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ORDERING BOOKS:

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODERN AMERICAN BOOK TRADE

A Dissertation in

English

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis traces the influences of the Spanish, English, and German book trades upon social and economic structure of the developing American book trade from 1500 to 1876. By focusing on the business of making and selling books, rather than their cultural value, the thesis uncovers some of the causes of the systemic problems that plagued the American book trade throughout the nineteenth century.

After establishing the importance of the book trade to the discovery and conquest of the Americas, the thesis analyzes the business models developed by early colonial book producers, such as Juan Pablos, Elizabeth Glover, William Bradford, Benjamin Franklin, Christopher Saur, and Conrad Beissel. From that foundation, it explores the technical, economic, and social forces that influenced the development of the book trade in the United States, paying particular attention to the contributions of Fredrick Leypoldt and his associates, Henry Holt, Richard Rogers Bowker, and Melvil Dewey.

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PREFACE

“Lord,” he said, “when you sell a man a book
you don’t just sell him 12 ounces of paper and ink and glue.”

—Christopher Morley¹

My study of the American book trade began while I was looking through the first two years of *Publishers’ Weekly* using a balky microfilm reader. I sensed then that I was looking at a solution, but I knew very little about the problem it was supposed to solve. I tried to learn everything I could about the man behind *Publishers’ Weekly*, Frederick Leyboldt. There was very little. Between 1855 and 1884, he created *Publishers’ Weekly*, the *American Catalogue of Books* and the *Publishers’ Trade List Annual* (which became unified in *Books in Print*), and the *Library Journal*, all of which continue as the standard publications in their respective fields. Leyboldt deserves much of the credit for the creation of the American Library Association and for launching the careers of Henry Holt, R. R. Bowker, and Melvil Dewey. He was also a dismal failure as a businessman. Beyond the astonishing facts of his professional life, I found next to nothing. Leyboldt left behind nothing more personal than a handful of business letters and a few receipts.

Knowing I had a solution, I started to look for the problem. I quickly discovered that, while almost everyone agreed that the book industry in the U.S. was a fragmented, chaotic mess before Leyboldt and *Publishers’ Weekly*, no one seemed to know why it was so beset by problems. Contemporary accounts of the U.S. book trade were full of complaints and accusations, which historians of print repeat. The standard works of U.S.

print history, particularly Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt's *The Book in America* and John Tebbel's *A History of Book Publishing in the United States*, were helpful, but they described the problems without explaining their causes. Reading the developing body of work in the new discipline called book history was no more helpful. Why was the U.S. book trade such a mess in the nineteenth century?

At about that time, I re-read a passage in a remarkable little book by William Charvat, a book historian well before it became a recognized discipline. In the preface to the lectures presented in *Literary Publishing in America 1790-1850*, Charvat explained something that I had not taken into account:

These chapters are, in one sense a skimming, in other ways, a condensation, of materials which I collected years ago toward a history of the economics of authorship in America. I had hoped to add a new dimension to literary history, but the dimension turned out to be too narrow. Literary history, no matter what the historian's approach, must be primarily concerned with literature. If the approach is wholly extrinsic as mine was at the beginning, the product is likely to be sterile. Facts and figures about sales of books and incomes of authors are interesting—but not interesting enough, unless they specifically reveal something about the ways in which writers and their writings function in a culture.

Similarly, the history of publishing, with which I became deeply involved, tended, like most specialties, to become an end in itself. Publishing is relevant to literary history only in so far as it can be shown to be, ultimately, a shaping influence on literature.²

Charvat's approach was a radical departure from the textual focus of literary studies in the late 1950s, when he delivered his lectures, but his primary interest remained the literature and authors who created it. The idea that the business of making and selling books, distinct from the business of composing fictions or poems, might be interesting enough to warrant close study was more than Charvat could allow, but it was exactly what I was doing.

My work was part of a new discipline that is usually called book history or history of the book. In his 1982 essay, "What Is the History of Books?" Roger Darnton explained that book history combined traditional bibliographic study with the socio-economic analyses of French scholars like Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin. As Darnton described it, book historians might borrow elements from print history, bibliography, library science, Marxist materialism, cultural history, and literary history. The new approach, according to Darnton, encompassed "the social and cultural history of communication by print," and it was interdisciplinary in nature and international in scope.³

Book history examines book production and distribution, but, as Darnton made clear, it is most concerned with "communication by print." Thirty years separated Charvat's lectures and Darnton's article, but they seemed to agree that literature was more interesting than the business of publishing. Charvat said it perfectly: "Facts and figures about sales of books and incomes of authors are interesting—but not interesting enough, unless they specifically reveal something about the ways in which writers and their writings function in a culture."

At about that time, I also happened to read *Networks of Power: Electrification in Western Society, 1880-1930* by Thomas Parke Hughes. Hughes used systems theory to explain the development of the electric power grid in Great Britain. Systems theory emerged after the Second World War, primarily in the work of Ludwig von Bertalanffy, a theoretical biologist who developed General Systems Theory because he noticed in biology the same problem that Henry Adams noted in history: chains of causation tend to break down as we continue to study a phenomenon.⁴ Studied in isolation, any phenomenon appears to have and beget a particular chain of causation, but, when we examine that phenomenon in context, it becomes increasingly difficult to map cause and effect.

Hughes distilled the principles of systems theory into one cogent paragraph that seemed to illuminate the problems I was finding in the American book trade.

Some characteristics of systems are so general that they transcend time and place. A system is constituted of related parts or components. These components are connected by a network or structure, which for the student of systems may be more interesting than the components. The interconnected components of technical systems are often centrally controlled, and usually the limits of the system are established by the extent of this control. Controls are exercised to optimize the system's performance and to direct the system toward the achievement of goals. The goal of an electric production system, for example, is to transform available energy supply, or input, into desired output. Because the components are related by the network of interconnections, the state, or activity, of one component influences the state, or activity, of other components in the system. The network provides a distinctive configuration for the system. For example a system can have its components arranged vertically or horizontally.⁵

The American book trade lacked any sort of controlling mechanism. It certainly had no central control that could be engaged to optimize system performance. I wondered if the book trade actually had any goals.

I began to look for the roots of the American book trade. My approach was a practical application of some ideas that I took from the work of Hayden White and Michel Foucault. Assuming that vestiges of earlier book trade structures were influencing the American book trade as it developed, I began to follow the American book trade back to its European roots. Eventually, I traced the American trade back to its logical starting point, the Fall of Constantinople, which the Ottoman Turks undoubtedly called the Liberation of Istanbul. Then I started to follow the threads forward to America.

It was a surprise to discover that American book trade was not simply an extension of the English trade. The modern book trade in America developed from several points of origin that were geographically and chronologically distinct. As the trade developed, it incorporated elements from many sources. The American book trade was not a single coherent enterprise until late in the nineteenth century. Until then, it was a loose network of competing and sometimes incompatible trades.

When I started the project, I intended to write a professional biography of Frederick Leypoldt. Instead, I found that I was trying to explain the context of his work; I had to explain why the American book trade needed someone like Leypoldt. Now Leypoldt is a turning point in a story with many turning points. He made it possible for the book trade in the United States to succeed without a formal regulatory agency. Publishers, printers, and booksellers in the U.S. rely on a handful of private companies,

most of which were started by Frederick Leypoldt, for all of their trade communication and education. The U.S. has no *Bösendverein* and no Stationers' Company—it has *Publishers' Weekly* and the R.R.Bowker Company.

The story is no longer a biography. Neither does it have much to do with “writers and their writings.” Instead I have tried to describe the internal and external forces that shaped the book industry as it migrated from Europe to the New World and evolved into the modern American book trade. I have tried to pay particular attention to economic and structural forces that worked upon the various European book trades once they were established in the New World. Along the way, I have had the opportunity to tell the stories of some interesting people.

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Ordering Books:

The Development of a Modern American Book Trade

The history of publishing is the history of erroneous judgments.

—George Haven Putnam

America was involved in the book trade well before printing from movable type began in the New World. Columbus based his argument for the Enterprise of the Indies on the information that he gathered from a small library of printed books. He announced his discovery of a new route to the Indies in a published letter that circulated throughout most of Europe. From that moment on, America, as a place and as an idea, generated thousands of books—some were about America, some were meant to be used there.

The European encounter with the Americas has always been mediated through print. Because of the popular reception of a couple of little books, America was named after a Florentine merchant instead of a Genoese sailor. America became a continent in the Ocean Sea that separated Europe and China in print six years before Balboa stepped onto the shore of the Pacific Ocean. For at least two centuries, most Europeans experienced America in print. The Europeans who settled in the New World had previously encountered it in printed books, and they brought their book trade with them.

The book trade arrived in the New World in waves—first from Spain, then from England, then from Germany, then from France. Each wave of European conquest brought a book trade to the New World. The book trade was an integral part of the colonial process, and every settlement in the New World carried on some sort of transatlantic trade in books. Soon after establishing permanent settlements, each colonial group launched a domestic book industry to produce books for the colonists. The importation of European book trades continued long after the colonial period ended; by the beginning of the twentieth century, the Americas had presses operating in dozens of languages.

For the most part, American book industries continued as they began—divided by language. Spanish-language printers and booksellers served Spanish-speaking populations in regions claimed by Spain. English-language printers and booksellers, when they arrived, served English-speaking populations in the regions claimed by England. Book trades in other languages followed a similar pattern, but with a significant difference. The German-language book trade that emerged in America served German-speakers who lived in enclaves surrounded by the larger English-speaking population. The same pattern occurred when the French, or the Swedes, or the Hungarians established book trades in the Americas.

Naturally, there was some linguistic crossover, especially in cities where the same shop might print or sell books in several languages. The early Mexican press was created to produce bilingual texts. Philadelphia once supported quite a few printers, Benjamin Franklin among them, who issued books both in English and in German. New Orleans

and Montreal are still home to printers who issue books in French and in English. Still, each wave remained surprisingly distinct. The language barrier was also a market barrier.

During the long era of colonial rule, roughly 1493-1800, America developed a multitude of more or less distinct book trades. Each settlement was served by its own book trade, which usually retained close ties to its country of origin. The country of origin determined much more than the language of the books that were issued from each press. It also determined the relative freedom of each book trade and the business practices that governed the operation of the various parts of the trade. That early pattern of market segregation remained a fact of the book trades in America.

The book trade that had begun as a part of the Spanish colonial enterprise had followed Spanish business practices, but when England won dominance over most of North America, the production and distribution of books became an overwhelmingly English enterprise. The dominance of the English-language press virtually guaranteed that the North American book trade would follow business practices that developed in the English trade.

Most of the early printers and booksellers in English America created a trade that was based, naturally enough, upon the practices developed in England. For some obvious geographical and political reasons, the English have always been separated from the rest of Europe. The English book trade evolved in relative isolation to suit the special needs of its island economy and culture. Although it began quite early, the English book business grew comparatively slowly and in relative isolation without significant external, or even internal, competition. By the terms of its 1557 charter, the Stationers' Company of London regulated the English book trade. Under the control of Stationers, the English

book business was almost entirely confined to metropolitan London. The English book trade, as it evolved, became increasingly well suited to its own highly protected metropolitan market.

When English printers and booksellers began working in colonial America, they did their best to reproduce the English book trade in the colonies. The metropolitan business model of the English trade did not suit the geographical, political, and economic realities of North America, but that fact did not reveal itself immediately. When the United States became an independent nation, a distinctly American version of the English book trade began to emerge.

The highly integrated English business model was poorly suited to a country without a dominant metropolitan center, because the English-language book trade in America developed from multiple independent centers. Conflicts began as soon as the book dealers in those centers began to interact with each other. With no mechanism to resolve the conflicts, the American book trade became increasingly contentious and fragmented. By the middle of the nineteenth century, America's English-language book industry was in chaos. Demand for books was high, and production capacity was increasing, but the infrastructure of the trade was inadequate. The trade had no rules, and the members of the trade had no way to communicate with each other.

The overwhelming success of the English colonial enterprise in the New World profoundly influenced the book trade in America. As the United States and its English-language press began to dominate North America, the meaning of the phrase "American book trade" changed. Where once the term embraced all book production on two continents, the American book trade now meant printed goods manufactured or sold in

the United States. The American book trade became a national enterprise, distinct from the Canadian, or the Mexican, or the English book trade.

The American book trade as an independent, national book industry, did not develop until well after the United States was an established political fact. The Treaty of Paris did not make the U.S. book business independent. By some accounts, it still was not an independent industry nearly a century later. In his memoir, *Garrulities of an Octogenarian Editor*, Henry Holt recounted a conversation with the English publisher Frederic Macmillan in 1870. According to Holt, Macmillan regarded America's publishers as little more than pirates: "You fellows are not publishers: you are simply reprinters."⁶ Macmillan might have overstated the case, but most of his contemporaries agreed that the American book trade was in trouble and heading for a crisis.

A solution came, indirectly, from Germany. The trade in printed books had begun in Germany, where it quickly developed multiple competing centers. The German trade was organized upon principles that were very different from those that developed in England, but it was a system that would have suited conditions in the sprawling U.S. trade. A German book trade began in the Pennsylvania colony shortly after the first contingent of German settlers arrived in 1683, but the German-American trade developed as an isolated subcategory of the larger American book industry.

The American trade had German business practices forced upon it by a German immigrant who arrived in America in 1854. Frederick Leypoldt began his American career in the foreign-language bookstore of F. W. Christern. Leypoldt began importing German and French books to stock his own foreign-language bookstore in Philadelphia, but the outbreak of the American Civil War forced him to begin selling English-language

books produced in the U.S. Leypoldt's early experiences in the American book trade showed him that American publishers and booksellers had none of the tools that German book dealers took for granted. The American trade had no central journal, no directory, and no comprehensive catalogs.

Leypoldt spent the rest of his life reinventing the American book trade. He was a publisher just long enough to redefine the role of the publisher in the American book industry, and to launch the career of Henry Holt. For the rest of his working life, Leypoldt devoted himself to the task of establishing American versions of the journals and catalogs that he believed were a necessary part of any national book trade. Moreover, he used his journals and catalogs to promote the idea that America had a national book trade and that it ought to be organized along the lines of the German trade.

Leypoldt's major enterprises continue as Henry Holt and Co., *Publishers' Weekly*, *Books in Print*, the *Library Journal*, and the American Library Association. By the time he died in 1884, Leypoldt had established the foundation for a book trade that applied German principles and techniques to patterns that the Americans had developed from the English trade. The resulting hybrid was a unique, unregulated, but well-organized national book industry—the modern American book trade.

* * *

My study of the development of modern American book trade is divided into five chapters. The first three look at the European book trades that became the foundations of the American trade and trace the influence of those book trades on the trade that

developed in colonial America. The final two chapters look at the development of a unique and independent American book trade in the United States.

The first chapter, “The Book Trade and the New World,” begins with a discussion of the importance of printing in the development of early modern scientific culture, especially as a precondition of the exploratory voyages of Christopher Columbus. What follows is a discussion of the ways that print mediated the European reaction to Columbus and his successors, particularly Amerigo Vespucci. Next, is an examination of the way the book trade migrated from Spain to New Spain to support the ecclesiastical mission to the Indies, which led to the establishment of the first New World printing press. After tracing the career of Juan Pablos, the first printer in the New World, the chapter ends with a discussion of the problems that mass production caused for early printers like Pablos.

The next chapter, “The English-language Book Trade in America,” traces several “beginnings” and follows them through to the establishment of English-language book production in the American colonies. In England, as in Spain, print preceded exploration, but the English had a century to read and write about America before they established settlements. The discussion then shifts to the development of multiple colonial book enterprises and their evolution into a loose confederation of book trades after the Revolution. The discussion returns to the English to reveal the structures that were developed in the tightly regulated London trade in order to show how they would later influence the course of the U.S. trade. The chapter finishes by showing how the English structure led to problems when applied to the radically different U.S. trade—problems

that were exacerbated by improvements in book production technology and the distribution network.

The third chapter, “The German Book Trade in America,” opens with an examination of the German book trade and its long relationship with America as a place and as an idea. Then, it looks at the organizing principles of the German trade and the trade associations that enforced those principles. The discussion shifts to the beginnings of a German book trade in the Pennsylvania Colony and the German-American book industry that grew from it. The second half of the chapter follows the careers of three German-American booksellers Rudolphe Garrigue, F. W. Christern, and Frederick Leypoldt. Each is distinctly German, but represents a different approach to the problem of selling German books in the U.S.

The next chapter, “Redefining Publishing in American Book Trade,” traces the publishing career of Frederick Leypoldt. The chapter begins with a discussion of the role of the publisher in the confused relationship between the wholesale and retail sectors of the book trade. Next it looks at some of Leypoldt’s practices and strategies as he made the shift from German bookseller to American publisher. The middle of the chapter examines some of the books that Leypoldt published and the relationships he built with several of his authors, particularly Charles Leland. After a discussion of Leypoldt’s efforts on behalf of the Sanitary Commission and a puzzling meeting with James Fields, the chapter turns to Leypoldt’s early efforts to reform the American book trade. After following Leypoldt’s transformation into an independent wholesale publisher, the chapter finishes with Leypoldt’s partnership with Henry Holt and his marriage to Augusta Garrigue.

The final chapter, “The Modern American Book Trade,” follows a series of nineteenth-century attempts to organize the American book trade. Beginning with a discussion of the economic conditions in the U.S. after the American Civil War, and their effect upon the book trade, the focus shifts to the many short-lived trade organizations and trade journals that were founded to bring some order to the chaotic American book industry. It then traces the influence of Frederick Leypoldt and the Offices of *Publishers’ Weekly* on the book trade in the United States.

Chapter 1: The Book Trade and the New World

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies

When a new planet swims into his ken

—John Keats

Early in the 1580s, while Europe was making the transition to the new Gregorian calendar, the Flemish painter Jan ver der Straet (1523-1605), also known as “Stradanus,” designed a series of twenty engravings that celebrated the great discoveries and inventions of the modern world. Each plate depicted an invention or a discovery unknown in classical Rome or pagan antiquity—the magnet, stirrups, gunpowder, iron clocks, printing, distillation, the watermill, spectacles, America, oil colors—nineteen in all. The Antwerp firm of Galleus issued several editions of the prints using one of the new discoveries depicted in the series, copperplate engraving. The series of plates, collectively titled *Nova Reperta*, was a popular success when it was first published.⁷ The plates have been reproduced so often that the images collected in *Nova Reperta* have become the standard illustrations of early modern science and technology.

Most of the innovations depicted in *Nova Reperta* were derived from an inventory that had been in circulation since the middle of the fifteenth century. The earliest known version of the inventory appeared in a treatise called *De Orthographia* (1449-50), written by the first Vatican librarian, Giovanni Tortelli (c.1400-??). Tortelli’s interest in modern

inventions was primarily philological. Anything that had been unknown in Roman times he regarded as a novelty, because those things that were developed in the centuries following the fall of Rome were often difficult to express in Latin. His standard of novelty was quite broad; thus horseshoes, which actually were used by the Romans, and the stirrup, which was in common use in the time of Charlemagne, appear alongside such later innovations as the compass and the cannon.⁸

Tortelli's list was debated and emended over the years; the most notable additions were of course the press, on which his treatise was printed in 1471, and the New World. In *Nova Reperta*, Stradanus distilled a century of debate begun by Tortelli into a series of images. In *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, Elizabeth Eisenstein explained that images of *Nova Reperta* "probably did as much as any written treatise to fix the theme [of modern innovation] in its present familiar form."⁹ For modern viewers, the images also fix our vision of the early modern world.

The title page of *Nova Reperta* has not been reproduced as frequently as the plates depicting print shops, distilleries, and the like. The title page collected nine innovations into a single composition that functioned as an allegory of the modern world. In it, Stradanus revealed a great deal about early modern attitudes toward the innovations that helped to define the age. Some parts of the title page image must have seemed intentionally cryptic compared to the straightforward illustration that followed, but the significance of the arrangement was inescapable.

Stradanus arranged nine numbered innovations across a barren landscape rising to a starless night sky. A title block bearing the inscription, "NOVA REPERTA," divided by a stylized depiction of the Southern Cross floats above the horizon. Below the title

block two large disks appear to rest lightly upon the ground. The disks are framed by two figures: an old man bearing an ouroboros (the legendary self-devouring serpent that Plato identified as the first living thing in the universe) and a wand exiting to the right and a young man, also bearing an ouroboros and a wand, entering from the left. The human figures are traditional representations of the departing past and an emerging future. The young man points his wand at the disk on the left-hand side, which is a map of the Americas encircled by a legend identifying Christopher Columbus as “inventor” and Amerigo Vespucci as “denominator.” The right-hand disk is a magnetic windrose inscribed with a legend crediting Flavius of Amalfi as its “inventor.” Together the figures and the disks create the primary horizontal axis of the image.

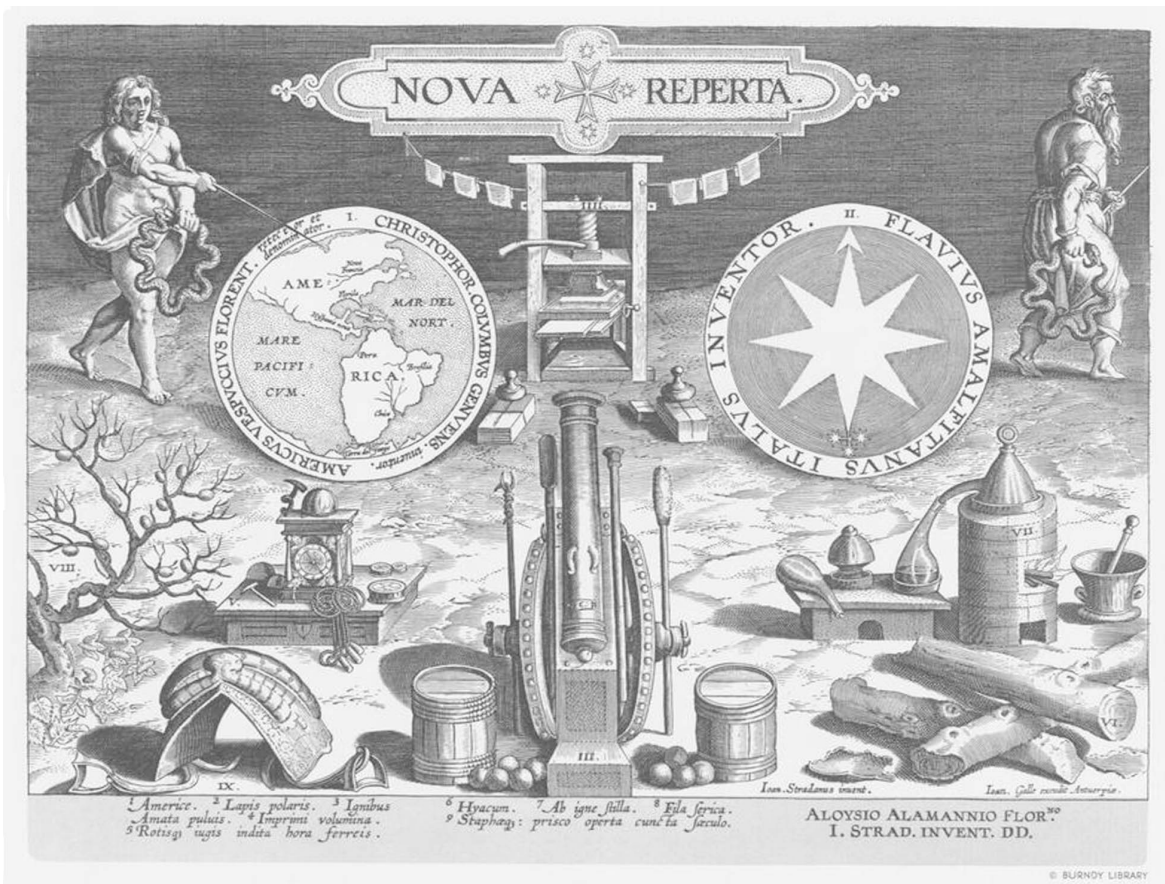


Fig. 1. “Title Page,” *Nova Reperta*.¹⁰

In the foreground, several other innovations are arranged in a tidy row: a saddle with stirrups, a distiller's retort, an iron clock, a mulberry branch bearing the cocoons of silkworms, and so on. In the center of the foreground stands a large cannon flanked by kegs of gunpowder. The cannon appears to be trained upon the Southern Cross in the center of the title block. Graphically, the cannon forms the lower half of the composition's vertical axis, which is completed by a printing press placed between the map of the New World and the wind rose. Everything seems to point toward the printing press that stands at the center of the composition, closest to the horizon. In an odd counterpoint to the overall formality of the composition, newly printed sheets hang like laundry from strings that run from each side of the press to a pair of nails driven into the title block.

No one viewing the title page of *Nova Reperta* could possibly overlook its allegorical significance. Print, gunpowder, the magnetic compass, the New World: these were the crucial innovations of the modern world. Moreover, the modern phenomena they represented—print culture, modern warfare, scientific navigation, and colonial expansion—were interrelated. Stradanus placed the printing press in the center of his composition, because it was central to his understanding of the modern world.

Although it appeared more than a century after Johannes Gutenberg (c. 1398-1468) issued his *Biblia Sacra*, *Nova Reperta* was one of the earliest popular evaluations of the power of print as a force in shaping the modern world. Print culture was an established fact of life well before anyone seemed to realize its importance. Another sixty years would pass before Francis Bacon (1561-1627) famously distilled Tortelli's list of modern innovations to three:

Again, it is well to observe the force and virtue and consequences of discoveries, and these are to be seen nowhere more conspicuously than in those three which were unknown to the ancients, and of which the origin, though recent, is obscure and inglorious; namely, printing, gunpowder, and the magnet. For these three have changed the whole face and state of things throughout the world . . . insomuch that no empire, no sect, no star seems to have exerted greater power and influence in human affairs than these mechanical discoveries.¹¹

Like Stradanus before him, Francis Bacon recognized the role of printing in the development of the modern European world and defined it allegorically. For both Stradanus and Bacon, printing appeared as an elemental force harnessed by technology. An earlier, less famous assessment of the power of printing considered printing as a commercial and cultural enterprise.

The earliest recognition of the power and potential of the book trade occurred in 1474, when the Catholic Kings, Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, promulgated the first law regulating the book trade. Published six years later in *Novisima recopilación de leyes de Espana* (New Digest of Laws of Spain), the law exempted books from tariffs and duties, declaring the importation of books “advantageous” to the Spanish kingdoms. The statute described books as “instruments for creating learned men” and mandated universal education within the kingdoms and an unrestricted international trade in books. Books proved to be dangerous to both church and state, so the statute was rescinded eight years later.¹² The Spanish laws represent the earliest official declaration of the power and the utility of readily available printed books. They also began 500 years of legal debates

over the freedoms and restrictions of the press.

Spain's early legislation was crucial to the American book trade because the American trade began along with the Spanish Enterprise of the Indies. The New World has always been inextricably linked to the development of print culture. Print has always been an integral part of the European New World. Assessing the role of print culture in the European conquest and development of the Americas remains complicated precisely because we have never been able to study one without participating in the other; they are linked revolutions. The advent of the printed book radically changed a world that would soon become "old"—transformed by the news of a New World. The speed of the transformation was breath-taking; only thirty-eight years after Gutenberg issued his famous Bible, Columbus published a short account of his voyage to the islands "beyond the Ganges." The book trade arrived in the Americas with the first ships from Spain, and it might have been the reason that those ships set sail in the first place.

The Book Trade and the Invention of America

When Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) began to gather support for his "Enterprise of the Indies," Europe was still in the grip of a cartographic revolution begun by the introduction of Ptolemaic geography. Early in the fifteenth century, Jacopo Angeli da Scarperia (c.1360-1410/11) translated the text of *Geographike hyphegsis* of Klaudios Ptolemaios (c.100-c.170) into Latin.¹³

Generally known as Ptolemy's *Geography*, the book suddenly altered the purpose of mapmaking. Medieval mapmakers made no attempt to depict the physical reality of the world around them; their maps were historical or philosophical rather than practical.¹⁴

The publication of the *Geography* changed the way Europeans thought about maps and the way they imagined their world. Once mapmakers began to focus on the accurate depiction of physical features, they began to imagine and then delineate the shape of the unknown. Unfortunately for Columbus, the new maps demonstrated the impossibility of his enterprise. Nevertheless, he had to build his argument upon something, and the tools he used were a handful of printed books.

Popular accounts of Columbus have usually represented him as a practical sailor, a man well versed in his craft, but he was also the product of the emerging culture of print. He gathered virtually all of the evidence that he presented—first to João II of Portugal and then to Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain—from printed books. Four books in particular formed the core of his research library: Pliny's *Natural History*; Marco Polo's *Travels*; the *Historia Rerum Ubique Gestarum*, an encyclopedia compiled in 1477 by Aeneas Silvio Piccolomini (1405-1464), later Pope Pius II; and *Imago Mundi*, a geography written by the French theologian and philosopher, Pierre d'Ailly (1350-c. 1420). Columbus underlined passages and wrote marginal notations in his copies of these volumes, which were preserved by his son and biographer, Ferdinand. The annotations Columbus made in his little library provide a fairly clear picture of his thinking about the Orient and the possibility of reaching the East by sailing west.

Columbus underlined many passages that described the riches of the East and the grotesque creatures that inhabited the unknown. Most of his marginal notes discussed methods of calculating the distance between Europe and the Indies.¹⁵ Marco Polo told stories of mountains of gold and lakes of pearls. Pliny, Pierre d'Ailly, and Piccolomini each described giants and pygmies, amazons and dogmen, and, most interesting of all,

cannibals. Naturally, Columbus was deeply interested in geography, but he had little use for Ptolemy or his *Geography*. If he had believed Ptolemy, he could never have imagined the possibility of reaching the Indies by sea (or by land, for that matter). Ptolemy overestimated the distance between Spain and China by more than 10,000 Roman miles, no matter which direction one traveled. Thus, it should be no surprise that Columbus made relatively few geographical annotations in his copy of *Historia Rerum* (1477), which was mostly a rehash of Ptolemy.¹⁶

Imago Mundi, compiled in 1410, was far more palatable to Columbus because Pierre d'Ailly based his work upon the theories of Marinus of Tyre, whose geographical treatise was the primary point of departure for Ptolemy's later work. Most important for Columbus, d'Ailly repeated Marinus's contention that the Eurasian landmass spanned 225° of longitude. When copies of the recently rediscovered *Geography* of Ptolemy began to circulate in Europe, d'Ailly studied, and then wrote refutations of the "new" theories. Columbus based his calculations upon the 1480 printed edition of *Imago Mundi*, which included two treatises refuting much of Ptolemy. Constructing his arguments for a westward passage to India, Columbus began with data from *Imago Mundi*, added some specious reasoning of his own, and concluded that Spain and Japan were separated by less than 68° of longitude, which he calculated to be something less than 4,000 Roman miles.¹⁷ By sheer accident, he also predicted the distance between Seville and the nearest landmass west of Spain. With little more than his boundless optimism, reinforced by the antiquated science and colorful folklore he gleaned from printed books, Columbus won the backing of Isabella.

As every American schoolchild knows, Columbus sighted land early on the morning of 12 October 1492. The date is famous. The day Columbus finally returned to Spain, 15 March 1493, has never been celebrated, but it marked the real beginning of the European encounter with the Americas. The news of the successful voyage across the ocean, and back again, launched the era of European conquest. The popular understanding of the Columbian voyage began as an official letter addressed to Gabriel Sanxis (Sanchez), the Treasurer of Aragon.

A Latin translation of that letter, rendered by Leandro de Cosco of Naples and commonly known by its abbreviated incipit “*Epistola de insulis . . . nuper inventis* (Letter from the islands . . . newly discovered),” was printed in Rome by Stephen Planck. The most intriguing feature of the common title of the Latin letter is the ellipsis. The elided words, “Indie supra Gangem,” or “India beyond the Ganges,” remind us that Columbus was certain that he had found exactly what he was looking for. Plank’s quarto edition of the Columbian letter appeared early in May of 1493 and was reprinted three times in that year.

The news of the successful navigation of the Atlantic was spread across Europe by the same culture of print that had provided Columbus with the texts he had used to justify the venture. The news was stupendous. Columbus briefly described the fertile islands he had found, the gullible and generous people he encountered, the sad lack of monsters and cannibals, and, of course, the gold. He finished with a brief complaint about the ships he had been allotted and the assertion that he had seen what others had only guessed at in fables. It seems odd, but he said almost nothing about the actual voyage.¹⁸

In all, nine Latin editions were printed in Rome, Antwerp, Basel, and Paris before 1501.¹⁹ The first illustrated edition of the Columbus letter, which is now the most often reproduced, appeared in 1493. Published in Basel, its Latin text was enlivened by four rather fanciful woodcuts. Next, Giuliano Dati cobbled together a heroic poem in Italian that was loosely based upon the Columbus letter. Printed in Rome, and in Florence, four of the five editions of the Dati version included one of the woodcuts used in the Basel edition. The illustration depicts King Ferdinand peering across the ocean as Columbus first encounters the naked Indians. A later German translation of the Latin version of the letter was printed in Strasbourg 1497.²⁰

Unfortunately, we can only guess how many copies of the Columbus letter were printed in each edition and how many people might have read them. Clearly, “*Epistola de insulis . . . nuper inventis*” was a media event, but it only lasted a few years. Eighteen of the twenty-two known imprints of the letter were printed within a four-year period between 1493 and 1497.²¹ After the turn of the century, Columbus fell out of public favor and his letter was eclipsed by the published accounts of Amerigo Vespucci (1451-1512).

The Indies came to be known as the “New World” and later the “Americas,” because Vespucci became a publishing phenomenon.²² Like Columbus, Vespucci was an Italian, but the similarity ends there. Vespucci was a Florentine from a prosperous family. He attended school with Pier Soderini (1450-1513), who was later elected *gonfaloniere* (an office combining the powers of a Lord Mayor and alderman) for life. When he was seventeen, Vespucci became a clerk in the commercial house of Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco d’Medici (1463-1503). Pierfrancesco sent Vespucci to Seville to represent the interests of the Medici as a merchant banker and a ship’s chandler in association with Giannetto

Berardi. When Berardi died in 1495, Vespucci took charge of the business, including several lucrative Crown contracts and a claim against Columbus for 180,000 maravedis.²³ Columbus sailed across the ocean on credit. From the beginning, the “Enterprise of the Indies” depended more upon private investments brokered by merchant bankers like Berardi and Vespucci than it did on royal subsidies. Vespucci helped to organize, outfit, and finance at least three of those commercial ventures, including Columbus’s ill-fated third voyage.²⁴

Vespucci was not a sailor; he was a broker. Nevertheless, he sailed to the New World at least twice. His first voyage was a commercial venture. In 1499, Vespucci commissioned two ships for himself and joined an expedition led by Alonso de Ojeda (c.1465-1515) and Juan de la Cosa (c.1460-1500), both veterans of earlier Columbian voyages. When the fleet made landfall somewhere on the Guiana coast, Vespucci and his ships left the fleet to explore the northern coast, including the mouths of the Amazon and Para rivers, about as far as modern Parnaiba. Then he turned and followed the coast northwest to the Gulf of Venezuela. According to tradition, the *palafitos*, the stilt villages of Guajira peninsula, reminded Vespucci of Venice and its canals, so he named the place Venezuela, or “little Venice.” After nearly a year at sea, Vespucci’s company had found few pearls and little gold, so they stopped briefly at Hispanola to refit, and sailed for Spain. On the way home they raided several islands, capturing 232 Indians to sell as slaves. By the standards of the day, the expedition was a failure, saved only by the last-minute expedient of slave running.²⁵

Vespucci’s second voyage was not a private venture. He sailed with Gonçalo Coelho on an official voyage of exploration for Portugal in May 1501. Vespucci and

Coelho sailed southwest to survey the cape of Brazil, which Pedro Álvares Cabral (c.1467-c.1520) had discovered quite by accident while sailing for India. According to Vespucci, the fleet made landfall at about 5° S and continued south until they found a great natural harbor that he named “Baie de Tuti li Santi (Bay of All Saints).” Called Bahia by the Portuguese, it became the first important Brazilian port. São Salvador da Bahia became the seat of Portuguese colonial government beginning in 1549. From Bahia they coasted far to the south, exploring Rio de Janeiro and La Plata before reaching a point Vespucci calculated to be 52° S. If his measurements were accurate, they were much farther south than any European had ever sailed.²⁶ For a second time, Vespucci returned to Europe with little more than his observations and stories to show for the effort.

Until the publication of some of those observations in *Mundus Novus*, or *The New World*, Vespucci was not a public figure. He had made at least two voyages and was well regarded in the courts of Spain and Portugal, but that was true of many men. If *Mundus Novus* had not been published, he might have remained a peripheral figure of early modern navigation like Juan de la Cosa; instead, two continents bear his name. Published shortly after the death of Pierfrancesco de' Medici in 1503, *Mundus Novus* presented itself as a Latin translation of a letter from Vespucci to his patron, reporting the highlights of his exploration of the Brazilian coast for Portugal begun in May of 1500. The book was marred by serious factual and textual problems, but that hardly mattered to contemporary readers.²⁷

The opening paragraph of the book was sensational. Vespucci began by reminding Pierfrancesco of the “new regions” that he had explored for Portugal. “And

these,” he continued, “we may rightly call a new world. Because our ancestors had no knowledge of them, and it will be a matter wholly new to all those who hear about them.”

As he continued, he amplified his claim:

For this transcends the view held by our ancients, inasmuch as most of them hold that there is no continent to the south beyond the equator, but only sea which they named the Atlantic; and if some did aver that a continent there was, they denied with abundant argument that it was a habitable land. But that this their opinion is utterly opposed to the truth, this my voyage has made manifest; for in those southern parts I have found a continent more densely peopled and abounding in animals than our Europe or Asia or Africa.²⁸

That paragraph created the New World and made the known world Old.

Although it resembled the earlier Columbus letter, *Mundus Novus* was a different sort of document altogether. Columbus was filing a report; Vespucci was telling a story. Most notably, Vespucci narrated the journey itself. He told the story of sailing across the ocean, and he described the astronomical observations that he made. Throughout the little book, he took pains to discuss the central problem of navigation, which has always been how to determine where you are relative to some known location. In the middle of his discussion of the problems of navigating in unknown waters, Vespucci made a peculiar claim, a claim that eventually caused a backlash of anti-Vespucci sentiment. He said that he was more skilled in navigation “than all the ship-masters of the world.”

The claim seems outrageous. Vespucci was not a sailor. His knowledge of navigation was entirely theoretical; it was book learning. But that was his point: “I

showed them that though a man without practical experience, yet through the teaching of the marine chart for navigators I was more skilled than all the ship-masters of the world. For these have no knowledge except of those waters to which they have sailed.”²⁹ In other words, when sailing into the unknown, scientific navigation trumps practical seamanship. Vespucci’s scientific knowledge, gained from printed books, allowed him to understand and to predict beyond the limits of practical experience. He was pitting the understanding that he gained from studying mathematics and astronomy against the knowledge that captains and pilots acquired through experience. The skill he claimed derived directly from the widespread publication of Ptolemy’s *Geography*. His claim was not personal; it was a distinctly modern argument for the value of book learning in a practical art.

Although he was thoroughly modern in some respects, Vespucci was not completely free of his medieval heritage. The people he described in *Mundus Novus* would have seemed suitably barbarous to his European audience. They pierced their cheeks and inserted large stones in the holes. They were consumed by “excessive” and unnatural lusts, especially the women. And of course, they were in the habit of eating one another. On the other hand, they lived without religion, commerce, or government; they lived “according to nature and may be called Epicureans rather than Stoics.” Likewise, the land they inhabited he described as a paradise on earth, or near to it. The fertile land was heavily forested and rich in animals and delicious fruits.

Vespucci declared that the plenitude of the New World would have staggered even Pliny. The air was serene and pure. Pearls and gold were as common as pebbles. Vespucci claimed that gold was the only metal known to the people of that New World.

He then explained that his expedition brought back none of the gold, but gave no reason for that strange omission.³⁰ Obviously, Columbus was not the only adventurer to read Pliny and Marco Polo. Like Columbus, Vespucci was influenced by the popular stories of the day. His description of a land where no metal is known save for gold was certainly suspicious. That particular detail also appeared in a contemporary popular romance, *Las Sergas des Esplandin (The Labors of the Brave Knight Esplandian)*.³¹

Although troublesome as an historical document, *Mundus Novus* was an immediate commercial success. More than ten years had passed since the publication of the Columbus letter, ten years without another first-hand account of the Enterprise of the Indies. It should be no surprise that *Mundus Novus* was a “runaway best-seller.” By almost any measure, it was more successful than the Columbus letter. Within two years, more than twenty editions were in print. Latin editions were issued in Vienna, Florence, Venice, Paris, Basel, Cologne, Antwerp, and Rostock; German editions appeared in Augsburg, Basel, and Nuremberg.³²

A second Vespucci book appeared almost simultaneously, and it made an even bigger impression. First published in Italian under the title *Lettera di Amerigo Vespucci della isole novamente trovate in quattro suoi viaggi*, (Letter of Amerigo Vespucci upon the isles newly found in his four voyages), the second book presented itself as a series of four letters addressed to Pier Soderini.³³ Generally called the *Four Voyages*, the book was obviously cobbled together without much regard for chronology or even sense. Nevertheless, the style was brisk, and the stories were sensational. Vespucci had a knack for describing horrific events so simply that they became even more lurid:

On the seventh day, while we again were making to the shore, we discovered that the natives had brought their wives with them. As soon as we landed they sent many of their women to talk with us. But even the women did not trust us sufficiently. While we were waiting for them to approach, we decided to send to them one of our young men who was very strong and agile; and then, that the women might be the less fearful, the rest of us embarked in our small boats. The young man advanced and mingled among the women; they all stood around him, and touched and stroked him, wondering greatly at him. At this point a woman came down from the hill carrying a big club. When she reached the place where the young man was standing, she struck him such a heavy blow from behind that he immediately fell to the ground dead. The rest of the women at once seized him and dragged him by the feet up the mountain, whereupon the men who were on the mountain ran down to the shore armed with bows and arrows and began to shoot at us. Our men, unable to escape quickly because the boats scraped the bottom as they rowed, were seized with such terror that no one had any thought at the moment of taking up his arms. The natives had thus an opportunity of shooting very many arrows at us. Then we shot four of our guns at them; and although no one was hit, still, the moment they heard the thunderous report, they all fled back to the mountain. There the women, who had killed the youth before our eyes, were now cutting him in pieces, showing us the pieces, roasting them at a large fire which they had made, and eating them. The men, too, made us similar signs, from which we gathered that they had killed our two other Christians in the

same manner and had likewise eaten them. And in this respect at least we felt sure that they were speaking the truth.³⁴

The image of those naked women stroking and touching and then killing, butchering, roasting and eating that young man, “very strong and agile,” and a Christian, must have made his readers tremble.

Four Voyages, even more than *Mundus Novus*, was designed for mass appeal. It was originally printed in Italian and then widely distributed in vernacular editions, including German, Dutch, French and even Czech. In all, nearly forty separate editions of the book were printed in six different languages. Most of those editions were illustrated with woodcuts. Oddly enough, one of the woodcuts that illustrated *Four Voyages* had been used earlier to illustrate Dati’s version of the Columbus letter. That was not the only way the book borrowed from Columbus. Presenting Vespucci’s adventures as four voyages must be regarded as something more than coincidence. It recalls the four genuine voyages made by Columbus.

Taken together, the two books attributed to Vespucci are nothing short of a publishing phenomenon. The popularity of Vespucci’s books dwarfed Columbus’s venture in publishing. The Columbus letter generated twenty-two editions in four languages, eighteen of which were issued between 1493 and 1497. After that, Columbus virtually disappeared from the publishing world. The Vespucci books generated sixty editions in six languages over the course of fifteen years.³⁵ Those books made Amerigo Vespucci one of the most celebrated men of his age, but they also made him a villain.

Vespucci’s reputation and influence have always been difficult to assess. His books were certainly popular in their day. In 1508 Ferdinand of Spain made Vespucci

Pilot Major of Spain, giving him the authority to direct all Spanish navigation and navigational training. Vespucci's books were important sources for sixteenth-century humanists, especially Thomas More (1478-1535). Much of his *Utopia* (1515) was modeled after Vespucci's descriptions of the New World.³⁶ By the time Stradanus was designing his *Nova Reperta*, Vespucci was widely regarded as the "discoverer" of the New World; the plate depicting the New World omitted Columbus and exalted Vespucci.

Bartolomé de las Casas was probably the first to raise doubts about Vespucci.³⁷ Anti-Vespucci sentiment waxed and waned over the years, but it reached a kind of climax in the nineteenth century. In the essay *English Traits*, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) railed against Vespucci, condemning him as a "false pickledealer" and a "thief."³⁸ Vespucci's reputation in the United States never recovered from that. More recently, Samuel Eliot Morison made it his business to expose Vespucci as "a charlatan and a liar." Morison, hardly dispassionate under the best of circumstances, seethed with barely repressed anger when discussing Vespucci, dismissing him as a self-serving incompetent and no true sailor.³⁹ Even Vespucci biographer Frederick Pohl repudiated the books that made Vespucci famous, calling them forgeries foisted upon an unsuspecting public by unscrupulous printers.⁴⁰

Vespucci might have been a liar and a charlatan. *Mundus Novus* and the *Four Voyages* might have been forgeries. Genuine or not, the books were popular and influential. *Mundus Novus* established the idea of a New World, and *Four Voyages* spread that idea throughout Europe. The Indies became the New World largely through the mechanism of the early book trade. When the book trade exerted its influence a few years later, Amerigo Vespucci became the eponym for nearly half of the globe. The New

World became America in 1507 when a syndicate of scholars led by a German geographer, Martin Waldseemüller, published a little book and a large map. The book was called *Cosmographiae introductio cum quibusdam geometriae ac astronomiae principiis ad eam rem necessariis insuper quattuor Americi Vesputij navigationes* (Introduction to Cosmography with certain necessary principles of geometry and astronomy as mentioned above with the Four Voyages of Amerigo Vespucci); the map was the first to depict a pair of continents dividing the ocean between Europe and Asia. The southern continent bears the name “America.”

Waldseemüller was born Martin Waltzenmüller sometime between 1470 and 1475 in a village near Freiburg, in the Breisgau. He entered the newly founded university at Freiburg in 1490, where he studied cosmography with Gregor Reisch (c1467-1525), compiler of the *Margarita Philosophica* (*Pearl of Wisdom*), an important early encyclopedia first published in Basel in 1503.⁴¹ When he finished his studies, Waldseemüller was appointed Professor of Geography at the college of Saint-Dié, which was under the patronage of Duke René II of Lorraine (1451-1508).

Walter Lud (1448-1547), secretary to René II, had established printing press in Saint-Dié in 1500. The press made the remote monastery town in the Vosges Mountains a center of intellectual activity. Matthias Ringmann (c 1482-1511), professor of Latin at Saint-Dié, was the third member of the group.

The Saint-Dié group planned to publish a corrected edition of Ptolemy’s *Geography* with maps detailing the new discoveries made by Spain and Portugal.⁴² Although seven printed editions of the *Geography* had appeared between 1475 and 1500, no one had made any genuine attempt to bring Ptolemy up to date. The revised edition of

Ptolemy had to be postponed for several years. In the interim, the Saint-Dié group issued two maps that reconfigured the world and a book that was nearly as significant as Ptolemy's. One map consisted of a set of gores for a globe that could be cut out and pasted onto a sphere. The other was a large wall map, published as twelve woodblock plates; once the plates were assembled, the resulting map was 54 inches tall and 96 inches wide.

Although 1,000 copies of the wall map were printed, the entire edition disappeared within a few years of publication.⁴³ The little book fared much better. *Cosmographiae Introductio* was really two books bound as one: a brief treatise on geographical principles written by Waldseemüller and a Latin version of Vespucci's *Four Voyages* translated from a French edition by Ringman. The entire project was explicitly synthetic, combining both the ancient and the modern. As Waldseemüller explained in the Preface: "studying, to the best of my ability and with the aid of several persons, the books of Ptolemy from a Greek copy, and adding the relations of the four voyages of Amerigo Vespucci, I have prepared for the general use of scholars a map of the whole world—like an introduction, so to speak—both in the solid and projected on the plane."⁴⁴

The inclusion of *Four Voyages* might explain why an esoteric text like *Introduction to Cosmography* required three separate editions in 1507 and a fourth edition in 1508. Judged on its own merits, Waldseemüller's treatise on geography did little to advance the science of geography; it did little to clarify or amplify Ptolemy. Aside from the endorsement of Amerigo Vespucci, the book would have faded into obscurity. The lasting fame of the book rests upon a single paragraph in the final chapter.

There, after providing etymologies for the names Europe, Africa and Asia, Waldseemüller writes:

Now, these parts of the earth have been more extensively explored and a fourth part has been discovered by Amerigo Vespucci (as will be set forth in what follows). Inasmuch as both Europe and Asia received their names from women, I see no reason why anyone should justly object to calling this part Amerigo, i.e., the land of Amerigo, or Amerige, after Amerigo, its discoverer, a man of great ability. Its position and the customs of its inhabitants may be clearly understood from the four voyages of Amerigo, which are subjoined. Thus the earth is now known to be divided into four parts. The first three parts are continents, while the fourth is an island, inasmuch as it is found to be surrounded on all sides by the ocean. Although there is only one ocean, just as there is only one earth, yet, being marked by many seas and filled with numberless islands, it takes various names.⁴⁵

That short passage made the fourth part of the world “America.” Waldseemüller had given a name to the unknown, and the name made itself permanent.

The story of Waldseemüller, Vespucci, and the naming of America took an odd turn in 1901. For nearly 400 years, *Introduction to Cosmography* was the only evidence that the St. Dié maps had ever existed. Then Joseph Fischer, a Jesuit scholar, discovered a complete copy of the lost wall map in a bound miscellany in the library of Prince von Waldburg zu Wolfegg-Waldsee at the Castle of Wolfegg, Württemberg, Germany.⁴⁶ The rediscovered Waldseemüller map presented a picture of the world instantly recognizable

to modern viewers, but it would have looked very strange to readers used to the world as Ptolemy had drawn it.

Although it became famous as the first instance of “America” as a place name, the real innovation of the Waldseemüller map was the decision to represent the new landmass between Europe and Asia as two linked continents. By deductive necessity, that decision also created a new ocean six years before Balboa (1475-1517) could “discover” it. Waldseemüller created a second hemisphere. That vision of the world divided into two hemispheres was not clearly depicted in the large map projection, but it is quite clearly drawn in the decorative border of the map. Above the main body of that map, between portraits of Ptolemy and Vespucci, Waldseemüller drew two small circular maps. Beside Ptolemy he placed a map of the world more or less as Ptolemy had drawn it. The map he placed beside Vespucci would have made little sense to Ptolemy or even to Columbus, but we recognize it as a map of the western hemisphere. Although the proportions are odd, we see North and South America as two continents joined by an isthmus.

Waldseemüller’s map was lost for 400 years, but its most characteristic features became lasting innovations on world maps. The division of the world into hemispheres, roughly as Waldseemüller depicted them, remains the standard view of the world. His choice of a name for the lands of the new hemisphere also persisted. Exactly why Waldseemüller, a German geographer working in the mountains of Upper Lorraine, chose to honor a Florentine merchant banker who sailed for Spain and Portugal remains a bit of a mystery. Although he proposed the idea, naming the New World in honor of Amerigo Vespucci was not in Waldseemüller’s control; it became an irreversible fact through the mechanisms of print culture.

Less than forty years after printed books began to circulate in Europe, the Unknown became the Indies. Ten years later, the Indies became New World, and five years after that, the New World became America. By the time Stradanus designed the plates for *Nova Reperta* in the 1580s, America was a cultural reality for people who would never see the ocean that separated the Old World and the New.

Transforming the Unknown into America required complex interactions of scientific, historical, intellectual, and geopolitical processes, all of which were urged along by the emerging print culture. The book trade helped to create America. Just thirty-two years after the name “America” first appeared in print, a printing press arrived in the New World. That press was another crucial step in the development of an American book trade, because it established America as a source of printed books.

The Book Trade and New Spain

As Columbus predicted, the lands he had found by sailing to the west offered vast opportunities to the Church and to Spain. Unfortunately, a series of recent papal decrees had given sovereignty in the Atlantic, extending to all lands south and west of the Canary Islands, to the Portuguese. When Columbus returned to his home port on 15 March 1493, everything he had seen on his remarkable voyage for Ferdinand and Isabella belonged to Portugal. The Catholic Kings immediately petitioned Alexander VI, the newly installed Pope, who was conveniently also a Spaniard. Beginning on 4 May 1493, Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borja 1431-1503) issued the first of a series of Bulls of Donation establishing a meridian 100 leagues west of the Azores and the Cape Verde Islands, then assumed to be of the same longitude. Isabella and Ferdinand were granted possession of everything

south of the Azores and west of the line of demarcation. Portugal retained title to everything east of the line.⁴⁷ In effect, the papal bull allowed Portugal to retain control of its African possessions.

Spain thus acquired title to everything between the Azores and Japan. Naturally, Portugal objected, primarily because of unfounded worries that they might thereby lose the sea route to India. The conflict was resolved the following year in the Treaty of Tordesillas. Under the terms of the treaty, the imaginary line of demarcation was moved to a point 370 leagues west of Cape Verde, which assured the Portuguese of their route to India and, incidentally, gave Portugal title to most of coastal Brazil. The Crown of Castile took title to everything in the Americas south of 38° S and west of 48° W (in modern terms, everything south of Washington, D.C. and west of Brasilia).⁴⁸

From a legal standpoint, the new lands were not Spanish possessions or colonies; they were the hereditary property of the Crown of Castile. The papal donation conveyed title to the New World to the Catholic Kings for the propagation of the faith. By that possession, the Kings of Castile were defenders of the faith and sponsors of the evangelical mission to all the lands beyond the line of demarcation. The justice of their title depended upon the faithful execution of that obligation. Isabella established a policy designed to integrate the evangelical mission with colonial exploitation. The duality of Spain's colonial enterprise shaped Isabella's instructions to Nicolás do Ovando (1460-1518), the second governor of Española:

Item: Because we desire that the Indians be converted to our Holy Catholic faith and their souls be saved and because this is the greatest benefit the we can desire for them, for this end it is necessary that they be instructed in the articles of our

faith, in order that they will come to knowledge of it and you will take much care to see that it is accomplished

Item: Because for mining gold and performing other work which we have ordered done, it will be necessary to make use of the service of the Indians, compelling them to work faithfully in our service, paying each one a wage which appears just to you⁴⁹

Although the search for resources, especially gold, was paramount, discovery and conquest, according to her policy, should lead to permanent, self-sustaining colonies. From these Christian outposts, the task of conversion could proceed. She also proposed that once the Indians accepted Christian religion and government, they would become free vassals, entitled to the same rights and protections as her European subjects.⁵⁰

As it was originally conceived, Spain's colonial policy reflected much of the same liberality that characterized the earliest Spanish laws regarding the book trade. In both cases, the liberality was short-lived. Despite good intentions and a series of debates concerning "Christian justice and good government," the administration of Spain's holdings in the New World tended to be pragmatic and brutal.⁵¹ Officially, the laws of Castile prevailed in the New World, but across the ocean, Spain's colonies were run for the benefit of colonial landholders as long as that benefit did not run counter to the interests of the Crown. Responsibility for the management of the native population generally fell to those same landholders under a system known as the *encomienda Indiana*, which was derived from Spanish feudal institutions. Theoretically, the *encomienda* (literally, to place in trust) established the rights and obligations that governed the relationship between the *encomendero* (grantee) and the Indians granted to

his care. The Indians were required to provide tribute and labor to the *encomendero*, who was in turn responsible for their welfare, their assimilation into Spanish culture, and their conversion to Christianity.⁵² In reality, the Indians were, for all practical purposes, slave labor.

As the colonial government evolved in the New World, the complex relationships between the colonists, the Indians, and the Crown required periodic intervention. In 1511, Ferdinand reasserted royal authority, creating the first American *audencia* (magistrate) in Santo Domingo, who was given the task of local administration of the Antilles and Tierra Firme. Charles V (1500-1558), the grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella, established a Mexican *audencia* in 1528, replacing the provisional military government established by Hernán Cortés following his conquest of Tenochtitlán in 1521. Renamed Mexico, the metropolis of the Aztecs became the ready-made center of colonial government in New Spain and the center of Spanish rule in the New World. Under the direction of Nuño Beltrán de Guzmán (1490-1544), the Mexican *audencia* became an emblem of Spanish misrule in the Americas. Guzmán himself came to represent the tyrannical brutality of the entire colonial enterprise.

At about the same time as he installed the Mexican *audencia*, Charles V recommended the elevation of the Franciscan, Juan de Zumárraga to a new ecclesiastical office, Bishop of Mexico. Because his episcopal consecration was not immediate, Zumárraga sailed for New Spain in August of 1528 as bishop-elect and Protector of the Indians. He took both commissions quite seriously, although his actual powers were, at best, unclear. Guzmán and Zumárraga were natural adversaries. For one thing, they represented the competing interests of *encomenderos* and the church. Furthermore,

Guzmán was a pragmatist interested primarily in his own personal profit and Zumárraga was an idealist.⁵³

By modern standards, neither was clearly virtuous or villainous. Guzmán systematically exploited the territory and the people, especially the Indians, for personal gain; his name has become synonymous with wanton cruelty and misrule. Zumárraga systematically destroyed the culture and religion of the people he was appointed to protect, but his reputation for kindly paternalism has endured. The conflict between Guzmán and Zumárraga ultimately led to a legal battle that resulted in Guzmán's imprisonment and the appointment in 1535 of Antonio de Mendoza (1495-1552) as Viceroy of New Spain.⁵⁴

During the course of the complex legal battle that ended the *audencia* and led to the appointment of Mendoza, Zumárraga was summoned to Spain and finally consecrated Bishop of New Spain in 1533. By all accounts, the bishop and the new viceroy worked well together. Exercising nearly plenary powers, Zumárraga and Mendoza shaped the spiritual and civil life of New Spain. Apparently Zumárraga and Mendoza agreed that a printing press in Mexico was necessary to the interests of the church and the state. In June of 1539, they concluded negotiations that would bring printing to the New World.⁵⁵

As Bishop of Mexico and Protector of the Indians, Zumárraga's primary obligation was to bring the Indians into the Church. The legitimacy of the Spanish claim to the New World depended upon the success of his evangelical mission. The Spanish had almost no missionary tradition before the encounter with the New World. Their earliest efforts had been haphazard at best, but they certainly realized the importance of the New World missions in Spain's political future. The future of the Church was also at

stake. Threatened by Reformation, humanism, and a rebellious England, the Church needed Spain to remain a powerful, Catholic presence in a rapidly changing world.

The Mexican mission began slowly. The first contingent of twelve Observant Franciscans arrived in Vera Cruz in 1524. A group of twelve Dominicans followed two years later. The mendicant orders had been chosen for their primitive Christian beliefs and their experience teaching in rural areas. The missionaries had been granted extraordinary episcopal powers, which were sometimes used to justify brutal methods. While jurists and theologians debated the issue in Spain, missionaries used force and threats to eradicate native religious cultures and establish the *señorío* of Christ in the New World.⁵⁶

Clerics like Zumárraga and Las Casas advocated education and indoctrination rather than force. Education depended upon a steady supply of books and pamphlets that missionaries could use “in the field.” The New World missions imported religious and educational tracts, which was a windfall for Spanish printers. Printers have always filled out their production schedules with job work—smaller jobs that can be printed when time and materials permit. The missions created a demand for the sort of work that could fill out a pressman’s work day. Few sixteenth-century printing houses bothered with accurate accounts of the religious ephemera that they produced and sold, but the records of some transactions do survive. In 1512, for example, an early Franciscan mission to the islands of the Caribbean, led by Brother Alonso de Espinar, purchased a quantity of devotional woodcuts and 2,000 ABCs from the printing house of Jacobo Cromberger (1472-1528).⁵⁷

A native of Nuremberg, Cromberger arrived in Seville sometime before 1500. He became a partner in the printing house of Ungut and Polono by marrying the widow of

Meinardo Ungut. He first published a book above his own name in 1503. Cromberger's arrival in Seville coincided with the first wave of full-scale commercial traffic in the New World (a designation that might not have meant anything to Cromberger at the time). Cromberger invested in the *compañias* that backed trade expeditions and produced books for export to the New World. He also published works certain to appeal to the growing company of adventurers seeking their fortunes across the "Ocean Sea." His first popular success was a Spanish translation of Marco Polo's travels brought out in 1503.⁵⁸

Cromberger achieved fame as a publisher of chivalric romances, especially a Spanish version of the *Amadís de Gaula* cycle adapted by Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo (d. 1504). The fifth book of the cycle, which might be Montalvo's invention, captured the imagination of the age. First published in 1510 and frequently reprinted, *Las Sergas des Esplandián* (The Labors of Esplandian), recounts a fictional siege of Constantinople, in which all the forces of paganism gather in an attack against the emperor and his Christian allies in the city. In the midst of the siege, the pagans receive unexpected aid from Queen Calafia of the island paradise, California.

Know that on the right hand from the Indies exists an island called California very close to Earthly Paradise; and it was populated by black women, without any man existing there, because they lived in the way of the Amazons. They had beautiful and robust bodies, and were brave and very strong. Their island was the strongest of the World, with its cliffs and rocky shores. Their weapons were golden and so were the harnesses of the wild beasts that they were accustomed to domesticate and ride, because there was no other metal in the island than gold.⁵⁹

The passage bears a striking resemblance to Amerigo Vespucci's account of the people he encountered in the New World. Obviously, Montalvo's account of California, its black Amazons and plentiful gold, left a lasting imprint on the map of the world. It also inspired and justified the conquistadors.⁶⁰ Books like *Las Sergas des Esplandián* were popular in New Spain until they were outlawed by sweeping colonial licensing restrictions in 1560.

The Mexican Press and the New World Book Trade

When Bishop Zumárraga arrived in New Spain, he took charge of a remarkably sophisticated mission. In the intervening years, the friars had developed a more systematic approach to their task. Some had undertaken the task of compiling vocabularies and constructing grammars of the principal Indian languages; many of the company could now preach in one or more of those languages.⁶¹ The Spanish evangelical missionaries depended upon linguistic study and printed texts. The fact that most Mesoamerican cultures were literate before the Spanish arrived might have worked to the benefit of the missionaries.

The highly developed book culture of pre-conquest Mesoamerica was remarkably like that of Europe prior to 1455, even to the codex form of the books. The missionaries, Zumárraga chief among them, destroyed most of the books that they found, but the twenty or so that survived the purging demonstrated the sophistication of American paper manufacture and the book arts prior to conquest.⁶² Of course, the state of the Mesoamerican book culture was of little consequence to the missionaries except as an aid to understanding the languages and cultures that they meant to supplant.

Bishop Zumárraga understood the crucial role the book trade could play in his evangelical mission. He imported printed goods for the use of the missionaries, and even acted for a time as Jacobo Cromberger's agent in New Spain.⁶³ In 1534, he appealed to the Council of the Indies for a printing press in Mexico. The Council approved the idea and sent it on to Charles V, but the proposal apparently died there.⁶⁴ In 1539, Zumárraga and Viceroy Mendoza opened direct negotiations with Juan Cromberger, Jacobo's son and partner, to produce a catechism in Nahuatl. The Nahuatl catechism was one of a new wave of devotional texts translated into Indian languages. The result of years of linguistic work by the friars, the bilingual texts were a great improvement over the generic Latin and Spanish devotional literature that Seville's printers churned out for the missions. If the bilingual texts could be printed with the Indian languages transliterated in roman characters, the missionaries would have a powerful religious and cultural tool to support their work.⁶⁵

At some point in the negotiations, Cromberger apparently realized that he could parlay the contract to print Zumárraga's catechism into something much more profitable. Instead of printing one or more editions in Seville, Cromberger agreed to establish a subsidiary press in America. On 12 June 1539, Cromberger signed an agreement that made one of his press operators, Juan Pablos, the first printer in the Americas. Born Giovanni Paoli in Brescia, an early print center in Lombardy, Pablos had worked in the Cromberger shop since 1532.⁶⁶ The contract, which survives, named Juan Pablos to represent the house of Cromberger in America for ten years. Pablos was required to produce 3,000 sheets per day, when he had work at hand. He was prohibited from engaging in any other business, and he was bound to melt down worn type, a provision

meant to discourage competitors. For the duration of the contract, Pablos remained a subsidiary; everything he printed would bear the imprint “en casa de Cromberger.”⁶⁷

While Pablos administered the printing operation in Mexico, Cromberger assumed the initial financial risk. He provided the press and its furniture, a stock of types and ornaments, and supplies of paper and ink. Cromberger also paid all of the transportation costs for equipment. He also paid passage for Pablos and his wife, Jeronima Gutierrez, a pressman, Gil Barbero, and a slave. During the term of the contract, Pablos was entitled to living expenses but no share of any profits. At the end of ten years, after all of Cromberger’s expenses, including the initial transportation expenses, Pablos’ living expenses, and any depreciation of equipment would be deducted from the gross revenues. Pablos was entitled to one-fifth of the profits, although the press and its furniture remained the property of Cromberger.⁶⁸ The contract made no provision for periodic shipments of paper, ink, or type, but the pattern of the contract suggests that the responsibility for purchasing and shipping supplies should fall to Cromberger.

The most important provision of the contract made Pablos the retail agent for Cromberger in America. Pablos was required to sell any “merchandise or books” sent by Cromberger “at the highest price possible—only for cash and never giving credit to a purchaser.” He was then to forward the cash directly to Cromberger, “duly registered according to the law, by the first vessels sailing for Spain after the sale of the goods.”⁶⁹ Pablos was to receive no commission for the sales he made on behalf of Cromberger. The press itself was probably a means to an end for Cromberger. For the cost of a printing press and its furniture, Cromberger acquired an indentured agent in New Spain. He used the same press to strike a lucrative bargain with Zumárraga, Mendoza, and Charles V: in

exchange for the press in New Spain, Cromberger received a book trade monopoly in New Spain.

Juan Pablos was bound not only by his contract with Cromberger, but by civil and ecclesiastical law. Between 1473 and 1502, the Spanish book trade operated with little regulation or oversight. By the time Pablos arrived in New Spain, however, the liberal laws promulgated by Ferdinand and Isabella in 1474 were no longer in effect. Under the influence of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, that initial liberality was replaced by strict regulation. When Pablos began his work in Mexico, no book could be printed in Spain, its territories, or colonies without the explicit permission of the King or his agent. Furthermore, it was a capital crime to print, sell, transport, or possess any book, written in any language, that had been prohibited by the Inquisition. Prohibited books were to be destroyed by fire and anyone convicted of trafficking in forbidden books forfeited both life and property.⁷⁰

In New Spain, royal permission was the province of the Viceroy. The Holy Office of the Inquisition was 5,000 miles away, which gave Bishop Zumárraga absolute authority to dispense ecclesiastical permissions. Pablos might have been a part of the house of Cromberger, but for all practical purposes, he was the bishop's printer. Pablos and his press had come to Mexico to serve the needs of the church and the first issue of the press was a bilingual catechism entitled *Breve y más compendiosa doctrina christiana en lengua mexicana y castellana* (A brief and greatly abridged Christian doctrine in the Mexican and Castilian languages). The only evidence of that first quarto edition of twelve leaves is a description in *Cartas de Indias* published in Madrid in 1877. The colophon recorded in *Cartas de Indias* reads: "This catechism was printed in Juan Cromberger's

office on the orders and at the expense of Juan de Zumárraga, first bishop of this great city Tenuchtitlán, Mexico, New Spain: 1539.”⁷¹ Thus, the catechism that Zumárraga wanted Cromberger to print in Seville became the first recorded issue of the first printing press in America.

The lost catechism was followed by the *Manual des Adultos*, issued 13 December 1540. Only three leaves of the *Manual des Adultos* survive, but an internal reference to the recto of leaf thirty-six indicates that the guide for the instruction of adult Indians in preparation for baptism was a larger project than the 1539 catechism. Next came *Relacion del espantable terremoto que agora nueuamente ha acontecido en la cibdad de Guatimala*, a brief account of the earthquake that hit Guatemala in September 1541. After an inexplicable gap of two years, Pablos began work in 1543 on his first major publication, an octavo edition of eighty-four leaves: *Doctrina breve muy provechosa de las cosas que pertenecen a la fe catholica y a nuestra cristianidad*. Compiled by Bishop Zumárraga, the *Doctrina breve* was a catechism “in simple style for the average intelligence.”⁷²

Because it survives intact, the *Doctrina breve* is often celebrated as the first book printed in the New World. Dating the book has always been a little troublesome; the title block is dated 1543, but the colophon is dated June 1544. Unless the date on the title block was a simple error, the first sheets were printed at least seven months before the final sheets were pulled. If the date on the title block was not an error, Pablos must have begun work on the *Doctrina* early enough in 1543 to be confident that he would complete the work before the end of the year. In either case, Pablos apparently printed nothing for

two years, after which he started a project that he was unable to finish until seven months later.

The contract with Cromberger required Pablos to produce 3,000 sheets, “*tres mill pliegos*,” a day. Three thousand sheets per day ought to mean just that—at the end of the day, 3,000 sheets of paper printed on both sides—but that quota was ambitious at best.⁷³ The terminology of the book trade has always been ambiguous, but even if the “*tres mill pliegos*” of the contract meant 3,000 impressions per day, we have a problem. Certainly Pablos and his assistants were not working at the rate of 3,000 sheets per day while printing the *Doctrina breve*. If they had worked at the contractual rate, they could have finished the job in a few weeks.

Doctrina breve was printed in eighty-four octavo leaves. An edition of 500 copies would require a total press run of 10,500 impressions. If he really did begin the job in 1543 and finished in June of 1544, he and his assistants averaged fewer than sixty impressions per day. Unless they were also working on other projects simultaneously, the press was ridiculously inefficient. While we have no reliable contemporary production figures, we can derive some sense of a reasonable day’s work from surviving eighteenth-century print shop ledgers—very little changed in the printer’s shop between 1540 and 1740. Documented press-rates range as high as 347 impressions per hour (4,164 impressions, or 2,082 sheets per twelve-hour day), but rates of 200-250 impressions per hour are much more common.⁷⁴

If we consider the early Mexican press as a practical enterprise, we have to wonder how it survived. Juan Pablos remained the sole printer in the New World for twenty years. Even before his contract expired, Pablos operated the press without any

significant oversight by the house of Cromberger. He had a monopoly, but he worked under extraordinarily difficult conditions. Legally, Pablos needed permission from Mendoza and Zumárraga before he printed anything. Practically, he had to import every sheet of paper and all of his types from Spain. Nevertheless, he published the first law book in the New World, the first mathematics text, and the first book that included music. In all, Pablos is known to have published thirty-seven titles during his twenty years in the New World.

In his study of the house of Cromberger, Clive Griffin implied that the “derisory output” of the Mexican press run by Juan Pablos was a case of too much supply and not enough demand.⁷⁵ Other circumstances hint that Juan Pablos might have been more than a contract printer for Bishop Zumárraga. We have no way to estimate the market for books in New Spain, but it was sufficiently valuable that the printers and book sellers of Seville protested Cromberger’s monopoly. Seville’s book dealers offered to trade in the colonies at a discount of twenty-five percent if the Emperor would set aside the monopoly.⁷⁶

In 1550, Juan Pablos brought a type founder named Antonio de Espinosa to Mexico. Just before Pablos died, Espinosa successfully petitioned for an end to the printing monopoly and obtained permission to establish his own press. Once the monopoly ended, other printers decided to try their luck in the New World. Before the close of the century there were six separate printing shops in New Spain. Nevertheless, the entire known output of all seven printers working in New Spain between 1539 and 1600 comes to just 204 titles.⁷⁷ In 1570, there were approximately 30,000 Europeans, 3,500,00 Indians, and 25,000 Africans living in Mexico.⁷⁸ If the reading population was

just one percent of the total, the market should have been capable of supporting something more than 204 books.

During the years of the monopoly, Juan Pablos had averaged two titles per year. In the forty years following his death, the printers of New Spain produced, on average, four books each year. The production figures are impossibly low—too low to be easily explained. Considering the legal restrictions placed upon the trade and the severity of the penalties for violating the laws, the existence of some books might have been hidden. Much, even most, of the work of the early printers might have escaped anyone's notice because was it ephemeral. Calendars, ABCs, playing cards, broadsheets, and such constitute the job-work that filled the spaces between bigger printing tasks and kept a print shop running. It was also the sort of work that generated income without attracting the notice of the authorities.

The most obvious reason for the low output was the harsh restrictions placed on the colonial book trade by the Crown and the Inquisition. The laws restricting the book trade became even more severe in 1560. The new laws gave the Council of the Indies sole authority over the colonial book trade. Colonial authors and printers needed the Council's approval before publication, which meant that a manuscript had to be sent to Spain, approved, and returned before it could be printed in New Spain. The law also made it illegal for Spaniards living in Spanish America to "study, examine, or discuss any matters relating to the colonies."⁷⁹ The draconian legal restrictions certainly must have been daunting for the early printers, but the economic pressures of owning an idle press were also strong.

The Mass Production and the Book Trade Economy of Mexico

In *A History of Book Publishing in the United States*, John Tebbel outlined the career of Juan Pablos in order to make a point about the character of the book trade in the colonial Americas. According to Tebbel, Pablos “created the kind of cottage industry in printing and publishing which was to prevail in North America for the next 250 years.”⁸⁰ Print production, however, has never been a cottage industry. Early printers, like Juan Pablos and Jacobo Cromberger were pioneers in a new model of manufacturing—mass production. Pablos and his followers were unable to maintain the continuous production schedules of European printing houses, but they were still engaged in mass production; they were engaged in the mechanized manufacture of identical goods.

While in operation, even the most primitive printing press was a remarkably efficient machine. A hand press of the sort that Juan Pablos used could produce thousands of identical impressions every day. On the other hand, the presses required a great deal of work to support the printing of each sheet. To run a hand press with anything approaching efficiency, a printer needed at least two assistants. The work began well before the first impressions were pulled. Setting the type has always been the most time-consuming part of the preparation, but printing on a hand press also required a daily routine of tasks. “Making ready,” as the process was called, properly began with wetting up and weighting the paper the night before and continued the next morning until everyone and everything was in place to begin the day’s work.

Once the printing day was finished, everything had to be cleaned before making ready for the next day’s work. Typesetting, making ready, and cleaning up had to be charged against the output of the press. A long, uninterrupted printing day was a crucial

counterbalance for all the supporting work. Anything that interrupted printing wasted both press time and the work of making ready. Press stoppages of any sort increased the unit cost of each sheet. The printing press introduced a new urgency to production. Printing something like the *Doctrina breve* required a significant pre-production investment of work and material.

Mass production changed the financial structure of manufacture, and print production was the first industry that had to adapt to the new structure. In traditional craft manufacture, products were usually made to order. The financial risks associated with manufacturing were limited to the actual cost of the materials and the labor of the manufacturer. Since goods were made to order, craft manufacture rarely required speculation. Printers had to have the all of their materials and cash to cover printing expenses in hand before production could begin, an obligation that made print production inherently risky.

Printing has always been an industrial enterprise, requiring the support of other trades—notably papermakers and type foundry. A printing house is a complicated enterprise, but it has always been just one part of the book trade. Obtaining supplies and distributing the finished goods were often more complicated and expensive than the actual printing. Transportation and financing certainly were staggering economic and logistical problems in New Spain. The same problems confronted the book trade in a European print center like Seville, but the relative scale of the problems was much different. Supplies of paper might have been closer to hand in Seville, but so was the Inquisition.

Whether productive or idle, a print shop is a continuous expense. To offset that expense, the press must be run or it must be subsidized. In the early years of the press, the demand for books was primarily ecclesiastical, but it was never entirely ecclesiastical. The Mexican press survived because it was subsidized by the Church. Although he was Cromberger's deputy in New Spain, Juan Pablos was Bishop Zumárraga's printer. His work was primarily, but not entirely, ecclesiastical. In 1541, for example, Pablos printed an account of an earthquake that devastated Guatemala in September of that year. Nevertheless, the Mexican press could not have survived as an independent commercial enterprise.

Juan Pablos had to balance the competing pressures of mass production and strict civil and ecclesiastical regulation. His contract with Cromberger compelled him to run his print shop as a profitable industrial enterprise. His living and the living of at least three other individuals depended upon the press, although conditions in New Spain often made it difficult and dangerous to run the press. The economic necessities of print manufacture and the law made him a servant of the Church and, to a lesser degree, the state. He had to balance the economic realities of an industrial enterprise against the political reality of the Inquisition.

The economic and political forces that shaped the earliest American book trade persisted in colonial Spanish America for two centuries. The severe laws regulating the book trade for most of the colonial period were eventually relaxed, but the press continued to operate under the vigorous scrutiny of church and state, changing only when printing became a tool for the Mexican independence movement toward the end of the eighteenth century.⁸¹ A second colonial book trade began in English America a century

after Juan Pablos established his press. Although the English-language press was also established to serve the ecclesiastical and political needs of the colonists, the English-language book trade quickly escaped the control of the church and the state.

Chapter 2: The English-language Book Trade in America

He who first shortened the labor of Copyists by device of *Movable Types* was disbanding hired Armies, and cashiering most Kings and Senates, and creating a whole new Democratic world: he had invented the Art of Printing.

Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*

One hundred years after Juan Pablos established his printing press in New Spain, an English nonconformist minister named Jose Glover purchased a press for the Puritan settlements in Massachusetts. The colonies of Catholic New Spain and Puritan New England could hardly have been more different.⁸² In New Spain, the conquistadors seized cities, established plantations based on Indian labor, and carted off tons of gold and silver. In New England, the Puritans laid out small towns, avoided the Indians, and salted tons of cod. Like Spain, England justified its colonial enterprises using the same fundamental legal argument: Christian monarchs have a right and a duty to claim and subdue any territory inhabited by non-Christians. The religious conversion of the Indians authorized the commercial exploitation of their land, which made conquest a spiritual exercise.⁸³

The European colonial enterprise in the Americas was explicitly ecclesiastical and missionary. In the century that separated the founding of New Spain and the settlement of New England, however, the nature of the mission changed. The radical upheaval in

European Christianity known as the Reformation had a profound influence upon the colonial enterprises in the New World. The intervening century also changed the way colonists encountered the New World. The Spanish began with a direct encounter, which was reinforced by a, more or less, continuous direct experience.

The English encounter with the New World, which began soon after the Columbus letter was published, did not become a colonial enterprise until 1607. The English had a full century to think about, to read and write accounts of the New World before they began to establish colonies in America. America had become an established name for the New World well before the English founded settlements. The English encounter with America was therefore mediated and driven forward by a century of print.

England's colonial empire began with the publication of the Columbus *Letter* in 1493. The widespread distribution of the brief report made Columbus an international celebrity and sparked the commercial imagination of many Europeans. Spain and Portugal claimed sovereignty in the new lands, but that claim would prove difficult to enforce.

Enormous wealth waited on the other side of a manifestly navigable ocean, and John Cabot (c. 1450-c. 1499) was the first to challenge the Spanish and Portuguese claims. Like Columbus, Cabot was an ambitious Genovese merchant seaman seeking a patron. Soon after the publication of the Columbus *Letter*, he began an unsuccessful attempt to gain the support of Ferdinand II. Cabot turned next to England and made an appeal to Henry VII (1457-1509).⁸⁴

On 5 March 1496, Henry issued a letter of patent granting Cabot, his sons, heirs, and deputies "full and free authority, faculty and power to sail to all parts, regions and

coasts of the eastern, western and northern sea, under our banners, flags and ensigns.”

Cabot was further charged to “find, discover and investigate whatsoever islands, countries, regions or provinces of heathens and infidels, in whatsoever part of the world placed, which before this time were unknown to all Christians.”⁸⁵ Henry’s 1496 letter of patent ignored the 1493 papal Bull of Donation that gave the new territories to Ferdinand and Isabella, although it was based upon the same legal principles.

According to the terms of the patent, Cabot and his heirs were empowered to act as an agency of the English Crown. Henry VII granted the Cabots the right to “conquer, occupy and possess whatsoever such towns, castles, cities and islands by them thus discovered that they may be able to conquer, occupy and possess,” but only as the “vassals and governors lieutenants and deputies therein, acquiring for us the dominion, title and jurisdiction of the same towns, castles, cities, islands and mainlands so discovered.”⁸⁶

After a failed attempt in 1496, Cabot successfully crossed the North Atlantic in the spring of 1497. Cabot’s return to Bristol on 6 August 1497 gave England a claim to territory in the New World that Spain and Portugal, quite naturally, contested.⁸⁷ England was, however, remarkably slow to exploit its claim to the New World. Spain and Portugal established permanent settlements almost immediately, but England allowed its claim to languish for decades. England might have exploited its claim to the New World sooner if Cabot had stumbled upon gold or pearls in Newfoundland. He did discover the world’s richest fishing grounds, but a limitless supply of cod does not fire the commercial spirit in quite the same way that gold does. The English delay allowed the French and the Dutch ample time to establish their own competing claims to the New World.

Henry VIII (1491-1547) ascended to the throne in 1509, two years after Waldseemüller proposed the idea of naming the New World for Amerigo Vespucci. Like his father, Henry VIII had an interest in ships; during his reign England became a maritime power. Henry VIII is generally identified as the founder of the Royal Navy, but he used his navy to make war against France, not to explore the New World. Furthermore, the pressing need for a lasting alliance with Spain probably outweighed the potential profits of exploration. Two weeks before his coronation, Henry VIII married Catherine of Aragon, the widow of his brother Arthur and the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella. Henry later maneuvered the dissolution of his marriage to Catherine, but he never abandoned his efforts to maintain an alliance with Spain. While Henry VIII ruled, the English claim to the New World languished.

In the meantime, Jacques Cartier (c. 1491-1557) and Giovanni de Verrazzano (c.1485-1528), a Florentine sailing for France, claimed vast territory in the New World for France. Like England, France claimed most of the landmass now called North America but did little to exploit the claim. New France drew adventurers and missionaries but no successful permanent settlements until Cardinal Richelieu organized the Company of One Hundred Associates (*Compagnie des Cent-Associés*) in 1627, more than one hundred years after Verrazzano's first voyage. In the end, France never devoted sufficient resources to fully exploit its claim to the New World. The Dutch were latecomers to the New World, but they moved very quickly once they established a claim. The Dutch founded their first American settlement just five years after Henry Hudson (c.1570-1611) sailed into the Hudson River basin in 1609.

Despite the various claims of the Portuguese, Spanish, French, and Dutch, the English eventually dominated the part of the New World that became North America. The long delay between first contact and settlement meant that, in England, America existed as an idea long before it became a real, physical destination. America, as symbol or an abstract idea, developed during the century that followed Cabot's voyages. America became an important focus of discussion, but the discussion had little to do with direct experience.

While explorers, merchants, and missionaries sailed back and forth across the Atlantic, the English were learning about America through print. Thomas More (1478-1538) was the first Englishman to write an account of the New World. In his enigmatic little book *Utopia* (1516), America appears as an intact Eden, more or less as Vespucci described it in *The Four Voyages*.

Thomas More combined elements of Vespucci's best-selling book and Plato's *Republic* to create a vision of uncontaminated social perfection.⁸⁸ More refers to the book directly when he introduces his narrator, Raphael Hythloday, a sailor who served under Vespucci. The simple orderliness of life on Utopia and the indifference of its inhabitants to material wealth he took directly from Vespucci's anthropological narratives. More took the world that Vespucci had visited and reshaped it into Utopia. Although we now focus on the social and political critique in *Utopia*, the book popularized an image of America divorced from any actual experience. In More's hands, America became an intact Eden.

Utopia did not have an immediate effect on English notions of the New World. More was English, but *Utopia* was not really an English book. It was written in Latin

and published in Flanders by Thierry Martens under the supervision of More's great friend, Erasmus.⁸⁹ German, French, and Italian translations followed almost immediately. *Utopia* was tremendously influential, but its influence in England really began after More's death in 1538. Ralph Robinson's English translation was published in 1551, more than a decade after Juan Pablos began printing books in Mexico. A second edition of Robinson's translation followed in 1556.

Utopia was not the first account of the New World printed in England. The first mention of America in an English publication occurred in 1521, the same year that Cortez conquered Tenochtitlán and established Mexico City. The discussion of America appeared in a short play called *A New Interlude . . . of the Nature of the Four Elements*, which was also based on the writings of Vespucci.

Written by Thomas More's brother-in-law, John Rastell (d.1536), the play combined the familiar features of the morality play with an extended geography lesson and a discourse on the value of commerce and empiricism. Two characters, Studious Desire and Experience, attempt to educate Humanity, while Sensual Appetite and Ignorance try to lure him into sin. Experience has traveled widely and strongly advocates English exploration and colonization, especially in the "newe landys founde . . . callyd America."⁹⁰ The contemporary influence of Rastell's play is difficult to know. The play was printed, which was a significant undertaking, but only one, undated example of the text has survived. Robinson's 1551 translation of *Utopia*, on the other hand, sold well enough to require a second edition. *Utopia* has remained in print, in English, almost continuously since 1551, and its importance has never been in doubt.

Soon after the English translation of *Utopia* appeared, Richard Eden (1521?-1576) began his career translating important works of New World geography, history, and navigation into English. In 1553, Edward Sutton printed *A treatyse of the newe India*, Eden's translation of the section of Sebastian Münster's *Universal Cosmography* (1544) that discussed the New World. Two years later, William Powell issued Eden's *Decades of the Newe Worlde or West India*. The book contained Eden's translations of five works that discussed the New World: the first three decades of *De Orbe Novo* (On the New World); Peter Martyr's history of Spanish exploration and conquest from Columbus to Balboa; a partial account of Magellan's voyage: the text of the 1493 bull of donation: and excerpts from Ovieda's *Natural History of the Indies*.

Eden's translations of Münster and Peter Martyr gave English readers access to the wider European discussion of the New World. Eden later provided the English with their first modern navigational text. In 1561, Richard Jugge printed *The Arte of Navigation*, Eden's translation of a Spanish guide to navigation written by Martín Cortés. Taken together, Eden's translations gave the English access to most of the intellectual tools that they needed to exploit their claim to the New World, but the claim would have to wait. Like her father, Elizabeth I (1533-1603) continued to build a navy, but she was more inclined to issue letters of marque than letters of patent or colonial charters.

In 1578, Elizabeth departed from her usual practice and issued a letter of patent to Humphrey Gilbert (1537-1583). Gilbert proposed to find the Northwest Passage to Cathay that Frobisher had failed to discover. Elizabeth supported the scheme to the extent that she gave Gilbert license to "discover, finde, searche out, and view such remote, heathen and barbarous lands, countreys and territories not actually possessed of

any Christian prince or people.’⁹¹ In its particulars, Elizabeth’s patent was similar to the one Henry VII granted to John Cabot. It granted Gilbert broad powers to exploit any lands he encountered, but it recognized the possible validity of competing claims, if the claimants were Christians. Gilbert never discovered a Northwest Passage. He did establish Newfoundland as the first enduring English settlement in the New World in 1583, but it fell to James I (1566-1625) to authorize the first English colonies in America. In 1606, James I created the Virginia Companies, a pair of overlapping joint stock ventures chartered to establish colonial settlements in America.

Under the terms of the charter, the London Company administered North America between Cape Fear and the Long Island Sound, while the Plymouth Company administered the region from the Bay of Fundy south to the Chesapeake Bay. Thus, the Virginia Companies shared jurisdiction in the area between the 34th and 40th parallels. The London Company established the Jamestown Settlement, which succeeded. The Plymouth Company established the Popham Colony on a site near present-day Phippsburg, Maine, which failed within a year. By a peculiar accident of history, the English Separatists, generally known as the Pilgrims, who founded Plymouth Colony in 1620 did so under a license granted by the London Company.

Shortly after the Popham Colony failed, Henry Hudson set out to discover the sea route to Asia that Gilbert failed to find. Sailing for the Dutch East India Company, Hudson’s exploration of coastal Delaware and the Hudson River valley provided grounds for a Dutch claim in the New World. In 1614, the Dutch claimed the territory between 38° and 45° N, roughly from the Delaware Bay to the Adirondacks. Thus the Dutch assumed control of the overlapping territory that James I originally granted to both of the

Virginia Companies. The Dutch moved quickly to realize their claim. The newly formed Dutch West India Company and the New Netherland Company established colonies and built fortifications beginning in 1624.

The Book Trade and the Massachusetts Colony

During the century that elapsed between Cabot's voyage in 1497 and the establishment of the Jamestown settlement in 1607, books had not been a central concern to the few Englishmen who sailed to America. The earliest attempts by the English, the French, and then the Dutch to join Spain in carting off the riches of the New World created little demand for a book trade—what books the early adventurers needed they brought with them.

Permanent settlements created a demand for books, which were imported by and for the colonists. In 1619, the Court of Virginia Company began to purchase religious and agricultural texts for shipment to the Jamestown colonists. The Quarterly Court of Virginia in London, 30 January 1621, recorded the acquisition of books for colonial use. The same session of the Court announced the foundation of a free library, the gift of Thomas Bargrave, a colonial minister.⁹² The early liberal attitude toward printed books in the Virginia Colony would change soon enough.

Some six hundred miles north of Jamestown, the members of the Massachusetts Bay Company intended to establish their New Canaan, a godly commonwealth on earth. As John Winthrop described the enterprise, the colony would be a Christian example to the whole world—"a city upon a hill."⁹³ The colonists meant to be godly themselves and to bring their religion to the people they would encounter in the New World, who turned

out to be very different from the people More described in *Utopia*. According to the terms of its charter, the Company was charged to “win and incite the natives of the country to the knowledge and obedience of the only true God and Savior of mankind, and the Christian faith, which in Our royal intention, and the adventurers free profession, is the principal end of this plantation.” Books would be crucial to the Christian education of the colonists and, to a lesser degree, the Indians.

The course of English colonialism changed when Charles I (1600-1649) chartered the Massachusetts Bay Company in March of 1629. The new company superseded all previous land grants and it brought most of New England under the control of the Puritans who owned stock in the company. The terms of the charter directed the Governor of the Company or his representatives to “assemble and hold and keep a Court or Assembly of themselves, for the better ordering and directing of their affairs.”

By an extremely important oversight, the charter was not specific about the location of the assembly that it authorized. The leaders of the Company noted the omission and made plans to establish a semi-autonomous state in the New World. The signatories of the Cambridge Agreement, agreed on 26 August 1629 that “the whole Government, together with the patent for the said Plantation, be first, by an order of Court, legally transferred and established to remain with us and others which shall inhabit upon the said Plantation.”⁹⁴ Unlike every previous European settlement in the New World, the Massachusetts Bay Colony was not going to be a commercial outpost. Neither was it conceived as a separatist enclave like the Plymouth Settlement. The leaders of the Company had a much broader vision for a New England, a vision realized by rapid large-scale migration.

The first contingent of 400 colonists sailed in April of 1629, less than a month after Charles I chartered the colony. A second contingent of about 700, including John Winthrop (1588-1649), arrived the following spring. By 1634, the Massachusetts Bay Colony had absorbed nearly 10,000 immigrants. Anticipating the rapid migration, members of the Company expanded Plymouth and Salem and, in 1630, organized the towns of Boston, Dorchester, Newtowne, Watertown, and Weymouth.

The rapid settlement of Massachusetts furthered the aims of the Puritan colonists who intended to make the colony self-sustaining and independent. The Puritan emphasis on reading and preaching directly from the Scriptures made schools essential to the success of the colony. Thomas Dudley (1576-1653) chose Newtowne as the site of the New College, which was established in 1636 to train ministers to serve the congregations of the colony. Two years later, New College was renamed to honor John Harvard, and, in 1638, Newtowne was renamed Cambridge to reflect the town's new role as a college town. That same year, the Reverend Jose Glover (c. 1598-1638) sailed for America with a printing press that he meant to use for the benefit of the colony.

The Cambridge Presses

The Puritan colonists of the Massachusetts Company held books in high regard. In his 1810 *History of Printing in the United States*, Isaiah Thomas proudly announced that, "among the first settlers of New England were not only pious but educated men." Simon Bradstreet, Thomas Leverett, John Cotton, William Pynchon, and John Winthrop were all Cambridge men, but it was their Puritan belief in the necessity of approaching God through the written scripture, their belief in the Augustinian dictum *tolle et lege*

(take and read), that moved them to establish grammar schools and to found Harvard College.⁹⁵ The books that they needed for the colonial schools could be imported from England, but the licensing laws that restricted English publishing houses made it difficult to obtain dissenting theological works while Charles I ruled England. Books that had been outlawed in England could be obtained from Holland or Germany, but that was a troublesome arrangement.

Domestic book production began in the English colonies much as it had in the Spanish colonies. In the context of a print culture, religious education created a need for books. It mattered little whether the instruction was intended for the colonial congregation or the Indians; books had become the crucial tool for ecclesiastical work. Unfortunately, books were expensive and difficult to obtain in America. The English colonists arrived at the same solution that the Spanish had a century earlier. Rather than importing the books that they needed, they would establish a press and print the books locally. Printing came to English America to support religious education, albeit in a form that would have been anathema to Bishop Zumárraga.

Zumárraga's counterpart in English America was a wealthy Puritan minister, the Reverend Jose Glover. Before he migrated to the Massachusetts Colony in 1638, Glover used his pulpit to advocate for schools in the Colony. He also canvassed for funds to support those schools. When he sailed for the New World with his wife and children, he took with him equipment for constructing an iron foundry, as well as a large number of books and a printing press that he had purchased for twenty pounds. Glover also purchased types, paper, ink, and all the various tools of the trade at a cost of sixty pounds.⁹⁶

Like Bishop Zumárraga before him, Glover was compelled to transport an entire printing shop to the New World. He also needed someone to operate the press. Glover could have hired a printer, but he did not. Instead, he entered into a contract with Stephen Day, the man who traditionally receives credit for being the first printer in America.⁹⁷ On 7 June 1638, Glover contracted to pay one hundred pounds for the two-year indenture of Day, a locksmith.⁹⁸ Glover also agreed to advance the cost of passage for “Day and Rebecca, his wife, and of Matthew and Stephan Day their Children, and of William Bordman and three men servants.”⁹⁹ The contract does not specify what services Glover expected Day or his family to perform. The first indication that Day was engaged as a printer is a journal entry by Governor John Winthrop: “1639 Mo. 1. A printing house was begun at Cambridge by one Daye, at the charge of Mr. Glover, who died on the seas hitherward.”¹⁰⁰

When Glover died on the voyage, the legal status of his property, including the press, became less certain. Shortly before embarking Glover made a will leaving all his property, both in New and Old England to his wife, Elizabeth, during her lifetime. Upon her death, the estate was to be divided between his sons, except for sizable individual bequests to his three daughters.¹⁰¹ Glover’s will reflected the Puritan aversion to entailed estates and their preference for what they regarded as Biblical laws of descent.¹⁰² Thus the press with all of its furniture and paraphernalia arrived in the colony as the custodial property of Elizabeth Glover and the future property of her children.¹⁰³

The legal situation became complicated when Elizabeth Glover remarried in 1641. Her second husband was Henry Dunster (1609-1659), the president of Harvard College. Dunster assumed control of the press when he took charge of his new wife’s

property. When she died in 1643, Dunster assumed ownership of Elizabeth Glover's estate, including the press. A decade later, her dispossessed children initiated a series of successful suits against Dunster for restitution of their inheritance, including the value of the press. Although the children prevailed in the court, Dunster managed to retain most of the value of the estate and possession of the press.¹⁰⁴

Between September of 1638 and her marriage to Dunster in June of 1641, however, Elizabeth Glover had clear title to the press. There is some evidence to suggest that she put the press into service immediately after her arrival in America. In a letter to a friend in Bermuda dated 10 October 1638, the Rev. Hugh Peter (1598-1660) mentions the existence of a printing shop in Cambridge and suggests that he is at work on a manuscript for the press.¹⁰⁵ Unfortunately, no examples of the first issues of the press at Cambridge, "The Oath of a Free-man," a colonial oath of allegiance, and "An Almanack for the Year 1639," survive. In 1640, the press issued *The Whole Book of Psalms*, a volume of 148 leaves in quarto popularly known as the "Bay Psalm Book," which is generally regarded as the first book printed in English America.

Although Stephen Day traditionally receives the credit for these early American publications, there is no conclusive evidence that he printed any of them. Isaiah Thomas (1749-1831), the first historian of American print, was ambivalent about Day—celebrating him as the first American printer while condemning his lack of craftsmanship. In *The History of Printing in America*, Thomas mentions that Day's name never appeared on an imprint.¹⁰⁶ Day probably did operate the press; no one has proposed any other candidates. Nevertheless, he would have done so under the supervision of Elizabeth Glover, who held his indentures. According to Frances Hamill, Elizabeth Glover

assumed the publishing costs of the “Bay Psalm Book.”¹⁰⁷ In the absence of contradictory evidence, we must conclude that she also assumed whatever risk there might have been in those early issues of the press. If she owned the press and financed the printing, Elizabeth Glover was the first publisher in English America.

Although some of the details of the Glovers’ press remain confused, the general outline is clear enough—one hundred years after Juan Pablos established a press in Mexico City, a domestic book trade was launched in the town of Cambridge to foster the religious education of the colonists. Rev. Glover’s educational goals for that first press were never fully realized, and the press, which subsequently became the property of Henry Dunster and then of Harvard College, languished in relative disuse.¹⁰⁸

Books that might be used for the Christian education of the Indians did not exist. The English Puritans had no missionary tradition before they arrived in the Massachusetts Colony, and they showed little inclination toward the work once there. According to the charter, the conversion of the Indians was the “principal end” of the colony; in reality, the mission to the Indians had to wait until the 1640s, when John Eliot (1604-1690) began the work in earnest. Eliot needed texts that would help him to bring Calvinism to the Indians, but language and literacy were enormous obstacles to Puritan evangelism, as they had been for the Spanish Brothers a century earlier.¹⁰⁹ Eliot began the twin projects of developing grammars of the Indian languages and translating the scripture into those languages in 1646.

In 1660 a second press was established in Cambridge expressly for printing the Bible in the Algonquin language. Marmaduke Johnson, a trained printer, was brought to the colony to shepherd John Eliot’s translation of the scripture, generally known as the

“Eliot Indian Bible,” through the press.¹¹⁰ The printing of Eliot’s Indian Bible was a massive failure. Producing 2500 copies of the book consumed more than three hundred reams of paper and three years of labor, but most of that paper and labor was simply wasted. Nearly the entire print run was destroyed during the conflict known as King Philip’s War—by the people it was meant to subdue.¹¹¹ Whether we consider the Indian Bible as a missionary tool or as publication, it was a failure.

Between them, the two Cambridge presses were even less productive than the first Mexican press had been a century earlier. Without the help of a major patron like Bishop Zumárraga, neither press generated enough income to support its printer. Samuel Green began operating the Glover press in a desultory fashion beginning in 1649. Marmaduke Johnson, once he had finished with the Indian Bible, had little work for his “Indian” press.

With no domestic copy to print, Green and Johnson inaugurated that most characteristically American publishing venture, reprinting. They picked popular works imported from London and reproduced them for sale in Massachusetts. Reprinting English books eliminated the risks of new work and the cost of shipping, but it also attracted the attention of the authorities. Over the years, Johnson and Green fought with each other, became partners, dissolved their partnership, and finally turned to contract printing for Boston’s first booksellers, Hezekiah Usher, Joseph Farnum, John Ratcliff, William Avery, and other merchants.¹¹²

Although the leaders of the Massachusetts Colony wanted books to maintain civic order and to promulgate religious doctrine, they had no intention of allowing a free press. They understood the dangers of the press—their own Nonconformity was, after all, built

on the illicit use of the tightly restricted English and European press. In England, the Crown enacted the Licensing Act of 1662 specifically to suppress publication of Nonconformist tracts. Naturally, the Puritans used precisely the same tactics to protect their political, religious, and commercial position in the colony. The magistrates investigated Marmaduke Johnson regularly and admonished him several times. Most of Johnson's legal trouble was caused by his willingness to ignore the laws restricting his press, but he was also cited for unseemly behavior toward Samuel Green's daughter.

Like their counterparts in London, the Cambridge printers had to submit to the law, but they also had to make a living. In the conflict between legal restrictions and economic pressures, then as now, economic pressures generally prevail. Marmaduke Johnson was not a particularly important printer. None of the books he printed, including the Indian Bible, ever achieved lasting fame or influence except as historical curiosities. Nevertheless, he achieved one lasting victory. Just before he died, he secured permission to establish a press in Boston, which broke the Cambridge monopoly and complicated the task of regulating the colonial press. Of course, Boston would have had its press with or without Marmaduke Johnson, but the proliferation of the domestic book industry had to start somewhere.

Domestic Book Production in the English Colonies

While domestic book production was limping forward in Massachusetts, it came to nothing at all in the Virginia colony. Unlike Massachusetts, Virginia began and continued as a factory colony like those established by Spain a century earlier. The Virginians had not brought their charter with them to the New World, which made it

quite simple for James I to revoke the charter and make Virginia a crown colony. Soon after it was established, the Virginia colony became the personal property of the royal family.

Neither printing nor public education was welcome in Virginia. William Berkeley (1605-1677) was the governor of the Virginia Colony, on and off, from 1642 until his death. In 1671 he explained his position on both: "I thank God we have not free schools nor printing; and I hope we shall not have these hundred years. For learning has brought disobedience and heresy, and sects into the world; and printing has divulged them and libels against the government. God keep us from both."¹¹³

Berkeley got his wish: printing was officially prohibited in Virginia until 1730. There was one minor exception. In 1682, John Buckner imported a press and a printer to run it. Soon after, his printer, William Nuthead, commenced publication of the sessions laws enacted by the House of Burgesses. Berkeley's successor, Thomas Culpeper, reacted immediately, ordering Nuthead and Buckner to cease production on the grounds that the press had no license. A year later, printing came under an absolute ban in Virginia.¹¹⁴ Nuthead removed himself to St. Marys on the Maryland peninsula, where he continued printing almanacs and government documents until his death in 1695.¹¹⁵

In the new Pennsylvania colony, the book industry was welcomed as an integral part of colonial governance. When William Penn (1644-1718) first visited his colony, he brought with him a printer's apprentice named William Bradford (1663-1752). Bradford returned to London, negotiated his release from his master, Andrew Sowle, a prominent Quaker printer, and returned to Pennsylvania. Like every American printer before him, Bradford had to import an entire print shop, which he located near Philadelphia in 1685.

He also brought a commission from George Fox to print books for the Society of Friends in Pennsylvania and for export to the other colonies. In many ways, Bradford's mission paralleled that of his predecessors; he was sent to the New World to support the religious education of the colonists.

To the consternation of Pennsylvania's Quakers, Bradford was more interested in the commercial potential of his trade. Bradford began his American career by printing the *Kalendarium Pennsilvaniense, or, America's Messinger: Being an Almanack for the year of grace, 1686*. Written by Samuel Atkins, the book was an entirely commercial venture. The choice suggested that Bradford had no intention of confining himself to Society of Friends business. To make the matter perfectly clear, Bradford included a short notice: "I have brought that great Art and Mystery of Printing into this part of America, believing it may be of great service to you in several respects, hoping to find encouragement, not only in this Almanack, but what else I shall enter upon for the use and service of the Inhabitants of these Parts." Bradford then apologized for the crudeness of the pamphlet and finished with this remarkable sentence: "And for the ease of Clarks and Scriviners, &c. I propose to print blank Bills, Bonds, letters of Attourney, Indentures, Warrants, &c. and what else presents itself, wherein I shall be ready to serve you; and remain your Friend."¹¹⁶

The Philadelphia Friends resented Bradford's commercialism and his defiant declaration that he would print whatever he chose. They did their best to control him. Like the Puritans in Massachusetts, the Friends were well acquainted with political repression achieved by restricting the press. Likewise, they had long experience with clandestine publishing as a means of political resistance and, their commitment to

religious tolerance notwithstanding, they had no intention of allowing a free press. The Provincial Council exercised its own version of England's Licensing Act to bring Bradford to heel.¹¹⁷

Like his predecessors in Mexico and Massachusetts, William Bradford ran a subsidized press. His livelihood depended upon a stream of work for the Society of Friends and the colonial board of governors. At the same time, he was the first genuinely commercial printer in English America, by his own declaration and in actual practice. His entire career in Pennsylvania, and later in New York, was a balancing act. He needed to make his press pay, which meant that he had to print commercial work, but he could not afford to alienate the authorities too much.

He helped solve the most vexing problem of colonial print production: the high cost and uncertainty of importing paper. Bradford was an important member of the syndicate led by Samuel Carpenter and William Rittenhouse that built a paper mill near Germantown, Pennsylvania, in 1690. In 1693, Bradford was appointed Royal Printer for the Province of New York.¹¹⁸ Control over two printing plants gave Bradford a measure of independence, but his ventures remained makeshift, colonial, and economically unstable. In the end, Bradford was not able to live by the promise he made to print "what else presents itself," but that principle became a goal for colonial printers. The dream of a free and economically viable press never was fully realized, but an edgy compromise did emerge in colonial America.

It fell to a young printer from Boston to make printing in the colonies a profitable venture.¹¹⁹ When Benjamin Franklin opened his Philadelphia printing shop in 1728, most of the books, pamphlets, and periodicals sold in the colonies were still produced in

England. Domestic book production remained very low in the colonies; before 1750, America's printers issued fewer than 200 titles per year.¹²⁰ Franklin made his printing shop profitable by limiting his book production and focusing on projects with little capital risk. He established a viable business as a "jobber," printing the sort of forms, notices, and advertisements that Bradford solicited in his almanac for 1686. Franklin combined job work with more regular newspaper work, creating a model that was emulated by American printers for nearly a century.

In some respects, Franklin's diversified business followed the pattern that had been established by William Bradford. Franklin also forged partnerships with his suppliers and even his competitors. Unlike Bradford, however, Franklin launched his printing business without the support or the permission of any church or colonial government. As an unlicensed, independent entrepreneur, he had to forgo the institutional support that sustained official printers but also avoided most of the legal troubles that plagued Bradford.

William Bradford had declared himself free to print whatever he liked. Benjamin Franklin made no such declaration, but he worked in comparative freedom, printing whatever he thought would bring him a profit. The freedom Franklin enjoyed was a consequence of his willingness to concentrate on small projects and to operate without official sanction. Regulating a single, official printer like Bradford had been fairly simple, but overseeing the new unofficial book trade was more difficult. As more printers set up shop, regulation became even more complicated.

Franklin himself was responsible for much of the early growth of the print industry in the colonies. Beginning in 1731, Franklin established a series of partnerships

with the journeymen he trained in Philadelphia. As his journeymen were ready to establish shops of their own, Franklin would set them up in markets outside of Philadelphia. Franklin sent Thomas Whitmarsh to Charleston in 1731 and financed James Parker's move to New York in 1742.¹²¹ For a short time, most colonial printers had been trained by Franklin or were imitating his methods.

Intentionally or not, Franklin was constructing a syndicate that would become the first American media network. Through his partnerships with a succession of printers, papermakers, typographers, and retailers, Franklin influenced much of the domestic book trade, and his success only inspired his competitors to imitate his methods. Franklin decided it made more sense to form partnerships with his journeymen and help them establish new markets than to compete against them for a share of the existing market.

Franklin did not invent the idea of the book trade syndicate. Informal syndicates arose simultaneously with printing. Printers have always required skilled workers to run a press efficiently, so they train apprentices. As the apprentices master their trade, they generally demand more money or leave to start a competing business. Forming a syndicate made it possible to expand the market and reduce the problems of competition. Syndicates spread printing throughout Europe and the Americas—some created by formal contract and some by ad hoc agreement. The Mexican press that Juan Pablos established for the house of Cromberger was part of a syndicate that stretched from Mexico, through Seville, to the printing shops of Nuremburg where the Crombergers started.¹²² Printing syndicates helped to balance the pressures of competition with some cooperation.

Franklin's syndicate was part of a larger pattern of proliferation and distribution in print production in the English colonies. As the population grew and became more dispersed, so did the book business. When Jose Glover set sail for Massachusetts in 1638, there were fewer than 20,000 Europeans living in English settlements; by the time William Bradford established his New York printing house in 1693, the population had grown to more than 200,000. By 1745, more than a million people lived in the towns and cities scattered along a thousand miles of the North American coastline.¹²³

America and its book business had become too big and too scattered to regulate effectively. Colonial America was a patchwork of jurisdictions. Not only were there thirteen separate colonial governments in the New World, each colony fell under the jurisdiction of various corporate and crown agencies in England. Regulation of the colonial book trade was further complicated by the relative ease of travel within and between colonies. As the case of William Nuthead illustrates, a printer who ran into trouble in one colony could set up shop in one with more liberal laws. Franklin and his protégés were able to work in comparative freedom, even when they served as official colonial printers—a post Franklin held in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware.

American printers and booksellers actually worked with less oversight than their English counterparts. With the possible exception of the Stamp Act of 1765, there never was any coordinated attempt to regulate the book trades in all thirteen colonies simultaneously. In his *History of Printing in America*, Isaiah Thomas describes a range of reactions to the Stamp Act: “some of the more opulent printers, when the act was to take place, put their papers in mourning, and, for a few weeks, omitted to publish them; others not so timid, but doubtful of the consequences of publishing newspapers without

stamps, omitted titles, or altered them, as an evasion.”¹²⁴ Although the Stamp Act gave officers of the Crown an effective tool to control the book trade throughout the colonies, it was never used for that purpose.

Even as war with England began to look inevitable, the book trade in English America remained generally free to grow and develop as the market allowed. According to John Tebbel, the book trade flourished, while it became progressively decentralized. “The trend between 1773 and 1798 is clear,” he explains, “when one examines the figures for the people and firms employing printers, publishers, and booksellers. At the beginning of the period, Boston listed thirty, New York thirteen, Philadelphia sixteen, Baltimore one, and Charleston three.”

Between 1638 and 1773, the domestic book trade in English America grew from one “firm,” the Glover press, to more than sixty-three firms. By 1789, the English colonies were states in an independent nation and the book trade in the new United States had tripled. Furthermore, its center had shifted from Boston, which had forty-one firms, to Philadelphia and New York, with eighty-eight and fifty-six firms respectively. Baltimore and Charleston each listed fifteen firms.¹²⁵ In roughly the same amount of time that it took for Philadelphia to acquire a second printer, the American book trade had grown from sixty-three to more than two hundred firms. That rapid growth would be a defining characteristic of the American book business until the middle of the next century.

The Book Trade in Post-Revolutionary America

In the years leading up to the American Revolution, the colonial book trade had become a moderately successful commercial enterprise. By a peculiar twist of fate, as the colonies moved toward independence, the American book business became even more dependent upon London. There was a brief moment when the American book trade could have asserted its independence, but the moment passed. The bond between colonial American booksellers and printers and their counterparts in London coalesced during the periods of rapid population growth before the American Revolution. To a large extent, it was the rapid growth of the population that cemented the relationship between London and the American book trade. The ties to London continued after the revolution and persisted as the American trade expanded during the first half of the nineteenth century. On both sides of the Atlantic, the America trade was regarded as a provincial outpost of the London print industry, and the Americans worked in the shadow of London for another hundred years.

Immigration was the engine that drove the rapid population growth in America, before and after the revolution. Immigration also drove the growth and the direction of the book industry in America. In 1690, nearly a quarter of a million Europeans lived in the colonies. From then on, the non-indigenous population doubled every twenty-five years until, in 1775, it exceeded 2.5 million. When the first census was taken in 1790, the tally had risen to 3.9 million.¹²⁶ Immigration accounted for most of that phenomenal growth.

In the book industry, established markets grew, sometimes at remarkable rates. On the eve of the American Revolution, Philadelphia had become the second largest city

in the English empire, served by sixteen firms that manufactured or sold books. Twenty-five years later, the city's 68,000 residents were served by eighty-eight book dealers. New markets were opening as Americans moved further west, founding new settlements along navigable waterways. Late in 1793, for example, William Maxwell established a printing shop in Cincinnati, the largest settlement in the Northwest Territory.

The growth and the spread of the American markets outpaced the capacity of the domestic book production. The domestic trade was unable to train enough new printers and booksellers serve to the rapidly growing market. The war did little to change the fact that the domestic American book industry was only a small part of the trans-Atlantic English book trade based in London. If Benjamin Franklin had been able to maintain his early influence over the American print industry, it might have developed very differently. By the time Franklin left his printshop to become a politician, however, his syndicate had already been displaced by the steady stream of English printers and booksellers, trained in London, who came to America to make their fortunes.¹²⁷

London set the standard for American print production and distribution. By training and inclination, American printers followed the customs and practices of their English counterparts, and American booksellers stocked their shelves with books produced in England. English books dominated the marketplace because domestic production could not keep pace with demand. Moreover, American book buyers demanded English imprints because they believed that books manufactured in America were inferior to the English product.¹²⁸ Thus, most Americans who engaged in the book business carried on as if they were English bookmen in exile: they followed English

book-trade traditions; they endorsed English standards of taste and craftsmanship; they also freely pirated English material.

Printers and booksellers in the new United States tried to create an independent book trade based on the practices of the English book trade. Conditions in the U.S., however, were radically different from those that prevailed in England. The U.S. had no metropolitan center; instead, it was a patchwork of major and minor markets scattered over hundreds of thousands of square miles. Like the book trades in continental Europe, the English trade was highly integrated and cooperative. Unlike the book industries that developed in the rest of Europe, English book production and distribution was almost entirely confined to a single central market: metropolitan London. Even before the print revolution, the English book business was a metropolitan enterprise controlled through the mechanism of the Stationers' Company.

Mass Production and the Metropolitan Book Trade of London

The printers and booksellers working in the United States had learned their trade within a system that had been developed to suit the special conditions in England almost 300 years earlier. William Caxton established the first English printing shop in 1476, but he did not create the English book trade. Caxton introduced print into an existing system of book production and distribution. The manufacture and sale of books had, since the reign of Henry IV, been a protected craft largely confined to the City of London. Print, when it became the method of manufacture, was likewise protected and confined. Of the one hundred or so printers who worked in England between 1477 and 1557, when the Stationers' Company was incorporated under royal charter, perhaps a dozen worked

outside of the city.¹²⁹ London had always been the center of the retail book market; when printing arrived, London became the center of that, too. Anyone who hoped to publish or purchase a book in England had to travel to London and do business with the Stationers.

As it was chartered in 1557, the Stationers' Company served a dual purpose. First, it gave the members of the Company a virtual monopoly for the manufacture and sale of printed matter. According to the terms of the charter, no one in the realm could exercise the "mystery or art of printing," either himself, or through an agent, unless he were a freeman of the Stationers Company of London, unless he had specific royal permission to do so.¹³⁰ Second, the charter made the Company a regulatory agency of the Crown.

As the preamble declares, the King and Queen, wishing to provide a suitable remedy against seditious and heretical books that were "daily published and printed by divers scandalous malicious schismatical and heretical persons," gave certain privileges to their "beloved and faithful lieges," the ninety-seven Stationers, in addition to the normal rights of the company.¹³¹ The Master and Wardens of the Company were authorized to search the houses and business premises of anyone engaged in any of the book trades, seize, confiscate, or destroy any contraband, and imprison anyone who resisted the search or who was illegally engaged in the trades.¹³²

The mystery or art of printing required regulation because printing had changed the structure of the book trades. Before print, books were made to order. The customer who paid for the book initiated the process of production. The idea of producing a book as a commercial speculation would never have occurred to anyone in the pre-print book trade. Neither would it have occurred to anyone to write a book, hoping for publication.

The introduction of printing made every book a speculation. Print brought with it the unfamiliar economy of mass production, which changed everything, from the capital structure required for production to the organization of the market. In order to manufacture printed books, someone had to advance the cost of production, which made financial speculation a necessary component of the book business. Whoever arranged or guaranteed the cost of printing became the publisher. Mass production meant that the book business had to invent new structures for itself in order to survive.

In any industry, the income from the sale of the product must exceed the cost of production. That was simple enough in most early industrial models. Carpenters could quite easily compute the cost of manufacturing a dozen chairs, or a hundred. The same was true of scribes, who produced books using a pen and ink. Cost ought to be equal to time plus materials and a percentage of the overhead. Overhead is the cost of doing business; tools, a shop to work in, licensing fees and the like, all figure into the overhead. Our carpenter or scribe risked the cost of doing business against the probability of a steady stream of future work. In more heavily capitalized industries like milling or glass making, the risks were greater, but the principle remained the same.

The printing press was designed to produce large numbers of identical units. It was the first engine of mass production, and it introduced problems of scale not found in simpler industries like carpentry or milling. Like all mass production, the book industry has been shaped by the economic facts of its means of production. Printing, from Gutenberg on, required large capital investment before production could begin.

The press itself was a fixed cost, but running the press generated huge operating costs, most of which had to be paid in advance. First, the press required a large stock of

type. Second, all the paper for a print project had to be on hand before the project could begin. Next, setting the type and preparing the paper generated significant labor costs. The investment in materials and labor had to be made in advance and could not be recovered until the entire project was completed and offered for troublingly uncertain sale.

Theoretically, a printing press could be used to make a single copy of a book, or even one hundred copies as Henry Adams did when he had *The Education of Henry Adams* printed, but the cost of printing renders the idea ridiculous. In the era of the hand press, print runs were measured in hundreds or thousands of units, and printers have always had to decide the size of the print run in advance. There has never been a practical way to make a few copies to test the market. Likewise, no one has developed a simple way to make more copies if the demand exceeds expectation.

Up to a point, printing more copies reduces the unit cost of production, but any unsold copies must be counted against the unit cost.¹³³ Unit cost has never been a simple consideration. The printer must decide whether it is better to produce a thousand copies that are sure to sell, or two thousand copies at a much lower unit cost and take the risk that some or all of the second thousand will not sell. Copies that cannot be sold, “remainders,” still terrify the print industry.

The calculus of risk has influenced every commercial print project. A city of two million residents, for example, might absorb an edition of a thousand copies at a given price, but it might not provide a sufficient market for an edition of two thousand, even at a significantly lower price. If we imagine that the first thousand copies covered the initial costs of production, plus a little profit, then the second thousand would have much

greater potential for producing profit. Most of the overhead and all of the set-up cost would be paid for before the second thousand were produced. The cost of producing more copies would be time and material, but the cost of producing the additional copies would have to be covered in advance. Worse, the second thousand would count against profits if they are never sold.

In order to justify the cost of production, printers have always had to produce more units than they could easily sell in their local market. The business of selling the excess books evolved into the retail book trade. Booksellers purchased part of a press run at a discount and resold them. Printing caused unprecedented market saturation, which in turn divided the book trade into wholesale and retail enterprises. Soon after print became the means of book production, distribution became the focus of the book trade.

Distribution had been a relatively simple matter when books were produced one-at-a-time: the purchaser went to the producer, or the producer went to the purchaser, or they both met at a marketplace. A hundred identical books created a problem that the existing market structure was unable to solve. Once the local market absorbed its share of the copies, something had to be done with the remainder. The additional books might be unloaded if they were taken to another similar city, but shipping cost money and introduced new risks. The books would not sell themselves, so the producer needed an agent in the new market.

Although we are now quite used to the two-tiered, wholesale/retail structure, it has caused problems for the book business ever since printing made it necessary. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, printers retailed most of the books they printed, but they also acted as wholesalers when they had the need or the opportunity.

Booksellers sometimes financed printing, in which case, they became publishers.

Publishing, whether a printer or a bookseller managed it, became a wholesale function.

Printing divided the industry, but the divisions were neither clear nor permanent. Printing, publishing, and bookselling never have resolved into distinct activities. Once the market divided into wholesale and retail functions, any profits had to be divided, as did the costs of production and distribution. The book business never has settled on a clear formula for dividing the risks and the rewards between the wholesale and retail sides of the business.

The charter granted to the Stationers' Company in 1557 gave the English book trade the power to regulate the competing wholesale and retail interests that accompanied print production. The charter imposed strict geographical limits on book production and sale. Under the terms of the charter, books could be produced and sold in some regional markets, notably by the university presses at Oxford and Cambridge, but the bulk of the trade was confined to London. Concentrating the trade within the metropolis controlled competition and protected the interests of established firms.

The most vexing problems of distribution can be eliminated when the customer becomes responsible for locating and transporting the product. Confining the English book trade to a single physical location meant that London functioned as a mass market. It was a novel solution to the problem of distribution, but the strategy required the cooperation of an entire industry. The charter gave the Stationers' the power to force cooperation.

The Stationers' controlled the trade in London, but its authority was not absolute. As printing inevitably spread to smaller English cities, London's printers complained

about unauthorized or pirated editions that appeared in the regional press. Soon after the advent of print, some clever soul discovered a way to eliminate some of the risks of book production—wait until someone prints a successful book and print another edition.

The regional printers, for their part, complained about the monopolistic power of the Company. The 1710 Statute of Anne, which enacted copyrights in England, helped to resolve the conflicts. The English copyright law was not meant to protect authors; it was meant to settle disputes between printers.¹³⁴ While the statute extolled the value of authors and gave them the right to sell or lease their work for publication, its major provisions protected printers against the illicit use of their copy.¹³⁵ Moreover, English copyright protected printed work but did nothing to protect unpublished manuscripts.

Copyright protection, like the charter of 1557, served the interests of the Crown by giving power to the Stationers' Company.¹³⁶ The regulatory power of the Stationers' Company discouraged dissent and made the English book business unusually cooperative. Although the individual members of the Company competed for business, membership in the Company made them partners. The interests of individual printers and booksellers were inextricably linked to the interests of the entire Company. The fundamental unity of the English book trades resulted in unprecedented cooperation; it solved most of the problems of product distribution and encouraged printers and booksellers to share the extraordinary risks of mass production.¹³⁷

Recreating the London Book Trade in America

Although it was built upon English principles and practices, the American book trade operated under conditions that were nothing like those that influenced the

development of the English trade. The American book business had no central marketplace. Instead, it developed from multiple, competing centers. Print production and distribution in the English colonies began as a series of geographically and intellectually isolated enterprises. As the book trades developed in English America, the isolation persisted and became institutionalized. The American trade was so fragmented that it is probably nonsense to think of it as a single entity until the end of the nineteenth century.

The American trade also enjoyed significant institutional and practical freedoms that were unknown in England. The American printers and booksellers operated without the regulations and licensing restrictions that remain a feature of the English trade. The U.S. Constitution established copyright as a protection for authors and guaranteed a free press. There were no licensing laws in the U.S., nor was there any regulatory agency like the Stationers Company. Printers, booksellers, and publishers were left to operate as the market allowed.

Although the American trade was fragmented geographically, the laws under which it operated were uniform and remarkably liberal. The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution explicitly protected authors and printers from most institutional interference, whether governmental or religious. Of course it is one thing to declare a free press and another to make it so. The most significant guarantee of a free press is the absence of any licensing laws. Without licensing laws like those enforced by the Crown and the Church in England and Spain, the American government has never had a workable mechanism to prevent publication. Neither the author nor the printer needs

permission to publish, which means that the only official recourse is to outlaw certain kinds of publications and prosecute after they are produced.

Over the years, the U.S. Congress has sought to limit the scope of the First Amendment protection, but most attempts to regulate the free press have failed. The Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 and the Sedition Act of 1918, for example, each made it a crime to print anything critical of the government, but neither act was particularly effective and both were subsequently repealed. Likewise, most efforts to outlaw objectionable material such as pornography have repeatedly failed on constitutional grounds.

Internal regulation of the American book trade has always been complicated by its long-standing geographical fragmentation. The book trade developed from multiple centers, and those centers persisted because of their relative isolation as well as their political and economic autonomy. When the Alien and Sedition Acts were passed in 1798, for example, virtually every American city was served by some combination of retail and wholesale book trades. The largest markets—Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Baltimore—supported independent and often antagonistic industries. The fragmentation of the American trade was so severe that it might be more accurate to say that several competing book industries existed in the United States.

The earliest efforts to organize trade associations reflected the state of the national industry. Boston had a booksellers' association in 1801; Philadelphia and New York followed in 1802.¹³⁸ None of those early associations attempted to unify the trade across markets, or even to unify the various parts of the trade within those markets. Those early attempts to organize trade associations did not last long. There was no compelling reason

to organize. Like the country it served, the American book business began as a haphazard conglomeration of enterprises, and the new political union did nothing to change either course.

The country was united in name, but not in fact. Political union did nothing to ease the problems of transporting goods. As partners in trade, Boston maintained closer ties with London than it did with Baltimore, for example. The cities that were important to the book business remained geographically and culturally isolated even after the railroads connected them. The lack of communication and cooperation between the urban centers of the early American book industry might be the single most significant factor in its subsequent development.

America's booksellers and printers might have had a better beginning if they had inherited their business model from a less unified industry. Unfortunately, most of the men and women engaged in America's book business received what training they had in London, or from those who had been trained in London. They were hampered by their own habits and customs. Chief among those customs was the notion that the book trades were simultaneously competitive and cooperative ventures.

In London, the Stationers' Company limited competition for the benefit of everyone in the trades. American printers and booksellers had no guild to regulate their business, but they still expected their colleagues to behave as if the regulations existed. American book dealers extolled a principle called "the courtesy of the trade." As Henry Holt described the custom, courtesy of the trade forbade one printer from poaching another's most successful publications and authors.¹³⁹

Such unwritten rules dominated the American book industry. Everything from page costs to booksellers' discounts was governed by unwritten rules and provisional negotiations. Copyright law could have given some structure to the industry, but its effects were slow to develop. Following independence, states began to enact copyright laws that were superseded when the U.S. Constitution guaranteed copyright to native authors.¹⁴⁰ Federal copyright protection was of little practical use to printers and booksellers, however because it protected the author, not the printer.¹⁴¹ American authors could negotiate to publish the same manuscript with any number of printers, if they chose.

Protecting American authors was hardly useful in an industry that was starved for copy, but indifferent to domestic literature. American writers did not produce enough copy to satisfy the domestic market, but even if they could have, there was not much demand for their work. Printers and booksellers looked elsewhere—for the most part, they looked to England. Most of the books that were sold in America were either English imports or pirated American editions of English imports. Of the 1300 or so titles listed in the 1804 *Catalogue of Books Printed in the United States*, at least 1,000 are domestic reprints of books originally printed in England.¹⁴² Most of the domestic books in the catalog were historical or legal works treating American subjects. In order to keep their presses running, American printers “borrowed” copy from their overseas competitors, or from colleagues working in other cities.

If print production was piratical, the distribution and sale of those books was downright anarchic. Before rail transport, large-scale distribution was prohibitively expensive unless the markets were connected by a navigable waterway. In most cases,

books were purchased within a few miles of the place they were printed. As William Charvat explained in *Literary Publishing in America, 1790-1850*: “A writer published where he happened to live and if he happened to live, say, in Walpole, New Hampshire, as did Royall Tyler, his work had little circulation.”¹⁴³

In large markets like Boston, New York, or Philadelphia, a book buyer might find a selection of books printed in other markets. Outside of those cities, the book industry was hamstrung by transportation costs. Charvat reported that in 1826, it took thirty days to transport goods from Philadelphia to Columbus, Ohio, at a cost of \$5 per hundredweight. The Erie Canal cut transport from New York to Columbus to just twenty days at half the cost.¹⁴⁴

The expense of transportation might not have caused problems if books were more like other commodities. Transporting a particular book from Philadelphia to Columbus did not guarantee the sale of the book. If anything, a book that did not sell in Philadelphia was less likely to find a buyer in Columbus. The uncertainty of that sale raised the central dilemma in the distribution of books: who should assume the risks? Printers prefer to think of books as the property of the bookseller, who should assume both the cost of transport and the risk. Booksellers prefer to think of the book as the printer’s property until the moment of sale. Printers and booksellers would set aside their differences, if they could figure out some way to make authors assume the risk.

Book Production Technology in the United States

Both the United States and its book industry grew rapidly during the first half of the nineteenth century. Between 1790 and 1850, the population of the U.S. doubled

every twenty-five years. The 1850 census counted more than 23 million inhabitants. Immigrants flocked to America, and as the population grew more and more people settled in the west and the south. Domestic book production grew at an even faster rate. In 1820, U.S. book production was valued at 2.5 million dollars; thirty years later, in 1850, it was valued at 12.5 million dollars.¹⁴⁵

The most famous and enduring American publishing houses—Ticknor and Fields, Houghton, Putnam, Harper, Appleton, Scribner, Lea, and Lippincott—were all founded during that period. Many more enterprises, begun with high hopes, foundered quickly. Much of the growth in the book industry was driven by rapid population growth and the westward migration of that population. More people in more cities and towns created a demand for more books and newspapers. An increasing demand for school textbooks, for example, created a fast-growing and contentious market within the industry.

The demand for printed goods grew faster than the production capacity. Unfortunately, that demand was ever more widely dispersed, which exacerbated the inherent distribution problems in the U.S. As the population migrated westward, the transportation infrastructure became progressively less reliable. The book industry adapted by becoming even more attenuated. Presses appeared in frontier towns like Cincinnati and Kaskaskia, but the center of domestic book production remained in the industrial northeast.

While the industry tried to adjust to the changes in its markets, new industrial technology was finding its way into almost every part of the U.S. book industry. As it finally began to take hold in America, the Industrial Revolution had a profound effect on book production and distribution. New developments in metallurgy, chemistry, and

mechanical engineering revolutionized print production. The network of railways that began to connect American cities in the 1830s altered forever the patterns and costs of print distribution. All of the new technology was tied in one way or another to the application of steam power to industry.

The influence of the Industrial Revolution was first felt in the printing shop. The basic processes of book production, from type foundry and paper production to printing and binding, had remained remarkably stable between 1450 and 1850.¹⁴⁶ Metal was cast into molds to make type, and fibers were pressed in molds to make paper. Type was composed, locked into forms, and inked. Sheets of paper were placed over the inked type, and pressure was applied with a flat platen driven by a hand screw. The sheets were folded into signatures, the signatures sewn together into books, and the books glued into bindings. Each step admitted almost infinite variation, but the basic process remained unchanged for nearly four hundred years.¹⁴⁷

Within that basic framework, the artisans of its constituent crafts continually refined book production. Type foundry, building on the basic letterforms and established foundry technique, developed hundreds of typefaces. Many of the typefaces available to us electronically are based on faces developed before 1800. Papermakers developed their craft and their product for centuries, without significantly changing the basic techniques. The printers who used that type and paper developed ever more precise and powerful presses, without altering the basic hand-screw design used by Gutenberg and his contemporaries. Gutenberg would have felt perfectly at home with the press in Ben Franklin's shop, for example, or even those used in most small printing shops before 1860.

The remarkable durability of both the methods and the products of print actually slowed innovation. The tools of book production in the hand press era were relatively simple and built to last. The book itself proves to be a remarkably durable object. Oil-based ink pressed onto cotton-fiber paper lasts almost indefinitely. The printed books that Columbus studied and annotated are as crisp and legible today as the day they were impressed. Kept safe from extreme dangers like fire and flood and little children, a book printed on a hand press was and is, for all intents and purposes, immortal. The tools and techniques of print production were also protected by the guilds.

When book production technology began to change in the first half of the nineteenth century, what developed was the first real revolution in book production since the advent of print. Iron presses, stereotyping, case binding, and cylinder presses eased or eliminated handwork in the printing shop and the bindery. Hand-made paper was made obsolete by development of papermaking machinery that turned out a cheaper, more uniform product.

The up-to-date printing shop of 1850, its equipment, its pace, and its noise, would have baffled and probably frightened printers apprenticed on a wooden hand press. At the heart of the new printing shop was the iron press. Replacing wood with iron meant the press could be stronger and more rigid, thus able to withstand much greater forces. A printer working a new Stanhope Iron Press could print a full 19 by 25 sheet in a single impression, cutting the press time for a 16mo edition by more than half.¹⁴⁸

The Stanhope Press was manufactured in England, where it enjoyed great success, but it was not truly a modern press; rather, it was an old-style press built of cast iron.¹⁴⁹ The iron press owed its advantages to its construction material, not to its design. George

Clymer (1754-1834) of Philadelphia improved upon the Stanhope design. His Columbian Press, introduced in 1813, eliminated the screw mechanism altogether. Clymer used a compound lever mechanism to apply pressure to the print bed, an innovation quickly adopted by Stanhope. The mechanical gain of the compound lever made it a genuine improvement over the older screw-pull mechanism. A printer using a compound-lever press could now apply greater pressure with less effort (or print larger sheets with the same effort).

Because of their clear advantages, compound-lever presses became the standard, first in Europe and then in the U.S., but the transition was not instantaneous. The new presses were much more expensive than the traditional wooden press. Wooden presses were familiar; they could be built and maintained by any good carpenter or joiner. Adjusting or repairing an iron press, by contrast, required the skills of a machinist. Given the initial cost of an iron press and the inevitable maintenance problems, only those printers who really needed the increased output could reasonably justify the expense.¹⁵⁰

The Washington Press, designed by Samuel Rust and later manufactured by Robert Hoe, combined a series of innovations, like steel beam construction, with adjustable tensioning rods, and an improved high-torque knuckle-joint mechanism, in a single machine. Using a Washington Press, a printer could out-produce a printer with a wooden, screw-pull press by more than four-to-one.¹⁵¹ Washington pattern presses dominated the American market throughout the nineteenth century, remained in use well into the twentieth century as proof presses, and are still used by fine-art printers.

The improvements that the new presses brought to production were augmented by important developments in typesetting and bookbinding: stereotyping and case

binding. Stereotype solved one of the most vexing problems of book production. If everything was going well, a great percentage of the shop's type was literally tied-up (for proofing) or locked-up (for printing). Only the biggest, best-equipped shops could keep more than a few frames of type set at any one time. Type was too expensive to buy in great quantity, certainly too expensive to keep lying around in the cases, so printers were forever short of type. Production of a book usually required setting a frame or two of type, pulling a set of impressions, tearing down the frame, cleaning and distributing the types, and composing the next set of pages.

Stereotype, and its later cousin electrotype, offered a solution to the problem. Both methods made it possible to turn a frame filled with hundreds of individual pieces of type into a single, solid printing plate. In the first process, a specially formulated papier-mâché was beaten into the set-up type and allowed to dry. Once it was dry, the paper impression was carefully removed. The resulting positive impression was used as a mold for casting metal plates that could be used in the same way as traditionally set type. Electrotype achieved a similar result through a more complicated electro-chemical process first developed by Luigi Brugnatelli, a process that subsequently replaced the more expensive Sheffield process for manufacturing silver plate.¹⁵²

The cast printing plates had obvious advantages. Stereotype freed standing type for other uses. It allowed the publisher to order multiple, identical plates which could be farmed out to printers almost anywhere in the world for simultaneous or subsequent printings. The plates could be stored for later press runs. Although they were comparatively delicate, the papier-mâché molds themselves could be shipped or stored at even lower cost than the cast metal plates.

The same efficiency that stereotyping brought to printing shops was achieved in binderies by the development of case, or edition, binding.¹⁵³ Before the development of case binding, bookbinding proceeded entirely by hand, one book at a time. The binder would receive the printed sheets from the printer, either flat or already folded into signatures. The signatures, no matter who folded them, were then gathered and sewn over bands or cords. Sewing the signatures onto the bands created the characteristic ridges on the spine of a hand-bound book. Because it was impossible to pull the signatures perfectly flat with binder's thread, the gathered book had a distinct swell at the spine, which had to be beaten out with a flat-peen hammer. Next the boards were attached to the bands. Technically, a book was bound once its boards were attached, but the boards and spine were usually covered with a thin sheet of leather. Once the leather was attached, lettering and decoration could be impressed into the cover using heated irons.

Case binding did not really eliminate any of the steps, but it rearranged the process to eliminate the one-at-a-time schedule of hand binding. Casing-in, as it is called, turned binding into three separate procedures: building the case (the cover), gathering the signatures, and attaching the case. The case was, and still is, built of boards and a covering material, usually cloth. Because it was used to hold the boards and the spine together, the covering became an integral part of the case rather than a protective or decorative addition.

Gathering remained a hand operation long after case binding became the norm, but the new system eliminated the need to beat out the spines. Because many books were bound at the same time, the sewn-up books could be stacked up and flattened in steam or

hydraulic presses.¹⁵⁴ The cases were then attached to the sewn-up, flattened books with pasted-in paper hinges. The outermost end papers were pasted down to reinforce the joint. The product was not quite as strong as a hand-bound book, but case binding has proved a durable method of building books.

Because it separated sewing up and building the covers, case binding had advantages over traditional hand binding. The cases could be made up at any time in the process of book manufacture. They could also be lettered or decorated before they were attached to the gathered pages. Because they were more or less flat objects, they could be lettered or decorated with a heated stamping press, eliminating the binder's most difficult handwork. Made-up cases could also be stored conveniently waiting for the books that would fill them, and they could be mass-produced in standard sizes. Case binding made the bindery nearly independent of the printer's schedule. The chief advantage, however, was that casing-in allowed the binder to mechanize nearly every step of the process, from beating-out to stamping the title on the spine.

The clear advantages of stereotyping and case binding could not be fully exploited, however, until the next big leap forward in printing technology, the cylinder press. The impressive increases in production made possible by the Columbian and Washington presses were soon overshadowed by the production capacity of the cylinder press. The cylinder press was a radical departure from all previous print technology. The new press required the structural qualities of cast iron, and it was conceived to take advantage of steam power.

The first practical cylinder press was built by Friedrich König (1774-1833). Driven by steam, König's press was used print to the *London Times* of 28 November

1814, demonstrating a new technology harnessed to the power source of the new age. The early cylinder presses were too crude and unreliable for most work, leaving printers little choice but to continue with iron hand presses. While work continued toward the development of a practical, reliable cylinder press, the void was filled by various schemes to apply external power sources to the existing presses.

In the early 1820s, Daniel Treadwell (1791-1872) of Boston experimented with presses driven by a horse walking around a circular track. Treadwell's press combined features of the familiar platen press with some of the paper handling features developed for the cylinder press. His design required a complicated series of linkages to transfer the circular movement of the power source to the lever action needed to run the press.¹⁵⁵

At about the same time and through similar mechanical linkages, steam power was harnessed to the printing press. In 1823, Jonas Booth of New York published *An Abridgement of Murray's English Grammar*, said to be the first book printed with a steam-powered press in the United States. These hybrid machines worked well enough, but they were awkward to look at and difficult to maintain. Furthermore, they still retained many of the limitations inherent in the design of bed and platen presses. The most successful hybrid power press, introduced by Isaac Adams in 1830 and improved in 1836, became a standard for bookwork in the United States. The Adams Press remained in regular use until the late 1880s.¹⁵⁶

Robert Hoe (1784-1833), the manufacturer of the Washington Press, was carefully following the efforts to perfect a rotary press, especially the work of David Napier. In 1832, Roe sent his engineer, Sereno Newton, to London to investigate the new developments in cylinder presses.¹⁵⁷ Three years later, Hoe's son Richard (1812-1886)

introduced the “Single Small Cylinder Press,” and the “Single Large Cylinder Press,” both of which used flat print beds. Twelve years later, in 1847, the firm introduced the “Hoe Type Revolving Press,” which is widely regarded as the foundation of modern press technology.¹⁵⁸ The Hoe Type Revolving Press was the first successful cylinder press that used a rotary type bed.

Attended by a pressman and four boys, Hoe claimed, the press was capable of 8,000 impressions an hour, but the estimate seems optimistic. Less partisan estimates for the rotary type presses range between 1,000-2,000 impression per hour. The Hoe press wore out type quickly, and book printers derided them as type smashers.¹⁵⁹ The rotary presses were fast, but there was simply no practical and reliable way to lock type into curved frames. The papier-mâché stereotype molds provided the solution. John Macdonald and Joseph Calvery developed a method for casting curved stereotype plates that fit the drums of cylinder presses.

The rotary press took full advantage of innovations in the newly mechanized paper industry. Developed in France by Nicholas-Louis Robert, a new papermaking machine churned the paper pulp into slurry and then slowly poured the slurry onto a moving belt of woven wire. The water drained away while the pulp was carried forward to a series of belts and rollers that formed the pulp into a continuous sheet of paper that was taken up in one long roll. The paper was then cut into sheets that were dried and finished. A variant of the French machine was constructed in Delaware in 1817; others followed.¹⁶⁰ The web press, which used curved printing plates and fed paper directly from the roll, was introduced in 1865. Web presses still dominate printing.¹⁶¹

Railroads and the U.S. Book Trade

By 1850, the modern steam-driven printing plant was an emerging reality. Handwork was disappearing from the book trades. Hand-made paper and hand binding, for example, were nearly obsolete by 1850. The next major print production innovations, automatic typesetting and typesetting machines, were on the horizon. Steam drove the factories that manufactured the iron printing presses and the mills that produced the paper. It drove the machinery that made case bindings and would soon power the presses that churned out printed sheets. Even more significantly, steam drove the railroads that carried books and the book industry to ever-widening markets.

In 1850, America was still at the beginning of a transportation revolution. After twenty years of development, the rail network was almost ready to compete with the long-established water transport network. By 1850, 9,000 miles of track connected all the major cities of the Northeast and ran between population centers in the South and the West. Passengers and freight could travel up and down the metropolitan corridor that includes Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C.

The journey was, however, anything but smooth. In his memoir, *Garrulities of an Octogenarian Editor*, Henry Holt described the journey from Washington to New York, as he experienced it in 1845. Holt began in Baltimore, which was the second stage of the trip: “The locomotive from Washington had been left at the Western edge of Baltimore, and the cars drawn singly by horses towards the Eastern edge, where passengers for New York waited in other cars for the train to be made up. Spring coupling had not been invented, and the cars started off with a jerk that sent everyone’s body some inches in advance of the top of his head.”

The train continued towards New York until it reached the Susquehanna River at Havre de Grace. There the passengers carried their baggage to the ferries that transported passengers and freight across the river. Once everything had been transferred to “the East side of course, we had to carry ourselves and our baggage to a fresh train.” In Philadelphia, Holt, his fellow passengers, and any freight were loaded onto horse-drawn omnibuses and taken cross-town to the Delaware River docks opposite Camden. At that point the passengers had a choice: “One was by ferry across to Camden, and thence by rail to Perth Amboy, and thence by boat to New York. The other was by boat to Tacony, thence by rail to Jersey City, and by ferry across.”¹⁶²

The journey from Washington to New York took about fifteen hours in good weather and required four rail lines, three ferries, and five transfers. As clumsy and inconvenient as it was, that early system moved passengers at about fifteen miles per hour for about three cents a mile. The early railroads moved people and goods twice as fast as any other land transit, and they went to places that could not be reached by waterway.

At mid-century, however, the railroad could not yet compete with water-borne transportation. Shipping freight on the Erie and the Ohio canals cost a penny per ton-mile, while the competing railroads charged twice or three times that rate.¹⁶³ The rates and the fares were high, but the railroad was fast and it ran all year long. The rail bed never froze and it was only occasionally flooded. The railroads that were first built to connect to the water routes began to compete against them. The Western Railroad, for example, was completed in 1841. It connected Boston to Albany and the Erie Canal and was intended to siphon off some of the trade that went down the Hudson to New York.

In the *North American Review*, Charles F. Adams, Jr. (1835-1915), declared that the Western had been constructed upon “the fallacy that steam could run uphill cheaper than water could run down.”¹⁶⁴

Writing in 1868, less than thirty years after its opening, Adams patiently demonstrated that the builders of the Western Railroad simply had not gone far enough. Although a network of more than 30,000 miles of track connected every major market between the Atlantic seaboard and the Mississippi River, Adams argued that Boston’s commercial future depended upon a greater investment in rail transport, especially the new railroad bridges. The water flowed down to New York, but the rail network could make Boston a commercial hub once more.

Despite the phenomenal growth of the rail network, rail transport could not, in 1868, compete with existing water routes, but it soon would. Rail transport, where it existed, was already faster and more reliable. The next step was to connect everything. By the end of the nineteenth century, the national rail network was a reality, and Charles F. Adams, Jr. superintended a major portion of that work.

The Crisis of the U.S. Book Trade

Iron and steam accelerated the pace and the capacity of the U.S. book industry. Iron presses, stereotype, case binding, and machine-made paper boosted output and increased the efficiency of book manufacturers. Rail transport made it easier and cheaper to ship books across the country, even as the country became vastly larger. However, the new technology did little to solve the fundamental problems of the U.S. book trade. America’s printers and booksellers still behaved as if they were working in London.

Like their English counterparts, American printers and booksellers had trouble differentiating the wholesale and retail functions of the trade. Most of the domestically produced books that were sold in the United States between 1790 and 1860 were sold directly by the printing houses that produced them, or by the booksellers who had arranged for their production. Books were also sold as general merchandise in variety shops. Dedicated retail bookstores were rare outside of major cities.

Because their roles were never clearly defined, printers and booksellers frequently complained about the sharp practices of their counterparts in the trade. The problem was exacerbated by conflicts between markets. Booksellers and printers in New York, for example, might complain about each other, but they were even more likely to complain about their competitors in Philadelphia. With no one to arbitrate the conflict, American printers and booksellers simply fought it out.

In America, as in London, the crucial role of the publisher remained provisional. Whoever arranged or underwrote the financing was the publisher. In the colonial era, printers usually assumed the role of the publisher. By 1850, most of the publishers in the U.S. had begun as booksellers. Of the major publishing houses that emerged between 1790 and 1850, only Harper began as a printing house. The house of Harper provides a good illustration of the problems within the U.S. book industry. The Harpers printed books that they published, but they also printed books for other publishers. In their bookstore, they sold their own books alongside books printed and published by other firms.

Anyone who took on the task of selling books in the U.S. was usually competing against the publisher and printer, as well as any other booksellers who stocked the same

titles. Like its English model, the U.S. book trade routinely combined wholesale and retail functions, but the combinations were provisional and usually tied to particular projects. The “system” worked well enough in England, where the Stationers’ Company regulated trade behavior, but it nearly crippled the U.S. book trade.

In the United States, the confusing combination of retail and wholesale functions led to something called “underselling.” As the term was used in the book trade, underselling meant selling a book below its published retail price. Competing on price points has become standard retail practice in the U.S., but it was a radical departure from the established patterns of the book business. By longstanding custom, the book business has given publishers the right to set the retail prices of their books.

Since publishers traditionally set the retail price of their books, the wholesale book business developed a convoluted system called discounting. Under the discount system, the wholesale price of a book was, and still is, the retail price, minus the discount rate. Publishers offer discounts from ten to sixty percent depending upon a range of criteria. Jobbers, the intermediaries who distribute books to retailers, traditionally receive the biggest discounts—between forty and sixty percent. Retailers might receive discounts ranging between fifteen and thirty percent, depending upon the size of the individual order, the number of orders placed each year, the size of the edition, the type of book, or even the location of the retailer. Still other criteria determine the discounts offered to institutional buyers like libraries and universities.

The U.S. book trade inherited the discount system from the English trade, but it has always been the standard of the book industry. Discounting worked well enough in the tightly regulated English market. It also worked in France and Germany, which had

developed their own systems for regulating the book industry. In the U.S., both retailers and wholesalers rebelled against discounting, and the rebellion usually manifested itself as underselling.

The American book industry was in trouble. Practices that worked in England caused trouble in America's sprawling network of markets. Given enough time, the American industry might have developed some organizing principles for itself. Rapid population growth, coupled with large-scale internal migrations, put still more pressure on the book industry, which was simultaneously becoming more concentrated in the East and more dispersed in the West.

The technology of book production and distribution was steadily improving, but the increased capacity and efficiency also put pressure on the book industry. More changes were coming, and the pace of the changes would only increase. Even before the outbreak of the American Civil War, the disparity between production and transportation technology and business practices threatened the stability of the industry. For the next fifty years the American book business would struggle to find a way to adapt its inherited business practices to the American marketplace. The lasting solution to the problem would come from an unlikely source—a young German who came to America to find work in the third important book market that developed in the New World.

Chapter 3: The German Book Trade in America

America you have it better
than our old continent:
you have no fallen castles
no stones.
You are not inwardly torn,
at stirring time,
by useless memories
and vain quarrels.

Use the present well!
And should your children make verses
let fortune spare them
tales of robbers, knights, and ghosts

—Goethe

The book industries that arrived first in Mexico, and later in Massachusetts, had their beginning in Germany. Printing from movable types began there, but Germany and its book trade also played a central role in the creation of America as an intellectual concept and as a geographical destination. Columbus developed his scheme of sailing west to Asia using books produced by German printers. His copy of Pierre d'Ailly's *Imago mundi* (1477-1483) had been printed in Leuven by Johannes of Westfalia. Another

of the books that Columbus used, Piccolomini's *Historia rerum ubique gestarum* (1477), was printed in Venice by Johannes of Cologne and Johannes Manthen. Even if they did not work there, most European printers learned their craft in Germany or from printers who had been trained by Germans. German printers colonized Europe a generation before Europe began to colonize the New World.

During the first fifty years of European printing, Germans dominated the book trades.¹⁶⁵ Master printers were German or they had been trained by Germans; there was, however, no specifically German book trade. Vernacular printing and modern notions of national identity did not begin to take root until the first half of the sixteenth century. Before 1500, Latin was the dominant language of printing in the Holy Roman Empire and throughout Europe. The ubiquity of Latin had profound consequences for the early development of the book industry. Because Latin tended to efface national and linguistic boundaries, it eased and thus accelerated the spread of printing. The book industry quickly became an international enterprise.

Despite the internationalism of the early book trade, Germans still dominated the industry. According to Febvre and Martin, more than half of the printers working in Lyons at the beginning of the sixteenth century were Germans.¹⁶⁶ The number of Germans at work in Lyons was significant because the French city was then the commercial center of the European book industry and the site of the first international book fairs. Twice a year, the fair at Lyons became the primary distribution center of the book trade. For the rest of the year, Lyons was a major center for book production—particularly for scientific publications.¹⁶⁷

The German book trade, when it began to emerge as a distinct institution, took keen interest in the Spanish and Portuguese voyages. German printers issued three editions of the Columbus *Letter* before 1500, including one of the earliest vernacular editions. Vespucci's accounts of the New World were even more popular. German presses issued twenty-four separate editions of *Mundus Novus* and *Four Voyages* between 1504 and 1508—about half of them were printed in German.¹⁶⁸ One of those presses belonged to the consortium led by Martin Waldseemüller. When he appended a Latin translation of the *Four Voyages* to his *Introduction to Cosmography*, the book brought Vespucci to an even wider audience, including Thomas More who transformed Vespucci's ethnographic commentaries into *Utopia*.¹⁶⁹ Vespucci might have followed Columbus into obscurity had it not been for the enthusiasm of the German geographer and printer.

From the books that inspired Columbus to the books that recounted the discoveries and conquest of the New World, the German book trade mediated the European experience of the Americas. Between 1493 and 1526, German printers were responsible for nearly half of the published accounts of exploration, including twenty-six vernacular editions.¹⁷⁰ German interest in the New World was not confined to the accounts of adventurers who had traveled there. Estimates vary, but German printers produced at least four hundred books about America between 1493 and 1618—from the publication of the Columbus *Letter* to the outbreak of the Thirty Years War. The beginning of the Thirty Years War also marked the beginnings of English and Dutch colonialism in the New World.¹⁷¹

The German preoccupation with America was not necessarily a sign of a particular national interest in the New World. During the sixteenth century, Germany became the center of the international book industry, as the Frankfurt book fair supplanted the Lyons fair and became the commercial clearing-house of the international trade. Twice each year, printers and booksellers from all over Europe unpacked their kegs of unbound book sheets and assembled the largest wholesale book markets in the world; they bought, sold, or traded unbound sheets.¹⁷² The German practice of exchange allowed printers and booksellers to expand their market “footprint” without adding any significant risk. The fairs also attracted scholars, librarians, and book collectors.

The Frankfurt fair imposed a structure upon the European book trade, a structure that shaped the German trade as it became a distinct institution. Early in the 1540s, printers began to issue catalogs of the new books they were offering at the fair. The catalogs proved a boon to legitimate dealers and to less scrupulous individuals who used the catalogs to guide their reprinting schemes. Peter Schmidt began publishing a comprehensive catalog of the books offered for sale at the fairs in 1590. The Frankfurt town council assumed responsibility for the catalogs a few years later.¹⁷³ The catalogs of the semiannual German book fairs were the most comprehensive bibliographies of the European book industry. John Winthrop the Younger (1606-1696), Governor of the Connecticut Colony and an early member of the Royal Society, continued to receive the catalogs after he immigrated to America in 1631.¹⁷⁴

The Frankfurt town council regulated the production of the catalogs as part of their overall supervision of the book fair. As the fair became the center of the book trade, the Frankfurt town council became the *de facto* regulating body of the trade. Bookmen

who wished to trade at the fair needed a license from the council. Alien vendors, those without a permanent presence in Germany, were subject to special rules that effectively restricted their participation in the book trade. In 1588, the council issued a series of ordinances that granted printers clear rights to their copy, anticipating the statute of Anne by 120 years. Under the council's ordinances, printers retained copyright even if the reprinter secured a legal privilege to issue the book.¹⁷⁵ The council was able to enforce its rules and arbitrate conflicts between printers because it controlled access to the fair.

Once the council assumed control of the catalog, it had an effective mechanism to forestall copyright disputes. At the close of each fair, vendors were required to submit lists of books they intended to issue for sale in the coming year. If two or more printers listed the same title, the Bürgermeister had the power to negotiate an arrangement between the principals. No book could be listed in the catalog without the consent of the council, which gave the town council extraordinary power over the book industry.¹⁷⁶ Unlike the Stationers' Company in England, which exercised power granted by royal authority, the Frankfurt town council derived its power over the book trade as a direct consequence of its ability to control access to the market. When the market waned, as it did during the Thirty Years War, the power of the council also waned.

Like every other aspect of the book trade, the Frankfurt fair suffered during the Thirty Years War. In 1632, the Leipzig book fair overtook the Frankfurt fair, becoming the new center of the German book industry. Eventually, the Frankfurt fair recovered some of the ground it had lost during the war, but by then the book business had changed. The Peace of Westphalia marked the end of the war, but it also marked the end of the long era of internationalism that had characterized the book trade. The Frankfurt fair was

no longer the center of an international industry; it was now the secondary market of the German book industry.¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, the catalogs and the trade regulations that had been established in Frankfurt became the standards of the German trade. Over the course of the next two and a half centuries, many of the trade practices developed for the Frankfurt book fair would cross the Atlantic to become part of the American book trade.

When German books, and later the German press, migrated to the New World, they followed the same patterns that had been established in New Spain and New England. At first, any books that were needed were brought over by the people who would use them, or they were imported privately. A domestic German press was established to serve the ecclesiastical needs of the new population. Eventually the economic pressures of the book industry asserted themselves as the driving force shaping the new book business. Unlike the Spanish- and Anglo-American industries that preceded it, the German-American book industry never became fully naturalized as an independent book business.

From its beginnings, the German-American book business developed in response to the patterns of immigration. Most of the earliest German immigrants were religious dissidents who intended to maintain a separate, German-speaking culture in the New World. They wanted domestically produced German books to further their social and religious principles. When the mass migration known as the *Auswanderung* began in the eighteenth century, the German-American trade had to adapt to the needs of the new immigrant population. Each time the character of the migration changed, the trade had to adapt.

There was also a secondary American market for German-language books. Scholarly readers like John Winthrop the Younger wanted access to books manufactured in Germany. American readers interested in science (especially the new work in botany), medicine, or philosophy needed the books that were being printed in Germany. The German book trade had no serious rivals in scientific or technical publishing until the twentieth century. Although the demand for scholarly works, in any language, was never great in colonial America, that segment of the market developed in the nineteenth century, as did the market for German literary works.

The German-American book trade had to serve radically divided markets. Some Germans migrated to America for religious reasons, while others were primarily motivated by economic pressures. There was also a third group of readers who, while they were not German, were interested in the many scholarly works published in Germany. The markets, and the book dealers who served them, sometimes overlapped, but they never coalesced into a single enterprise.

The Earliest German-American Book Trade

German settlements in the New World began comparatively late. The Dutch colony of New Netherland had begun, flourished, and been annexed by England before a sizable German migration began. German miners and smelters immigrated to the Spanish colonies in the 1550s. Several German craftsmen settled in Jamestown, Virginia. The Germantown settlement in Pennsylvania, however, marked the beginning of a migration that would last until the beginning of the twentieth century and would radically alter the course of American social, political and commercial history.¹⁷⁸

In 1683, two years after Charles II granted William Penn (1644-1718) title to the territory that would be known as Pennsylvania, a group of German Mennonites, Pietists, and Quakers led by Daniel Francis Pastorius (1651-1720) purchased 15,000 acres of land northwest of Philadelphia.¹⁷⁹ The Germantown settlers had come from Frankfurt and Krefeld to establish an autonomous religious community in the New World. They were followed by a slow but steady stream of immigrants, predominantly German Baptists (often called Dunkers) and Lutherans. Like the Nonconformist English, and the Lutheran, Reformed, and Anabaptist Dutch colonists who preceded them, the Germantown settlers were used to a highly developed print industry, and they needed books to support their literate religious culture. They also needed German versions of the almanacs and legal forms that William Bradford printed for the English-speaking Quakers in Philadelphia.

The settlement of Germantown marked the beginning of a complicated relationship between America and the German book trades. America figured prominently in the German book trade long before 1683. German printers issued hundreds of books about America, mostly for the European market. They also printed many of the important theological, scientific, and agricultural works that filled the libraries in the Dutch and English colonies. The German trade and its Dutch cousin served the Dutch- and German-speaking settlers of New Netherland in an informal way.¹⁸⁰ Before Germantown, the trade between Germany and the New World was a tiny part of the larger German book industry. The markets were small, fragmented, and difficult to serve once the English conquered and annexed New Netherland. Germantown, and the settlements that followed, created a small but significant German-American market for imported and domestically printed German-language books.

At first, the Germantown settlers satisfied their need for books through the same sort of direct, informal importation arrangements used by the Dutch settlers in New Netherland. According to A. G. Roeber, the need for devotional books created an informal network that connected the German Mennonites of Pennsylvania and their Dutch counterparts in New York, with the ecclesiastical book trade of Amsterdam.¹⁸¹ Private importation of books was sufficient for the German-speaking population in and around Philadelphia during those first few decades. One nineteenth-century historian, Frank Diffenderffer, estimated that the German-American population had grown to, perhaps, two or three thousand by 1708—hardly enough to support a dedicated domestic book industry.¹⁸²

The market for German-language books increased dramatically when the second wave of German immigration, generally known as the Palatine migration, began in 1708. Following an unusually brutal winter, thousands of Germans from the Palatinate, Swabia, and the Vosages region of Alsace traveled up the Rhine Valley in the spring of 1709. For reasons that remain unclear, nearly 12,000 German refugees arrived in London. Apparently, rumors that the English were offering aid to persecuted Protestants had circulated through the southwest regions of the Holy Roman Empire.

The refugees, as many as 12,000, claimed that they were the victims of religious persecutions at the hands of the Catholic French. The disposition of the refugees was a matter of considerable debate in Parliament. In the end, 2,000 refugees, mostly Catholics, were returned to Germany; an equal number died in England. The rest were transported to Ireland or the Americas. About 650 were sent to the Carolinas and 3,200 were sent to rural New York. Distressed by their treatment in New York, many of the Palatinate

migrants made their way to Pennsylvania beginning in 1723.¹⁸³ The most famous among them was Conrad Weiser (1696-1760), a political and military leader in colonial Pennsylvania who was considered an expert in Indian affairs.

The Palatine migration was the second stage of what might be called the Rhine Valley exodus. Anabaptists, Pietists, Lutherans, Baptists, , Huguenots, Schwenkfelders, and many other reformed and radical Protestant groups seeking relief from religious persecutions made their way up the Rhine to Rotterdam; from there, they sailed to England and then to Philadelphia. By 1727, perhaps fifty thousand people from the Rhine Valley had settled in Pennsylvania.

According to a 1733 account by one of those immigrants, an early glass manufacturer named Caspar Wistar (1696-1752), the voyage from Rotterdam to Philadelphia took as long as seventeen weeks. Adult passage cost six doubloons (in 2007 dollars, about \$2,000). In lieu of payment, passage could be had for a pledge of indenture lasting anywhere from three to eight years.¹⁸⁴ The Rhine Valley migration created a highly literate German-speaking culture in Eastern Pennsylvania. The German speakers who lived in and around Philadelphia were, however, radically fragmented by their ethnic and religious identities.¹⁸⁵ Sectarian fragmentation probably diminished the political and economic power of the early German immigrants; it certainly impeded the creation of a durable German-American book industry.

Conrad Beissel and German Printing in America

Like the Spanish- and English-language press before it, the German-language press arrived in America to serve the ecclesiastical needs of the colonists. In 1728,

William Bradford's son, Andrew (1668-1742), launched the domestic German-American trade when he printed an English translation of *Mysterion Anomias* (*Mysteries of Lawlessness*), a defense of the Christian observance of the Jewish Sabbath, written by Johann Conrad Beissel (1690-1768). Conrad Beissel became a recurring nexus of German-language printing for a generation. Beissel developed an interest in mystic Christianity while he was a young man traveling in Germany. He arrived in Boston in 1720 but settled in Germantown and was baptized by Peter Becker into the Church of the Brethren. Beissel visited several utopian communities in the Pennsylvania wilderness. In 1732, he established the Ephrata Cloister of the Seventh Day Baptists based, in part, upon the principles laid down in *Mysterion Anomias*.¹⁸⁶

Benjamin Franklin followed Bradford into the new domestic German market. In 1730, he printed two German-language books for Beissel, both in roman type: one, a collection of hymns, and the other a collection of mystical poems and aphorisms. The hymnal was expanded and reprinted as *Vorspiel der Neuen Welt* (Prelude to the New World) in 1732.¹⁸⁷ Franklin actively pursued the German trade. Between 1730 and 1743, he printed at least thirteen works in German. His first five German imprints were all for Beissel and his Ephrata cloister—then he began printing the work of Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760) for the Moravian Brethren who had recently founded the city of Bethlehem on the Lehigh River.¹⁸⁸ In 1732, he launched the first German-language newspaper in the Americas, the *Philadelphische Zeitung*. The paper soon folded.

A few years later, Franklin faced real competition for the German-American market. Christopher Saur (1694-1758), the first German printer in the American colonies,

launched his career with a German-language almanac in 1738. According to Isaiah Thomas, Saur came to America in 1724 and tried his hand at a number of trades, including button making, before he chanced to become a printer.¹⁸⁹ In 1738, Saur obtained a stock of *fraktur*, or German black-letter types, which he used to set *Zionitischer Weyrauchshügel (Zion's Hill of Incense)* for Beissel's Ephrata Community. German printers favored black-letter type long after other European printers had adopted antiqua, or roman, typefaces—Saur has the distinction of having been the first American printer since Juan Pablos to use black-letter type.

The printing project came to a sudden halt when Saur ran short of paper and was forced to apply to Benjamin Franklin for credit. Franklin refused to sell paper on credit to a man he viewed as a rival.¹⁹⁰ Franklin eventually accepted the pledge of Conrad Weiser, who had become a member of the Ephrata Brotherhood after he fled New York, and the project was completed in 1739. In the meantime, Saur commenced publication of a newspaper, the *Germantaurer Zeitung*, and undertook a subscription printing of a German Bible.¹⁹¹ The Saur Bible was based upon the 1708 edition of Luther's translation printed at Halle and was the first European-language Bible printed in the New World.

Although he sometimes worked in partnership with Saur, Franklin was openly hostile toward him and the other German printers who served the growing German market. In a letter to his friend Peter Collinson in England, dated 9 May 1753, Franklin complained: "Few of their children in the Country learn English; they import many books from Germany; and of the six printing houses in the Province, two are entirely German, two are half German half English, but two are entirely English."¹⁹² Germans who refused to learn English and imported their books created some financial difficulties for a printer

who had to maintain English and German type. Despite his complaints, Franklin ran one of those half-and-half enterprises himself. The unforgivable sin committed by German printers in America was competing with Franklin, especially for English-language printing work. A year after he wrote to Collinson complaining about German printers, Franklin formed a partnership with Anthony Armbruster, one of Philadelphia's German printers.¹⁹³

Conrad Beissel sent an unusual amount of work to printers, but he eventually rejected commercial printers like Franklin and Saur and established his own ecclesiastical publishing enterprise in the Ephrata community. The first products of the Ephrata press were a pair of devotional books printed for the German-speaking Swiss and Palatinate Mennonite congregations. Beissel reprinted two German prayer books for Mennonites, *Güldene Aepffel in Silbern Schalen* (Golden apples in silver bowls) and *Die Ernsthaffte Christen-Pflicht*, (The wholehearted Christian duty), both of which appeared in 1745.¹⁹⁴

That same year, the cloister published Alexander Mack, Jr.'s, German translation of excerpts from the Mennonite devotional text popularly known as the *Martyrs' Mirror*, under the title, *Das Andencken einiger heiligen Martyrer oder: Die Geschichten etlicher Blut-Zeugen der Wahrheit; nebst ihren Briefen, welche sie kurz vor und in der Gefangenschaft geschrieben; wie solches in dem Blutigen Tooneel zu finden. Aus dem Holländischen gründlich und treulich übersetzt durch Theophilum* (The memorial of the holy martyrs' or: stories of the blood witnesses of the truth; together with their letters, written shortly before they were imprisoned, as they may be found in the bloody theater. Thoroughly and truly translated from the Dutch by Theophilum).¹⁹⁵

The Ephrata community was quickly becoming the publishing center for American Mennonites, who next commissioned Beissel and the Brothers of the Ephrata cloister to publish a German edition of the entire *Martyrs' Mirror*.¹⁹⁶ The *Martyrs' Mirror* had been compiled nearly a century earlier by Thieleman Jansz van Braght (1625-1664), an elder of the Flemish Mennonite congregation of Dordrecht. Like John Foxe's earlier *Book of Martyrs*, van Braght's immense book, *The Bloody Theater or Martyrs' Mirror of the Defenseless Christians who baptized only upon confession of faith, and who suffered and died for the testimony of Jesus, their Saviour, from the time of Christ to the year A.D. 1660*, recounted hundreds of stories of horrific physical suffering, which were presented as examples of spiritual submission. The crucial differences between the two books were signaled by van Braght's identification of the martyred Christians as "defenseless," and "baptized only upon confession of faith," which attest to the Anabaptist belief in non-resistance and adult baptism.

Translating and printing the *Martyrs' Mirror* was a massive undertaking—larger even than the Eliot Indian Bible. Fourteen Brothers of the cloister worked for three years to produce the edition of 1,300 copies of the 1,512-page volume. During the course of the project, Beissel created the first fully self-contained publishing enterprise in America. Peter Miller (1710-1796), the prior of the Ephrata cloister, translated and edited the Dutch text. Six Brothers were employed in the cloister's paper mill. Four worked as typesetters, while another four printed the sheets. Still more Brothers were required to bind the books and support the more skilled workers.

At the beginning of the project, the brothers obtained type through Christopher Saur, but they later began producing their own types using matrices purchased from

Benjamin Franklin.¹⁹⁷ Isaiah Thomas told an interesting variant of the story, which he said he heard from Francis Baily, a Lancaster, Pennsylvania, printer who was trained at Ephrata. Because the project was so big, the typesetters sometimes ran short of particular sorts (“sort” refers to a particular letterform within a typeface, the “e” or the “t,” for example). To solve the problem, one of the workmen devised a mold to make copies of the existing type. “The mold consisted of four quadrangular pieces of brass; two of them with mortices to shift to a suitable body, and secured by screws. The best type they could select from the sort wanted, was then placed in the mold, and after a slight corrosion of the surface of the letter with aquafortis to prevent soldering, or adhesion, a leaden matrix was cast on the face of the type.”¹⁹⁸ Once the matrix was cast, it was used to make more type. The second-generation copies would not be as sharply defined as the original, but they would serve. The method described by Thomas, while ingenious, would not have been used if the cloister had owned proper matrices.

In addition to the *Martyrs’ Mirror*, the Ephrata publishing enterprise issued thirty known works between 1745 and 1793. The cloister lasted another decade, but its book production did not. Like most of the earliest American presses that preceded it, the Ephrata press was expressly ecclesiastical; unlike its predecessors, it never became a commercial venture. On the other hand, the masterwork of the Ephrata press, the German-American *Martyrs’ Mirror*, has outlasted all similar undertakings and remained more or less continuously in print since its first issue in 1748. Zumárraga’s catechisms, the Bay Psalm-book, the Eliot Indian Bible, and even Saur’s Bible were important undertakings, but we remember them now primarily as first steps in their respective printing traditions. The *Martyrs’ Mirror* was and remains something quite different. The

book created its own self-generating publishing enterprise, but the press that issued it never developed into anything else.

Selling German Books in America

When the Ephrata press ceased production in 1793, some 285,000 German-Americans were living in the new United States.¹⁹⁹ Most were the descendants of the 120,000 Germans who had come to North America in the century following the founding of Germantown, but some would have been first-generation immigrants.²⁰⁰ Benjamin Franklin might have complained that Germans did not teach their children English, but his pronouncement was colored more by commercial animosity than by any real assessment of the educational patterns among German-Americans.

Nearly 300,000 German speakers could have supported a healthy German-language book industry, but the German-American population at the end of the eighteenth century was not a single, cohesive community. Attempts to preserve German language and culture in an overwhelmingly English-speaking country were doomed to fail. Some separatist groups, notably the Anabaptists, maintained their German identity and language, but most Germans assimilated. When a second wave of Rhine Valley migration brought an additional 20,000 Germans to the United States at the beginning of the nineteenth century, many third- and fourth-generation German-Americans must have viewed the newcomers as foreigners.

In 1817, Moritz von Fürstenwärther followed the migration route that had taken so many Germans to America. His influential report, *Der Deutsch in Nord-Amerike*, painted a bleak picture. He discovered that the conditions of the journey were often

horrific, but he was even more troubled by the Germans he met in America. Von Fürstenwärther's concerns were almost exactly the opposite of those that Franklin had raised. Life in English-speaking America was eradicating the German culture of the immigrants. Fürstenwärther complained that the children of immigrants learned German, but "rarely well; in them a dislike for everything German is most evident and they are often ashamed of their origins. With grandchildren the German language is usually completely lost."²⁰¹

The erosion of German culture and language was a disaster for everyone involved in the German-American book business. Demand for German-language books was inextricably tied to a growing (or at least stable) German-speaking population. If the German language disappeared, so would the German-American book trade. In the lull that followed the migration of 1816-17, it appeared that most Germans would become fully assimilated into the English-speaking culture that dominated the United States. German would survive as a theological necessity in Amish, Mennonite, and Moravian communities, or in remote rural settlements, but not in urban centers. Nevertheless, a small-scale German-American book trade survived in the United States, primarily in urban centers like Philadelphia and New York, both of which had significant German populations.

At the time, no one knew that German immigration to the United States was about to undergo a series of dramatic shifts. Beginning in 1830, annual immigration had to be measured not in thousands, but in tens of thousands. In the mid-1850s, annual German immigration peaked at more than 250,000. At several times during the ebb and flow of the German influx, publishers and booksellers in Germany considered a variety of

schemes designed to exploit the Germans living in the U.S. as a secondary market. The English had established a brisk trans-Atlantic trade; the Germans ought to be able to do the same.

Semi-annual fairs and comprehensive catalogs made the book industry in Germany a model of efficiency, but it was still plagued by over-production and inadequate market development. Just a few months after the Treaty of Paris settled the conditions of American independence, Karl Christoph Reiche, a former clergyman, author, and book dealer, published his scheme to use America as a secondary market for surplus German imprints. His plan appeared in the 5 February 1784 issue of *Die Buchhändlerzeitung*, the German book industry's first true trade journal. Reich reasoned that "to dispose of all our published books in Germany is simply impossible. Even editions of good authors remain in large part unsold and must be pulped unless a way out is found, and markets fostered outside of Germany in heavily populated and cultivated lands and provinces." Reiche's solution to German overproduction was an early version of commodity dumping. He proposed "the vast lands of the Free States of America" as a suitable market for books that could not be sold in Europe.²⁰²

Reiche tried to put his scheme into practice, but he overestimated the market and underestimated the risks. He sailed to Philadelphia with a stock of remaindered books and died there in 1790. Before he left Germany, Reiche was confident that the "multitudes of well-to-do Germans" living in America would gladly purchase his remaindered books, but he died unable even to find a buyer willing to take his books for pulp.²⁰³ The Germans living in America did want books, but they were not so hungry for books that they would buy anything printed in the German language. Before 1830, most German-

speaking Americans had immigrated for religious reasons. They needed devotional works and schoolbooks to support their religious life and training. They also needed commercial, agricultural, and medical texts that took local conditions into account. Unfortunately for Reiche and his investors, private importing channels and the tiny domestic German-American book industry met the modest needs of most German-speaking Americans.²⁰⁴

Despite the failure of Reiche's scheme, the idea of exploiting the American market still fascinated Germany's printers and booksellers. In the fifteen-year period between 1830 and 1845, nearly a million Germans immigrated to America, mostly for economic or political reasons. The new immigrants came from all over Germany, although the largest contingents came from Mecklenburg and Prussia in the northeast and Bavaria in the south.²⁰⁵ The *Auswanderung* had begun in earnest, and the potential of the German-American market for German books was too great to ignore. Two circumstances, the formation of the powerful *Börsenverein der Deutschen Buchhändler* (German Book Trade Association) in 1825, and the steady development of cheaper and faster transatlantic crossings, seemed to offer the German book trade the necessary conditions to develop the American market.

The German Book Depot

In 1845, the *Börsenverein* decided to back a more sophisticated version of Reiche's earlier plan. The idea appeared sound: German printers and booksellers would buy shares in a joint-stock venture to establish a central depot to be called "*Deutsche Vereinsbuchhandlung in Nordamerika*" in Philadelphia or New York.²⁰⁶ According to the

plan, the depot would be the wholesale distribution center for German publications in the United States, fronted by an elegant retail bookstore run on German principles.²⁰⁷

German publishers and booksellers imagined that they could recoup some of their losses at home by shipping their unsold books to America, where German-speaking readers would happily buy the books.

The commission charged with implementing the plan selected a young bookseller named Rudolph Garrigue (1822-1891) to conduct a survey of the potential market.

Garrigue was a talented and ambitious young man, born to a well-to-do German Huguenot family living in Copenhagen.²⁰⁸ He had learned the book trade as an apprentice to the firm of Herold and Wahlstab of Lüneberg, Hanover. At the time of his commission, he was working for F. A. Brockhaus, the firm best known for its famous encyclopedia.

Garrigue's tour of America was short—he arrived 31 October 1845 and returned home in April of 1846—but he was able to measure the market quite shrewdly in that short time. His findings were issued as a pamphlet, *Bericht an die Commission für die Begründung einer deutschen Buchhandlung in den Vereinigten Staaten (Report to the Commission for the Founding of a German Book Market in the United States)*, that was presented at the Leipzig Book Fair in April of 1846.²⁰⁹ The report was not encouraging.

The Germans that Garrigue found in America were hardly a homogeneous group. They had come to America in a series of migrations that spanned a century and a half. The earliest immigrants had come to America for religious reasons. Some of those early settlers maintained separate communities where German remained the primary language; others had assimilated into the larger English-speaking culture. Religious separatists like

the Mennonites, the Amish, and the Moravians spoke and read German, but they were not much interested in the secular books that Garrigue's employers wanted to sell.

The Germans who arrived after 1800 generally came to America, not for religious freedom, but for economic or political reasons. As a rule, those Germans who immigrated before the mass exodus in the mid-1850s were educated, skilled or semi-skilled workers. Immigrants who arrived in America with work skills and education usually settled in cities where it was economically advantageous to learn English and assimilate. Less educated, unskilled immigrants tended to work as farm labor, an occupation that has never encouraged linguistic (or any other) assimilation. Overall, the Germans who immigrated to America during the first half of the nineteenth century were generally more successful than other immigrant groups in finding a path to economic prosperity.²¹⁰ German was an important secondary language in the United States, but it was markedly secondary and stigmatized.²¹¹

Garrigue dismissed the majority of the German-speakers living in the United States as marginal readers needing little more than almanacs or the occasional technical manual, which were already available locally. Upwardly mobile Germans who might buy books were quickly assimilating into the larger English-speaking culture. Assimilated Germans were much more likely to buy English-language books, either domestic or foreign, which were much cheaper than the books produced in Germany and were readily available. Garrigue found almost no German-American market in the Northeast, but he correctly predicted that a German market might develop in the new western cities of Columbus, Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Louis.²¹²

According to Garrigue, the Anglo-American book buyers comprised the most promising market in the U.S. German, he explained, was the pre-eminent language of culture and learning, whether in science, philosophy or literature. Furthermore, most university-educated Americans had at least some German. If German books were readily available at the right price, he thought university-educated Anglo-Americans would buy them. He suggested that the *Börsenverein* go forward with the planned depot, but with a revised plan to suit a different market. Instead of dumping low-cost books, he outlined a plan for supplying a wide selection of well-made, low-priced editions for students and scholars and finely printed editions for wealthier book buyers. With a good selection of books and a staff of well-trained booksellers, the planned depot could cater to the needs of German *readers* rather than German *speakers*.

Garrigue was also enthusiastic about the potential of the library market in the U.S. His visit coincided with a period of growth for the public library movement in America. Large public libraries had already been founded in Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Chicago. The smaller mercantile and mechanics libraries were expanding rapidly. Garrigue claimed that “no country in the world has as many libraries as the United States,” which was, and still is, true. He also claimed that he had sufficiently stimulated interest at the Library of Congress to expect the formation of a German division within the year, and, he stated that fifty to seventy-five thousand dollars of the John Jacob Astor estate had been set aside for the purchase of German books for the new Astor Library.

Although he was optimistic about the potential of the American market, Garrigue was sharply critical of the German book dealers he encountered in America. They were not specialists, not trained booksellers in the German mode. Most were merchants who

ran variety stores that catered to a German-American clientele; books were simply another line of merchandise. One example, Henry L. Reitz, a grocer in Baltimore, advertised his stock of books along with pickled herring and Limburger cheese.²¹³

Garrigue was particularly critical of Wilhelm Radde (1800-1884), whose bookshop doubled as a homeopathic apothecary. According to Garrigue, Radde issued catalogs that were more fiction than fact: sometimes only a fraction of the books listed were actually available for purchase, and special orders regularly took as long as eight months to fill.

When they were available for purchase, German books were often prohibitively expensive by American standards. Americans were used to cheap reprints of English books, but Garrigue thought they would pay for well-made German books if the book dealers explained the reasons for the higher cost. Garrigue worried that bookdealers like Radde and Reitz were making a bad situation worse by inflating prices whenever they could. Eager to realize any profit, some German booksellers were charging twice or four times retail when they had a popular book and thought the market would stand it. German books were already more expensive than American and English imprints—price gouging had soured an already weak market.

Despite the problems, Garrigue thought German booksellers could succeed in the United States if they maintained their business standards while they adapted to the conditions of the American market. Book selection would be critical for the American trade. His recommendations—philosophy, history, biography, popular and scholarly theology, medicine, natural science, German *belles lettres* and children's books—were solid choices in 1845 and, with the exception of German *belles lettres*, remain so today.

More important than selection, in Garrigue's estimation, was availability. Customers used to ready merchandise in American bookshops would not be content to order books from a catalog and wait weeks or months for delivery. Any American venture would need a large stock of books on hand, and sufficient long-term credit, to survive. Garrigue's findings were well received, and the plans for the American book depot in New York were approved. Nevertheless, the joint-stock venture failed to attract enough subscribers. A year after Garrigue had submitted his report, only half of the shares had been sold. By April of 1847 the plan was dead.²¹⁴

Garrigue & Christern, Foreign Booksellers

Although the joint-stock venture failed, Garrigue was convinced that his own research was sound; he believed that he could sell German books to Americans. In June of 1847, as the idea of revolution was beginning to spread across Europe, he sailed for New York with sufficient credit and financial backing to launch his American career. He opened his bookshop at the corner of Barclay Street and Broadway in the arcade of the luxurious Astor House Hotel.²¹⁵ In September of the same year, he married Charlotte Lydia Whiting, the daughter of a prominent Unitarian family. The Whitings were direct descendants of the *Mayflower* notables William Bradford, John Alden, and Priscilla Rogers, and they were proud of the connection. According to Alice Garrigue Masaryk, her grandparents had become engaged while Garrigue was touring the U.S. for the *Börsenverein*. Garrigue met Charlotte while he was a guest in her parents' home in Morrisania, a village in the countryside west of New York City (now the South Bronx).²¹⁶

Garrigue started his American venture with many advantages. He had made a good marriage that linked him to an old and influential American family. He had a good address; locating his shop in the Astor House allowed him to associate his name with the most famous of German-Americans, John Jacob Astor (1763-1848). He had the support and cooperation of Heinrich Brockhaus (1804–1874), his former employer and the publisher of the most successful encyclopedia in Europe. He had the respect of the trade, which he had earned while working for the *Börsenverein*. Most important, he had a unique understanding of the American market. Garrigue understood that he could not succeed simply by transplanting a German bookshop to America. He had to maintain the standards he had learned during his apprenticeship with Herold and Wahlstab, while adjusting his methods to suit the makeshift American market. Americans had little reverence for the book trade; they would need to be taught.

When he arrived in New York, Garrigue already had an outline for a successful bookselling enterprise in the United States; it accounted for everything from the cost of fire insurance to the types of bindings that Americans would be willing to purchase. Garrigue simply needed to adjust the scale of the plan he had included in his report to the *Börsenverein* to suit his own, much smaller venture. The calculations for the book distribution depot were predicated on a large initial stock of books purchased on a three-year line of credit. Garrigue thought the depot would require an initial capitalization of nearly \$19,000 and an annual operating budget of \$8,200. The annual expenses were broken down thus:

Rent for a store	\$1,200.00
Rent for a warehouse	300.00

Furnishings for store (\$500 amortized over three years)	166.67
Fire insurance	300.00
Salary for the chief	2,000.00
Salary for an American assistant	800.00
Salary for an German assistant	900.00
Salary for an errand boy	300.00
Fire, light and office expenses	133.33
Advertising	600.00
Interest on credit	750.00
Travel and minor expenses	150.00
Commission fees in Germany	<u>600.00</u>
	\$8,200.00 ²¹⁷

Garrigue had a sound plan, but he certainly had nothing like \$30,000 (nearly \$800,000 in current dollars). Like almost everyone who has ever worked in the book industry, he had insufficient capital. Whatever his resources, he would have to sell a remarkably large number of books to pay for his elegant business address and to support his growing family. In October of 1848, Charlotte gave birth to Emilie, the first of their eleven children.²¹⁸

Garrigue's venture might have succeeded had he stuck to the business of importing and selling foreign books. Unfortunately, he decided to begin an ambitious program of publishing for the American market. Garrigue began in a small way. His first venture was *The Black Aunt's Stories and Legends for Children*, a reprint of Charles A. Dana's translation of Clara Fechner's *Tante Schwarze* stories. In 1849, two years after he opened his shop, Garrigue obtained permission to publish an English-language edition of *Bilder-Atlas zum Conversations-Lexicon*, the famous Brockhaus encyclopedia, at his own expense. The first volume of the twenty-five volume *Iconographic Encyclopedia of*

Science, Literature and Art Systematically Arranged by J. G. Heck, appeared late in 1849.²¹⁹ Volumes 2, 3, and 4 followed at irregular intervals. An American edition of the Brockhaus encyclopedia eventually made a respectable profit, but it succeeded for Appleton, not Garrigue.

The idea of publishing English translations of popular German works was sound enough, but publishing costs ate up credit that Garrigue needed to run the bookshop. In his 1878 survey of the German-American book trade, Friedrich Kapp suggested that Garrigue was a little reckless in his spending; still, all might have been well had it not been for a fire in 1852.²²⁰ The fire was a setback. Apparently he had no fire insurance, despite his own advice to the *Börsenverein*. The fire and a growing family (he was now the father of four children) left Garrigue temporarily unable to pay his debts. He decided that he needed a partner and, in December of 1852, Friedrich W. Christern (1816-1891) joined him at 2 Barclay Street.

Christern, a native of Lüneberg, also began his career as an apprentice to the firm of Herold and Wahlstab. Christern began his training earlier than Garrigue, so he probably finished his apprenticeship before Garrigue came to the firm. Apparently the two apprentices became good friends.²²¹ After Garrigue settled in America, he began to encourage Christern, his friend and future brother-in-law, to come to America. When Christern arrived in America in 1850, he found a position in Philadelphia with John Weik, a bookseller and publisher whose specialties were books for children and panoramic prints.²²² Christern prospered, and in March of 1851 he bought the business from Weik. Weik was perpetually over-extended. In his most desperate straits, he offered

land options in America in lieu of cash payments to his German creditors.²²³ In all likelihood, Christern got a bargain.

A year later, Christern sold the Philadelphia shop to his own assistants, Correa and Rühl, and became Garrigue's partner at the Astor House. Garrigue had connections, while Christern had experience and cash. Together they began to implement some of the reforms that Garrigue had proposed in his report to the *Börsenverein*. At 2 Barclay Street, they ran a proper bookstore—neither pickled herring nor homeopathic cures were offered. The young booksellers stocked what any German bookseller might: books, periodicals, art prints, maps, and good advice.

Garrigue and Christern also tried to fill the need for regular catalogs and monthly bulletins. They issued two types of catalogs. The first was a comprehensive catalog of books published in German. The German catalogs consisted of 300-350 closely printed pages listing hundreds of books. They were, in fact, Leipzig Fair catalogs printed in Germany, with custom title pages. The catalogs sold for 37½¢ and were only useful for customers who wanted to place special orders—exactly the sort of catalog Garrigue disparaged in his report to the *Börsenverein*. Garrigue and Christern also issued catalogs of French publications under the title *Livres Curieux*, which were printed in New York by G. B. Teubner. Running thirty-nine pages, they were less comprehensive than the German catalogs, but still appear to be republished ordering lists rather than catalogs of books on hand.

Garrigue and Christern also published bulletins that contained lists of books actually available for sale. In June of 1853, they launched *Garrigue & Christern's Monthly Bulletin of German Literature*. Issued as one or two folio sheets, the *Bulletin*

contained little more than their shelf lists and notices of new publications that customers might want to order. Unlike the catalogs, the *Bulletin* listed book prices in U.S. dollars; the catalogs reproduced book prices in thalers or francs and contained a note giving the exchange rates that customers could expect.

Garrigue and Christern remained partners for just two years. When a second fire destroyed “the plates, stock & MS of the unpublished parts” of the *Iconographic Encyclopedia* in 1854, Garrigue “determined if possible to enter a new field.”²²⁴ After the fire, the partners gave up the Astor House location. Garrigue continued as a book importer, doing business at 178 Fulton Street. Christern established his own retail bookstore at 763 Broadway, a few blocks from Washington Square and New York University.²²⁵ Garrigue tried his hand at publishing, issuing a large volume of German poetry selected and translated by Alfred Baskerville. In 1855, he found a new field when he became the president of *Deutsche Gessellschaft*, the German Society of New York City.

Garrigue was a controversial figure in the German Society. Unlike former presidents, from Baron von Steuben to Gustav Schwab, Garrigue was not a wealthy man, so the board of the German Society agreed to a salary of \$2,500. A paid president was unprecedented and unpopular—no president, before or since, has received a salary. As president of the Society, Garrigue was an *ex officio* Commissioner of Immigration for the City of New York. During his tenure in both posts, he oversaw the development of the Emigrant Landing Depot at Castle Garden, the forerunner of Ellis Island. The German Society was instrumental in the creation of Castle Garden, which provided much-needed protection for the masses of new immigrants who were arriving at the Port of New

York.²²⁶ The docks of New York, never a gentle place, were particularly dangerous for German immigrants during the years before the American Civil War, when Fernando Wood was the mayor and “nativist” gangs acted with impunity.

Garrigue led the German Society until 1858, when he converted his experience with disaster into profit as founding partner of the Germania Fire Insurance Society. For the first time, Garrigue prospered. About a year before the birth of their tenth child, Alexander, in 1862, Charlotte and Rudolph Garrigue were able to move from Brooklyn to a large house in Charlotte’s hometown, Morrisania. Garrigue became president of Germania Fire in 1866 and held that post until his death in 1891. The year after Garrigue took over the leadership of Germania Fire, it became the center of a national scandal because of its anti-Semitic practices.²²⁷ Garrigue and his company survived the scandal and prospered. When he died suddenly in 1891, Garrigue was a nationally recognized leader of the insurance industry.²²⁸

F. W. Christern, F. Leypoldt and the Foreign Booksellers’ Trade

Following the dissolution of his partnership with Garrigue, F. W. Christern established himself at 763 Broadway. Moving uptown made perfect sense. Christern’s customers were not the German immigrants living in *Kleinedeutscheland* on the Lower East Side. His store catered to upper-middle class, university-educated Americans, just as Garrigue had recommended. Christern simply followed New York’s *bourgeoisie* as they migrated up to Greenwich Village. A decade later, he followed his customers further uptown to 863 Broadway, just north of Union Square, and in 1879 he moved to 180 Fifth Avenue, next door to G. P. Putnam’s Sons. Over the course of his career, Christern

moved his store five times; each move took him further uptown until he finally settled at 249 Fifth Ave., above Madison Square Park.²²⁹

Christern seems to have had a knack for success that Garrigue lacked. He had done well in the German book trade and was ready to open his own book store in Munich, when Garrigue convinced him to abandon his plans and come to the U.S.²³⁰ Limited opportunities in Germany, coupled with the economic uncertainty that followed the failed European revolutions of 1848, must have made America an appealing alternative. Christern did not join Garrigue in New York; rather, he followed the traditional path of German immigration and settled in Philadelphia. He was among the last contingent of German immigrants who sailed for Philadelphia; the vast majority of those who followed would enter the U.S. through the Port of New York.

Although Christern migrated to the U.S. soon after the German Revolution, he was not what was called a “forty-eighter.” Genuine “forty-eighters” were a small contingent of political and intellectual refugees who left Germany after the revolution failed. Generally perceived as well-educated, industrious, socially responsible, and politically progressive, the “forty-eighters” were second only to the Germantown settlers in the social hierarchy of German immigrants. Admired by Germans and non-Germans alike, they became emblematic of the “good immigrant.”²³¹ Christern emigrated in the company of “forty-eighters,” but he was not a revolutionary. He was, of course, an intellectual and his bookstores served as “the rendez-vous of almost all scientific and literary men visiting this country, who almost invariably brought letters of introduction to Mr. F. W. Christern,” but he was not a revolutionary.

Christern spent a year as an assistant in John Weik's Philadelphia bookshop, after which he acquired the business. Weik, who later gained a measure of fame for his six-volume edition of Heinrich Heine's works, was an enthusiastic speculator who went in and out of the book business many times in his career.²³² Christern arrived just in time to pick up the pieces of Weik's first business collapse. The new owner began by moving the business to a shop in the 200 block of Chestnut Street (now the 800 block). William Brotherhead mentioned Christern and his bookstore in his reminiscence *Forty Years Among the Old Booksellers of Philadelphia*: "Mr. Christern, a German, opened a book store under the National Theatre [Welch's National Theatre & Circus] In one of the stores attached to the theatre, on Chestnut Street, Mr. Christern sold foreign books and engravings. He did not occupy the store long, but took his business to New York."²³³

Christern's Philadelphia bookstore made an impression on Charles Godfrey Leland (1824-1903), who was just beginning his career as a man of letters when the store opened. In his 1893 *Memoirs*, the author of the "Breitmann Ballad," recalled:

There was in Philadelphia at this time a German bookseller named Christern. It was the thought of honourable and devoted men which recalled him to mind. I had made his acquaintance long before in Munich, where he had been employed in the principal bookseller's shop of the city. His "store" in Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, became a kind of club, where I brought such of my friends as were interested in German literature. We met there and talked German, and examined and discussed all the latest European works.²³⁴

Leland and his friends met at Christern's store to read and practice their German; significantly, he did not mention any encounters with German customers.

Leland described Christern's store as a meeting place for writers and European *émigrés*, a center for the cosmopolitan, international community in Philadelphia, but Europeans did not figure prominently in his narrative. Instead, he recalled meetings with Frank Wells (n.d), a critic for the Philadelphia *Evening Bulletin*, and George Boker (1823-1890), a poet, playwright, and later, minister to Turkey and Russia. Leland apparently struck up a friendship with Christern's assistant, Karl Rühl, who bought the store when Christern moved to New York. He described Rühl as "a burly, honest, rather droll fellow" who had been a "Revolutionist" in Munich and became a refugee in America.

Although they did not appear in the memoirs of Brotherhead or Leland, Christern probably employed a junior clerk and a shop boy, along with Rühl. A bookseller, two clerks and a boy could reasonably staff a German book store, as long as the senior assistant knew the stock and understood the needs of customers like Leland and Boker. Christern would have required an assistant proficient in German, French, and English, possessing at least a passing familiarity with Italian, Latin, and Greek. If we can rely on Leland's reminiscence, Christern's bookstore was exactly the sort of enterprise that Garrigue had recommended. Before he had an opportunity to succeed or fail in Philadelphia, Garrigue summoned Christern to New York.

Christern's American career began with a series of rapid changes. He arrived in Philadelphia in 1850, purchased Weik's business in 1851, sold that business and entered into a partnership with Rudolph Garrigue in 1852. In September of 1853, he married

Emilie Garrigue, Rudolph Garrigue's older sister. A year later, his partner left the business and he was the sole proprietor of one of the most important foreign-language bookshops in New York. At that point, Christern settled into a long career at the center of the German book trade in America.

F. W. Christern succeeded in a business that had nearly ruined his friend and brother-in-law. Some part of his success must have been due the phenomenal growth of the city—by 1855 the population of New York topped 630,000, doubling in just ten years.²³⁵ German immigrants were pouring into New York at an unprecedented rate. The year Christern married Emilie Garrigue, 200,000 Germans immigrants entered the United States—most of them through the Port of New York.²³⁶ The flood of new immigrants created a boom market for a wide variety of German and bilingual newspapers, many of which were published by “forty-eighters.”²³⁷

Hundreds of thousands of new immigrants created a vast reserve of cheap labor in New York. Unfortunately, the new immigrants did little to improve Christern's business, but they did demonstrate that New York was now the undisputed commercial center of the United States. Manufacturers, merchants, and brokers, however, took full advantage, building vast fortunes with cheap labor. The city was in the midst of an economic boom that made it an international center of trade.²³⁸ Christern also profited from the prosperity that was driving the city. As New Yorkers prospered, they sought the trappings of European culture, including university educations. Christern's bookstore was a center of intellectual culture, a cosmopolitan outpost in a rough metropolis. The economic tide was rising in New York, and Christern was able to rise along with it.

Christern's success was more than simple luck; it was the result of careful attention to the business of selling books. Unlike Garrigue and many other German booksellers, Christern made decisions carefully. In 1863, for example, he acquired a foreign news agency from one of John Weik's former partners, Joseph Wieck, in lieu of payment for an outstanding debt. He then sold the agency to Ernst Steiger, who made the mistake of leasing it back to Wieck—Wieck embezzled funds and Steiger fired him.²³⁹ In 1868, Christern also negotiated an exclusive, long-term contract with Justin Winsor of the Boston Public Library. The contract made Christern the purchasing agent for the library and gave him the authority to select newly published foreign books for the library.²⁴⁰ His choices were rarely bold, but they were usually sound.

As a traditional German bookseller, Christern took an active role in the intellectual life of the city. He was, as Adolph Growoll wrote in his obituary, “a leader in all schemes and charities to promote German interests in his adopted country . . . an active member of almost every German organization of social or charitable importance in this city.” Christern also used his position to train several generations of German-American bookdealers, one of whom went on to blur the distinctions between the German, German-American, and American book trades.

In 1854, a young man named Jakob Friedrich Ferdinand Leupold (1835-1884) left his home in Stuttgart, Württemberg, bound for America. He was one of nearly 250,000 Germans who came to the United States in 1854. He arrived in New York harbor a few months before the Emigration Landing Depot at Castle Garden opened its doors and began the task of processing new immigrants. The conditions of the voyage had improved since Caspar Wistar's day, owing largely to the efforts of the German Society and to

advancements in transatlantic shipping. Passage between Le Havre and New York now took about five weeks and cost \$75 for a second-class fare, \$35 for steerage.²⁴¹ Like so many immigrants, when he landed in New York, Leupold simplified his name, beginning his new life as Frederick Leypoldt.²⁴²

The story of Leypoldt's youth in Germany and his arrival in the United States was fairly typical; his experience resembled that of many thousands of young German men who immigrated to the U.S. in the years before the American Civil War. Almost everything we know about Leypoldt's early life comes from a pair of memorial biographies written by Richard Rogers Bowker (1848-1933) and Adolph Growoll (1850-1909) days after Leypoldt died. Growoll was Leypoldt's colleague and champion; he crafted a portrait of an idealized immigrant:

He was born in Stuttgart, Württemberg, November 17, 1835. His father was a prosperous butcher, who controlled an important part of the trade of the King's household, and who took intense pride in his business, which he desired to see continued by his namesake—his younger son Frederick. The older son, who had a taste for his father's career, was destined for a college life; the younger son, who had inherited from his mother a warm poetic, idealistic temperament, was forced to learn his father's trade. This stern, unyielding father and his sensitive, high-spirited son caused each other great mutual unhappiness. In his hard-earned and restricted leisure hours Frederick Leypoldt had made the acquaintance of several kindred spirits of literary and dramatic aspirations, young men willing to brave all things and risk all things to live their own lives and to realize the ideals which then fired "Young Germany" in every strata of society. Frederick Leypoldt ran

away from home and visited several cities of Germany offering a play he had written, in which he hoped to be allowed to play a part. Meeting only rebuff and failure, he invested his few remaining pennies in books, which he sold by the roadside, and finally worked his way home again, and once more tried to conform to his father's wishes. But the taste of freedom had been too powerful. He at length gained his parents' consent to go to America and earn his own living.²⁴³

In Growoll's portrait, young Leypoldt combined German industry with a restless romanticism. The capsule *bildungsroman* may have been based upon stories that Leypoldt told of his early life in Germany, but Growoll carefully constructed a life that would suit his audience.

Growoll's account included details that ring true and some that might be questionable. Leypoldt's father was a successful butcher, and he might have forced his eldest son to study at university. True or not, the irony of the incident—a bookish son forced into trade, while the son who wanted to follow his father in trade was forced to go to university—would have appealed to Growoll's book-trade audience. They would have appreciated the reference to “Young Germany.” Like “forty-eighter,” the sobriquet signified a superior sort of German immigrant.

“Young Germany” was part of a widespread movement that began with the *Giovine Italia* of Guiseppe Mazzini (1805-1872). Dubbed *Junges Deutschland* by Ludolf Weinberg (1812-1872) in *Ästhetische Feldzüge* (“Aesthetic Campaigns,” 1834), it was primarily a literary movement with explicitly political goals. “Young Germany” set itself against the “decayed” Romanticism that followed in the wake of Goethe, Schiller, and Schlegel. Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) was the central figure of the movement, which

also included Ludwig Börne (1786-1837), best known for his satirical letters, *Brief aus Paris*. The playwright Heinrich Laube (1806-1884) was also a member of the movement. Heine's circle included Richard Schumann and Karl Marx. While he was an editor of the Paris *Vorwärts* (*Forward*), Marx published Heine's satirical poem, *Deutschland. Ein Wintermärchen* ("Germany. A Winter's Tale").²⁴⁴

Leyboldt was too young to have been part of the movement, but he was of a generation that would have been greatly influenced by the liberal politics and the realist aesthetics of *Junges Deutschland*. Identifying Leyboldt with the "Young Germany" movement had a symbolic significance for Growoll and his readers. In 1884, when Growoll wrote his biography of Leyboldt, "Young Germany," like the related "forty-eighter," indicated the better sort of German immigrant: the "good" German—intelligent, industrious, educated, and politically progressive—who would become a good American.

Growoll completed his character study with the bookselling incident. A boy who invested his few remaining pennies in a stock of used books that he sold to support himself as he returned home—that was a boy destined for greatness in the book business. The story had the smooth economy of an often-told tale, and it identified Leyboldt as a born bookseller. It took more than a "few pennies" earned selling used books to buy passage to New York, however.

The *Auswanderung* had proceeded in waves since it had begun at the end of the eighteenth century. Between 1850, when Christern made the journey, and 1854, when Leyboldt followed, the rate of immigration more than doubled. During that five-year period, more than 700,000 Germans arrived in the United States, nearly ninety per cent of the total U.S. immigration for those years.²⁴⁵ Leyboldt arrived at the peak of the pre-Civil

War *Auswanderung*; then, the rate of German immigration dropped steadily for nearly a decade. During the peak years of German immigration, passage in steerage from Liverpool to New York, could be had for as little as \$35 (about \$600 today), which was about two months wages for a skilled worker.²⁴⁶

Two months wages would buy the cheapest passage, under the worst conditions, on the slowest sailing vessels. Second-class fares were double or triple that rate, and passage on the much faster steam ships was beyond the reach of most immigrants during the peak years between 1850 and 1855. The demographic profile of the *Auswanderer* had changed since Garrigue had come to the U.S. As the *Auswanderung* progressed, the proportion of immigrants reporting their occupation as agricultural or unskilled laborer rose dramatically: by 1855 about half of German immigrants were unskilled and all immigrants coming into the U.S. were increasingly poor. Many of the poorest immigrants were, in practice, deportees—“undesirables” whose passage to America was wholly or partially subsidized as a cost-effective alternative to incarceration in prison or the workhouse.

The arrival of thousands of paupers in the U.S. caused a backlash of anti-German sentiment.²⁴⁷ Anti-immigrant violence broke out, especially in the cities most affected by the immigration—New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and New Orleans. Anti-immigration sentiment gave the nativist American Party, or Know-Nothings, its rallying cause. The Know-Nothings were primarily anti-Catholic, which gained them support among rural Germans in Ohio and Indiana. Their stance on immigration was supposedly a consequence of their religious position. Nevertheless, they condemned German

immigrants, who were overwhelmingly Protestant, for their “revolutionary” tendencies and their unwillingness to assimilate.²⁴⁸

The shift in the economic status of the *Auswanderers* accompanied a related shift to individual immigration. By 1850, most of the Germans who came to America were men who traveled alone. After 1850, the German migration was driven almost entirely by economic pressures. As the *Auswanderung* peaked, reports of the wretched conditions of the immigrant poor and of the abuses of U.S. immigration policy by German officials led to resentment of the immigrants and of Germany. Public opinion had turned against immigrants generally, and Germans in particular. Well aware of the changed attitudes toward German immigrants, Growoll made sure to identify Leypoldt as a “good” immigrant and a “good” German.

Becoming a German Bookseller in New York

Growoll described young Leypoldt in terms that his audience would appreciate. Leypoldt’s hard work, self-sufficiency and independent streak made it clear that he was not one of the troublesome new immigrants who aroused such animosity. Growoll continued his story, in which Leypoldt found his calling in New York:

On his arrival in New York, without friends and almost without money, he suffered much, and finally started out to tramp the streets in search of any work he could pick up. His tastes inclined him to books, and seeing a sign “Boy Wanted,” he entered the foreign bookstore of F. W. Christern, explained his position and obtained a situation. After working two years he went to Germany, intending to find a place in the German book trade; but he leaned toward American

institutions, and in the fall of 1857 returned to America and became one of the most patriotic of American citizens. He found his place waiting for him at Christern's. Mr. Christern was at heart a warm friend of Leypoldt's to the very last, and helped him through many struggles; but he totally failed to understand or make allowance for the strong individuality and originality of his young clerk. Conservative to a degree, the ideas and plans of Leypoldt, succeeding each other with lightning rapidity, irritated him and frightened him. He refused to have Leypoldt's plans for extending business and other unconventional experiments tried on his premises, and finally advised him to set up in business for himself in Philadelphia, offering to help him generously and to let him manage his business untrammelled by interference.²⁴⁹

The story contained all the elements that made the dime novels of Horatio Alger so popular. Alone in a foreign country, and almost without hope, young Leypoldt prevailed, finding his life's work in the book trade. According to Growoll, Leypoldt combined all the qualities Americans traditionally admire: pluck, hard work, keen intelligence, and a restless imagination.

Richard Rogers Bowker, Leypoldt's partner and successor in the bibliographic publishing business, created a more restrained portrait of Leypoldt's entry into the German-American book trade. Bowker's sketch was the centerpiece of a special issue of *Publishers' Weekly* that marked the death of its founder. In his official biography of Leypoldt, Bowker mentioned nothing of the stern father, nor of the lonely suffering on the streets of New York. Instead he recalled that Leypoldt arrived at Christern's shop with "one or two letters of introduction." Bowker described Leypoldt as a cosmopolitan

blend of the best European traits: “great industry and other of the best German qualities” and a “French temperament and courtliness of manner.” The combination of attributes made Leypoldt the sort of man “who want[ed] to see things right, and who was willing to do his part to right anything that was wrong.”²⁵⁰

The two accounts were marked by the same differences that mark their two authors. Bowker’s description of Leypoldt as a righter of wrongs was true enough, but it was a better description of Bowker, who was an inveterate reformer. Growoll’s picture of Leypoldt’s irrepressible originality was also partly self-portraiture. A third account, written by Friedrich Kapp while Leypoldt was still living, presented still another beginning to the story. In his history of the German book trade in America, published by the Börsenverein, Kapp said that Leypoldt completed an apprenticeship at Bach’s Bookstore in Stuttgart before coming to the U.S.²⁵¹ Kapp’s version of events was even less romantic than Bowker’s, but the readers of his summary of the German-American book trade were probably less interested in personal myth-making.

Perhaps Leypoldt simply walked into the bookshop at 763 Broadway and “explained his position” to the proprietor, as Growoll said. Maybe Bowker was right, and Christern engaged the young man on the strength of his character, or his letters of reference. Or Leypoldt might have been a qualified journeyman bookseller, as Kapp claimed. Whatever the case, Christern hired Leypoldt. The minimum qualifications for the job included fluency in French and German, familiarity with English, Italian, Latin and Greek, and a good character. Christern gained an energetic and intelligent assistant, and Leypoldt began his career at the top of the German book trade in America. Leypoldt

might have found his situation confining, but in Christern's store he learned the booksellers' trade from one of the most successful German bookdealers in the country.

Learning the Booksellers' Trade in Christern's Store

German booksellers like Christern were products of a longstanding tradition. They were rigorously trained before they were allowed to engage in the trade. The system of training was developed during the early days of the Leipzig Fair. When the *Börsenverein* was founded in 1825, it became responsible for setting the standards of the trade and later established the School of Bookselling in Leipzig. Aspiring booksellers served an apprenticeship that lasted between two and four years. During that time, they learned the skills of the trade, from cleaning the store and the proper handling of books, to the more complicated tasks of ordering, shipping, accounting, and cataloging. Eventually the apprentice learned the fundamentals of store management and salesmanship. Apprentices also learned, in great detail, the workings and the organization of the publishing business, which in Germany was, and is, clearly distinct from the booksellers' business.

The most important aspect of their training, according to Hellmut Lehman-Haupt, was in the "appreciation of literature and in bibliographical methods." A bookseller in the German tradition was supposed to be equal parts scholar and merchant. Upon the successful completion of an apprenticeship, the bookseller-in-training ascended to the position of junior assistant and then, perhaps, to senior assistant. A talented assistant, with sufficient luck or financial backing, might one day be made a partner, or establish an independent store.

The German system virtually compelled anyone hoping for a career in any aspect of the trade to begin as a booksellers' apprentice. Germany had by far the most rigorous, highly regulated book-trade training, but similar systems were in place throughout Europe, and to a much lesser degree in England. "The old-time German bookseller," Lehman-Haupt writes, "considered himself a servant of literature, and he was proud of his training and his literary judgment."²⁵² Although he practiced his trade in America, Christern was a German bookseller, trained in the German manner. We should expect that he trained his employees much as he had been trained.

If he arrived alone and without resources, as Growoll claimed, Leypoldt would have begun at the bottom of the hierarchy, as a rather elderly shop boy. He would have had many duties: sweeping the shop, carrying coal, trimming the lamps, twisting spills, scrubbing floors, dusting and polishing the store fixtures, delivering parcels, and fetching the noon-time beer. Shop boys had little leisure in the age of coal stoves and oil lamps. If Leypoldt had served an apprenticeship in Germany, as Kapp claimed, Christern would not have wasted him on chores that could be assigned to a twelve-year-old boy. Whatever the case, Christern would have felt an obligation to continue Leypoldt's training.²⁵³

Because Leypoldt entered the German book trade in New York, rather than in Leipzig or Frankfurt, he had an opportunity to rise very quickly. In Germany, apprenticeships were long, and masters could be severe. In New York, master booksellers had no trade infrastructure to reinforce their authority. An unhappy apprentice was free to leave at any time. All the evidence suggests that Leypoldt was an eager, apt student. Under Christern, Leypoldt mastered the principles of accounting and

retail sales. He also must have learned the peculiar complexities of the transatlantic, German-American book business.

Christern would have taught his apprentice how a proper German bookseller builds and maintains his clientele, as well as how he maintains his standing in an honorable trade. He would certainly have guided Leypoldt's reading, so that he might know what was inside the books. He would have taught Leypoldt to make accurate bibliographic descriptions of the books he read and worked with every day. When he learned the structure of the German publishing trade and the ways that the various parts of the trade interacted and communicated with each other, Leypoldt would have become thoroughly familiar with the catalogs of the German and French book industries and with the major European trade journals, the *Börsenblatt* and the *Bulletin Mensuel*.

One task that might have suited Leypoldt's particular talents was editing Christern's *Monthly Bulletin of Foreign Literature*.²⁵⁴ Christern's *Bulletin* was the continuation of the little newsletters that he and Garrigue had started in 1854. The *Bulletin* remained a simple folio publication listing titles available for sale, with an emphasis on new arrivals. In the spring of 1856, about a year after Leypoldt's arrival in the shop, the bibliographic descriptions became a bit more detailed, sometimes including passages from the books listed. Some announcements for new books were accompanied by excerpts from reviews that had been culled from German and French journals. Christern's *Bulletin* was little more than an excellent trade list, but a vigorous editor with some financial backing could have transformed it into an American version of the *Börsenblatt*.

At that moment, the German booktrade was flourishing in the United States. New York had twenty-five booksellers who were either wholly dedicated to German books or, like Christern, sold a variety of foreign-language books. More than half of New York's German book dealers had entered the market after 1851. At the same time, Philadelphia had nine German book dealers, and Boston had two.²⁵⁵ German-language printing, on the other hand, was confined largely to newspaper production. The market for German publications was growing; it might have supported a trade journal like the one Garrigue envisioned in 1847. Leypoldt might have succeeded as the editor of an American *Börsenblatt*. Christern certainly had the respect of the German book trade and he could have raised the capital, if he had wanted to be a publisher. The transformation never occurred; the *Bulletin* continued as a simple trade list, and Leypoldt continued to learn the trade.

Bookselling vs. Selling Books

The training that Leypoldt received in Christern's bookstore was utterly unlike anything he might have learned in an American bookshop. The German book trade had been a highly structured, well-regulated affair for almost two hundred years. Moreover, the German book trade was organized on principles completely foreign to the American trade. In Germany, publishers had little direct contact with the book-buying public. Unlike their British and American counterparts, German publishers rarely operated their own retail outlets, nor did they employ subscription agents and drummers. In Germany, publishers manufactured books—booksellers sold them.

German booksellers were, moreover, particular about their stock. They were in the business of selling books. Books, magazines, maps, sheet music, and engravings or

lithographs were considered the legitimate stock of a bookseller. The same “old-time German bookseller” who, Lehman-Haupt tells us, considered himself a “servant of literature” regarded stationery and notions as beneath his dignity.²⁵⁶ A German bookstore was designed to serve the needs of the serious reader.

By contrast, nothing was beneath the dignity of most American booksellers. The American book trade was the unruly offspring in the British trade, which was organized very differently. The English never viewed printing, publishing, bookselling, and the manufacture and sale of stationery as distinct occupations. The incorporation of printing into the stationers’ trade happened well before the Stationers’ Company was chartered in 1556. The British view of the trade was transplanted to the English colonies in America and became the dominant mode of operation.

In the colonies, and later in the republic, the notion of sustaining a bookshop by selling nothing but books, or even books and stationery, was ridiculous. Andrew Bradford of Philadelphia sold “whalebone, goose feathers, pickled sturgeon, chocolate, and Spanish snuff” along with the books and pamphlets that he printed.²⁵⁷ Wilhelm Radde sold homeopathic remedies. Even in the largest markets—Philadelphia, New York, and Boston,—booksellers needed to supplement their stock of books with a variety of wares, simply to survive. The American book trade has always been indiscriminate, and it remains so today.

In the United States, books have been, and still are, most often a sideline. According to William Charvat, “proper bookshops” were rare, even in cities, well into the nineteenth century. By “proper bookshops,” he meant book and stationery shops like those found in London. Books were sold in newspaper offices and general stores. Books

could also be purchased in unlikely places: post offices, apothecaries, or even millinery shops.²⁵⁸ The catholic view of the trade in American was later reflected by the variety of trades listed on the masthead of the *Publishers' and Stationers' Weekly Trade Circular*, which proclaimed itself a “journal devoted to the interests of the Publishing, Printing, Book, Stationery, News, Music, Art, and Fancy Trades [paper notions], and Associated Branches.”

In the United States, the place of books as a commodity has remained fairly constant for the last three hundred years. Writing of his life as an American stationery manufacturer's traveling representative, Paul Wielandy described the state of the trade in the 1880s, when he was just starting out:

The leading items of a book and stationery store in the pioneer days were writing paper—envelopes—legal blanks—blank books—pencils—quills—pens—inks—slates—black boards—chalk crayons—copying books and copying presses. At the time there were no tablets and papeteries [note cards], or typewriter, mimeograph and carbon papers—all correspondence was written out in longhand. With few exceptions, every stationery store carried a general stock of books.²⁵⁹

Little changed in the status of books as merchandise between Andrew Bradford's day and Paul Wielandy's. The position of books in his inventory of a “book and stationery store” was not meant as irony.

Wielandy's “general stock of books” could be found alongside displays of chinaware, cigars, and collar stays. Dolls and alphabet blocks were at least as common as books in the sort of “bookstore” Wielandy served in the 1880s. Compared with steady

sellers like chalk crayons and copying books, books with the text already printed on the page were simply a risk. Who, for example, could predict how a book would sell? Even popular books like Timothy Shay Arthur's might languish on the shelf. Selling books was an uncertain enterprise; the risks could be minimized by diversification. Bookstores devoted entirely to books have always been rare in the United States.

German booksellers, by contrast, preferred to sell nothing but books. Whether in Leipzig or New York, German booksellers stocked their shops with books and little else. In Christern's shop, Leypoldt learned all the skills of the bookseller, but he also learned a particularly German view of the book trade. A bookshop like Christern's was intended to be a center of learning and culture, a "*rendez-vous* for scientific and literary men," and perhaps for the occasional literary woman. The books were carefully selected and valued above mere merchandise. The staff was thoroughly trained and familiar with the stock. The book trade was a high calling.

"F. Leypoldt, Importer of Foreign Publications"

After two years in Christern's store, Leypoldt returned to Germany. According to Henry Holt, Leypoldt said that he had come to America hoping to make enough money to return home and build a career in Germany. Compared to life in New York, however, he found "that it was too slow for him over there," and he returned to the U.S., never to leave again.²⁶⁰ In their respective memorial essays, Bowker claimed that Leypoldt was "too good an American to desert America," while Growoll asserted that Leypoldt "leaned toward American institutions." More likely, Leypoldt discovered that his experience in New York counted for little in the tightly regulated German trade. It was all very well to

have worked for someone as reputable as Christern, but that could not be counted as formal training.

Whatever his reasons, Leypoldt returned to New York in the fall of 1857 and resumed his place in Christern's shop. In a letter dated 18 March 1941, Leypoldt's daughter, Marion A. Osborne, explained that the two men became close friends and that Christern had received her father in his home, practically as member of the family.²⁶¹ Despite the warm paternalism, or perhaps because of it, Leypoldt and Christern did not always see eye to eye. Christern might have been a close friend and a mentor, but as Growoll explained, he "totally failed to understand or make allowance for the strong individuality and originality of his young clerk." He had no intention of risking his capital on any of Leypoldt's "unconventional experiments." Two years after Leypoldt returned to New York, Christern encouraged and probably helped him to establish a shop of his own in Philadelphia.

Early in the fall of 1859, Leypoldt opened his "*Librairie Étrangère*" at 1323 Chestnut Street, "below the U.S. Mint." The new bookstore was located immediately behind the new Philadelphia and Columbia Railroad freight depot, a few block east of Centre Square, the future site of City Hall.²⁶² Advertising himself as "F. Leypoldt, Importer of foreign publications," he offered his customers "books, periodicals, maps, works of art, &c."²⁶³ Philadelphia was a logical place for Leypoldt to begin his career as an independent bookseller. The city was no longer the center of German-American life in the U.S., but it still supported a foreign book trade. Furthermore, Leypoldt could not impinge on Christern's business if he was safely in Philadelphia. Instead they could act in concert, forming a very small bookselling syndicate.

The association with F. W. Christern must have smoothed Leypoldt's entry into Philadelphia's book trade. Christern had probably maintained his contacts among the bookdealers of Philadelphia, although few of the German booksellers from the early 1850s were still in business. Ernst Karl Schäfer and Rudolph Koradi still ran the largest and most prosperous foreign bookstore at the corner of Fourth and Wood, on the north side of the Old City. Writing at the end of the century, William Brotherhead complained that Schäfer and Koradi, who were still in business in 1891, were the only antiquarians among Philadelphia's German booksellers. Like Franklin before him, Brotherhead was none too fond of Germans:

It is a most singular fact that in this city, with a German population of over 300,000, they sustain only *one* that deals in old books, and this on a small scale. This fact reflects on the generally well-educated German but little credit. Why this should be so I do not know. I have asked well educated Germans about this deplorable fact, but no good solution can be given. Some say that the educated German cannot be found here, or at least but few of them, their chief object in life is [to] work, smoke and drink lager beer, and only read their newspapers. I am sorry to say that there is a great deal of truth in this partial explanation.²⁶⁴

Brotherhead was more impressed by the "foreign" offerings of John Pennington and Joseph Sabin, but they were antiquarian book sellers, rather than dealers in foreign books.

Carl Rademacher's homeopathic bookshop, which had been a mainstay of the German community in Philadelphia since the early 1840s, was now the property of William Radde, Jr. In his report to the *Börsenverein* in 1847, Garrigue had used Radde's

father as an example of the worst sort of German-American bookseller, but Radde's business succeeded while Garrigue's failed. The homeopathic bookstores were the only bookselling firms that catered primarily to Germans living in the U.S. John Weik, Christern's first employer, was still in and out of business. Karl Rühl was no longer in business; he had not been able to make a success of Christern's old location.²⁶⁵

Leypoldt prospered in Philadelphia. Soon after he opened the shop, he added a reading room for foreign periodicals and a lecture room, which Charles Leland mentioned favorably in the *Continental Monthly*.²⁶⁶ Leland, who had regarded Christern's store as his "social club," became a regular visitor to Leypoldt's bookstore. There he met with George Henry Boker (1823-1890) and Bayard Taylor (1825-1878). Boker was probably best known for his verse tragedy, *Francesca da Rimini* (1853), and his Civil War poems, especially "The Black Regiment" (1864). Taylor was the author of a popular collection of travel sketches called *Views Afoot; or, Europe Seen with a Knapsack and Staff* (1846), as well as numerous novels, plays, and poems. Taylor was probably the most famous of Leypoldt's clients; already a literary celebrity and a respected scholar of German literature, he was beginning his career as a diplomat.

The publisher Henry Charles Lea (1825-1909) was another visitor to Leypoldt's store. H. C. Lea succeeded his father as a partner in the firm Blanchard & Lea, previously Carey & Lea. Respected as a publisher, Lea was also a noted historian and an expert on the medieval church and on the Inquisition. Leypoldt also welcomed scholars Hiram Corson (1829-1911), Fanny Fuller (n.d.), and C. P. Krauth (1823-1883), and the theologians Rev. John Grigg (1792-1864) and the Rev. Dr. William H. Furness (1802-

1896).²⁶⁷ Leypoldt enjoyed long professional associations with many of the authors and scholars who gathered in his shop.

Clearly Leypoldt had absorbed the lessons of his mentor. His bookstore on Chestnut Street recreated the intense intellectual atmosphere that Leland had noted in Christern's earlier store. The eminent scholars of Philadelphia made the shop a meeting-place, as did many performing artists. Lucille Western, famous for her portrayal of Lucretia Borgia, was a customer, as was Edwin Forrest (1806-1872). Forrest was the Shakespearean actor whose feud with Charles Macready was the spark that touched off the Astor Place Riot in 1846.

As Bowker described it, Leypoldt's foreign bookstore was an important Philadelphia institution. He also hints at a livelier side of Leypoldt's character:

His place was also the *rendezvous* of the musical and the dramatic profession, who frequently sought Mr. Leypoldt's advice as to their rendering of certain parts, Mr. Leypoldt being a great lover of music and the drama. At this time, also, his intimate friends were permitted to see the evidence of the vein of poetry in his nature. He made a spirited translation of Boker's "Black Regiment" into German, and wrote not a little original verse in his native tongue.²⁶⁸

Leypoldt's verses have survived, but his love of poetry, music, and theater reemerged time and again throughout his career.

Important and gratifying as the attention of scholars and artists might have been, it could not, by itself, sustain a business. Starting a business has always been easy enough, but staying in the book business, as Leypoldt knew, required good stock, good service,

and strict attention to the ledger. Leypoldt made a reasonable success of all three from the moment he opened his doors. Staying in business, however, could also be a matter of luck. Leypoldt's luck ran out on 12 April 1861.

Soon after the American Civil War began, Leypoldt had to contend with higher import duties and unprecedented inflation. The tariff acts of 1861 and 1864 significantly changed the cost of importing books. Bound books, which had been subject to a duty of seven per cent on bound volumes since the tariff reduction of 1857, were subject first to a fifteen percent and then to a twenty-five percent import duty.²⁶⁹ Rates for unbound sheets, including newspapers, doubled, and then tripled. The increased duties hurt the agencies that imported foreign newspapers.²⁷⁰ At the same time, the nominal value of gold rose from 103% per to 285%. The rising price of gold cut its purchasing power by nearly two-thirds. Gold prices rose dramatically as soon as the war began, a situation that was exacerbated when the U.S. Treasury began printing paper money.²⁷¹ The subsequent inflation hurt everyone, but the deflated value of gold was especially hard on importers like Leypoldt who were required to pay in gold for both goods and duties.

The unsettled economic conditions made discretionary book buyers cautious and forced libraries to postpone purchases. Higher import duties and devalued gold, along with stagnation in the institutional market, brought the foreign booktrade to a standstill. Leypoldt tried at first to weather the crisis by adding selected American and English titles to his stock. He became, for example, the American agent for the Tauchnitz line of standard British authors in 1862.

That same year he launched a private circulating library, specializing in French literature. Administered by Marian M. Monachesi, the lending library eventually held

over six thousand volumes in several languages.²⁷² It was fairly common for booksellers, foreign and domestic, to maintain lending libraries, charging fees based on the popularity or the scarcity of the book. In a broadside advertisement dated 1862, for example, Burnham's Book Store of Boston offered its library customers books at: "6-50¢ per Week | New Books 3 Days Only | Foreign, Classical, Law, Medical, & London Books Extra."²⁷³ Foreign booksellers, like Leypoldt, could offer specialized booklists to their subscribers, adding titles as they were requested. Once the demand for a particular volume began to wane, it could be sold at a discount.

The new English-language department and the lending library helped, but they could not save a business that depended on imported stock—goods that were, for the foreseeable future, impossible to obtain. So in April of 1863, Frederick Leypoldt tried something new. He could no longer afford to import books in any language, so he decided to start publishing books himself. His first effort was a book of stories by Hans Christian Anderson called *The Ice Maiden and Other Tales*. It was a small book, not particularly distinguished, but it launched Leypoldt's new career as a publisher. *The Ice Maiden* was significant primarily because it was printed in English. It marked his entry into a new and troubled world that bore little resemblance to the German book business that he knew and respected. The German-American book business would continue to follow the patterns of German immigration, but Leypoldt had chosen another direction.

Chapter 4: Redefining Publishing in American Book Trade Mobile

A book is certainly not a production, the cost of which can be calculated like butter.

—F. Leypoldt

When Frederick Leypoldt opened his Philadelphia bookstore in the fall of 1859, the book business in the United States had evolved into an overwhelmingly commercial industry. Most of the printing enterprises that had been established to serve the ecclesiastical and political needs of immigrant populations had embraced the wider marketplace. A few printing houses specialized in the production of religious works, but it was more common for religious works to be one product line among many.

The structure of the book trade had also changed dramatically. Printing had lost much of its mystery in the years since William Bradford issued his commercial challenge to the Quakers of Philadelphia. By 1859, the printer was no longer the central figure of the book trade. Printing a book was no longer the equivalent of publishing it. The two functions were not yet clearly delineated in the nineteenth century, but the defining characteristic of publishing has always been the assumption of risk. It was during the nineteenth century, that booksellers and publishers began to dominate the book industry in the U.S. and Europe.²⁷⁴

For nearly two centuries, commercial printing and publishing were effectively one function. Printers had to arrange their own financing, manufacture the book, and usually handle the marketing of the product. Forming *ad hoc* publishing syndicates became a common way to distribute the risks of publishing, but the printer usually bore most of the responsibility for a book. The major exception was a system that might be called institutional book production—the kind of contract printing for ecclesiastical or political bodies that sustained Juan Pablos in Mexico and William Bradford in Philadelphia.

As the industry grew and became more complicated, a three-part structure emerged. Publishing, printing, and marketing became three semi-independent functions. Whether in Spain, England, Germany, or the United States, the book industry sorted itself into some distribution of the same three functions, but the functions were never clearly differentiated. Printer-publishers and bookseller-publishers were the norm in Europe and in America. In the U.S., it became increasingly common for booksellers to function as publishers, while printing became an industrial specialty within the book business, like stereotyping or binding.

In England and the United States, publishing was most commonly linked to bookselling. In the English and American trades, bookseller-publishers usually arranged for and managed the production and sale of the book. Bookseller-publishers contracted printers to manufacture the books and paid them for their services. In the German trade, it was more common to find firms that combined printing and publishing. Printer-publishers arranged the financing and managed the production of a book, leaving the marketing to booksellers.

The most notable difference between the English and German models was the relationship between the wholesale and retail functions of the book trade. When publishing is a contingent function of either printing or bookselling, it forces publishers, printers, and booksellers to compete against each other at the retail and at the wholesale level. When printers functioned as publishers, they tended to concentrate on the wholesale trade, leaving most of the retail trade to booksellers. When booksellers functioned as publishers, they were simultaneously engaged in the wholesale and retail trades. In almost every case, a single firm was in the peculiar position of competing for sales of its own books. Linking publishing to bookselling or to printing worked in England and Germany because those trades had regulations; they also had systems for resolving disputes.

A German Bookseller in the American Book Trade

The U.S. book industry tended to follow the English model. Most American publishers began and continued as booksellers. In the unregulated U.S. trade, the combination created a rift between the publisher-booksellers, who were simultaneously wholesalers and retailers, and those booksellers who were strictly retailers. Printers were drawn into the dispute only if they were also publishers or booksellers or, like the Harpers, both. The problem that divided the trade had two related components: discounts and retail pricing.

The dispute between the wholesale and retail sectors of the trade was a serious problem made worse by the fragmentation of the U.S. marketplace. The U.S. book business was a loose confederation of overlapping and competing markets. The market

isolation that originated in English, Dutch, and German colonial settlements persisted as the republic expanded. Boston, Philadelphia, and New York were the original centers of the American book trade, and they continued to dominate the trade, each vying for supremacy in the emerging national market.

Philadelphia took an early lead in the book industry, because it was the center of a successful mercantile distribution network that linked it to the South and the “old” West. When the Erie Canal opened a vast western distribution network for New York, that city began to dominate the book trade. As the rail network first augmented, then replaced water transportation in the U.S., Philadelphia and New York became an industrial corridor—the dual-centered hub of trade in the United States.

Boston tried, unsuccessfully, to use the railroad to draw off some of the trade that flowed through New York, but Boston remained the center of an isolated, second-tier market until the second half of the nineteenth century when it overtook Philadelphia as the second city of American publishing. By the time Rudolph Garrigue and Frederick Christern were doing business in the Astor Hotel, New York had overtaken Philadelphia as the center of the book business in the United States.²⁷⁵

When Leypoldt arrived in the United States in 1855, New York was the center of American industry and finance. As New York grew, it attracted even more industry, including the book industry. By 1859, when Leypoldt left the city, New York had a dozen major publishing houses. The move to Philadelphia, home to just four major publishers, took Leypoldt away from the center of the U.S. book business.

On the other hand, it brought him to the traditional center of German-American culture and an underserved book market. Moving to a smaller market might have been a

canny strategy. In Philadelphia, Leypoldt could cooperate with Christern, rather than compete against him. For a foreign bookseller, Philadelphia was a relatively open field; his only real competition in the foreign book trade was the firm of Schäfer and Koradi. As it turned out, Leypoldt had little more than a year to establish his foreign bookstore before the American Civil War brought his business to a standstill. At that point, it hardly mattered where he tried to do business. High tariffs and devalued gold made it impractical to import books anywhere in the U.S.

Once he realized that he could not survive as a foreign book dealer, Leypoldt took steps to diversify his business. He opened a reading room and established an English-language department, stocking “all the favorite American and British authors,” and the “new books of the day.”²⁷⁶ He added a lending library administered by a young woman named Marian Monachesi.²⁷⁷ The changes moved him into a new world—that of the American bookseller.

While he was a foreign book dealer, Leypoldt was little affected by the problems within the U.S. trade. When tariffs and inflation pushed Leypoldt into the American book trade, he was forced to contend with all the problems that plagued the book business in America. The Americans had no rules and no central organization. To a German bookseller like Leypoldt, the American trade was a lawless wilderness. As soon as he made the transition, Leypoldt realized that the American trade had serious problems, and he tried to help by explaining the advantages of the German way of doing business. Leypoldt was never shy about his professional convictions, which he displayed openly, or his opinions of the trade, which he delivered freely.

Early in his transformation from German book dealer into American publisher, Leypoldt realized that the United States had none of the infrastructure that German booksellers took for granted. As he had learned it, the business of making and selling books required certain tools that gave structure to the enterprise. In the American book industry, those tools were incomplete or missing altogether.

In the issue for 2 February 1863, Charles Rode (1824-1865), the editor of the *American Publishers' Circular and Literary Gazette*, printed a letter written by Leypoldt. The *Publishers' Circular* had begun life in 1851 as *Norton's Literary Advisor*, a monthly trade and literary journal edited by Charles B. Norton (1814-1891). In 1855, it became a weekly trade journal sponsored by New York's Book Publishers Association—a year later Rode took charge of the journal. In 1861, responding to the slump caused by the war, Rode made the *Publishers' Circular* a monthly. It was then the only regularly published book trade journal issued in the United States. Leypoldt began his letter by commenting favorably upon a letter written by Robert Clarke, a prominent Cincinnati bookseller who later acted as a secondary publisher for many of Leypoldt's books. Clarke had written to urge Rode to recommence weekly publication and to urge him to undertake an annual catalog. Leypoldt continued by explaining the situation as it appeared to a German, trained in the German method:

Having commenced business as an importer of foreign books, I but lately—in consequence of “the really depressed state” of importing—paid more attention to the domestic book-market. But when commencing to work in this new branch, I soon felt, “very sadly” too, a deficiency of the book-seller's most indispensable *tools*—a well-supported central organ and—good catalogues. I wondered for

long, how it was, that in this country, where everything is offered to us so extremely *practical* and *handy*—especially timesaving tools and instruments—the booksellers have been neglected so much. I confess, I am a spoiled child in matters of book lists and catalogues, having been brought up in Germany—“the living catalogue of Europe!”²⁷⁸

German booksellers, he explained, had two dozen trade journals to choose from and several annual catalogs. In Germany, he said, it was a matter of too much information rather than too little, as was the case in the U.S

“The soul of the German book-trade,” he continued, was the *Börsenblatt*, the trade journal founded in 1834 by the *Börsenverein*. The *Börsenblatt* was issued three times a week, and six times a week during the Leipzig Bookfair, each issue requiring 20-24 pages. As Leypoldt described it, the *Börsenblatt* contained everything:

communications, complaints, suggestions from publishers and dealers, notices, news, etc.; an exact list of all books published since the issue of the last number; extra lists of works of art and of foreign publications; a register of all criticisms on books, as they appeared in recent periodicals; circulars of new establishments, and changes in business; announcements of books in press and in preparation; long columns of books wanted which are out of print, or sought for at reduced prices; also of books offered at conditional prices; quotations from the money market, etc.

More to the point, the journal was “filled with individual *trade advertisements* from all parts of Germany, and even from foreign countries. No German bookseller could do without the ‘*Börsenblatt*.’ Those advertisements made the journal a profitable concern.

Leypoldt explained that the U.S. also needed accurate trade lists and catalogs. The German trade supported a variety of lists and catalogs for new publications: “a full weekly list, a semi-monthly, several monthlies (one of them forming a supplement to the ‘*Börsenblatt*’), a quarterly classified Catalogue, and a half-annual one, alphabetically arranged by the authors, with classified index. And all do pay!” German booksellers also had access to a record of the whole history of the trade, going back to 1590, in the series of annual catalogs that began with the earliest catalogs of the Frankfurt Fair. As Leypoldt explained, Germany had a register of “every work, down to the smallest pamphlet, with the fullest exactitude as to the names of the publisher, place and date of publication, size, number of pages, price etc.”

Leypoldt was not finished. Germany’s vast bibliographic enterprise might be beyond the reach of the American industry, but America’s publishers and booksellers could do better than they had thus far. Even the French and the English had better bibliographic aids. America had Orville Roorbach’s catalog, the *Biblioteca Americana* and its supplements and appendixes, which Leypoldt dismissed as “too carelessly compiled” and out of date. American booksellers also had the catalog of American imprints issued in London by Nicholas Trübner, but Leypoldt complained that it was “of a limited use to the American bookseller, as it excludes reprints, and gives the prices for England.”

Leyboldt maintained that a good American trade journal like the *Publishers' Circular* would succeed, if it were supported by the trade. "The more advertisements the 'Circular' will get from the publishers, the more subscribers it will gain, for the more indispensable it will be to the dealers; and again—the more subscribers the more profitable advertising will become to the publisher." He finished his letter by apologizing for his "broken English," explaining that he "could not help saying a few words which—if not well said—certainly are well meant! I shall be happy if you will make some use of my letter in the 'Circular,' only I would advise you, before doing so, to expurgate it a little from its 'Germanisms.'"

Becoming a Publisher in the American Book Trade

Leyboldt's letter had no immediate effect on the American book trade, but even before his letter appeared in the *Publishers' Circular*, Leyboldt had decided to publish his own books. In Germany, it would have been impossible for a young bookseller to simply declare himself a publisher. In the United States, however, anything was possible. In America, publishing was a common occupation for booksellers, a practice inherited from the English trade. With the notable exception of the Harpers, all of the most prestigious American publishers of the day had begun, and continued, as booksellers. The Harpers were, of course, booksellers on a grand scale, but Joseph Harper had begun his career as a printer.

As a bookseller who published books, Leyboldt had difficult business decisions to make. Among his first tasks, he had to establish a system for distributing the books he issued. He could not expect to sell the entire print run of any book he published through

his Chestnut Street store, so he needed to arrive at wholesale arrangements with other booksellers. Christern was willing to sell Leyboldt's books in New York, but then Leyboldt and Christern had to share the profits, which were further reduced by the cost of shipping the books to New York. Leyboldt could sell a portion of his books to other Philadelphia booksellers, but that would force him to compete for sales of his own books in his own market. As a further complication, he had no way to compel other booksellers to compete fairly.

The book business has never had a clear, simple system for organizing its wholesale and retail functions. Instead, the book business has usually relied on discounting to set wholesale prices. The producer of a particular book, whether a printer or a publisher, determined its retail price and then sold the book to retailers minus a percentage of the retail price, the discount. Naturally, booksellers and publishers have always had difficulty agreeing on the percentage. The practice has always been contentious. In Germany and England, which had regulatory bodies, conflicts could be adjudicated. In the U.S. trade, where wholesale and retail interests were confused and unregulated, no one was satisfied.

As the publisher of a book, Leyboldt needed to negotiate wholesale arrangements with book dealers who, then, competed against him for retail sales. Leyboldt could make more on the books he retailed himself, which gave him an advantage over his wholesale customers, if every book dealer sold the book at the same retail price. If his wholesale buyers decided that the publisher's advantage was unfair, they might decide to sell the book below retail.

Undercutting the retail price, known as underselling in the book business, has always been controversial in the trade. Publishers have always set the retail price of the books they issued, a practice that prevented retailers from competing on price. In Germany and England, the book trades enforced the policy by ostracizing any book dealer who violated the principle, a policy the English trade later codified in the Net Book Agreement.²⁷⁹ Leypoldt began his publishing career just as underselling was becoming the central concern of the Philadelphia trade. Leypoldt was deeply offended by underselling and went on to campaign against it until he died.

In the spring of 1863, Leypoldt was struggling to define his role in the book business. He was still a German bookseller, but he filled the shelves of his store with English-language books. He was about to launch his career as an American publisher, but most of the books he was planning to publish were written by Europeans. Working in the American trade, Leypoldt would face an array of problems that he had never encountered in the German trade. Furthermore, he would have to solve his problems without the help of the infrastructure that German book dealers took for granted. Leypoldt was, thus, a fairly typical American publisher. He was on his own, with no organization to help him and no rules to hold him back. Every decision he made was a risk.

Leypoldt made one truly remarkable choice when he became a publisher. He decided to concentrate on English-language publications. The books he published signaled a shift in his course; he was leaving the foreign book business. Leypoldt issued very few books in German or French, and most of those were schoolbooks intended for language study. Instead, he specialized in translations of German and French *belles lettres* and children's literature. Some of the books he published were simple reprintings

of established works, but more often he issued translations or editions prepared by the artists and scholars who patronized his Philadelphia bookstore.

On the whole, he was a successful publisher. Most of the books that he issued in his short career remained in print for many years. A few of his books became quite popular, but Leypoldt never realized much profit from his publishing venture. The profits and the recognition generally went to a young man who got his start in publishing as Leypoldt's partner—Henry Holt. Leypoldt never achieved anything like celebrity as a publisher, although he did earn the respect of some of his contemporaries. Like most publishers, he worked in relative obscurity. He struggled book to book, hoping to make enough on one project to finance the next. He made plans, but he was forced to react to circumstances beyond his control, both inside and outside of the trade.

Creating a Book Trade Identity

In April of 1863, two years after the guns were first fired against Fort Sumter, Frederick Leypoldt filed his copyright for *The Ice Maiden and Other Tales*, a collection of stories by Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) that had been translated into English by Fanny Fuller.²⁸⁰ Subtitled “New Tales and Stories,” Leypoldt's first book collected “The Butterfly,” “The Psyche,” and “The Snail and the Rose-Tree” along with the title story in a slim volume, case bound in brown cloth embossed with a honeycomb pattern. The little book sold for seventy-five cents, and it sold well enough to require a second edition before the end of the year. The *Ice-Maiden* was the first book issued under the imprint, “Philadelphia: F. Leypoldt,” and it was a typical Leypoldt publication.

In the first two years of his publishing career, Leypoldt issued about forty titles. His books were well printed and cased in neat, substantial bindings. Many of his books were carefully selected translations of already-popular German and French works. Besides *belles-lettres*, Leypoldt specialized in works relating to music and theater. He also issued a line of educational works, particularly French and German primers, and an array of specialty items, including maps, broadsides, and portfolios of photographic reproductions. Leypoldt's wide-ranging publications have never been regarded as a significant contribution to American publishing, perhaps because so few of his books qualified either as "original" or as "American." Leypoldt published very few books written by Americans for an American audience.

Leypoldt did not publish many "original" books, but he was often the first to publish an important translation for the U.S. market—a form of originality that rarely attracts much notice. A translation of Heine's *Book of Songs* might not qualify as original or American, but it was nevertheless a significant publication. Leypoldt's *Dante Album*, a portfolio of photographic reproductions of Gustav Doré's illustrations for Dante's *Inferno*, was neither original nor American, but it introduced Doré and Dante to an American audience four years before Longfellow's translation of the *Divine Comedy* reached the market.

Foreigners like Heine or Doré or Dante might not appeal to a broad American audience, but Leypoldt's books were usually intended for niche markets within the larger American book market. Popular translations of European authors were the core of Leypoldt's publishing enterprise. Of the twenty-four books that Leypoldt published in 1863, ten were translations and six of those had been prepared expressly for Leypoldt.

Three of his books sold well enough to require second editions before the end of his first season.

The Ice-Maiden was one of the books that justified a second edition. It was a modest critical success, garnering positive notices in several newspapers and literary magazines. As was the practice of the day, Leypoldt digested the reviews of the *Ice-Maiden* and used them in the advertisements that he appended to most of the books in his catalog. One of the reviews that Leypoldt used in his advertisements was written by Charles Godfrey Leland (1824-1903), who became one of Leypoldt's authors. Leland's review appeared in the *Continental Monthly* in May of 1863.²⁸¹

In that first year, Leypoldt also published two editions of Felix Mendelssohn's *Letters from Italy and Switzerland*. The editions reprinted a translation by Lady Grace Wallace (d 1878) that had been previously issued in London by Longman and in Boston by Oliver Ditson in 1862. Leypoldt had an agreement with Ditson: in 1865, they began issuing the book, each listing the other as the secondary publisher. Mendelssohn was a popular commodity for Longman, Ditson, and Leypoldt, who each reissued the book several times during the next ten years.

Leypoldt's edition of the *Life of Chopin* also generated two editions in its first year, but it was a different sort of venture. Unlike Mendelssohn's *Letters*, the translation of Liszt's *Life of Chopin* was a domestic production. The translator, Martha Walker Cook (1806-1874), was a native of Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. Her brother, Robert J. Walker (1801-1869), had been Secretary of the Treasury under James Polk and was briefly governor of the Kansas Territory, appointed by James Buchanan.

At the time that Leypoldt issued Martha Walker Cook's translation of the *Life of Chopin*, her brother was half-owner of the *Continental Monthly* and she was a frequent contributor.²⁸² Naturally, the book received a favorable notice in the *Continental*. There was no mention of Martha Walker Cook in the review, but "the enterprising publisher" was praised for risking the "publication of a work deemed by many too excellent to be generally appreciated by our reading community."²⁸³ Apparently the book was not too excellent for the reading community; Leypoldt issued a second edition three months later. The book was a perennial seller for Leypoldt and for Oliver Ditson.

F. W. Christern was also listed as the secondary publisher of all three second editions. Over the course of his career as a bookseller, Christern appeared as the secondary publisher of perhaps two dozen books, most of which were Leypoldt's. Secondary publishing agreements, like those between Leypoldt and Ditson or Christern, were common in the book trade. Secondary publishers usually assumed a portion of the production costs in exchange for preferential treatment in the retail arrangement.

Christern's willingness to support Leypoldt's publishing venture was evidence of his continued goodwill toward the young man he had encouraged to leave New York. It also meant that the books must have sold briskly in New York as well as in Philadelphia and that Christern believed that they would continue to sell. His belief was borne out by the lasting popularity of the *Life of Chopin* and Mendelssohn's *Letters*—both books remained in print for many years.

As a foreign book dealer, Christern faced many of the same problems that had plagued Leypoldt. He was trying to maintain his import business despite punitive tariffs and rampant inflation. Christern never turned to publishing—he was too thoroughly a

German bookseller to abandon his trade for another. The memory of Garrigue's adventures in publishing probably reinforced his training. Christern was perfectly willing to help his friend, but there were limits to the risk he was willing to assume. He helped finance many of Leypoldt's books, stocked them in his New York store, and distributed them to other booksellers. He did what he could to help Leypoldt, without jeopardizing his career as a German bookseller.

Leypoldt issued his first four books, *The Ice-Maiden*, *Letters from Italy and Switzerland*, *Life of Chopin*, and a translation of Karl Kortum's mock epic, the *Jobsiad*, between April and June of 1863. Each of those first four books remained in Leypoldt's catalog, generating several editions over the next ten years. His next batch of titles was similarly successful. In June he took over a book that had originally been one of John Weik's titles. Weik had published several editions of Charles Leland's translation of Heinrich Heine's *Reisebilder*, the first in 1855. *Pictures of Travel* contained sketches of Heine's travels through Europe, recording physical, intellectual, and emotional journeys in verse and prose. Leypoldt issued a "fourth revised edition" of the book, inaugurating a long and sometimes complicated professional relationship with Leland. Most likely, the two men had known each other since Leypoldt opened his bookstore.

The "revised" edition of *Pictures of Travel* was, however, their first book together. It was followed a few months later by Leland's translation of Heine's *Book of Songs*. The second Heine translation was a success for Leland and Leypoldt. It remained on Leypoldt's list for more than a decade and generated reprint editions into the twentieth century. When it was first issued, however, the book was not to everyone's taste. In a letter to F. W. Christern, dated 30 November 1863, a bookseller in Rochester, New York,

explained that he was returning the copies of the *Book of Songs* that Christern had sent. “Mr Christern,” the letter begins, “These books are too infamous & immoral as you may see by reading the next to last verse in the 17th page & we take the liberty of returning them, Adams & Ellis.”²⁸⁴

The offending verse was from one of the “Dream Pictures” that open the collection. The poem recounted a sort of vision or ghostly encounter at the tomb of a minstrel.

In his lecture-chair the professor muddled
 And twaddled, and sent me to sleep,—the old quiz!
 But I could have slept with more comfort, if cuddled
 In bed with that beautiful daughter of his!²⁸⁵

Adams, or perhaps Ellis, must have stopped reading at the mention of cuddling in bed with the old professor’s daughter, because that sort of “infamy” occurs throughout the book.

Adams and Ellis returned their copies to Christern because Rochester was part of his “territory.” As the secondary publisher of the book, Christern was also acting as its New York distributor, using the western canal and rail network that made New York the commercial center of the country. Leypoldt, on the other hand, would have dealt with regional booksellers south and west of Philadelphia. Secondary publishers in Boston, Cincinnati, and Baltimore would give Leypoldt a comprehensive national distribution network for his books.

In October, Leypoldt published a volume that was meant to be the first in a series of modern critical essays. The elegant little book reprinted the influential essay, “Heinrich Heine,” by Matthew Arnold (1822-1888). With a few successful books on the market, Leypoldt used the Arnold book to announce himself as a publisher. The title page of *Modern Essays No. 1: Heinrich Heine* introduced the first version of Leypoldt’s colophon—an owl perched upon an opened book bearing the initials F. L. The owl and book colophon outlasted Leypoldt’s publishing venture and became famous as the mark of Henry Holt.

Modern Essays No. 1 also included Leypoldt’s fourteen-page catalog, dated October 1863. The catalog outlined an ambitious publishing program. It listed thirty-one titles, many of which were grouped into series. Leypoldt devoted ten pages to the first four books that he published, reprinting numerous excerpts from reviews. The rest of the catalog was a list of titles that were in print or forthcoming. The Heine volumes were listed, plus a tiny book by Anna Jackson called *The Art Principle and Its Application to the Teaching of Music* and a reprinting of Alfred Baskerville’s *Poetry of Germany*, a book that Garrigue had issued in 1854. The catalog listed two named series. “Leypoldt’s Foreign Library,” which was modeled on the Tauchnitz English authors series, included five titles. “Standard Educational Works” was a collection of textbooks, mostly French primers. Leypoldt filled out the catalog with a list of forthcoming titles, dominated by a series of books featuring Doré illustrations. Some of the titles listed as “forthcoming” actually appeared in 1863, others had to wait until the following year, and a few never made it into print.

The cover of the catalog listed a total of five secondary publishers. Christern was there, of course. A. K. Loring and S. Urbino, both of Boston, were listed below Christern. Robert Clarke & Co. of Cincinnati and James Waters of Baltimore completed the list. Taken together, Leypoldt and his secondary publishers made up a distinguished and comprehensive book distribution network.

The “Foreign Library” and “Standard Educational Works”

Leypoldt’s Foreign Library began, and ended, with five numbered volumes. Perhaps he intended to build a major fiction series, but he never did. Given time, an organizing principle for the Foreign Library might have emerged, but the first five books did not function as a series in any recognizable way—in fact, two of the books did not even count as “foreign” by American standards.

One or more secondary publishers underwrote all of the books in the Foreign Library. Christern was the sole secondary publisher listed in three volumes of the Foreign Library, *Immen-see*, *Fanchon the Cricket*, and *Human Follies*. For the remaining volumes, the group of secondary publishers corresponded, more or less, to the group listed in Leypoldt’s catalog. In volumes one and three, Christern was joined by James Miller of New York, A. K. Loring of Boston, and Rickey & Carroll of Cincinnati, the publishers of David R. Locke’s *Divers Views, Opinions and Prophecies of Petroleum V. Nasby*.²⁸⁶

The title of volume one of the Foreign Library might have made the book sound foreign, but “*Chi rompe—paga,*” or *Who Breaks—Pays (Italian Proverb)* was an English novel, written by an English “lady novelist,” Henrietta Camilla Jackson Jenkin (1807-

1885). She also wrote volume three of the series, *Skirmishing: A Novel*. Neither book was “foreign” in the same sense as the other books in the series. In the United States, English books had to be imported, but they were not considered foreign.

Mrs. Jenkin’s books were peculiar choices for something called a Foreign Library, but there was some logic to the designation. Leypoldt printed his editions of Mrs. Jenkin’s novels from stereotype plates that he acquired as the Tauchnitz agent in the U.S. While tariffs on books remained high, it made better sense to import the plates and produce the books domestically. From a practical point of view, it made sense to publish any version of Mrs. Jenkin’s novels, which generated dozens of editions in England, France, Germany, and the U.S. for the next fifty years. Leypoldt’s editions of the novels may not have fit comfortably into the Foreign Library, but they sold well enough to justify several reprintings.

The remaining volumes of the Foreign Library were demonstrably foreign. Volume two paired Theodor Storm’s *Immen-see* with another German novella, *Grandmother and Granddaughter*, by Louise Esche. *Immen-see* originally appeared in 1850; the English translation by H. Clark had been published in Germany a few months before Leypoldt issued it in the U.S.²⁸⁷ Caroline Rollin Corson’s translation of *Grandmother and Granddaughter* was probably done especially for Leypoldt’s edition. The book was not a great success, although it did receive a favorable notice in the *London Spectator*.²⁸⁸

Fanchon, the Cricket, volume four of the series, was also a translation. Leypoldt’s *Fanchon* was the second U.S. edition of Matilda Hays’ translation of *La Petite Fadette*, by George Sand (1804-1876). Putnam had issued the book under the title, *Fadette: A*

Domestic Story in 1851. Leypoldt's decision to issue the book under the title *Fanchon* allowed him to capitalize upon the popularity of a recent stage version of the story.

Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer adapted Sand's story, creating a popular German stage play, *Die Grille*, published in 1857. The German play was reworked for the U.S. stage by August Waldauer in 1860, and it opened in New Orleans under the title *Fanchon the Cricket*.²⁸⁹ The book remained on Leypoldt's list for many years.

The final volume of the series, *Human Follies*, was George Marlow's translation of another French novel, *La bêtise humaine*. The book was a romance by Jules Noriac, which was the anagrammatic *nom de plume* of Claude A. J. Cairon (1827-1882). The book had been popular in France but failed in the U.S. Unlike *Fanchon*, which generated dozens of U.S. printings in its various forms, *Human Follies* never earned a second printing. The title remained in Leypoldt's catalog for a decade, perhaps because the initial print run never sold out.

Taken together, the first five volumes of the Foreign Library gave no sign of any organizing principle. Although he listed the books as a series, Leypoldt made no attempt to create a coherent series—not even in the physical appearance of the books. A few years later, Leypoldt began issuing the books he licensed through the Tauchnitz agency in uniform bindings, but that might have been Henry Holt's idea. Holt pioneered the use of distinctive uniform binding as a marketing tool; the spider-web bindings of his Leisure Time Series were justly famous.

The Foreign Library was a qualified success. Some of the books sold well enough to remain in print for a decade or more, others failed utterly. Leypoldt had better luck overall with educational books. He published several histories intended for children and

English translations of popular French and German children's stories, but the core of his educational business was "Cheap, neat, and correct editions, the most approved Text-books for the study of the French language and literature." Curiously, Leypoldt never published any German textbooks.

Leypoldt had promised four language textbooks in his 1863 catalog, but he only published two that year. One was a well-established exercise book written by Percy Sadler, titled *Petit cours de versions: or, Exercises for Translating English into French*. The other, titled *Soirées Littéraires, Causeries de Salon* (Literary evenings, parlor conversations), was a less conventional textbook. Written by Caroline Rollin Corson, it presented a series of three conversations in French on contemporary literary topics designed to engage the student's natural interest in contemporary French literature.

Leypoldt maintained a productive relationship with Mme. Corson for several years. In addition to *Soirées Littéraires* and her translation of *Grandmother and Granddaughter*, she wrote notes for several of the French storybooks that Leypoldt published, including a French edition of the La Bédollière story *Mother Michel and Her Cat*. Before she arrived in Philadelphia, Mme. Corson had lived in Boston, where she produced a French translation of Longfellow's *Hyperion*.²⁹⁰ It was in Boston that she met her husband, Hiram Corson, who also became one of Leypoldt's authors.

Although it was not mentioned in the catalog, Leypoldt issued Professor Corson's first scholarly publication, an annotated edition of Chaucer's *Legend of Goode Women*, late in 1863. A native of Philadelphia, Corson had been a librarian for the Smithsonian Institution under Charles C. Jewett but had left the post when Jewett was forced to resign. When Leypoldt published his Chaucer edition, Corson was a private tutor and something

of a local celebrity, lecturing at the Ladies' Seminars and the Shakespeare Society. Corson later held a post at Cornell, where wrote his "introduction" series, beginning with *An Introduction to the Study of Robert Browning*, which was followed by studies of Shakespeare and Milton.²⁹¹

About half of the books Leypoldt published his first year were written or translated by friends or by the customers who frequented his bookstore, people like the Corsons. He also built relationships with a few of his authors. Fanny Fuller, for example, translated Andersen's *Ice-Maiden* and *Musical Sketches* by Elise Polko (1822-1899)—both of which sold well for many years. She also produced the text for Leypoldt's English edition of *Mother Michel and Her Cat*. Although it might have been safer to reissue books from the Tauchnitz lists, Leypoldt took some risks as a publisher.

Leypoldt and Leland, a Book-Trade Relationship

Leypoldt took significant risks when he published the work of Charles Godfrey Leland, who was a rising man of letters in Philadelphia. Leland had achieved some small national fame in the mid-fifties when the *Knickerbocker Magazine* reprinted "Hans Breitmann's Barty," one of a series of comic ballads written in German-American dialect. The *Breitmann Ballads* became so popular that Leland complained that he was usually known only as "the author of Hans Breitmann." Like David Ross Locke, the creator of Petroleum V. Nasby, Leland was so closely identified with his fictional character that the man and the character were sometimes taken to be the same.²⁹²

Frederick Leypoldt began his relationship with Leland by issuing an edition of Leland's translation of Heine's *Pictures of Travel*. A couple of months later, Leypoldt

brought out Leland's second book of Heine translations, *Book of Songs*. Leland's translations of Heine were good choices for Leypoldt. Heine was hardly a household name in America, but his brand of Romanticism and his identification with Young Germany must have appealed to a generation of intellectuals raised on Alcott, Emerson, and Carlyle. Leypoldt was taking a calculated risk by publishing Leland's translations of Heine. More than a few Americans reacted badly to Heine. As the letter from Adams & Ellis of Rochester to Christern demonstrated, there were booksellers who were unwilling even to have his books in their shops.

In between the Heine projects, Leland brought Leypoldt two small books of political satire that gave Leypoldt a chance to act upon his political sympathies. Leland and Leypoldt were both committed Unionists, and both men were volunteers in Pennsylvania regiments, although Leypoldt was never called upon to fight.²⁹³ The books, *Ye Sneak Yclepid Copperhead* and *Ye Book of Copperheads*, were intended to rally pro-Union sentiment by subjecting Copperheads, also known as "Peace Democrats," to fierce ridicule.

Written by Leland and his brother, Henry, during a low ebb of Union sympathy in Philadelphia, the books were published anonymously. *Ye Sneak Yclepid Copperhead* was issued under the names of its publishers, A. Winch, Willis P. Hazard, and F. Leypoldt. Leypoldt published *Ye Book of Copperheads* on his own. Leland claimed authorship readily enough when he wrote his *Memoirs* in 1893, but thirty years earlier he was quite willing to let the publishers accept whatever credit or blame the books might incite.

Ye Sneak Yclepid Copperhead was a small, paperbound, illustrated pamphlet that played endlessly upon the near rhyme of "snake" and "sneak."

I do not like ‘em—sneaks, I mean;
 And I have liked ‘em never:
 Nor striped, black, nor brown, nor green,
 Nor any sort whatever.
 They’ve mischief made e’er since “the Fall,”
 And I have learned to hate ‘em all;
 But most of all, I hate, beded!
 Ye ugly sneak, with eyes so red—
 Ye Sneak yclepid Copperhead.

The book made no particular argument beyond the simple, repeated association of Southern sympathizers and “snakes in the grass.”²⁹⁴

Ye Book of Copperheads was a more sophisticated effort that made brutal fun of Northern Democrats who wanted a continuation of James Buchanan’s policies, in particular the doctrine of “popular sovereignty.” The Copperheads, also known as Peace Democrats, vigorously opposed Lincoln’s war policy. Peace Democrats were primarily Midwesterners with commercial or ideological ties to the agrarian South. In the urban Northeast, many of the same people who had supported the nativist position of the Know-Nothings before the war, including many Irish and German immigrants, supported the Peace Democrats during the war.

For Republicans like Leland, “Copperhead” had become a synonym for traitor. Leland used the term in that sense, ignoring entirely any of the issues that animated the Copperhead movement. Each panel of *Ye Book of Copperheads* featured a political

cartoon, a short verse, and a quotation from Shakespeare. One panel, for example, depicted a devil reclining on an ottoman, holding a snake that was drawn to suggest a hookah. The devil sat surrounded by bubbles bearing the names of Copperhead papers: the *Chicago Times*, the *New York World*, the *Philadelphia Age*, and others. The caption read “The Pipe of Peace.” A verse below the illustration played upon “bubble” as a slang term for nonsense: “There’s a character very well known / Who bubbles for ages has blown; / But the best he has made / since at *bubbling* he played, / from a Copperhead pipe have been thrown.”²⁹⁵

Leypoldt clearly believed in *Ye Book of Copperheads*. It was one of his earliest publications, coming less than two months after *The Ice-Maiden*, and it was most likely the second or third book that he published for Leland. The English version of the book sold for twenty-five cents; it was reprinted in Indianapolis during the bitter presidential campaign of 1864.

Leypoldt also published, or at least planned to publish, a German translation of it—two days after he filed his copyright to *Copperheads*, Leypoldt filed his right to *Das Giftige Schlangenbuch* (The Venomous Snake-book).²⁹⁶ If Leypoldt published a German version of the book, no examples survived, nor do we know who provided the translations. Leland was certainly able, as was Leypoldt himself.

German immigrants remained divided on the war and on abolition and Leypoldt’s effort to convince his fellow immigrants was hardly unique. Francis Leiber, who drafted the military code of conduct for Union forces during the war, wrote an electioneering pamphlet meant to rally support for Lincoln in the election of 1864. *Lincoln oder McClellan?* Leiber tried to convince German-speaking immigrants that McClellan

represented a return to the Know-Nothing politics that had victimized them before the war.²⁹⁷

Ye Book of Copperheads might seem an obscure little publication today, but it was quite popular in its day. Abraham Lincoln was the book's most famous reader. In his memoir, Leland recalled his literary connection to "Father Abraham."

I also wrote and illustrated a very eccentric pamphlet, "The Book of Copperheads." When Abraham Lincoln died two books were found in his desk. One was the "Letters of Petroleum V. Nasby," by Dr. R. Locke, and my "Book of Copperheads," which was later sent to me *to see and return*. It was much thumbed, showing it had been thoroughly read by Father Abraham.²⁹⁸

Leland made nothing more of the story, simply allowing Lincoln's unspoken tribute to do its work.

Leyboldt and Leland produced at least eight books together. Most were translations, but a few, like the Copperhead pamphlets, were original works. Leland cataloged his wartime publications in his *Memoirs*. The list picked up after *Ye Book of Copperheads*:

I also translated Heine's "Book of Songs." Most of these had already been published in the "Pictures of Travel." I restored them to their original metres. I also translated the "Memoirs of a Good-for-Nothing" from the German, and finished up, partially illustrated, and published two juvenile works. One of these was "Mother Pitcher," a collection of original nursery rhymes for children, which I had written [sic] many years before expressly for my youngest sister Emily, now Mrs.

John Harrison of Philadelphia. In this work occurs my original poem of “Ping-Wing the Pieman’s Son.” Of this poem *Punch* said, many years after, that it was the best thing of its kind which had ever crossed the Atlantic.”²⁹⁹

Leland ended the paragraph with, “I also translated the German ‘Mother Goose.’”

Leyboldt published all of those books, and several more, but Leland never mentioned him.³⁰⁰ Leyboldt may be the only publisher of the day that Leland failed to mention in his *Memoirs*.

Leyboldt’s professional association with Leland reached a peak in 1864. Leland was involved, one way or another, in about one quarter of Leyboldt’s issues for that year. Leyboldt published Leland’s third Heine translation and a lavishly illustrated edition of Leland’s *Legends of the Birds*, along with his rendering of Mother Goose and the book of original nursery rhymes, of which Leland was proud. In addition, Leland wrote introductory essays for several of Leyboldt’s books. In 1864, Leyboldt also issued *An Artist’s Poems* by Carl Heinrich Schmolze (1823-1861). Leland provided translations of Schmolze’s poems and he probably brought the project to Leyboldt.

An Artist’s Poems was a portfolio of poems written and illustrated by Carl Schmolze, a German artist and “forty-eighter” living and working in Philadelphia. The publication was one part of a larger collaboration involving Leyboldt, Leland, George Boker, and many other prominent Philadelphians, to raise funds for the Great Central Fair, which in turn raised funds for the U.S. Sanitary Commission. Schmolze was a well-known artist in Philadelphia. He provided illustrations for a number of books published in the city; he also designed and executed the four large murals on the domed ceiling of the Academy of Music.³⁰¹

Leyboldt's contributed a great deal to the Great Central Fair and the Sanitary Commission. His work on behalf of the Great Central Fair was part of what he considered his patriotic duty to help raise funds for the Sanitary Commission, the forerunner of the modern Red Cross.³⁰² Organized in June of 1861, the Commission provided Union soldiers with sanitary hospital facilities and helped soldiers maintain at least minimal standards of hygiene and nutrition on the battlefield and in encampment, a task that became increasingly difficult as the war progressed.

Beginning in Chicago in 1863, Sanitary Fairs were held throughout the North to raise funds for the Commission. Like its predecessors, the Great Central Fair raised money by charging an admission to the fair and to the various concerts and exhibitions held on fair grounds. Money was also raised by raffles, auctions, and the sale of items donated by celebrities and political figures.³⁰³

The Schmolze portfolio raised money to stage the fair, but Leyboldt's most famous contribution to the Fair was a limited edition of the Emancipation Proclamation, signed by President Lincoln and Secretary of State William H. Seward, to be sold during the Philadelphia fair. Lincoln's name and image were particularly valuable to the organizers of the Sanitary Fairs. Lincoln attended fairs in Baltimore and Washington, D.C., and he sent autographed cards for sale at some fairs.³⁰⁴

Leyboldt's broadside edition of the Emancipation Proclamation took full advantage of Lincoln's valuable name. According to the description of a signed example held by the University of Delaware Library, Leyboldt published two editions of the broadside—a first edition of twenty-four printed late in May 1864 and a second edition of forty-eight copies dated 6 June. Lincoln and Secretary Seward signed the forty-eight

copies of the second edition, and Lincoln's private secretary, John G. Nicolay, witnessed the signatures.³⁰⁵

Leyboldt's contributions to the success of the Sanitary Fair did not earn him much attention, but they were significant. He published *An Artist's Poems* to help fund the fair and the Emancipation Proclamation to raise funds at the fair; he also provided office space for the organizers of the fair, or at least a mailing address. John Welsh, Chairman of the Executive Committee, sent Lincoln a letter dated 23 May 1864. According to Chairman Welsh's letter, the address of the "Office of the 'Great Central Fair'. U.S. Sanitary Commission" was 1323 Chestnut Street.³⁰⁶ Evidently the Great Central Fair was planned and organized in Leyboldt's bookstore, probably in the reading room.

Leyboldt's professional association with Leland continued after the Great Central Fair ended. In 1864, Leyboldt published five books for Leland, including the *Legend of the Birds* and *Mother Pitcher's Poems for Little People*, a book Leland recalled with real pride in his *Memoirs*. He also issued a second printing of Leland's translation of Heine's *Book of Songs*. Leyboldt's list for 1864 repeated many of the books that first appeared in 1863. He issued new printings of his best sellers: Mendelssohn's *Letters*, *The Life of Chopin*, and Elise Polko's *Musical Sketches*. He also issued a second printing of Hiram Corson's Chaucer edition.

Most of his reprinted editions carried stereotype credits, usually for L. Johnson and Co., of Philadelphia. Stereotyping made reprinting simpler, but it added to the initial cost of the print run and created storage problems. Leyboldt's decision to pay for stereotype plates reflected his intention to keep his list in print as long as possible. However, he rarely risked the cost of stereotyping when he introduced a title.

Leypoldt augmented his steady sellers with more books for children and students, both literature in translation and books intended for language study. Fanny Fuller translated *The Root-Princess: A Christmas Story* by German painter and poet, Robert Reinick (1805-1852). Leypoldt also issued *Eia Popeia: Deutsche Kinderheimath in Wort und Sang und Bild*, a book of nursery rhymes and lullabies collected by Franz Pocci and illustrated by Ludwig Richter.

In his second year of publishing, Leypoldt continued as he had begun. He seemed to publish whatever came to hand, with little regard for commercial viability. Some of his publications, like the Doré series, were expensive to produce. Leypoldt finally issued the second Dante album that he had promised in 1863. he also brought out a portfolio of twelve illustrations created for Chateaubriand's *Atala*, and another of illustrations from *The Legend of the Wandering Jew* to his list of Doré publications, making five in all. In a similar graphic vein, he published two maps and an atlas that depicted the battles of the Virginia campaigns of the Army of the Potomac prepared by Gustavus R. Bechler, the topographer who later mapped much of Colorado, including Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons, for the Geological Survey.

Leypoldt continued to publish translations and scholarly work. He brought out a second volume of Mendelssohn's letters and an edition of Schiller's poems, both translated by Lady Wallace. He issued a collection of German poems translated by Lucy Hamilton Hooper, a friend of Leland's and co-editor of *Our Daily Fare*, a newspaper published on the grounds of the Great Central Fair. She later edited *Lippincott's Magazine*.³⁰⁷ *The Poetical Works of John Milton* was a popular two volume scholarly

edition by Charles Dexter Cleveland. If the books Leypoldt published in his first two years reveal anything, they show a man looking for his way in a new enterprise.

One thing was a constant in Leypoldt's early career; he always believed in using the periodical press to promote his books. He sent review copies to journals he thought might review the books favorably—even when the book was not one that he had prepared for publication. One such book was briefly reviewed in the *United States Service Magazine*, a wartime journal by Henry Coppee:

From Mr. Frederick Leypoldt, of Philadelphia, the publisher, we have received an extended essay, translated from the French of CHARLES VICTOR BONSTETTEN, and entitled "The Man of the North and the Man of the South, or the Influence of Climate." It is an interesting investigation; and the author, after giving a clear comparison of "The Two Climates," discusses the subject under various divisions, such as Agriculture, Liberty, Habit, Suicide, Drunkenness, Literature, Friendship, and numerous others. The illustrative references are chiefly European; but the great principles are the same everywhere, and we may find an interest in endeavoring to apply them to our own North and South.³⁰⁸

Leypoldt was in fact the secondary publisher of the book. Christern held the copyright and had the book printed in New York.

The Man of the North had nothing to do with the issues that divided the United States. Bonstetten (1745-1832), a student of Rousseau and mentor to Johannes von Müller, wrote his celebration of northern virtue in 1824. Forty years later, readers in the U.S. were inclined to read the book as a philosophical and cultural defense of the Union,

if only by tenuous analogy. As Germans and Unionists, Leypoldt and Christern probably found much to agree with in Bonstetten's socio-climatological arguments. They were certainly "men of the north," in the sense that Bonstetten meant, and in the way that Henry Coppee suggested in his review of the book.

In his second year as an American publisher, Leypoldt maintained the course he had set in his 1863 catalog. The books he published reflected his training in the German book trade, but they also showed his commitment to the scholars and artists who had supported him since he moved to Philadelphia. Leypoldt's list was idiosyncratic, revealing a clear interest in the arts, and a willingness to take an occasional risk. Most of the books that Leypoldt published in those first two years were clearly meant to appeal to a broad audience, but several had little commercial potential. A few of his books were overtly political, but his list was not particularly adventurous.

In their biographical sketches of Leypoldt, however, Growoll and Bowker both told a story concerning James T. Fields that casts a very different light on Leypoldt and his publications. While in Philadelphia on business, Fields made a point of stopping by Leypoldt's Chestnut Street store to pay his respects. Fields "entered the store and inquired for Mr. Leypoldt. Upon Mr. Leypoldt introducing himself, Mr. Fields remarked, 'I specially hunted you up to make your acquaintance, for I was curious to see the man who ventured to publish books that older and richer houses would be afraid of. I must say, however, that I am disappointed: I expected to see a man at least six or seven feet high.'" That much was identical in both accounts, but Growoll added a note: "Leypoldt was a man well below the average stature, though broad and well-built."³⁰⁹

Neither Bowker nor Growoll gave any indication of the books that might have inspired Fields to make a special point of meeting Leypoldt. Fields might have been favorably impressed by Leypoldt's willingness to publish modern European writers. A few of Leypoldt's literary translations were mildly controversial and Fields was neither a prude nor a coward. Leypoldt's conversation guides and Doré portfolios would hardly elicit a strong response from Fields. Perhaps he was reacting to the handful of political publications.

When Fields sought out Leypoldt, the man "who ventured to publish books that older and richer houses would be afraid of," he was in the midst of his own struggle to reconcile his business decisions and his political conscience. According to his biographer, Warren Tryon, Fields considered himself a literary man and a businessman, even as war seemed certain. He had little genuine interest in politics, tending to follow the Whig sympathies of his partner, William Ticknor, more from convenience than conviction.

In Boston, as the tensions between the North and the South were becoming more pronounced, however, it became increasingly difficult for a man like Fields to maintain an apolitical stance as war approached. Fields was at the center of Boston literary life, which inevitably put him at the center of Boston political life. As Tryon explained in *Parnassus Corner*, Fields was forced by circumstances to take an active interest in politics and, eventually, to adopt a stance, but he resisted as long as he could.

Fields did whatever he could to maintain his business in the South. He advised one of his authors, Grace Greenwood, to delete portions of her book that would make it unsaleable in the South. He accepted returns of Charles Kingsley's *Two Years Ago* from booksellers in Charleston, South Carolina. Southerners took offense at Kingsley's

attitudes towards slavery and slaves. The love affair between an English gentleman, Freddie Scoutbush, and the runaway slave, Marie, was bad enough, but her eventual marriage to Tom Thurnall was beyond the pale.³¹⁰

The war, when it did come, was primarily a business problem for Fields. In 1861 Ticknor and Fields cut both its catalog and its production rate in half. These drastic measures allowed the firm to remain active even while the book trade languished in the uncertain early days of the war. Ticknor and Fields continued to issue new books. Oliver Wendell Holmes' *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* and Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* were both issued in 1861, for example, but they took few risks.

Fields might have become interested in Leypoldt's work because it was relevant to his own political development. Fields replaced James Russell Lowell as its editor of *Atlantic Monthly* in 1861, after Ticknor and Fields acquired the journal. Fields still had little interest in politics, and he tried to remain neutral as the editor of a respected literary magazine, treading carefully between the Whig sympathies of his partner and the more radical Republican politics of the Boston literati.

As the war progressed, however, his business principles were overtaken by his political views. The initial slump that had depressed the trade in the early days of the war ended quite suddenly. By the end of the second year of the war, the Northern economy had not simply recovered—it was booming.³¹¹ As his business recovered, Fields became more partisan. He used his personal and professional friendships in England to lobby for the Union cause and became outraged when he discovered that many in England supported the South. Fields would have been in the midst of his political conversion

when he came to see Leypoldt. Perhaps he was taken by the idea of a neophyte publisher, and a foreigner in the bargain, who was willing to act upon his convictions.

Fields struggled with his own convictions. In 1863, just before the publication of Hawthorne's *Our Old Home*, Fields faced a difficult decision. Hawthorne had dedicated the volume to his long-time friend, Franklin Pierce, whose efforts to avoid the inevitable conflict between North and South had earned him the lasting enmity of anti-slavery Unionists, especially in Boston. Fields cautioned Hawthorne, explaining that the dedication would hurt sales, perhaps even kill the book. In the end Fields left the decision to Hawthorne, who let the dedication stand.³¹² The risk was significant for both men. Each risked revenue and reputation, although only Fields risked the cost of production.

Fields was finally a man of convictions who respected the convictions of others. Leypoldt was willing to take chances. He risked his capital and his reputation by publishing books that might find a hostile audience, or no audience at all. Fields apparently recognized boldness in Leypoldt at a time when strong, and often contradictory, ethical and economic pressures caused many publishers to seek safety. Whatever inspired Fields to seek out Leypoldt, it must have occurred in those first two years. By September of 1864, Leypoldt was already thinking about leaving Philadelphia.

“To the Philadelphia Members of the Book Trade”

The admiration of James Fields notwithstanding, Leypoldt was making enemies in the Philadelphia book trade. Leypoldt was committed to the established patterns of the trade that he had learned from Christern. He was particularly hostile toward any attempt to undermine what he saw as the publishers' right to set the retail prices of the books they

issued. When Philadelphia booksellers started setting their own retail prices, which Leypoldt regarded as underselling, he fought back.

Before he began publishing books, Leypoldt understood that the U.S. book industry suffered from the lack of a journal and catalogs. After a little more than a year as a publisher, he learned that American booksellers, at least those in Philadelphia, routinely violated what he took to be a fundamental principle of the trade. Philadelphia booksellers were setting their own prices—even worse, publishers were allowing the thing to happen. Leypoldt was not the only one concerned about underselling; in the U.S. trade, only copyright infringement has caused more debate in the book business than underselling.³¹³

In September 1864, Leypoldt issued an open letter addressed to the “Philadelphia Members of the Book Trade.” It was his second public statement to the trade. Leypoldt believed that underselling jeopardized the entire structure of the book industry. He warned that underselling threatened the prestige of the trade, reducing it to mere commerce.³¹⁴ Leypoldt was furious and he began with open hostility:

Since I have been dealing in American books, and publishing, I have, publicly and privately, protested against the pernicious system, or rather *non*-system, of underselling. This non-system was, as is well known, *openly* begun in this city by a petty Chestnut Street dealer, whose example was followed by a so-called “leading” house, and, I am sorry to say, soon afterwards by many others. The latter, however, would still like to *appear* deserving the honorable name of bookseller.³¹⁵

“Honorable” book dealers, he continued, could halt the practice, but only if they acted together. Together, they had the power to “bring a faithless member back to his duty, by cutting off all connection with him.”

Leyboldt continued, recounting the meetings and the resolutions and the utter lack of effective action. He was particularly bitter about his treatment by the very people he imagined to be his allies. He complained of “having been even ridiculed for my vain efforts, and what is still worse, having been placed in a false position with my old customers, who have in more than one instance indignantly left me to purchase my own publications at a *second-hand* price, from that oldest and ‘most honorable’ firm.” The oldest and most honorable firm in Philadelphia should have been one of the firms descended from Mathew Carey’s enterprise, but he might have been referring to Lippincott.

Clearly, Leyboldt considered underselling more than just sharp business practice. Underselling disregarded the principle of mutual interest, and it violated the honor of the trade. At its core, Leyboldt’s argument depended upon the belief that books were more than just goods for sale; he was clear on that point:

A book is certainly not a production, the cost of which can be calculated like butter—so different from all other merchandise, so much depending on hundreds of contingencies, so much beset with difficulties of the nature of which the publisher alone can be fully cognizant, that it is the publisher alone who is capable of fixing a legitimate retail price.³¹⁶

Leypoldt never explained the contingencies and difficulties that made books unique among manufactured goods, perhaps because he had no good examples to offer. He was, nevertheless, sure of his position and willing to act.

Leypoldt concluded that it would be “foolishly obstinate then for the youngest and least supported member of the Trade still to insist on the good old fashion of consulting *mutual* interests!” The only way he could defend himself from the cutthroat practices that prevailed in Philadelphia was to embrace them. It was, he said, a kind of homeopathic cure—*similia similibus curantur* (let like be cured with like). Henceforth he meant to conduct his “city trade entirely on the wholesale basis (foreign publications excepted).” He vowed to do so until the trade came to its senses.

Leypoldt offered no apology for his “Germanisms.” Instead, he ended with a promise: “not to think the worse of any of my colleagues who, in consequence of the above statement, should in future refuse to sell me their books. I will, on the contrary, good naturedly accept their refusal, and, if I really want the books, get them from their neighbor.”³¹⁷ No doubt, Leypoldt meant to shame his colleagues, but his manifesto had no chance of success. If anything, it must have alienated his friends and amused his foes. Philadelphia’s booksellers and publishers continued to ignore quaint notions like mutual interest and the “courtesy of the trade.” Leypoldt continued to publish his books, but he soon decided to leave Philadelphia.

Leypoldt was convinced that underselling would ruin the book trade, but his business was doing quite well. As the war slowly staggered toward its inevitable conclusion, business was booming in the North. Assessing the economic consequences of the American Civil War has always been complicated and uncertain, but the economic

surge that began in 1864 was real enough. In the urban North, real wages and the consumer price index rose at about the same rate between 1861 and 1865. Exclude imported luxuries from the calculation, and the cost of living in the urban North actually seems to have fallen during the war.³¹⁸ Tariffs and customs duties continued to keep imported books out of reach for most booksellers, but the domestic trade flourished during the war. The initial wartime slump in the book trade lingered for more than two years, but it was followed by a vigorous rebound.³¹⁹

Leyboldt began publishing at the end of the slump. His publishing venture rose on an economic surge that helped many Northern businessmen. During 1864, he continued to run the bookstore and the lending library. Toward the end of the year he stopped retailing his own books, but he maintained a retail business based on imports and his foreign book and news agency contracts. The economic turnaround made it possible for Leyboldt to take a lease on a second-floor office in New York at the corner of Broadway and Bleeker Street.³²⁰ The New York office was the first sign that Leyboldt had decided to leave Philadelphia.

The second step was the disposition of his lending library. He was able to sell his entire French library to the Mercantile Library Company of Philadelphia. The collection, 2022 volumes in total, changed the character of the library in a single stroke, which was made clear in the Library Company's annual report for 1865: "By the purchase of Mr. F. Leyboldt's valuable French Library, an important deficiency has been supplied. Before this purchase was made, our collection of French books was very meagre, and almost devoid of the popular works of great modern authors; but now it is one of the best in the country, and certainly has no equal among the public libraries of this city."³²¹ The Library

Company paid \$1800 for entire collection; it was the largest single acquisition in the history of the Company.³²² Leypoldt must have sold the rest of his lending library, nearly 4,000 German and English volumes, but he left no record of the sale. His librarian, Marian Monachesi, was not dismissed when the library was sold—she remained with Leypoldt her entire working life.

The transition from Philadelphia bookseller-publisher to New York publisher took nearly two dangerously unproductive years. Leypoldt issued no new titles in 1865 and only two in 1866. Most of the books he issued during the transition were reprintings of his more successful titles. For two years, Leypoldt relied upon the work he had done in Philadelphia. Even the title pages of the most of books that he issued during the period identified him as a Philadelphia publisher.

A few of Leypoldt's books revealed the move to New York. One was *Our Year: A Child's Book in Prose and Verse* by Dinah Maria Craik (1826-1887). The children's book had been issued by Macmillan in 1840 and by Tauchnitz in 1860; Leypoldt's edition was a reprint of the Tauchnitz. *Our Year* had no colophon, but the title page read, "New York & Philadelphia, Fredrick Leypoldt." Another was a book called, *Gouttes de rosée: petit trésor poétique des jeunes* (Dewdrops: Little poetic treasures for children), by L. Pylodet. The book was a new venture for Leypoldt, who was of course, L. Pylodet. Leypoldt used the pseudonym off and on for the rest of his career.

Creating a New Kind of American Publisher

After he returned to New York, Leypoldt left the retail book trade altogether. Without a bookstore, he was no longer a bookseller-publisher. He was trying something

new. He would arrange financing, make contracts with printers and binders to manufacture his books, and then sell the books to retailers. Retail booksellers were welcome to cut each other's throats, but no one would ever undersell him again. Leypoldt's strategy was a radical departure for the American book trade. Publishing had never been an independent function in the U.S.

The experiment should have failed. The U.S. book trade had entrenched ideas about the proper way to do business, and Leypoldt's experiment ran counter to those ideas. The post-war industrial economy favored large-scale enterprises, and book industry, in New York especially, was following the trend. Putnam and Scribners developed into great industrial publishing houses after the war. Big houses like Appleton and Harpers prospered and grew even bigger.³²³

Harpers set the standard for large-scale book production. Their modern book factory, described in detail by Jacob Abbott in *The Harper Establishment*, put almost every operation of book production under two connected roofs. Manuscripts and other raw materials entered on the first floor of the Cliff Street building, proceeded up and down two seven-story buildings, and case-bound books were sold to the public in the Franklin Square showroom.³²⁴

Leypoldt worked out of a loft above a small bank, with the help of an assistant and an errand boy, but meant to insert himself into New York's book industry in a completely novel way. He could not compete against the big houses and he had no intention of repeating the frustration he experienced in Philadelphia. Instead, he planned to follow a business strategy that was based on the German model. He would be an independent publisher.

It was a bold, and nearly fatal, step for Leypoldt. Publishers cannot survive long on their backlists. His debts were mounting. He desperately needed to publish something new. Leypoldt was not the only businessman who was having trouble; the end of the war brought an end to the boom economy. One of the first new manuscripts that Leypoldt received in his New York office was a translation of Edmond About's fantastic novel *L'Homme à l'oreille cassée* (*The Man with a Broken Ear*). It was the sort of book that Leypoldt might have published, but he had no money to risk.

Leypoldt offered to publish the book if the translator, a young man named Henry Holt, paid the costs. Leypoldt did not publish the book, but he hired Holt in November of 1865. Two months later, they launched a fruitful partnership that was known, for a few years at least, as Leypoldt and Holt. The partnership lasted only a few years, but Holt eventually turned Leypoldt's quirky little experiment into a major American publishing house. It took most of a century, but every major American publisher followed Leypoldt's example and moved out of the retail book trade.

In his rambling, episodic memoir, *Garrulities of an Octogenarian Editor*, Holt recalled the path that took him to Leypoldt's loft. After taking a degree from Yale, he studied law at Columbia. While he was still in law school, Holt, who had literary ambitions decided to explore the book business. He helped underwrite an illustrated edition of Irving's *Sketch Book*, to be published by George Palmer Putnam for the Christmas market.

Encouraged by the modest success of the project, Holt bought a third interest in *The Rebellion Record*, a wide-ranging collection of Civil War data edited by Frank Moore. Putnam was serving as a federal tax collector at the time, and so the

administration of the project fell to Holt. Holt bungled the project, and Putnam sold *The Rebellion Record* to David Van Nostrand, who made a success of the venture.

Holt's handling of *The Rebellion Record* ruined his chances of a career with Putnam. Writing much later, George Haven Putnam described Holt as he had been when employed by his father, G. P. Putnam: "Young Holt had business ambition and a full measure of business capacity. He appeared, however, not prepared to believe in those earlier years that business success called for persistent application." According to the younger Putnam, Holt had a "winning personality," but he "possessed decided views on a number of questions, and possessed, also, an unwillingness, possibly an exaggerated unwillingness, to accept traditional beliefs or the conclusions arrived at by previous generations."³²⁵

After his failure at Putnam, Holt was again a young man of many advantages and few prospects. Casting about for a career in the book business, Holt called on a German publisher who specialized in translations of modern European authors. Holt described the event in his memoir, using his own idiosyncratic version of another of his enthusiasms, "rational spelling."

In '64 I finisht the course in the Law School, and while waiting for something to turn up, or trying to turn something up, I translated About's *l'Homme à l'Oreille Cassée*, and took it to "F. Leypoldt" (as he announced himself), who had come over from Germany a few years before, and had already publisht in tasteful style translations of a few well-chosen books in continental literature. He would take my book only at my own risk, but our talk led to my going to work with him in

November 1865, and six weeks later, on the first of January 1866, we went into partnership.³²⁶

When he presented himself at 644 Broadway, Holt must have reminded Leypoldt of Charles Leland. Like Leland, Holt had been born to money and he had lived a life of privilege. He had good social connections and academic credentials.

Holt asked G. P. Putnam for a letter of reference. The letter, dated 19 November 1865, praised Holt's character, ability, and education without commenting directly upon his actual work. Leypoldt preserved the letter, and kept it among his few personal papers.

Dear Sir, Learning from my esteemed friend Mr. Henry Holt that he has had formal conversations with you in regard to business arrangements, —it gives me much pleasure to say (although I am personally unknown to you) that my relations with Mr. Holt have been of the most agreeable & satisfactory character—that I consider him a gentleman of high character and ability—a man of business and integrity “whose word is his bond”—and that his talents for business as well as his literary ability and his education, render him a desirable & reliable associate.³²⁷

Putnam might have been “personally unknown” to Leypoldt, but he was among the best-known bookmen in the United States.

On 1 January 1866, F. Leypoldt became Leypoldt and Holt. The firm was housed in a second-floor loft where Holt first encountered his new partner. Holt described the place in a reminiscence that he wrote in 1923. Joe, who was the subject of the sketch, was

Joseph Vogelius, who had begun his career as Leypoldt's assistant, and continued as Holt's assistant until 1919. Holt remembered him for the readers of *Publishers' Weekly*:

When, fifty years ago I entered the publishing house of "F. Leypoldt," it consisted of a loft room about thirty feet square in a bank building on the northeast corner of Broadway and Bleeker streets, and its occupants were Leypoldt—a fine scholar and a true gentleman; Joe, a boy of about twenty, who tho he was mainly occupied in making bundles, was in soul as good a gentleman as Leypoldt or anybody else, and Charlie Seyer, a boy of a dozen years or so, and the image of Edward Rowland Sill, the poet, which was the most poetical image I ever saw—three remarkable people.³²⁸

Holt knew almost nothing about the book business at the time. He had never really worked for Putnam; he was a dabbler and a gadfly. He was not as well off as he appeared. Holt brought enthusiasm, \$6,000, and a wide acquaintance among intellectuals to the firm.³²⁹

Leypoldt was not quite the businessman he seemed to Holt either. In January of 1866, he possessed the rights to three European agencies, Tauchnitz, Didot, and Trübner, and \$11,000 in debts.³³⁰ By all rights, Leypoldt and Holt should have failed within the year. Instead, the firm survived and then prospered, primarily because Holt had connections and Leypoldt had the European agencies. The first book issued under the name "Leypoldt and Holt" was Joseph von Eichendorff's *Memoirs of a Good-for-Nothing*. The volume was one of the translations from German that Charles Leland completed three years earlier, and the final installment in Leypoldt's professional

association with Leland. The book was the first to feature the colophon of the new partnership. The owl was now perched upon a stack of books. On the cover of the topmost book, the initials FL had been replaced by an L superimposed upon an H.

Many of the books published by Leypoldt and Holt in 1866 were holdovers from Leypoldt's earlier lists. They reprinted five books from Leypoldt's years in Philadelphia, including Leypoldt's bestseller, *Letters of Felix Mendelssohn*. Leypoldt and Holt began to exploit the Tauchnitz British Authors Series. They issued four books by Charles Kingsley, whose novel, *Two Years Ago*, had caused trouble for James Fields before the war. They also began issuing a uniform edition of William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863).

The partnership did not have a distinguished first season. Other than merely surviving, their only real achievement of that year was a move to better offices. On 31 March 1866, Leypoldt and Holt signed a two-year lease for the first floor of a building at the corner of Broadway and Broome Street. The terms of the lease required them to pay W. Lee and Benjamin J. Morris \$2,000 in 24 monthly installments and to repair all "defacements" prior to the end of the lease. The lease gave the partners a prime retail location at generous terms, no doubt because Holt's wife, Mary, was the granddaughter of the man who owned the building.³³¹

At the new offices, Holt entertained a steady stream of his friends from Yale and Columbia. Holt mentioned a number of friends who came to visit.³³² J. R. Dennett, the literary editor of *The Nation*, was a caller. Dennett's visits were more than social calls. He sold Leypoldt and Holt a contract for advertisements in *The Nation*. Leypoldt and Holt signed a long-term contract, purchasing 1500 lines per year at sixteen cents a line—

the equivalent of three month's rent. It was a sizable commitment, but it guaranteed prime space at the top the page.³³³

Edmund C. Stedman (1833-1908) and Richard Henry Stoddard (1825-1903) were also frequent visitors. Stedman, who had been a hero to Holt at Yale, was working as a stockbroker and writing poetry during those early years in New York. He had literary ambitions but is best remembered as a critic and an early promoter of Poe and Whitman. Stoddard, another minor poet better remembered as a critic, helped Melville secure a job as customs inspector, a favor that Hawthorne had earlier done for him.

Holt also entertained Edward Youmans (1821-1887) and John Fiske (1842-1901). Youmans, America's great popularizer of science and scientific study, was then planning and promoting his "International Science Series." A few years later, he founded *Popular Science Monthly*, which he edited until his death. Youmans and Fiske helped make Darwin and Spencer household names in the U.S. Fiske devoted the first half of his career to the cause of Spencerian Evolution. He was particularly keen to forge a reconciliation between orthodox religious beliefs and a scientific understanding of human evolution.

Holt's friends may have gathered at the office, but they seem not to have brought much business with them. Leyboldt and Holt published Fiske's first book, *Tobacco and Alcohol*, in 1868, but Holt's poet friends never placed anything with the firm. Perhaps Stedman and Stoddard chose not to submit any of their manuscripts to their friend's firm, but it seems more likely that Leyboldt declined to take the risk, as he had with Holt.

Leyboldt had built his business on three primary lines: good translations of established European works, with an emphasis on poets, playwrights, and composers;

literature for children; and educational books, particularly primers for language study. Of course Leypoldt had, from time to time, ventured outside those boundaries, but he was rarely reckless. He was apparently reluctant to change his policies to accommodate Holt or his friends.

Holt's taste eventually prevailed over Leypoldt's caution, and then the firm began to find its way. In 1867, Leypoldt and Holt issued twenty-seven titles, fifteen of them new works for the firm. A few books on the list were clearly Holt's choices. Holt had idolized Edward Rowland Sill (1841-1887) while they were at Yale, so it must have given him great satisfaction to publish Sill's first book, *The Hermitage and Other Poems*. Holt brought the firm *Critical and Social Essays*, a collection of essays from *The Nation*, which was perhaps, part of the deal for advertising in that journal. He was also responsible for introducing Turgenev to American readers; he convinced Leypoldt to publish a translation of *Fathers and Sons* by Eugene Schuyler (1840-1890), another friend from Yale.

As a partner, Holt was also able, finally, to publish his own book—the translation of *The Man with a Broken Ear* that he had tried to sell to Leypoldt two years earlier. The majority of the list for 1867, however, depended upon Leypoldt's editorial taste. Bayard Taylor's scholarly edition of *Frithiof's Saga* and Eugene Richter's examination of cooperative stores as they developed in Germany, were exactly the sort of books that Leypoldt had published when he began in Philadelphia. *Beethoven's Letters, 1790-1826* and *Mozart's Letters, 1769-1791* continued Leypoldt's music series, while *The Journal of Maurice de Guérin*, which Henry James reviewed favorably, was another translation of modern French literature.³³⁴

Leypoldt's partnership with Holt survived its first year and prospered in its second. The business was doing well enough for Leypoldt to consider marriage to a young woman he had known for many years. During his frequent visits to the home of Fredrick Christern, Leypoldt had become acquainted with the family of Christern's former partner and brother-in-law, Rudolph Garrigue. Garrigue was, by that time, the president of the Germania Fire Insurance Company and the father of eleven children—seven of those children were daughters. On the 24 September 1867, Leypoldt married Augusta H. Garrigue (1849-1919).

Augusta was just seventeen when she married Leypoldt at her parent's house in Morrisiana, New York. She was the Garrigue's second daughter, but the first to marry. On the whole, her sisters made more advantageous matches. Her older sister, Emilie, married a successful businessman named Thomas Wright (1841-1918). Charlotte, who was a year younger, married Thomas Masaryk (1850-1937), who became the first president of independent Czechoslovakia. Eleanor Garrigue married the American painter, Henry A. Feguson (1842-1911), and Alice married the eminent professor of English Literature, Lewis F. Mott (1863-1941).³³⁵

Frederick and Augusta Leypoldt were well suited to each other. They were hard-working, enthusiastic people. Leypoldt tended to let his enthusiasms cloud his judgment, but his wife had a more practical attitude toward business.³³⁶ Leypoldt began every project with passionate intensity, but when a project ran into trouble, he was subject to deep depressions.³³⁷ In a letter to Bowker, written shortly before the first anniversary of her husband's death, Augusta remarked upon her husband's "fire and poetry and romance and his intense longing for, and dependence on, expressed sympathy."³³⁸ Leypoldt's "fire

and poetry” did always endear him to his wife, especially when it led him to the verge of bankruptcy.

When Leypoldt married, his firm seemed ready to abandon literary publishing, to concentrate on the educational market. Nearly a third of the books on their 1867 list were textbooks, mostly grammars and primers. The following year, they expanded their educational list even further. Leypoldt and Holt published their list for 1868 in the *Publishers' Uniform Trade List Directory*, a compilation of publishers and booksellers price lists issued in Philadelphia by Howard Challen. The first page and a half of their list was filled with literary titles, like Holt's translation of *The Man with a Broken Ear* and the Heine books. The rest of their six-page catalog was devoted to educational titles.³³⁹

Textbooks, if they caught on at all, had remarkable longevity, which seemed to offer a small degree of safety in a chaotic marketplace. Holt reported that his friend and colleague, the educational publisher Edwin Ginn (1838-1914), estimated that the average life of a successful textbook was twenty years. By comparison, Holt estimated that literary works seldom lasted much more than five years in the market.³⁴⁰ Many of the educational books published by Leypoldt and Holt enjoyed a long life; Charlotte Yonge's *Landmarks of History* and Percy Sadler's *Petit cours de versions* each remained in print for many years, nearly reaching Ginn's twenty years.

At least one of the textbooks published by Leypoldt and Holt remained in print for over forty years. The *Beginner's French Reader* by L. Pylodet was originally published in 1869. It sold between 2,000 and 3,000 copies a year for many years, and it was still earning royalties for its author's estate in 1914, when Holt sent Augusta Leypoldt a check for \$1.29.³⁴¹ L. Pylodet was of course, Frederick Leypoldt, the firm's most popular author

of language textbooks. Between 1864 and 1875, Leypoldt wrote or edited fourteen textbooks.

Despite the longevity of successful textbooks, the educational market was no safe haven. In the years following the Civil War, it became the most competitive and most corrupt part of the American book industry.³⁴² Holt wanted financial security, but his real interest was in literary trade books, what he called “miscellaneous” publishing.³⁴³ As he became more seasoned, he became more serious about business affairs and more ambitious as a publisher.

He had introduced Turgenev, Sill, and Fiske to American book buyers. He would soon publish work by major European and American scholars like Hippolyte Taine (1828-1893), Bertold Auerbach (1812-1882), and Raphael Pumpelly (1837-1923). Holt was showing signs of becoming a great and inventive American publisher. While Holt was becoming more involved in the running of the business, Leypoldt’s attention was beginning to drift.

For all intents and purposes, Leypoldt’s partnership with Henry Holt ended when Leypoldt started editing the firm’s newsletter, *Leypoldt and Holt’s Literary Bulletin*, although they remained nominal partners until 1872. With Leypoldt’s time and energy consumed by his bibliographic interests, Holt was free to run the business as he liked. In 1871, Holt brought Ralph Williams, yet another of his Yale classmates, into the partnership. That year Leypoldt, Holt, and Williams had its first major success, Hippolyte Taine’s monumental *History of English Literature*.³⁴⁴ A year later, in 1872, Holt launched the enormously successful Leisure Time Series, which featured the distinctive spider web design on the binding.

When he reflected upon the beginnings of his career in *Garrulities of Octogenarian Editor*, Holt had very little to say about Leypoldt and nothing at all to say about Williams. He thanked Leypoldt for starting him along the right path. Of the men he truly admired, men like himself, he said, “There now hang side by side in my office portraits of William Appleton, Joseph W. Harper, George P. Putnam and Charles Scribner, and I never contemplate them without thinking, ‘What a fine body of gentlemen you were!’”³⁴⁵

Holt never would have included Leypoldt in that publishing fraternity. Leypoldt might have been “a fine scholar and a true gentleman,” but he never had Holt’s genius for picking and promoting books. Henry Holt and Company developed according to the whims of its leader, but Leypoldt’s foundation remained visible. Holt was a publisher—he steered clear of retail book sales. He maintained and developed Leypoldt’s music and fine arts series, expanded the line of European literature in translation, and made the educational line his personal project. Throughout his long career, Holt continued as he had been taught—keeping much of Leypoldt’s spirit along with his owl colophon.

Holt’s estimation of his erstwhile partner was probably justified. Leypoldt was actively engaged in book publishing for only six years. During that time, he managed to bring out fewer than a hundred titles, none of which were the sort that made a publisher famous. Fortunately for Leypoldt, publishers have always been able to make a living from undistinguished books. The real significance of Leypoldt’s stint as a publisher had little to do with the quantity or the quality of his books.

When the American Civil War made it virtually impossible to import German books, Leypoldt tried to be an American publisher. The American book trade so

frustrated him that he imported a German idea of the book trade instead. Leypoldt created a new sort of American publishing house. It was not tied to any printing or retailing enterprise; it was a distinct business. Leypoldt's experiment initiated a radical change in the structure of the U.S. book industry. It took most of a century, but eventually America's publishers followed Leypoldt's example and moved out of the retail book trade.

Chapter 5: The Modern American Book Trade

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, o it with all thy might.

Ecclesiastes 9: 10

For all its devastation, the American Civil War had little direct influence upon the book industry. Certainly there were changes in the U.S. trade during the war, but only a few of those changes were caused by the war itself. The book business had always been concentrated in the industrial cities of the North, and in those cities the war was, on the whole, a distant problem. Like most industries in the U.S., the book trade suffered through an initial panic following the outbreak of the war, but it soon recovered to pursue business, more or less, as usual.

If anything, the war had been good for the domestic book business. New tariffs drove up the cost of imported books, which created an opportunity for U.S. book producers to gain a share of the market that had been dominated by their English counterparts. The trade was also quick to take advantage of wartime industrialization. By the end of the war, steam powered many of the processes of book manufacture, raising production rates and reducing unit costs. The greatly expanded rail network solved most of the transportation problems for an industry that depended upon wide distribution. By the end of the war, the U.S. had thirty-five thousand miles of rail track, most of which

was in the Northeast and the Midwest. The transcontinental railway linked East and West in 1869, and, by 1873, seventy thousand miles of track connected every major and minor city in the country.³⁴⁶ The rapid post-war growth of the rail network made the idea of a national market seem possible.

Although the American Civil War had ended, few of the underlying political and economic conflicts had been resolved. Those conflicts between North and South continued to influence the lives of Americans long after the shooting had stopped. In the immediate aftermath of the war, the U.S. experienced periods of rapid economic growth and industrial development, punctuated by a series of recessions and depressions. Many American industries had realized enormous profits during the war and were poised to supply goods to a populace that had endured years of careful economy. American industry, especially in the urban North, was in the middle of a boom. On the other hand, industrialists were worried by the sudden jump in the value of labor.

Nearly 620,000 men had died in the war. Those who did return to civilian life demanded higher wages and better working conditions. After the war, workers began to organize on a scale that had never been seen in the U.S.³⁴⁷ Robert Hoe II, the heir to the largest printing-press manufacturing enterprise in the U.S., complained that “outside influences” incited workers to organize, which in turn “weakened our influence directly and indirectly over the minds of the men.”³⁴⁸ The U.S. book industry, which was based upon small-scale manufacturing, faced the same dilemmas that troubled industrial manufacturers like Robert Hoe II.³⁴⁹ It might be more accurate to say that industrial manufacturers were finally facing the problems of capital speculation, overproduction, and distribution that had troubled the book industry since the advent of moveable type.

Nevertheless, the book industry was affected when labor and management became adversaries.

In 1866, a congress of small local labor unions meeting in Baltimore consolidated into the National Labor Union. The NLU was the first attempt to organize labor across a wide range of trades. It had some success in its campaign for the eight-hour workday, but the power of organized labor was more than matched by the increased concentration of capital in the hands of major industrial and financial firms.³⁵⁰

The increasing cost of labor prompted American manufacturers to invest in machinery that would minimize their dependence upon that labor. Sometimes called the Second Industrial Revolution, the post-war shift to mechanized, steam-powered manufacture in the U.S. was accompanied by a change in the structure of industrial production and finance.³⁵¹ Theoretically, steam allowed industrial production to spread almost anywhere in the country; in fact, industry became even more concentrated around metropolitan centers, particularly in the Northeast. Steam-powered machinery made it possible to manufacture on a scale that would have been unimaginable before the war, but that scale required vast capital investment.

Consolidation and incorporation became the guiding business principles of the era that Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner dubbed the “Gilded Age.” Bigger enterprises were able to take advantage of economies of scale; they also enjoyed preferential treatment from suppliers, distributors, bankers, politicians, and the courts. Factory owners like Robert Hoe II might complain that, following the war, workers were less dependable, or that they had been stirred up by “outside influences,” but his complaint ignored the fact that the structure of American commerce was changing. A gulf

had opened between consolidated, incorporated capital and organized labor. Labor was on one side of the gulf, and a new entity called “management” was on the other. The labor-management divide was more pronounced in large manufacturing enterprises, but it also affected smaller businesses, making it more difficult to run small-scale manufacturing that relied upon industrial production.³⁵²

During the era that followed the American Civil War, whether we call it the Second Industrial Revolution or the Gilded Age, organization became a national preoccupation. Labor began to organize into national unions. Commercial organizations, which before the war had been informal and usually local, were augmented or replaced by national associations. Before the war, organized action had been a secondary function of elite social clubs like the Century, the New York, and the Union. After the war, formal, national industrial organizations like the American Industrial League, the Free Trade League, and even the Pianoforte Manufacturers Society were established to protect the interests of manufacturers, financiers, and merchants.³⁵³

Organizing the Book Trade

In the aftermath of their Civil War, Americans were organizing everything from manufacturers associations to temperance societies as national enterprises. Most of the leagues, unions, and associations began as local attempts to bring order or to consolidate power, but they soon merged into national organizations, complete with conferences, platforms, and journals.³⁵⁴ The American book industry had experimented with the idea of national trade associations long before they became a regular feature of business in the U.S. At a time when most American industries were just beginning to organize, the U.S.

book industry already had a long history of short-lived trade associations, trade journals, and industry directories.

For many years, however, the book trade was unable or unwilling to translate the organizational impulse into an enduring reality. Attempts to organize the American book trade on a national level invariably disintegrated along one or another of the industry's many fault lines. Regional differences, conflicts between booksellers and publisher/booksellers, copyright arguments, the continuous debate about underselling, or simple inertia eventually scuttled every attempt to organize the book business.

The American Company of Booksellers, formed in 1801, lasted less than four years before internal disputes ended the venture. The group organized a few trade exhibitions modeled on the Leipzig fairs, complete with medals for excellence, but the association disbanded because it could reach no agreement on the perennial problem of underselling. The American Company of Booksellers was followed by the New York Association of Booksellers, which was formed in 1802 and lasted nearly a year. Again, disputes over underselling killed the association.³⁵⁵

Henry C. Carey of Philadelphia tried to launch a trade association in 1824. That effort came to nothing, but it led to the first of the annual trade sales. Carey and Lea's book-trade sales profoundly affected the course of the American book industry for most of the nineteenth century. The sales were not fairs or exhibitions; they were auctions. Publishers used the sales to liquidate unsold and unsellable inventory. Remaindered books, obsolete stereotype plates, miscellaneous paper stock, and equipment—all of it was auctioned off. Booksellers and jobbers bought stock for pennies on the dollar.³⁵⁶ The trade sale was a domestic analog to the German book-dumping scheme developed by

Christoph Reiche in 1783 and the Book Depot idea that brought Rudolph Garrigue to the U.S. in 1845.

The trade sale quickly became a defining and divisive feature of the American trade. The auction undermined the traditional discount structure of the trade by reinforcing retail price as a point of competition. Some firms began to produce cheap reprints especially for the trade sale, which became a semi-annual event shortly before Rudolph Garrigue made his fact-finding tour of the U.S. In theory, the cheap reprints could compromise the sales of the original, more expensive imprint. George Palmer Putnam and William Appleton formed the New York Book Publishers' Association in 1855 to combat the influence of the sales, but the group disbanded before the end of the Civil War. The sales continued.

In the decade following the war, nearly twenty book-trade associations formed and then faded away.³⁵⁷ From time to time one group or another would coalesce, usually to combat some particular problem in the trade, but the resulting organizations never had the power to enforce their reforms. American publishers and booksellers were used to their autonomy. They had no experience with the sort of industry-wide cooperation that prevailed in Germany and in England. The success of the American trade sales, despite repeated efforts at reform, clearly demonstrated that U.S. publishers and booksellers were still more interested in immediate individual advantage than in some future collective gain.

Book Trade Journalism

One important result of the fashion for forming trade associations was a sharp rise in trade journalism. The post-war demand for trade journals, directories, and catalogs occurred at just the right moment to take advantage of a new generation of steam-powered rotary printing presses that used curved stereotype plates. Printing was cheaper and faster than it had ever been, and trade journals used up some of the excess capacity. Trade journals and catalogs, like the associations that usually generated them, were not new to the American book industry. There were several attempts to establish a national book-trade journal before the Civil War began. None of those early attempts enjoyed any regular institutional support because there was no institution to provide support. The same lack of support hampered the development of regular comprehensive trade catalogs.

The first successful U.S. book trade journal was the *United States Literary Advisor and Publishers' Circular*, published by J. & H. Langley, which lasted from 1831-1842. At about the same time George Palmer Putnam, then a clerk for Jonathon Leavitt, began compiling his *Booksellers' Advertiser and Monthly Register of New Publications*. Putnam's journal, begun in 1834, lasted for twelve years and was the basis for a series of catalogs and trade lists, including the *American Book Circular*.³⁵⁸ Another New York firm, Appleton, published its own *Literary Bulletin* for a few years in the forties.

The *Literary World: A Gazette for Authors, Readers and Publishers* was published in Boston by Osgood & Co. In its first incarnation, the *Literary World* was edited by George and Evert Duyckinck, assisted in the first year by Charles Fenno Hoffman. The Duyckinck brothers ran the journal for six years, from 1847-1853, and

then they turned their attention to the compilation of their *Cyclopedia of American Literature*. More interested in literature than they were in the trade, the Duyckinck brothers quickly turned the *World* into a literary review, rather than a book trade journal. Samuel Crocker resurrected the *World* in 1870 and ran it as a monthly literary review until 1904.

The only book-trade journal to survive the war was *Norton's Literary Advisor*. Charles B. Norton launched the *Advisor* in 1851 as a newsletter for retail customers who wanted to keep current with new publications. A year later, it became *Norton's Literary Gazette and Publishers' Circular*, a monthly that ran to as many as twenty-four pages an issue. The name change reflected changes in the purpose of the journal; Norton was now marketing his *Literary Gazette and Publishers' Circular* to the trade. Along with the usual publishers' display advertisements, it carried book-trade news, book reviews, and lists of new publications. Norton used the lists of new publications to compile two annual catalogs in 1853 and 1854.³⁵⁹

In 1855, two of New York's leading publishers, George Palmer Putnam and William H. Appleton, returned to book-trade journalism. That year, C. B. Norton sold his journal to the New York Book Publishers' Association. Putnam and Appleton had formed the association, which brought together most of the major New York houses for the express purpose of reforming the trade sales. Although they were opposed to the sales, the Harper brothers opted out of the association. Putnam announced the formation of the Book Publishers Association in New York's daily papers and in the first issue of the Association's official journal, the *American Publishers' Circular and Literary Gazette*.³⁶⁰

The renamed weekly was introduced 1 September 1855, two weeks before opening the fall sale.³⁶¹

The *Publishers' Circular* then became the property of the Book Publishers Association. Charles Rudolph Rode (1825-1865) succeeded Norton as editor, beginning in July of 1856. Rode had more experience in trade journalism than he had in the book trade. A decade earlier, he had succeeded John Doggett as the editor and publisher of *Doggett's New York Directory*, and he published the first *United States Post-Office Directory*. According to Adolph Growoll, Rode agreed to take over financial responsibility for the journal in exchange for an assurance that the members of the Book Publishers' Association would maintain their support by purchasing advertisements.³⁶²

Rode issued the *APC* or *Circular*, as it was variously known, as a weekly until the outbreak of the American Civil War brought the book industry to a temporary standstill. In the panic that accompanied the beginning of the war, publishers stopped buying advertising space, and the Book Publishers' Association evaporated. Two months into the war, Rode announced that he could no longer maintain weekly publication.³⁶³ Other than switching to monthly publication, Rode took little editorial notice of the war.

For the next two years, Rode issued the *Circular* on an irregular basis—fluctuating between monthly and weekly publication “depending upon the exigencies of the trade.”³⁶⁴ Rode's health was already failing, in February of 1863, when he published a letter from a young German bookseller named Frederick Leypoldt. Leypoldt exhorted his colleagues in the American trade to support Rode. He argued that the trade needed journals and catalogs like those that served the bibliographic needs of the German book trade. The letter had no discernable effect on the trade. Six months later, in the issue for 1

April, Rode announced that he had sold the *APC* to George W. Childs (1829-1894), a prominent Philadelphia bookseller and publisher.³⁶⁵

Childs brought new energy to the *APC*. He moved the journal to Philadelphia, changed the design of the masthead, and switched from quarto to a smaller octavo format. The smaller format almost doubled the page count, which made the *Circular* appear a little more substantial. Although the pages were about a third smaller, Childs maintained the same advertising page rates that Rode had established in 1855: \$20 for a full page, \$12 for a half-page, \$6 for a quarter-page, and \$3 for an eighth-page.³⁶⁶ After all, whatever profit the journal might generate would have to come from advertising. To help cover the cost of production, he also doubled the annual subscription rate to \$2. In November, Childs rearranged the name; for the next nine years, he issued the monthly as the *American Literary Gazette and Publishers' Circular*.

From 1831 on, therefore, the American book industry usually had some sort of trade journal, although none of the journals lasted much more than a decade. Without any sort of institutional support, the life span of an American book-trade journal was often determined by the tenacity or the patience of the editor or publisher, who was forced to work with little support and less recognition. Few in the American book trade showed much interest in helping the trade journalists who were trying to help them, and there was no mechanism to force cooperation.

German and English publishers were obliged by law and custom to provide timely information to trade journalists and catalogers. For three hundred years, German publishers had been required to submit accurate bibliographic descriptions to the editors of the book fair catalogs; no book could be offered for sale at Leipzig or Frankfurt unless

it was listed in the official catalog. In England, new books had to be licensed before they were sent to press and then registered with the Stationers' Company after they were issued. Publishers in Germany and England actively supported a host of journals and catalogs, not simply because they had to satisfy a legal obligation, but because they understood that widely available information was good for business.

In the United States, there was no central agency where publishers could register the books they produced. Publishers could file for copyright protection, but they were not required to register their books with any agency. When a central registry was enacted by the Copyright Act of 1870, the law had no mechanism to enforce compliance. Publishers submitted information or review copies to newspaper or trade journals when and if they wanted to. The accuracy of American book-trade journals and catalogs, therefore, depended entirely upon the energy and tenacity of their editors. Facing indifference and sometimes hostility, neither the editors nor their journals lasted for long. No journal or catalog lasted long enough to demonstrate that cooperation and mutual interest could benefit the whole trade. The American book industry eventually did learn to use trade journals and catalogs to give some structure to the industry. They learned it from Frederick Leypoldt, a German immigrant with almost no talent for business.

The Influence of Frederick Leypoldt

Frederick Leypoldt was an unlikely candidate for the tasks of organizing the American book trade. He had tried his hand at a number of book-trade ventures before he decided that he would bring order to the American book industry. Once he made that decision, he pursued the idea with passionate intensity, launching one unstable venture

after another. In his memorial essay, Adolph Growoll characterized Leypoldt as a young man full of “ideas and plans.” Even as he neared middle age, Leypoldt’s schemes were still “succeeding each other with lightning rapidity.” He was, nevertheless, an outsider. American publishers had little reason to listen to a German bookseller with just a few years of experience in the American book industry.

Leypoldt was persistent and inventive. He was willing to try almost anything that might induce American publishers to act more like their German counterparts, even when his friends and family complained that one project or another had nothing to do with the book trade. Leypoldt kept trying to inoculate the American book trade with a small measure of the German method that he had learned from Frederick Christern. Remarkably, most of the ventures he started eventually became defining institutions for the American book industry. The resulting hybrid preserved the individualistic structure of the American book business, but the individualism was tempered by a small measure of the cooperation that characterized the German trade.

As he made his way from one part of the book business to another, Leypoldt was repeatedly shocked to discover that the Americans seemed to have no idea how to run their business. They lacked what Leypoldt considered the “booksellers’ most indispensable *tools*,” trade journals and catalogs, but they seemed not to notice. He was appalled to find that the Americans cared little about the well-being of the trade as a whole. Unlike their German counterparts, the Americans sought individual advantage rather than mutual interest. In his mind, pressing an individual advantage was shortsighted. In his open letter to the book dealers of Philadelphia, he had tried to explain

that ruthless competition might serve one individual or another, but it undermined the health of the industry and “must inevitably prove ruinous to *all*.”³⁶⁷

Leypoldt was not the first to protest what he believed to be unfair business practices in the American book trade, but he was the trade’s most persistent reformer. Leypoldt launched his first effort to reform the American book trade soon after he began to trade in English-language books. Once he realized that the American habit of combining publishing and bookselling made publishers particularly vulnerable to the “pernicious *non*-system” of underselling, Leypoldt applied a German solution to his American problem. In Germany publishing and bookselling were distinct enterprises. German publishers rarely involved themselves in the retail book trade, and booksellers were only occasionally involved in the production of the books they sold.

Facing what he regarded as unfair competition in the retail market, Leypoldt declared himself a wholesale book publisher and began to dismantle his retail business. He sold his bookstore and returned to New York, where he ran into serious trouble. He was attempting to run his business on German principles, but the United States had none of the infrastructure that supported the German book trade. Fortunately, Leypoldt found a surprisingly good business partner. It was Henry Holt who ultimately demonstrated the potential of Leypoldt’s attempt to run an American publishing house according to German principles. It took nearly a century, but every major American publisher eventually followed Leypoldt’s example. The Scribner Book Store, the last vestige of the publisher/bookseller system, closed for good in 1988.

Almost as soon as he formed his partnership with Henry Holt, Leypoldt lost interest in book publishing. Most of new books that Leypoldt and Holt published while

Leypoldt was still an active partner were books that Holt brought to the firm. Leypoldt wrote a few popular textbooks, but he was not attracting new authors or translators. By the time he married Augusta H. Garrigue in September of 1867, Leypoldt had given over the running of the business to Holt. Whatever he was doing during those three years, Leypoldt was not bringing books to press at the rate he had in Philadelphia. Writing several years afterward, Leypoldt claimed that one day he “turned his attention to the little circular” that he prepared for the firm’s clients.³⁶⁸

Literary Bulletins, Trade Circulars, and Annual Catalogues

In the summer of 1868, soon after the birth of his son Rudolph, Leypoldt started work on his first trade journal. He sold his interest in the publishing business to Holt and bought the rights to A. K. Loring’s *Literary Bulletin*, which he meant to use as a foundation for an American equivalent of the Brockhaus *Monthly Bulletin* or the Reinwald and Bossange *Bulletin Mensuel*.³⁶⁹ After an experimental Christmas issue that appeared in December of 1868, he launched the first regular issue of *Leypoldt and Holt’s Literary Bulletin, a Monthly Record of Foreign and American Books* in January of 1869.³⁷⁰

When it first appeared, the *Bulletin* was not quite the trade journal Leypoldt intended it to be. It was, rather, a ready-made substitute for the advertising circulars that nineteenth-century booksellers routinely compiled for their customers. Under the masthead, which featured a comical engraving of three bearded dwarves sorting through a heap of antique books and manuscripts, Leypoldt made a promise directed at retail customers: “*All Books mentioned in the ‘Bulletin’ supplied at the shortest notice.*”

In the first issue, Leypoldt started a practice that he would continue throughout his career. Under the heading, “NATURE AND OBJECT OF THIS PUBLICATION,” he presented an ambitious categorical list of the information that would appear in the journal:

- I. A *complete* and *classified* list of all reputable books issued in the United States during the previous month, stating full title, size, style, publisher’s name, and retail price.
- II. What the *reliable* press says of the new books.
- III. Tables of contents of the principal *American Magazines* for the current month.
- IV. Announcements of forthcoming American publications.
- V. American Literary News.
- VI. European Literary News.³⁷¹

In addition to those regular departments, the January issue also included a classified list of the “Principal American Publications” of the preceding year, “to meet, partially at least, the long-felt need for an annual catalogue.” Set in brevier type (slightly smaller than modern 8-point type), that first list ran to nine pages, which pushed the first issue to 48 quarto pages.

The list of “principal publications” was a precursor to Leypoldt’s plan to compile the monthly book lists into a complete annual index of American publications. Every year, the January number would include a classified list of new books for the year, referenced to the issue that contained the original listing. Thus, a complete set of the

Bulletin from February through the following January could be used as a “*catalogue raisonné*” for the year. It is therefore almost superfluous to advise our customers to retain their number and take pains to keep their sets complete.”³⁷² If the trade cooperated, Leypoldt could simultaneously fill the need for timely book lists and an annual American trade catalog.

Leypoldt was confident that his *Bulletin* would be valuable to booksellers and publishers alike. Booksellers were encouraged to use the *Bulletin* as a cheaper and more effective substitute for the in-house circulars most bookshops employed. Publishers could use the *Bulletin* as a precisely targeted advertising medium.³⁷³ In the perennial conflict between American booksellers and publishers, the *Bulletin* would be common ground. If all went according to plan, any book published or sold in America would be listed in Leypoldt’s journal.

The scheme was well conceived. Leypoldt offered the *Bulletin* to booksellers at about the cost of production, as little as a half-penny apiece for unbound sheets, without the booksellers’ imprint. After all, Leypoldt expected the booksellers to give copies of the *Bulletin* to customers free of charge. For a variety of extra charges, including the cost of stereotyping the cover sheets, Leypoldt offered to bind the *Bulletin* in covers to suit the need of each subscriber. A bookseller in Cleveland, for example, could distribute, under his own name, a carefully compiled listing of recent publications—a plan that had “already been adopted by two leading firms,” according to Leypoldt. Forty-one firms bought advance subscriptions to the *Bulletin* for an initial circulation of nearly twenty-five thousand copies.³⁷⁴

Publishers, on the other hand, were offered two ways to profit by their support of the *Bulletin*. First, Leypoldt would print any publisher's notices free of charge; he particularly solicited announcements of forthcoming or recently published books. Second, Leypoldt offered publishers advertising space at sliding rates based on the size of the print run. Terms for a full page were a little higher than publishers paid for an ad in Childs' *Circular*—\$25 for the first 10,000 copies and \$1.25 for each additional 1,000 copies in the issue—but the ads reached a wide retail audience. What profit Leypoldt would make depended upon advertisements. In the first issue, advertisements filled thirteen pages. The bulk of those ads were unadorned publishers' lists, including full-page listings from Hurd and Houghton, Lippincott, Putnam, Routledge, Scribner, and two pages from Harper and Brothers.

Leypoldt's *Bulletin* was a success. It began with, and maintained, a circulation of more than thirty thousand copies. It was distributed throughout the country by bookdealers great and small; the *Bulletin* was launched with paid subscribers in Richmond, Indiana, Augusta, Georgia, and Muscatine, Iowa, as well as in recognized book-buying centers like New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, New Orleans, and Cincinnati. G.P. Putnam's and Sons offered it to customers under their imprint, as did F. W. Christern and Loring, Short and Harmon of Portland, Maine.³⁷⁵

The *Literary Bulletin* was largely a compendium of lists, either as announcements or as advertisements, augmented by a digest of opinion and literary news from around the world. Although he included a few brief opinion pieces, Leypoldt's editorial policy was neutral—books were neither good nor bad, they were simply available for sale. No book was ever disparaged in the *Bulletin*; neither were particular books promoted except in

paid advertisements. Fortunately for Leypoldt, approximately half of the pages over the course of a year's run were paid advertisements generating about \$4,000 per year.

Although the *Bulletin* was a commercial success, it fell short of Leypoldt's expectations. It was primarily a promotional tool for booksellers who subscribed to save the cost of producing their own flyers and catalogs. For publishers, it was chance to advertise directly to retail customers, as well as to bookdealers. Providing booksellers with complete, up-to-date lists of books in print was an important part of the task that Leypoldt had set for himself, and the *Literary Bulletin* did that task as well as any of its forerunners.

Leypoldt was editing a generalized bookseller's catalog, but he wanted to create a journal for the trade, an American *Börsenblatt*. The journal he envisioned would unite the whole trade; it would allow publishers and booksellers to cooperate, to coordinate their efforts. Leypoldt sought to expand his enterprise by issuing a version of the *Bulletin* re-edited for the trade, beginning in September of 1869. While it was not really a separate publication, the new *Trade Circular and Literary Bulletin*, later the *Trade Circular and Publishers' Bulletin*, was explicitly a "Special Medium for Inter-Communication for Publishers, Booksellers, and Stationers."³⁷⁶

The *Trade Circular*, as it came to be called, shared many features with its retail counterpart. The core of both journals was the same: lists of new books and display ads for publishers and larger retailers. Most of Leypoldt's clients supported both journals. F. W. Christern, Leypoldt's mentor, faithfully bought a quarter-page ad in both the *Bulletin* and the *Circular*. Fields, Osgood, and Co., Harper and Brothers, Hurd and Houghton, and Routledge regularly bought space in both journals. The joint support was part of the

design. Terms for advertising in the *Circular* were generous. Fifteen dollars bought a single full-page insertion. Discounts were applied for continuing ads—ten per cent for three months, fifteen per cent for six months and twenty-five per cent for a year. Clients were given the option of advertising in both the *Bulletin* and the *Circular* at the rates Leyboldt originally charged for the *Bulletin*.³⁷⁷

The *Circular* also offered a few features intended for the convenience of the trade. Leyboldt solicited trade correspondence, promising to publish any letters free of charge. He especially asked for news of proven novelties that booksellers might add to their stock and news of any legal matters that might be of special interest to the trade. He also offered a section of classified ads—“*five lines inserted free of charge; ten cents for each succeeding one.*”

Leyboldt suggested several categories for the classified ads—goods for exchange, job lots, stereotype plates or woodcuts for sale, books wanted, and situations or help wanted. Dealers who wanted to advertise books for sale, “for the use of book-sellers who have become possessed of good or rare books, old volumes, etc., unsalable in their own localities,” paid ten cents per line. Aside from the classified ads and the letters section, the *Trade Circular* was identical to the *Literary Bulletin*. More a professional supplement than a separate journal, the *Circular* was sent free of charge to 2,000 booksellers—every dealer listed in Dingman’s directory.

The *Literary Bulletin* and the *Trade Circular* survived the first year. The year 1869 was Leyboldt’s most productive since 1863, when he launched his publishing house. After nearly fifteen years in the book business, he was becoming a public figure in the American trade. Although his friends described him as modest and even retiring,

Leyboldt's new career made him a spokesman for the American book trade, a strange position for a man admittedly self-conscious about his written English.

Leyboldt's public confidence was bolstered by his young wife, Augusta Garrigue. Augusta was the well-educated daughter of a prominent German-American family, and she had been brought up in close contact with the booktrade. In a few years she would be Leyboldt's most steadfast business partner. In December of 1869, she had an eighteenth-month-old son, and she was eight months pregnant. She would have cause to regret it later, but Augusta encouraged Leyboldt to follow his inclination toward book-trade journalism.³⁷⁸

As the first full year of the *Bulletin* and *Circular* was ending, Leyboldt was obliged to begin the task of compiling the promised annual index of books published in 1869. The previous August, he had compiled his first large-scale trade list, a special education number listing hundreds of books for the academic markets. The annual would be more difficult. Preparations for the publication of the annual were necessarily complicated by the seasonal pattern of the book business. He had to compile special Christmas numbers of the *Bulletin* and the *Circular* in November and December, before beginning work on the annual. Leyboldt was able to devote all his time to the task, as he had virtually nothing to do with book publishing at Leyboldt and Holt. To meet the annual's January deadline, however, all his time would not be enough.

In the first issue of the *Bulletin*, Leyboldt had promised that an index of books published during the year would appear the following January. By December, the list had grown well beyond anything he imagined. Originally, he had intended to include the annual index in the January *Bulletin* and *Circular*. January has always been a slow month

in the book trade—a time to recover from the Christmas rush. Leypoldt planned for the index to fill out the otherwise scanty winter issues of his journals, but the list he accumulated for 1869 was much too large for inclusion in either journal. Leypoldt decided to issue the index as a separate bound volume: *The American Catalog of Books for 1869*—price, \$1.00.

The resulting one-hundred-page catalog claimed on its title page to contain “complete monthly lists of all books published in the United States during the year 1869, with statement of size, price, place of publication, and publishers name. *To which are prefixed An Alphabetical and Classified Index.*”³⁷⁹ While it was as complete as Leypoldt could make it, that first catalog did not quite live up to its own description. As Leypoldt explained it, the problem was two-fold:

Even those most interested in having their publications properly catalogued, rarely give information that is either accurate or complete; and even those to whom a catalogue is of most use, do not seem to find it of use enough to warrant paying for many copies.

On the theory that a “good catalogue is a good thing, no matter whose time and money pays for it, and a catalogue may be good without being ideally perfect,” Leypoldt took several money-saving short cuts to produce his catalog.³⁸⁰ Nevertheless, he did produce the first annual catalog of American publications since the last of Norton’s catalogs in 1856.

The process of constructing the main body of the catalog was simple, but methodologically suspect. Leypoldt had his printer run new sheets from the stereotype

plates of the monthly lists that had already appeared in the *Bulletin* and *Circular*. Leypoldt reissued his twelve monthly lists in one volume, with no additions or corrections. Although simple and cheap, the result was not particularly useful. As Leypoldt explained in the “Preface,” the catalog was “broken into twelve sections, corresponding to the monthly periods of its issue. For the reasons already hinted at there was nothing to warrant the manufacture of new plates which should include the whole in one sequence.”³⁸¹

Reprinting the monthly lists was of little use to anyone. It must have been especially irritating to anyone who had followed Leypoldt’s advice at the beginning of the year and taken “pains to keep a set complete.” Leypoldt recognized the problem. “To compensate for this blemish,” he explained, “and to add a new feature of special and unique value, TWO INDEXES have been prefixed.” These indexes arranged and cross-referenced short titles and authors’ names alphabetically and categorically.³⁸²

Filling nearly twenty pages, the Alphabetical and Classified indexes made the catalog a useful reference tool. Amounting to a short-title catalog, the first index offered a uniform list of all the titles and authors in the monthly lists. Guided by pragmatism, rather than “any bibliographical ambitions,” Leypoldt listed authors alphabetically, by their most familiar names:

Contrary to bibliographic rule, we have preferred to record the works of pseudonym authors—such as Eliot, Oliver Optic, etc.—under the adopted name which the author chooses to retain on the title-page. In the first place, hardly any bookseller will look for Eliot under Evans or Lewes; for Sand under Dudevant; or for Optic under Adams; why then detain him by unnecessary cross reference?

Moreover, we really doubt the propriety of making prominent that name which the author—for some reason or other—(which no bibliographer should have a right to ignore merely to show off his knowledge), does not see fit to place on the title-page.³⁸³

Leypoldt's penchant for thoroughness led him to cross-references real names as well as the more familiar pseudonyms.

The much shorter classified index divided the catalog into categories that reflected the standards of the day. Leypoldt used a scheme similar to that used in 1855 by Trübner for his *Guide to American Literature*. The twenty-eight categories demonstrated something of the tastes of the era, as well as the organizing principles current at the time. His list began with works of reference, theology, and philosophy. Moving from the sacred to the secular, the next group of categories included law, government, economics, and political and social sciences. Next came the largest section, education, which Leypoldt divided into several sub-sections: education as subject itself, primers and elementary text-books, and the liberal and practical arts. The last few categories included the fine and performing arts, sport, and several subcategories of belles-lettres including "Literary Miscellany," "Poetry," and "Drama," "Humor, Satire, Facetiae," "Juvenile and Sunday-School Books," and, finally, "Novels and Tales."

Although it was meant simply to help booksellers locate works for their customers, the classified index revealed something about the way Leypoldt and his colleagues in the booktrade organized the world as it appeared in print. The list included categories that might not appear in most modern categorized book lists, "mentalism," for example, and "freemasonry," but it was constructed from the same world-view that was

popularized by Melvil Dewey a few years later. Perhaps the most revealing place on the list belonged to novels. Their place at the bottom of the list, after joke books and juvenilia, indicated something of the nineteenth-century prejudice against novels—a prejudice that would also be codified in Dewey’s system.

The *American Catalogue for 1869* was more than Leypoldt had promised and less than he had hoped for. Aside from the fact of its existence, the achievement of the 1869 catalog was the indexes. The indexes were useful, but they could not compensate for missing information. The completeness and the accuracy of the lists depended upon the cooperation of publishers, but some American publishers were skeptical of the monthly journals and the annual catalogs, some were indifferent, and some were openly hostile. Showing some pique, Leypoldt concluded his preface to the catalog with a conditional promise to make his annual catalog a “Trade Institution” if the trade would make some effort to support the venture. Moreover, he promised a catalog “on the plan of the French and German Catalogues—the full titles arranged in one alphabet, with an index classified in minute detail.”³⁸⁴

Leypoldt finished his first catalog a few weeks before his wife, Augusta, gave birth to their second child, a girl they named Marian Augusta. Leypoldt spent another year issuing the *Literary Bulletin* and the trade version, the *Literary Bulletin and Trade Circular*. When the year ended, Augusta was once again pregnant, and Frederick unaccountably decided to prepare a new sort of catalog.

Leypoldt’s second catalog was a failure in almost every way. Like the first catalog, it was simultaneously more and less than Leypoldt intended. The second catalog was issued under the long, confusing title, *The Trade Circular Annual for 1871*,

Including the American Catalogue of Books Published in the United States During the Year 1870, with Their Sizes, Prices, and Publishers' Names. The volume was a trade omnibus, and the catalog itself was overwhelmed by “features.” Leypoldt eliminated the repetitious monthly lists. The catalog of new books for 1870 was reduced to just the categorical and alphabetical indexes, which trimmed it to sixty pages. The index ran another ten.

A sixty-page catalog must have seemed too slight to Leypoldt, because he appended something he called a “general summary of trade information.”³⁸⁵ The resulting *Trade Circular Annual*, as it was commonly known, ran to one hundred and seventy-five pages, which were augmented (and paid for) by an appendix containing the catalogs of twenty-six publishers. The appendix pushed the page count to nearly eight hundred pages and foreshadowed another Leypoldt institution, *The Publishers' Trade-List Annual*.

Leypoldt's second attempt at an annual catalog was also marked by a mild subterfuge. As he explained several years after the fact, some publishers seemed reluctant to give their support to the *Trade Circular* because of its ties to the house of Leypoldt and Holt.³⁸⁶ Hoping to dispel fears of favoritism, Leypoldt dropped the name Leypoldt and Holt from the title page; instead he listed the “Office of the Trade Circular and Literary Bulletin, No. 25 Bond Street” as the publisher. Earlier in the year, Leypoldt and Holt had moved to 25 Bond Street, just around the corner from the loft rooms of 646 Broadway where Holt had first encountered Leypoldt.

The *Trade Circular Annual* was a poorly conceived venture. In his eagerness to be helpful, Leypoldt came dangerously close to swamping his own project. The *Annual* for 1871 included much more than a catalog of American publications: “a list of the

principal books published in England; a publishers', manufacturers', and importers' directory; an alphabetical list of nearly eight hundred articles suitable for sale at the book, stationery, music, and fancy goods stores; a summary of American and English novelties; and miscellaneous literary and trade information." Including hundreds of pages of miscellaneous information made the *Annual* too big for its own purposes. The various lists and articles were difficult to use and took both time and space from the catalogs of American books. The appendix of trade lists, while simple to produce, ran counter to the organizing principles of the catalog.

Buried under hundreds of pages of extraneous matter, Leypoldt's second catalog was an anemic thing, little more than a price-list. An annual price list was exactly what most of the trade really wanted, but it did not satisfy Leypoldt. He realized that the catalog itself was a qualified failure, but he seemed unable to recognize his own part in its failure.

Leypoldt blamed the publishers. He began his preface to the 1871 *Trade Circular Annual* with a reference to the comments that Nicholas Trübner made in the introduction to his second *Guide to American Literature*. Trübner had declared American bibliography "almost untrodden ground." America, he continued, "has disregarded the importance of an authentic record of her literary progress, and allowed the productions of her rising intellect and matured knowledge to be confounded with those of the great Anglo-Saxon family from which she sprang." Without careful bibliographies, he explained, a nation's literature was "like some huge pawnbroker's warehouse" in which anything of real value was lost in the great mounds of cheap trinkets.³⁸⁷ Writing a dozen years later, Leypoldt was forced to admit that little had changed: "Thousands of books are made; large sums

are spent on advertisements; all is done for momentary publicity, but, with few exceptions, little or nothing for an accurate and permanent record.”³⁸⁸

Leyboldt continued his long-standing arguments in favor of the German way of doing business. Unfortunately, those who would most benefit from accurate and complete records of the trade refused to do the simplest tasks to further that end:

No authentic title-record, still less a proper classification of books, is possible without examination of the books. In Germany, a copy of every book and pamphlet is deposited with the compiler of the official catalogues. Here the titles of books have to be obtained and verified in “ways that are dark.” Blanks are sent out, carefully ruled, and properly headed, for every item pertaining to the description of a book; but it is no exaggeration to state, that, out of one hundred, not ten come back properly filled. A complete title, if occupying more than one or two lines, is of rare occurrence.

Without help from the publishers, Leyboldt explained, he was forced to sift through “circulars, newspaper advertisements and book notices . . . obtaining from one the title, from another the name of the author, from another, size, price, or number of pages, etc.”

The “lack of encouragement” that he noted in the preface to the 1869 catalog continued to frustrate Leyboldt. Clearly surprised by the opposition that he met, Leyboldt recounted an example of the inexplicable attitudes of American publishers:

Some publishers seem to believe that they were doing *too* much for us in contributing to an accurate record of their own publications. It was one of our “representative” booksellers, who, when politely asked the question why he never

returned our blanks, seriously replied to our assistant, “Why, you must not expect *us* to do your work!”³⁸⁹

The prevailing attitude in the trade mystified and discouraged Leypoldt. Nevertheless, he remained determined to give the trade the tools it needed, even if the trade appeared not to want his help.

Leypoldt was happy to announce one bright spot on the book-trade horizon: new federal legislation that promised to force America’s publishers to adopt some of the discipline that marked the German trade. He was enthusiastic about the bibliographic potential of the new Copyright Act of 1870. The act designated the Librarian of Congress the national “Copyright Officer” and required publishers to deposit two examples of each copyrighted work with the Library of Congress. Leypoldt anticipated a new era of bibliographic certainty that would, once and for all, force publishers to abandon their slovenly ways. Looking forward, he made a prediction: “In 1872, America for the first time will possess, prepared by the able Librarian of Congress, an authentic annual record of American literature. Then it will be possible also to present some trust-worthy statistics which now would be made only by guess-work.”³⁹⁰ The Librarian of Congress prepared no such record for 1872, or in any subsequent year.

Leypoldt did his best to fulfill the promise of the Copyright Act, but the *Trade Circular Annual for 1871* was obviously incomplete, even at seven hundred and eighty pages. It was also unconscionably late—appearing just a few days before the spring trade sale in April of 1871.³⁹¹ By the time it was finally ready for sale, it was nearly obsolete. Although it failed in its stated purposes, the *Annual* brought together several ideas that formed the foundation of Leypoldt’s complex bibliographic business. It contained the

first fully collated annual catalog of new American editions ever published. It also included Leypoldt's first attempt at the sort of comprehensive directory and trade list that he later developed into the long-running *Publishers' Trade List Annual*.

Leypoldt spent the first half of 1871 getting the *Annual* into print and keeping up his monthly journals. He continued to issue progressively smaller versions of the *Literary Bulletin* for booksellers until late in 1872, when he replaced it with a serial called the *Monthly Book Circular*. The *Monthly Book Circular* had a number of formats, but for most of its life it was a four-page folio printed on paper "of a light texture that it can be enclosed in books, newspapers, letters, etc., without adding to the necessary postage." It could be purchased with the dealer's imprint or with space left for handstamps.³⁹²

Leypoldt's primary interest was the *Trade Circular*, and he made a number of changes that signaled a new direction for the serial. First, he rearranged the name, making it the *Trade Circular and Publishers' Bulletin*. Then he removed the name of Leypoldt and Holt from the masthead and returned to his old *nom de guerre*, "F. Leypoldt, Publisher." In September, he dissolved what remained of his partnership with Holt and moved to new offices at 712 Broadway. Finally, in December, he announced that the *Circular* would become a weekly.

Publishers' Weekly and the Modern American Book Trade

The first sign that the *Trade Circular* might do something more than simply survive had come in July of 1871. J. C. Barnes, a prominent New York textbook publisher, sent Leypoldt a letter announcing that the Publishers' Board of Trade had voted unanimously to make the *Trade Circular* their official forum.³⁹³ The Board had

been formed a year earlier, largely through the efforts of Henry Ivison of Ivison and Phiney, to regulate some of the shadier marketing practices of educational book publishers.³⁹⁴ Although it was based in New York, the Board of Trade was one of the first attempts at a genuinely national association within the book trade. The Board's endorsement gave some credence to Leypoldt's claims that his publications represented the interests of the trade.

As was so often the case in the American book industry, the support of the Publishers' Board of Trade turned out to be mostly symbolic. Leypoldt's journal was the public forum of the organization, but the honor was never reinforced with advertising revenue. As 1871 ended, Leypoldt seemed unsure of his future. His public announcements ranged from gloomy resignation to something approaching ebullience as he once again faced the task of producing a catalog from the miserable scraps of information that he was able to collect. His third American catalog filled ninety-one pages; classified and alphabetical indexes accounted for nearly thirty of those pages.

The little volume had none of the expansiveness of the previous year's *Trade Circular Annual*. Even Leypoldt's perennial complaint about the lack of trade support in the preface to the third catalog was uncharacteristically brief and dispirited.

An Annual American Catalogue, of bibliographic accuracy, is something next to impossible, by reason of the indifference of the majority of our Publishers in regard to furnishing the required information. But a small portion of the hundreds of letters written are satisfactorily answered; and then the time spent in writing and in waiting for answers that are never returned, and in patching up fragments of titles derived from indirect sources, would seem incredible to the uninitiated.

These facts must explain the absence of many titles, and the imperfect, and, in some cases, incorrect, record of many others that had to be inserted as they were found in newspapers, and in publishers' and library lists which happened to be at the Editor's disposal.³⁹⁵

Almost everything about the third catalog demonstrated the failure of Leypoldt's effort to establish an annual catalog. The only bright spot was a long essay enumerating and evaluating American literary production in 1871 written by an energetic young journalist named Richard Rogers Bowker.

Leypoldt decided to devote all his efforts to the *Trade Circular*. In the December number of what he now called the *Trade Circular and Publishers' Bulletin*, Leypoldt announced that he was going to discontinue his free trade monthly and replace it with an expanded subscription weekly. The masthead for the new *Weekly Trade Circular* revealed that Leypoldt was taking a new, broader view of the book trade. His journal was becoming "*A Special Medium of Inter-Communication for Publishers, Manufacturers, Importers, and Dealers in Books, Stationery, Music, Prints, and Miscellaneous Goods Sold at the Book, Stationery, Music and Print Stores.*"

Experience forced Leypoldt to abandon some of the principles and prejudices he had learned from F. W. Christern. A German bookseller might be able to survive exclusively upon book sales, but no one in the U.S. trade could afford to be so fussy. In the "Prospectus" for the weekly version of the *Trade Circular*, he explained the "well-known fact that during the last ten years especially, competition and other causes have forced the trade into a variety of branch combinations in aid and support of the book business." "Experience," he continued, "has shown that innumerable articles can be

brought before the book-buying public without in the least interfering with the sale of books.”

Leyboldt promised to serve the interests of “all business combinations.” His journal would include wallpaper, window shades, and musical instruments along with the more traditional goods of the American trade—books, prints, stationery, and sheet music. Leyboldt was willing to loosen his definition of the book business, but he was determined to draw at least one line; unlike several earlier book-trade journals, the *Weekly Trade Circular* would “confine itself strictly to the business interests of the trade,” avoiding “any pretension to be a literary paper.” Leyboldt offered the American trade, broadly defined, a “thoroughly representative medium of intercommunication” for \$2.50 annually, postage paid.³⁹⁶

The first issue of the *Weekly Trade Circular* gave Leyboldt an occasion to expand upon his mission statement:

A prompt and full business record will always form the main feature of the “Weekly;” but it is the aim of the editor at the same time to make the TRADE CIRCULAR a representative organ of the spirit of the trade, by admitting any exchange of views, or discussion on trade matters, that may lead to a reform of abuses, to a better understanding between publishers and dealers, and to a more congenial spirit among the trade in general.

The editor also aims to make the TRADE CIRCULAR an organ of trade education, by gathering from all available sources any material that may contribute to a more thorough business knowledge. He has in preparation a series of articles treating of the experiences, usages, and business management of the

trade in foreign countries. In view of the new movement among the Publishers' Board of Trade, to include miscellaneous as well as educational publishers, and thus to form a Union, which must finally become a general Booksellers' Union, the editor will begin the series with an article on the German "Börsenverein," the oldest and best organized Booksellers' Union, of the world.³⁹⁷

One week later, Leypoldt announced that he had purchased the *American Literary Gazette and Publisher's Circular* from George W. Childs.³⁹⁸ The sudden merger put Leypoldt in charge of the book trade's sole forum, the *Publishers' and Stationers' Weekly Trade Circular*. Leypoldt retained the old-fashioned, unwieldy title for the rest of that first year, after which it became, simply, *Publishers' Weekly*.

The goals that Leypoldt set for *Publishers' Weekly* were obviously unrealistic. For more than forty years, American publishers and booksellers had been indifferent to their trade journals. Only a few publishers bothered to submit review copies or even notices of new publications. Publishers who were unwilling to exert themselves for free publicity were unlikely to show much interest in "trade education" or a "general Booksellers' Union."

Leypoldt thought that *Publishers' Weekly* would foster and then serve a national trade organization. Instead, *Publishers' Weekly* itself became the organizing principle of the American book industry. During the first year of weekly publication, Leypoldt established an editorial schedule that served the four major events of the book trade. He devoted two or three issues each to the Spring and Fall trade sales. Throughout November and December, Leypoldt focused almost entirely upon the Christmas market. In June and early July, he turned his attention to the educational market. Leypoldt also

insisted upon inserting a fifth event into the book-trade calendar. Although he was unable to continue his annual catalogs, he compiled an annual list of books published in the previous year that he ran as a series in two or three issues in January and sometimes February.

Throughout his career, Leypoldt campaigned against the trade sales that had been a regular feature of the American book industry since the 1820s. Despite his professional opposition to the sales, he could not afford to ignore them in *PW*. Twice a year, in April and September, the various members of the U.S. book trade met at auction houses in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia for the semiannual trade sales. Over the years, Leypoldt published dozens of editorials that criticized the sales. As the editor and publisher of *Publishers' Weekly*, he was an unwilling participant. He propped up the system he hated with editorial coverage and trade advertising.

Leypoldt thought that the trade sales were a symptom of the larger problem of underselling. He opposed the trade sales because they undermined the book industry's traditional discount system. In a pair of editorials, titled "Underselling" and "Unity of the Trade," he connected underselling and the trade auctions. Leypoldt presented the position of a hypothetical bookseller:

An actual antagonism has sprung up between booksellers and publishers—"if *he* does not undersell, the *publisher* will undersell *him*," says the bookseller apologist; "the publisher sells his book to the retailer, and then endeavors to prevent him from selling to anyone else." And he adds, rightly, that this is a weakness of the publishing business alone, a branch of trade which as the most intelligent, should be most far-sighted.

Leyboldt concluded that publishers “must soon choose deliberately” between the traditional system of discounts and simple wholesale marketing, because “the retail trade cannot live against the competition of manufacturers, and either the competition or the retailers must cease to be.”³⁹⁹

Although he opposed the trade sales, Leyboldt was pragmatic enough to use the opportunity that the sales provided. Writing to Bowker on 9 September 1872, Leyboldt sought Bowker’s help to fill out the editorial columns for a special issue of *PW* that was to “be freely distributed when sent to the Trade Sale Rooms, and there should be some columns of items.” Using the Fall sale to distribute issues of the *Publishers’ Weekly* to publishers and booksellers was a clever idea, and it would save Leyboldt the penny for postage. He had to be careful, however. It would be suicidal to attack the trade sales or the publishers at the sale. Leyboldt cautioned Bowker to write “something appropriate for the sale room.”⁴⁰⁰

Leyboldt was not alone in opposition to the sales. In March 1872, T. B. Peterson and Brothers of Philadelphia took out a half-page ad in *PW* announcing that they would no longer participate in the trade sales; instead, they would sell their entire line at a forty percent discount with a further discount for cash. The firm insisted that they would sell only at regular discounts: “There will be no alteration in the retail price of any of our books this year.”⁴⁰¹ In the fall of 1873, Harper and Brothers opted out of the sales, taking a full-page ad to announce the fact.⁴⁰² Once larger houses like Harper and Brothers abandoned the sales, it became clear that the institution would eventually fold.

Despite almost universal condemnation, the trade sales lasted, in some form, for another twenty years. Because they were a fact of the trade, Leyboldt covered them (and

used them), but he never relented in his campaign against them. The distribution problems that plagued the book industry in Leypoldt's day persisted with or without the trade sales. Writing in 1913, Bowker reminded the trade that it was still looking "for a publisher who will 'discover or invent' a new method which shall be both practical and effective for the distribution of books of general literature."⁴⁰³

Leypoldt was less troubled by the other major events of the book-trade calendar. In May 1872, he announced his intention to publish an *American Educational Catalogue* as an independent serial. Under the banner headline "TO ALL WHO HAVE Anything to Sell to Schools," Leypoldt solicited ads for his new catalog. The first *Educational Catalogue*, which was issued in both trade and retail versions, came out at the end of July—just in time for buyers and sellers who were finalizing their fall orders. Although he had hoped to include at least some editorial content, the first catalog was simply an assemblage of advertisements and trade lists.

Leypoldt put his stamp on the new enterprise by compiling an alphabetical listing of schoolbooks, based upon the index of the third annual catalog. Publishers who wanted more than a short-title listing, in brevier type, had to buy advertising space at three times the rates they paid for space in *PW*. As Leypoldt warned them:

As the immense material only admits of the insertion of the titles in the most condensed shape, publishers may find it to their advantage to present elsewhere in the same number, an advertisement giving their own account of their books, and showing at one glance, the entire range of their publications, at the same time facilitating the making up of orders, both to dealers and to teachers. Otherwise

their books will, by the system of cataloguing, necessarily appear scattered through the whole number.⁴⁰⁴

Leyboldt came close to admitting that the system practically forced publishers to buy ad space if they wanted buyers to know what they offered.

Publishers who catered exclusively to the educational market and those who maintained special educational departments, like Appleton, Scribner, and Leyboldt's former partner, Holt, needed the display ads because they had regular lines of textbooks that would be broken up in the alphabetical lists. The problem was especially acute for firms like Appleton and Harper, which marketed to their readers in series. The structure of the series disappeared in the massive alphabetical list.

As the editor of the official journal of the Publishers' Board of Trade, Leyboldt took it as his responsibility to congratulate the education sector of trade when it did right and to condemn it when it did wrong. In an editorial promoting the *Educational Catalogue*, Leyboldt noted clear improvements in educational publishing. Textbooks were, on the whole, better made—using better materials and more careful construction than before. The content of textbooks was also improving. Leyboldt noted that scholars of world-wide reputation, like Tyndall and Huxley, were now writing for the American market, but he warned buyers not to be overawed by great names.⁴⁰⁵

Leyboldt told buyers that, although some publishers, like the members of the Publishers' Board of Trade, were working together to regulate the textbook market, teachers were responsible for the ultimate regulation of the trade: "It should be the aim of every conscientious teacher to reject any accidents of great names, or fine bindings, or offers of heavy personal discounts, and consider text-books solely as to their fitness for

producing effective results on the mind of the child.” He also congratulated the Board of Trade for “stamping their disapproval upon the old, demoralizing devices for ‘introducing’ books.”⁴⁰⁶

The advice that Leypoldt was offering ignored the fact that teachers were no longer in charge of textbook selection. The success of the common schools movement and the proliferation of local and state school boards and boards of education changed the old patterns of the textbook business. In rural markets, local booksellers filled orders for their local schoolteachers each August, while in urban areas publishers usually dealt directly with school boards, which bought books for their entire district. After the war, district- and even state-wide contracts were becoming more common and more lucrative.

The amount of money involved, the book trade’s traditional discount system, and human cupidity combined to create a corrupt and cut-throat business. Publishers began to use traveling agents to solicit contracts for their textbooks. Publishers authorized their agents to offer special “introductory” discounts to schools or districts if they adopted their books. Publishers would “introduce” a series free of charge if the buyer would abandon the use of a competitor’s books. The contracts frequently required the school board physically to surrender the old textbooks before they received the new books. Thus, if a school board handed over their old books, the discount for the initial order became one hundred percent.⁴⁰⁷ As the voice of Publishers’ Board of Trade, *Publishers’ Weekly* campaigned for decades against the ruinous competition in the textbook market. In 1879, Bowker wrote an editorial upbraiding textbook publishers for their “willingness to spend every cent of margin on agent’s expenses, to the exclusion of any at all for legitimate handling; to permit anything that will get somebody else’s books out and yours

in, even if the books must be given away; to supply specimen copies and books at ‘introduction’ rates when books have been in use for years.”⁴⁰⁸

Ironically, the *Educational Catalogue* and the special educational issues of *PW* undermined the reform movement. The catalog made it even easier for textbook publishers to bypass the old local distribution system and market their books directly to school boards. Manufacturers of goods for the educational market, everything from pencils to desks to patent blackboards, could reach buyers without the expense of preparing and mailing individual catalogs. For the buyers, the catalog offered a central marketplace where they could compare products and prices. The catalog helped to make local booksellers redundant, because it allowed purchasing agents for school districts to deal directly with the sales agents of publishers and manufacturers.

Serving the book trade pushed Leypoldt into a number of awkward compromises. When Bowker wrote an editorial condemning educational discounts, Leypoldt asked him to moderate the tone. Although he agreed with Bowker, Leypoldt asked whether, “the form in which it is presented may be perhaps modified. If you could make it appear as a mere *suggestion*, say made to us, or as *one of the* possible remedies instead of as an absolute assertion, that only this and no other measure will meet the difficulties. I believe it would be better for the *Trade Circular*.” Leypoldt could be pragmatic, but he was not a coward. After asking Bowker to temper his editorial, Leypoldt told him that he would print it as it stood if Bowker insisted.⁴⁰⁹

While supporting the educational market was complicated and morally ambiguous, Christmas was a straightforward retail event for the American book trade. Leypoldt’s treatment of the Christmas market always reflected the retail spirit of the

season. In 1872, he launched a pair of special numbers designed for the holiday. Once again, he published a *Circular* for the whole trade and a *Bulletin* for retailers. The *Christmas Trade Circular* was a special number of *PW* that appeared toward the middle of November. It contained descriptive price lists compiled by Leypoldt, but it was dominated by publishers' display ads. Leypoldt sold ads for the special number at the regular rates, but most of his regular advertisers took larger ads, and many included elaborate artwork. The *Christmas Trade Circular* was issued as early as possible to allow dealers to make up their orders in plenty of time for the holiday market.

The *Christmas Bulletin* was a retail version of the Christmas circular that booksellers could distribute to their customers. The *Christmas Bulletin* could be ordered with the bookseller's imprint for five cents per copy, with a minimum order of one hundred copies, and a sliding scale for larger orders. Like its *Literary* cousin, the *Christmas Bulletin* was intended to make the booksellers' job much easier. Rather than guessing which holiday items might strike the public fancy, booksellers could give the *Christmas Bulletin* to their customers and take orders. The advertising terms for the *Christmas Bulletin* were roughly triple what they were for the trade version.⁴¹⁰

After the disappointments of the third annual catalog, Leypoldt had been forced to suspend the series. The task was too difficult and too expensive without the cooperation of the trade. For a time, he tried to sell subscriptions to underwrite the cost of another annual catalog, but the response was discouraging. After a year of actively soliciting backing, he had raised less than half of the money he needed to proceed.⁴¹¹ Although he was unable to issue annual catalogs for many years, Leypoldt maintained the practice of compiling an annual book list for the January issues of *PW*.

There was little support for a catalog, but publishers were willing to back another trade annual. The *Trade Circular Annual for 1871* had been a failure as a catalog, but it had appealed to publishers. The trade annual gathered the publishers' individual trade lists in one handy volume. It was difficult to use for a bookseller who might be looking for a particular title, but publishers seemed not to care about indexing or cross-referencing. They simply wanted another way to distribute their trade lists.

The first *Publishers' Trade-List Annual*, or *PTLA* as it came to be known in the trade, was issued in the fall of 1873. Like the *Trade Circular Annual* that preceded it, *PTLA* was cobbled together from a variety of sources. Leypoldt asked American publishers to send him a certain number of copies of their trade lists. The lists were collated, bound together into a single volume, and distributed to booksellers. Leypoldt wanted to index each issue of *PTLA*, but that task was often left undone. The number and size of the trade lists determined the size of each annual. By the end of the century, the volumes became massive collations held together by steel posts; *PTLA* for 1898 was nearly a foot thick. In 1948, *PTLA* became a fully indexed book-industry catalog called *Books in Print*—Leypoldt would have been delighted.

Leypoldt issued the first *PTLA* through an entity that became the hallmark of book-trade journalism in the United States: The Offices of the *Publishers' Weekly*, 37 Park Row. Leypoldt established his comprehensive book-trade publishing enterprise in the old Potter Building, which faced City Hall Park and was directly across from the Astor House Hotel where Leypoldt's father-in-law, Rudolph Garrigue, had opened his bookstore twenty years earlier. Park Row, also known as "Newspaper Row," was the most concentrated print-manufacturing district in the world. It was the home to the

World, the *Post*, the *Mail*, the *Herald*, the *Times*, the *Staats-Zeitung*, and a diverse collection of magazine, book, and specialty publishers.

The Offices of *Publishers' Weekly* began as something more than a place to do business. Leypoldt was trying to create a bibliographic “bureau” that would supply the American book industry with the same range of trade publications that were available in the German trade. The Offices of *PW* issued hundreds of thousands of pages of trade information annually in an attempt to provide a center for the sprawling American book business. The Offices of *PW* produced a dizzying array of weeklies, monthlies, annuals, catalogs, guides, and bulletins—most intended to give a little structure to the book trade.

Leypoldt gathered a small, dedicated staff to realize his vision for his bibliographic bureau. Marian Monachesi was his first assistant. She had already devoted nearly ten years of her working life to Leypoldt’s various projects. She had supervised Leypoldt’s lending library in Philadelphia. In New York she managed his accounts and wrote book notices before becoming the *de facto* bibliographic editor at *Publishers' Weekly*.⁴¹² Leypoldt meant to give the book trade some sort of annual catalog, whether it wanted one or not, and Miss Monachesi, as she was known in the office, assumed the task of compiling and verifying all of the weekly, monthly and yearly book lists.

Richard Rogers Bowker was the literary editor for the *Evening Mail* when he started to write articles for Leypoldt. Bowker’s first attempt at book-trade journalism was the long review of new American publications for 1871. In the essay, Bowker focused most of his attention on the literary merits of the new American publications; he soon learned to value commercial potential over literary merit. Leypoldt divided the essay between the first and fourth issues of the *Weekly Trade Circular* and used it as an

introduction to the third, and apparently final, annual catalog. For three years, Bowker continued at the *Evening Mail*, while he worked as Leypoldt's assistant at *PW*. Like Henry Holt before him, Bowker was a well-educated, energetic, and sociable young man with a surprising knack for business; he deserves most of the credit for the eventual success of the Offices of *Publishers' Weekly*, which became R. R. Bowker Co. in 1899.

Leypoldt hired Miss Monachesi's brother to sell advertising space in *PW*. Nicolo di Rienzi Monachesi was not an ideal employee; in 1874, he decamped with several thousand dollars. To the consternation of his faithful employees and his wife, Leypoldt never even noticed the theft—when it was brought to his attention, he did nothing to recover the money. William Stewart replaced Nicolo Monachesi and spent the rest of his working life at the Offices of *PW*. In 1877, Adolph Growoll became the assistant editor of *PW*. Before he became part of the *PW* staff, Growoll supervised the production of Leypoldt's educational catalog series at Waldron and Payne, the firm that printed all of Leypoldt's publications.

Growoll and Bowker became close friends during their long professional association, but Growoll was truly devoted to Leypoldt. He was also very fond of an unofficial member of the staff, Augusta Leypoldt. In the early days of the Offices of *PW*, "Mrs. L," as Growoll referred to her in his office correspondence, occasionally helped with the work. As the enterprise grew and her children became more self-sufficient, she became a regular if unacknowledged member of the staff.

Over time, the steady rhythms of the Offices of *Publishers' Weekly* began to influence the rhythm of the trade. *PW* itself was not radically different from its predecessors, but its editor was methodical and unusually tenacious. He rarely varied his

editorial schedule; everyone in the trade, therefore, knew what to expect in each issue. Eventually, publishers and booksellers learned to use the schedule to their own advantage. It was, for example, more effective to submit a notice of a new publication the month before a major book-trade event than the week after.

It took time for the trade to understand that the Offices of *Publishers' Weekly* worked according to a system. A month before the 1873 Fall trade sale, Leypoldt limited the list of new publications to those that had arrived in the office complete and on time—he listed just three titles on an otherwise blank page.⁴¹³ Just six years later, many publishers were using *PW* as Leypoldt had intended. The ledger sheets for 1879 showed five distinct spikes in advertising revenue corresponding to the five events of Leypoldt's editorial calendar.⁴¹⁴

The American book industry began to rely upon *Publishers' Weekly*. In an otherwise chaotic industry, *PW* could be relied upon. Leypoldt's journal was prompt, accurate, and fair. *Publishers' Weekly* took strong editorial stands on most of the problems facing the trade, but it was scrupulous about printing opposing views. Reliability and editorial integrity were not the only reasons that *PW* succeeded where previous journals had failed. A decade after the Civil War, the American book industry was finally big enough and sufficiently interdependent to consider ideas of mutual interest and organized action.

The American Book Trade at the American Centennial

The Office of *Publishers' Weekly* was still struggling to stay afloat during the winter of 1873-74. At the same time, booksellers and publishers were again making

tentative steps toward a genuinely national trade association. A group of western booksellers, led by J. W. Gunn, Abel Low, Pugh and Brother, and C. Anthony, met in Cincinnati in October 1873 to form the Bookseller's Protective Union. A better-organized and more representative convention took place in February 1874. Representatives from West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Michigan, Iowa, and Missouri met, once again, in Cincinnati. The major items on the agenda were, as usual, trade sales and underselling, but the most notable outcome of the convention was a name change: the group was now called the American Book Trade Union.⁴¹⁵ A meeting of the Publisher's Board of Trade was simultaneously convened in New York.⁴¹⁶

The regional meetings paved the way for the first national book-trade convention at Put-in-Bay, a Lake Erie resort island about fifteen miles north of Sandusky, Ohio. The meeting of the American Book-Trade Union at Put-in-Bay was a turning point, not because of the particular business arrangements that were established, but because it was truly a national meeting. Most of the 120 delegates came from the western states, but representatives from firms in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and even New Orleans attended.⁴¹⁷ Moreover, publishers as well as booksellers attended the convention. R. R. Bowker covered the convention for *PW*.⁴¹⁸

For the first time, American publishers and booksellers met to discuss a regular national system of discounts. The resulting resolution was known as the "twenty percent rule." The "rule" set the discount rate for large buyers who were not regular members of the trade—libraries in particular. The representatives also passed a resolution to adopt *Publishers' Weekly* as the primary journal of the book trade. Publishers were

“encouraged” to submit announcements of forthcoming books and to send in full bibliographic descriptions of all books upon publication.⁴¹⁹

The American Book-Trade Union met again the following summer at Niagara Falls. The second meeting was larger than the first, but it transacted no significant new business. In a nod to rising anti-union sentiment in the country, the name of the organization was changed to the American Book Trade Association. The ABTA reaffirmed its stances on discounts, underselling, and the trade sales. It also made plans for a bigger convention the following summer in Philadelphia. The third national convention would be one of nearly a hundred conferences and conventions held in Philadelphia during the summer of 1876.

Soon after the end of the American Civil War, committees and subcommittees were formed to begin planning a celebration to mark America’s centennial. The centerpiece of the celebration was to be an “International Exhibition of Arts, Manufactures and Products of the Soil and Mine” on the banks of the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia. Ten million people would visit Philadelphia to see everything from cannons to coffee beans, but American industry and commercial culture, including the book industry, were the stars of show.

The exhibition was a celebration of American industrial innovation. Visitors to the fair saw the first commercial typewriter and Alexander Graham Bell’s new telephone, but the most popular attraction and the unofficial emblem of the fair was the massive Corliss Double Steam Engine. Two massive steam-driven pistons turned a fifty-six ton flywheel that was thirty feet in diameter. Attended by a single operating engineer, the Corliss Engine produced 1400 horsepower; it powered all the exhibits in Machinery Hall.

The Corliss Engine stood in the center of Machinery Hall, surrounded by smaller machines. Most were powered by steam or hydraulics, but a few demonstrated the potential of newer power sources like electricity and internal combustion. A courtyard connected Machinery Hall to the Main Exhibition Hall, which held displays of furniture, glassware, photographs, copper wire, cigars, rugs, watches, rifles, shirt collars, children's toys, and books—a vast array of merchandise, most of it manufactured using the sorts of machines displayed in the adjacent building.

The two enormous steel and glass galleries enclosed nearly thirty-five acres of machinery and manufactured goods, most of which was produced in the U.S. Including the connecting courtyard, the complex extended nearly three-quarters of a mile along the southern border of the fair grounds. Most visitors to the fair arrived in the rail coaches that stopped at the new Pennsylvania Railroad Depot opposite the main entrance. Fairgoers could board a train in New York, Boston, or even Chicago and step down to a platform that opened onto the courtyard that connected Machinery Hall to the Main Exhibition Hall. A smaller rail line circled the fairgrounds.

Everywhere, the emphasis was on technology, industry, and organization. Agriculture took a distant second place to manufacturing at the Centennial Exhibition. Although America was still overwhelmingly rural, there was little evidence of rural life at the fair. Although it was centennial celebration, there was little in Philadelphia to remind visitors of the past, especially the war and the defeated South. From the design of the grounds to the exhibits on display, the fair reflected most clearly the social and commercial values that had shaped the industrial North and the increasingly urban Midwest.

The American book industry tried to take advantage of Centennial Exhibition. The American Book-Trade Association exhibit in the Main Hall featured ninety-five firms. The big New York publishers, Scribner, Putnam, Harper, and Appleton, displayed their work, as did smaller specialty firms like D. M. Dewey, a Rochester, New York, printer who produced color plates for seed and plant catalogs. The Office of *Publishers' Weekly* displayed all nine bound volumes of *PW* and a variety of other publications at a small kiosk in the center of the ABTA exhibit.⁴²⁰

In addition to the exhibit, the American Book-Trade Association held their third national convention on the fairgrounds. For three days in mid-July, in the midst of an extraordinary heat wave, publishers and booksellers met to discuss the same problems that had plagued the American book trade since the American Company of Booksellers formed in 1801. The discussions were heated but inconclusive; the only real business transacted at the Centennial conference was the election of officers, after which the members of the trade embarked on an excursion to Atlantic City.⁴²¹ The trip to the seaside offered the book dealers a little relief from the heat that killed more than one hundred people before the before the end of July.

Another group with an interest in the book trade held a national conference Centennial Exhibition. The American Library Association gathered for the first time in October; it was one of about a dozen professional associations launched during the Centennial. The Centennial Exhibition was a symbolic occasion for national conferences, conventions, and congresses. Groups as diverse as the National League of Professional Baseball Clubs and the American Society of Civil Engineers held national conferences in Philadelphia. Some were established organizations like the Society of Civil Engineers,

which had been founded in 1852. The National League, on the other hand, was formed at the fair.

The founding of the ALA was a spur-of-the-moment decision. The idea for a conference at the Centennial had surfaced early in 1876, but the actual preparations began at a meeting that took place in the Office of *Publishers' Weekly* on May 17—just eleven days after President Grant opened the fair and threw the lever that started the Corliss Steam Engine. At that meeting, Melvil Dewey, Frederick Leyboldt, and R.R. Bowker discussed an idea for a publication that would serve librarians as *Publishers' Weekly* served the book trade—they would call it the *American Library Journal*. The conference came into the conversation primarily as an occasion to launch the new journal.

Dewey's meeting with Leyboldt and Bowker was apparently impromptu. Dewey recorded a few details of his meetings in his diary. He was in New York to attend a meeting of the American Metrological Society. The AMS meetings would not begin until the afternoon, so he stopped in at the Office of *Publishers' Weekly*.⁴²² He apparently tried to interest Leyboldt in his marketing ventures, but Leyboldt had no interest in Dewey's merchandise.

Dewey had been casting about for a venture that could unite his many enthusiasms. He had a university degree from Amherst College. After his graduation, he secured a job as an assistant librarian at the college. The job allowed him sufficient time to pursue a number of interests, including shorthand techniques, "rational" spelling, standardized measurement, educational reform, and the library classification system that would bear his name. In April 1876, he set up an enterprise in Boston that he called the "Hub." From the Hub, Dewey ran his various reform campaigns and a confusing mixture

of business ventures and marketing schemes. Dewey kept the Hub afloat by selling everything from textbooks and cataloging slips to metric scales and tape measures.⁴²³

Before Dewey left the Offices of *PW* that afternoon, however, he and Leypoldt had made an agreement in principle. Leypoldt would publish an independent journal for librarians at his own risk, and Dewey would edit the journal for a salary of “\$500 a year and 20% of gross receipts for advertising and subscriptions.”⁴²⁴

The same day, Leypoldt sent a letter to Justin Winsor, the Superintendent of the Boston Public Library, and several other prominent librarians. The letter, which asked the librarians to endorse the conference, enclosed a printed document headed “Call for a Library Conference.”⁴²⁵ The journal and the conference were launched simultaneously, but there was no mention of the *American Library Journal* in the first wave of letters and telegrams. The first hint that Leypoldt planned to publish a librarians’ journal appeared a few days later in the 20 May issue of *PW*.⁴²⁶ The decision to proceed with the *American Library Journal* and the conference might have seemed a sudden and peculiar tangent for an enterprise that served the interests of the book trade, but Leypoldt had already prepared the foundations for the venture.

Contrary to the prevailing opinion of the trade, Leypoldt had long believed that libraries were good for the book business. He had run a subscription library of his own when he was a foreign bookseller in Philadelphia. Since taking up book-trade journalism, he had published regular reports about libraries. In October 1872, he had issued a special “library number” of the *Weekly Trade Circular*. Leypoldt included a digest of reports from prominent American librarians, a selection of “Useful Hints” for librarians, and a

nine-page catalog of “Works of Reference for the use of the Librarian, Editor, Literary Student, Book-Collector, and Bookseller.”⁴²⁷

The idea failed to interest librarians or the book trade, but Leypoldt persisted. In January 1874, he launched a semi-regular feature called “The Library Corner.” Leypoldt’s interest in libraries probably mystified his colleagues in the trade. He thought of libraries as a complement to the book trade; librarians, he explained, needed “the same information as the bookseller, in book lists and the like, and are to some extent subscribers.”⁴²⁸ Furthermore, libraries bought thousands of books, and they got people into the habit of reading. Readers eventually became book buyers as they built their own personal libraries.

Leypoldt’s view of libraries was at odds with the general attitude in the trade. Both publishers and booksellers viewed libraries with suspicion—customers who might have purchased a particular book could borrow it from a library instead. Worse, libraries expected the same discounts that were usually reserved for “legitimate” members of the trade. Negotiating discount rates was always contentious, but the negotiations between libraries and booksellers were especially acrimonious because book dealers considered libraries and librarians as outside the trade. When the American Book-Trade Union adopted the “twenty percent rule” for library discounts; it was a measure directed *against* librarians who sometimes demanded the same rates that were usually reserved for jobbers. Some booksellers claimed that twenty percent was still too generous—one bookdealer suggested a rate schedule that allowed a discount of thirty-three and one third percent to jobbers and twenty-five percent to retail booksellers, while limiting libraries and other institutional buyers to a fifteen percent discount.⁴²⁹

Most American publishers and booksellers regarded librarians and their libraries as nuisances. Leypoldt, by contrast, viewed them as an auxiliary trade. He anticipated mutual interest. If all went well, every bookseller and librarian would subscribe to *Publishers' Weekly* and the *Library Journal*, and publishers would buy ads in both journals. Some publishers did buy advertising in both journals, but the book trade remained skeptical. Leypoldt's wife, Augusta, shared that skepticism; she never understood the value of the *Library Journal*.

The *American Library Journal* made its debut at the first meeting of the American Library Association. The ALA was the first national library organization, although the conference in Philadelphia was not the first national meeting. The ALA continued to hold regular conferences, and the organization continued to support the *Library Journal*. Eventually, the *LJ* helped to bridge the gap between librarians and the book trade, but the book trade never fully adopted Leypoldt's attitude toward libraries.

The *Library Journal* nearly ruined Leypoldt and the Office of *Publishers' Weekly*. Dewey had virtually no talent for running a journal, and his business practices were worse than Leypoldt's. Dewey routinely took funds from one venture to shore up another; *LJ* was no exception. Bowker shared Leypoldt's enthusiasm for libraries, but he regarded Dewey as a self-serving charlatan. He was outraged that Leypoldt continued to pour money into the *Journal* and that he continued to associate with Dewey.⁴³⁰ Augusta Leypoldt, who never had any faith in the *Library Journal*, famously characterized Dewey as a "miserable specimen of a gabbling idiot."⁴³¹ Leypoldt's dedication to the *LJ* appeared quixotic to his friends and colleagues, but, like most of Leypoldt's ventures, it eventually succeeded.

The Emergence of a Modern American Book Trade

By the time the Centennial Exposition closed early in November, more than ten million people had visited the fair. Over the course of six months, the fairgrounds had been the site of hundreds of conferences and conventions. As the fair ended, the country was really no different than it had been when President Grant delivered his opening address, but the fair indicated the direction the country would take. The industrial nation predicted in Philadelphia was a reality seventeen years later, when Americans gathered in Chicago to celebrate Christopher Columbus and the “discovery” of the New World at the 1893 Columbian Exposition.

In the interval between the two fairs, America had become an industrial nation. Industrial production had trailed agricultural production by about \$500 million in 1870. By 1900, industry was out-producing agriculture by almost two-to-one.⁴³² The pattern of consolidation and organization was firmly established. Industrial conglomerates and national labor unions were practical facts of commerce in the U.S., and professional associations proliferated.

Between the fairs, the American book industry continued to grow, but it changed less than many other industries. No massive book conglomerates emerged, and despite continuous improvement in the machinery of book manufacture, the industry still relied upon a great deal of handwork. The American book industry could not even sustain its own national association; the ABTA held a convention in 1877 and then folded. Nevertheless, the book trade became a coherent, cooperative, national industry. It was still plagued by problems that had roots stretching back to the colonial period, but

between 1876 and 1893, the American book industry started to behave like a national enterprise.

When the Centennial Exposition ended in November 1876, no one, not even Frederick Leypoldt, could have predicted that the Offices of *Publishers' Weekly* would survive the year, but they did survive. *Publishers' Weekly*, the *Publishers' Trade List Annual*, the *Educational Catalogue*, and the *Library Journal* all survived. Remarkably, the *American Catalogue* also survived. The volume for 1876 did not appear in print until 1880, but it did appear and it continued until 1909. Almost every publication of the Offices of *PW* continued into the twentieth century, and several still serve the book trade as Leypoldt conceived it.

The American book trade began without a center. It had no central marketplace and no regulating body. Unlike the book trades in Germany and England, the American book business had no organizing agency—no *Börsenverien*, no Stationers' Company. Instead, the American trade had the Offices of *Publishers' Weekly*—an independent, commercial enterprise that encouraged, but had no power to compel, cooperation. It was a unique solution. The American book trade continued, as it had grown, from its tangled English and Continental roots, but it now had access to the tools that organized the German book trade. The change took time, but by the end of the nineteenth century, the American book trade was a well-ordered national enterprise.

* * *

Today, the U.S. book industry accounts for about half of the English-language books produced worldwide each year. In 2006, 291,920 new books were published in the United States, a fifteen percent increase since 2002.⁴³³ The U.S. book industry still has no official regulatory agency. The R.R. Bowker Company, performs most of the regulatory functions of the U.S. trade. Bowker, for example, assigns International Standard Book Numbers. In most of the world, ISBNs are assigned by government agencies or a trade associations; in the United States the task falls to the same private company that creates and maintains *Books in Print*, the most comprehensive catalog of books published in the United States.

The Bowker Company began life as the Offices of *Publishers' Weekly*. *Books in Print* began as two separate serials: *American Catalogue* and the *Publishers' Trade-List Annual*. *Publishers' Weekly* is still the “organ of trade communication” for the U.S. book industry, but it is no longer the property of the Bowker Company. The bibliographic enterprise that Leypoldt created, and Bowker continued, gave the U.S. book trade a commercial alternative to the agencies that regulate and organize the book trade in most of the world. The Offices of *Publishers' Weekly* became the foundation of the modern American book trade.

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APC, American Publishers' Circular

LJ, Library Journal

NYPL, New York Public Library

PW, Publishers' Weekly (Note: although the title, *Publishers' Weekly* commenced with volume three, I have used the abbreviation, *PW*, instead of "*PSWTC*" to identify items from volumes one and two

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²¹ Rudolf Hirsch, "Printed Reports on the Early Discoveries and Their Reception," in *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, ed. Fredi Chiappelli, Michael J. B. Allen, and Robert Louis Benson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 538.

²² Pohl maintains that Vespucci was born, not in 1451 but 1454. Either date participates in a kind of myth-making. The traditional date connects him to Columbus, while Pohl's links him to the beginning of print. Frederick Julius Pohl, *Amerigo Vespucci, Pilot Major* (New York: Octagon, 1966), 14 and 207-09n.

²³ Morison, *The European Discovery of America: The Southern Voyages, A. D. 1492-1616*, 276-80, Pohl, *Amerigo Vespucci, Pilot Major*, 35-44.

²⁴ HARRISSE, *The Discovery of North America*, 671-77.

²⁵ Pohl, *Amerigo Vespucci, Pilot Major*, 76-89.

²⁶ Morison, *The European Discovery of America: The Southern Voyages, A. D. 1492-1616*, 280-83, Pohl, *Amerigo Vespucci, Pilot Major*, 121-26, Martin Waldseemüller, *Cosmographiae Introductio*, trans. Joseph Fischer and Franz von Wieser, *March of America Facsimile Series*, 2 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966), 133-44.

²⁷ Pohl characterizes both *Mundus Novus* and the *Four Letters* as forgeries, which seems to overstate the case. Both documents clearly derive from sources Pohl accepts as authentic. Pohl, *Amerigo Vespucci, Pilot Major*, 147-67.

²⁸ Amerigo Vespucci, *Mundus Novus: A Letter to Lorenzo Pietro Di Medici*, trans. George Tyler Northup, *Vespucci Reprints and Translations*, 5 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1916), 1.

²⁹ Ibid., 4.

³⁰ Ibid., 5-9.

³¹ Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo and William Thomas Little, *The Labors of the Very Brave Knight Esplandián*, *Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies*, 92 (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, SUNY Binghamton, 1992).

³² Hirsch, "Printed Reports on the Early Discoveries and Their Reception," 554-55.

³³ Sorting out the publication history of the Vespucci books is difficult. I follow the collation in Hirsch.

³⁴ Waldseemüller, *Cosmographiae Introductio*, 137-39.

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³⁶ William Brandon, *New Worlds for Old: Reports from the New World and Their Effect on the Development of Social Thought in Europe, 1500-1800* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1986), 9-10, Arthur J Slavin, "The American Principle from More to Locke," in *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, ed. Fredi Chiappelli, Michael J. B. Allen, and Robert Louis Benson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 145-46.

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³⁸ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Centenary Edition: The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 12 vols., vol. 5 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin/AMS Press, 1903), 152.

³⁹ Morison, *The European Discovery of America: The Southern Voyages, A. D. 1492-1616*, 272-312.

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- ⁴² Elizabeth Harris, "The Waldseemüller Map: A Typographic Appraisal," *Imago Mundi* 37 (1985): 32-33.
- ⁴³ Carol Urness, *Maps and Mapmakers: Three Views of the World* (University of Minnesota, 1999-2001); available from <http://www.bell.lib.umn.edu/index.html>.
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- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 70.
- ⁴⁶ Harris, "The Waldseemüller Map: A Typographic Appraisal," 30-31.
- ⁴⁷ Geoffrey Symcox, Giovanna Rabitti, and Peter D. Diehl, *Italian Reports on America, 1493-1522: Letters, Dispatches, and Papal Bulls, Repertorium Columbianum, 10* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2001), 10-13, 30-37.
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⁵⁶ McAlister, *Spain and Portugal in the New World, 1492-1700*, 166-71.

⁵⁷ Clive Griffin, *The Crombergers of Seville: The History of a Printing and Merchant Dynasty* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 52. The most reliable account of the founding of the Mexican press is presented in Griffin's study of the house of Cromberger.

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Ora Bretall Scholarship, Graduate School, Illinois State University, 1993. Awarded in support of scholarship in the philosophy of religion.
Ben Euwema Award, Department of English, Pennsylvania State University, 1995.
Awarded in support of scholarship in British studies.

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS:

Nineteenth-Century Literature in Britain and America, History of the Book, Comedy and Culture, Theater and Drama, Textual Criticism and Theory, Literatures of Religion, Bibliographic Studies, .

CREDENTIALS:

Transcripts and recommendations upon request.