield, then published his *Sermons* and *Journals*, 'the largest books published in America during the Great Awakening' (1.259–61).

Early on, American religious publishing was impressive, though subject to its own fluctuations. 'In 1740 "religious" printing (exclusive of the political tracts and controversy aroused by the Great Awakening) soared to more than three times the size of "government" printing. . . . in 1765, it was only one and a half times as great' (1.330).

In 'Benevolent Books: Printing, Religion, and Reform' (2.221–46), David Paul Nord surveys the beginnings of a passionate and enduring type of publishing that sought 'to lead the market rather than to follow it' (2.222). Richard A. Gross stresses this:

Far from being a dynamic agent of a communications revolution, book publishing clung to familiar ways down to 1840. The forces for change lay elsewhere: in the nonprofit sphere of religion and philanthropy, where evangelicals and reformers were quick to seize upon the new means of disseminating their message and flooded the nation with print during the 1820s and 1830s. (2.8–9)

Nord writes that religious publishers, including the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians and Others in North-America, the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the Philadelphia Bible Society, the New York Bible Society, the American Bible Society, the American Tract Society, and the American Anti-Slavery Society, 'knew well that they were moving against the rising tide of commercial culture. Indeed, that was their purpose' (2.222). 'By the end of the 1820s, the American Bible Society had built in New York a highly capitalized, technologically sophisticated printing operation that virtually monopolized the production of inexpensive Bibles in the United States' (2.231). 'The size of production and the scope of distribution made religious publishing one of the largest and most influential components in the nineteenth-century American marketplace for print' (3.194).

Volume 4 is particularly attentive to religious publishing. It includes consecutive essays by William Vance Trollinger, Jr., 'An Outpouring of

“Faithful” Words: Protestant Publishing in the United States’ (4.359–75); Jonathan D. Sarna, ‘Two Ambitious Goals: American Jewish Publishing in the United States’ (4.376–91); and Una M. Cadegan, ‘Running the Ancient Ark by Steam: Catholic Publishing’ (4.392–408). ‘Religious publishing remained the most established, stable, and prolific venue for aspiring printers and publishers following the Civil War’ (4.342).

Sadly, volume 5 picks up only one thread from volume 4, with Paul C. Gutjahr’s essay on Protestant publishing. Gutjahr recognizes that religious publishing in the United States is ‘awe-inspiring ... Between 1945 and 2005, American religious book publishing grew at a rate faster than the book industry as a whole’ (5.376). Here, too, the consolidation of the industry altered things. Christian bookstores lost market share to the megastores and Amazon.com, and for-profit publishers launched or acquired Christian imprints to grab all the sales they could. Gutjahr concludes with a short case study of the *Left Behind* series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins.

The history of the American Bible is treated in all five volumes. To evade patent laws, the first English Bible published in America (1731?) bore a fraudulent London imprint (1.327); three issues of Luther’s German Bible were published in Germantown, Pennsylvania, in 1743 (1.302).

If surviving inventories are any index, a Bible was the only book owned by one-fourth of the households in late colonial Virginia (1.388), but the authority of English publishers kept Americans from trying to publish Bibles themselves. A 1783 Bible was a financial disaster (1.297). After independence, that changed, with the cleverer American publishers securing subscriptions for their Bibles in advance. ‘Where there had been none for many years, now suddenly there were nine Bibles in press. No ambitious figure in the book trade seemingly wanted to be left out’ (2.83).

Gutjahr takes up modern Bible publishing—there are now 450 English Bible translations in 7000 editions available in the United States, the New International Version having become the most popular in the 1980s (5.384)—but tactfully declines to discuss what difference so many make.

Self-Publication

An array of American authors published themselves: Hannah Adams, Michael Wigglesworth, Benjamin Franklin, Edgar Allan Poe. Civil War

veterans self-published war memoirs that they ‘hawked themselves on street corners and in railroad stations’ (3.412). Sutton E. Griggs, ‘probably more popular among the rank and file of Negroes than the fiction of Dunbar and Chesnutt,’ set up his own publishing firm in Nashville (4.350–1).

Subscriptions

Though the first American newspapers depended on subscription revenue, they also needed advertising. At Washington’s inauguration in New York City in 1789, John Fenno declared his intent to found a *Gazette of the United States*, a national newspaper dedicated to covering the new government, and without advertising. It quickly failed (2.16). Following British practice, numerous book projects were undertaken only when sufficient subscriptions for them had been secured (2.87). Scott E. Casper identifies as 1870s as ‘the heyday of subscription publishing’ (2.219). In 1872 Hartford, Connecticut, had sixteen subscription publishers, and numerous others were scattered across the country; both Mark Twain and Ulysses S. Grant published this way. Trade publishers responded by setting up their own subscription services, selling their books as ‘limited editions’ (3.219–22).

Technology

HBA’s focus on book technology begins with William S. Pretzer’s “‘Of the paper cap and inky apron’: Journeymen Printers’ (2.160–71), proceeds through Michael Winship’s ‘Manufacturing and Book Production’ (3.40–69) and Megan Benton’s ‘Unruly Servants: Machines, Modernity, and the Printed Page’ (4.151–69), and finishes with Patrick Henry’s ‘Book Production Technology since 1945’ (5.55–71).

Colonial printers were hindered by the need to import paper. William Bradford established the first paper mill in British North America in 1690 (1.207), and ‘by the time of the Revolution, domestic output was substantial’ (1.154). The first paper mill in Massachusetts wasn’t built until 1728; by 1770 the colony had six paper mills and New England twelve (1.325).

The first ‘fully equipped, completely independent typefoundry’ was established in Philadelphia in 1796 (1.169). Previously American printers had had to buy type or matrices for casting type from Europe, a process prone to delays, accidents, and the other pains and expenses of long-distance shipping. The worn-down type used in Boston printed so

poorly that Benjamin Franklin advised, 'If you should have any Secrets that you wish to be well kept, get them printed in these Papers' (1.171).

In the early republic, 'new technology sometimes involved machinery; more often it consisted simply of changes in the division of labor and the materials used.... The cylinder papermaking machine was introduced in America in 1817, but only in the 1830s did papermaking machinery become common enough to drive down the price of paper' (2.113–4).

University Presses

University publishing began in 1802 when Harvard College established its own press to convert professors' lectures into textbooks (2.327). The practice spread.

Since American university presses began operating in the late nineteenth century, their roles are discussed solely in volumes 4 and 5, especially the latter. Their importance is well attested. Luey notes that university presses now publish titles that formerly would have been mid-list books for commercial presses (5.51). Teres writes that 'the best prospects' for resisting corporate domination of culture lie with university presses and small literary presses (5.242).

Marcel Chotkowski LaFollette's 'Crafting a Communications Infrastructure: Scientific and Technical Publishing in the United States' (4.234–59) explains why few university presses undertook science publishing: in the nineteenth century, American scientists felt it was vital to publish in Europe, a view that persisted till shaken by two world wars.

Without university presses, we would still be waiting for *HBA*. For coverage and overview, however, Tebble's sixty-three pages on university presses are a better source.¹¹

War

War is never a focused topic anywhere in *HBA*, but the impact of war is apparent in every volume. 'The import trade crashed with the Revolution, but country presses received a considerable impetus' (1.315). When printers fled inland to avoid the worst of the Revolution, they further decentralized American publishing, enabling greater representation of regional differences (2.17).

When William Gilmore Simms assessed the state of American authorship in 1844, he singled out the War of 1812 as an essential event in the development of the profession of letters. It was no accident, he said, that [James Fenimore] Cooper's career followed 'closely upon the footsteps of war.' The war cut off the supply of British books, and just as the embargo on British goods had encouraged domestic manufacture, so the embargo of British ideas spurred a market for American writings and finally permitted American writers to live by their pens. (3.411)

But the War of 1812 also 'set off a wave' of bankruptcies. 'By 1815, only thirteen of the sixty-four publishers who had gone to the [Philadelphia] book fair in 1803 were still active' (2.97).

It took World War II to break European publishers' dominance as importers of textbooks. Exports by US publishers, with significant federal government support, 'expanded dramatically.... U.S. exports of books exceeded imports for the first time during World War II' (5.30-1).

CONCLUSION

Simon and McCarthy write, 'After much talk a decade ago about the end of the book and of literature as we know it, now the impression that appears to be the most persistent one is that books have a certain integrity, a certain ability to resist the most corrosive aspects of our times, and perhaps books are the best lens through which to understand ourselves and the world we live in' (5.220).

Yes, perhaps.

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NOTES

1. For instance, a reference to 'the Macy's case' (4.78) before the US Supreme Court depends on a prior description of it (4.63-64), but neither instance is indexed. J.P. Morgan decided the fate of Harper Brothers (4.58) and lent his weight to the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice (4.282) but is absent from the index.
2. Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt, *The Book in America: A History of the Making, the Selling, and the Collecting of Books in the United States* (New York: R.R. Bowker 1939); 2nd ed., in collaboration with Lawrence C. Wroth and Rollo G. Silver (New York: R.R. Bowker 1951). I cite the second edition.

3. John Tebbel, *A History of Book Publishing in the United States*, 4 vols. (New York: R.R. Bowker 1972–81). Volume 1 is titled *The Creation of an Industry, 1630–1865*; volume 2, *The Expansion of an Industry, 1865–1919*; volume 3, *The Golden Age between Two Wars, 1920–1940*; volume 4, *The Great Change, 1940–1980*.
4. ‘Tebbel has not written history; he has compiled data.’ Mary Biggs, review of *A History of Book Publishing in the United States* by John Tebbel, *Library Quarterly* 52, 2 (April 1982): 183.
5. *History of the Book in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004–7), vol. 1: *Beginnings to 1840*, ed. Patricia Lockhart Fleming, Gilles Gallichan, and Yvan Lamonde; vol. 2: *1840–1918*, ed. Yvan Lamonde, Patricia Lockhart Fleming, and Fiona A. Black; vol. 3: *1918–1980*, ed. Carole Gerson and Jacques Michon
6. Tebbel, *A History of Book Publishing*, 1.56–131; 2.288–302, 453–473. Lehmann-Haupt, *The Book in America*, 365, correctly predicted that university presses would become centres of regional publishing.
7. Lehmann-Haupt, *The Book in America*, 390–5
8. ‘I would like ... to present Bakhtin’s ideas by constructing a kind of montage, halfway between anthology and commentary.’ Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle*, trans. Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1984), xiii.
9. Lehmann-Haupt, *The Book in America*, 115
10. Lehmann-Haupt, *The Book in America*, 239; Tebbel, *A History of Book Publishing*, 1.30–4, 178–90, 508–30; 2.541–59; 3.237–50; 4.589–626
11. Tebbel, *A History of Book Publishing*, 2.535–9; 3.279–85; 4.629–92