Reprinting Culture: Book Publishing in the Early Republic

Virginia L. Montijo
College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wm.edu/etd
Part of the American Studies Commons, and the United States History Commons

Recommended Citation
https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-70j2-7c80
REPRINTING CULTURE:

BOOK PUBLISHING IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

by

Virginia L. Montijo

2001
APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Virginia L. Montijo

Approved, July 2001

Robert A. Gross
James P. Whittenburg
Chandos M. Brown
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION: THE AGE OF PRINT: BOOK PUBLISHING IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1: THE WORLD'S MOST PROLIFIC BOOK PIRATES: IRISH BOOKSELLERS IN AMERICA</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2: AN ENSEMBLE OF TEXTS: THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF THE AMERICAN BOOKSELLER'S CATALOG</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPILOGUE: THE AGE OF PIRACY: THE RISE OF MODERN BOOK PUBLISHING</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX I</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX II</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>PERCENTAGE OF TITLES BY DATE OF PUBLICATION IN MATHEW CAREY'S 1791 CATALOG</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>PERCENTAGE OF TITLES BY BOOK SIZE IN PATRICK BYRNE'S 1802 CATALOG</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>PERCENTAGE OF TITLES BY GENRE IN MATHEW CAREY'S 1791 AND 1816 CATALOG</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

As a result of a failed Revolutionary movement in Ireland, continued English oppression, and limited opportunities, Irish printers and booksellers emigrated to the United States in significant numbers at the end of the eighteenth century. Many settled in the cultural capital of Philadelphia, bringing with them the publishing practices and strategies they had learned in their native land. Irish booksellers, exempt from the legal protection afforded literary property by the British Copyright Act of 1709, insisted on the freedom to reprint popular English books and called for protective tariffs to compete effectively with English imports. In the United States, fueled by an intense Anglophobia, they made similar arguments, now couched in the language of American nationalism.

Irish booksellers in America continued to draw on their experiences in Ireland with regard to the practical publishing program they pursued, including how they acquired their stock, how they published books, what types of books they published, and how these books were classified and marketed in their sale catalogs. At first, to build their stock, they imported thousands of pounds of books from abroad, particularly from their former colleagues in Ireland. Increasingly, however, responding to the demand among American readers for English books, they continued the reprinting tradition begun in Ireland, collaborating to issue pirated English titles in cheap, small formats. By doing so, they helped to eliminate the American reliance on English imports and created a reprinting culture, one that would have a profound influence on the development of the American book industry.
REPRINTING CULTURE
INTRODUCTION

THE AGE OF PRINT: BOOK PUBLISHING IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC

And let the emblem worth or worthless be,
That marks the era of complacent we,
Home to both wise and witless it must come,
A truth that strikes all disputation dumb,
Books by the bale proclaim it without stint,
Era of paper, and the Age of Print.

--Grenville Mellen, The Age of Print

In 1767, Dublin bookseller Robert Bell reprinted Alexander Donaldson's Some Thoughts on the State of Literary Property. In the introduction and conclusion to the work, Bell defended himself against the "odious" charge of piracy made not only by his competitors "from the other side of the water" in England but by his Irish colleagues as well. All Dublin booksellers, he argued, "neither give copy money to authors, nor to British booksellers," and rightly so. It is not an "invasion of the property of another to reprint all or any of the books published in Great Britain"; those booksellers who seek to monopolize the reprinting business do so "to the prejudice and injury of all the people of Ireland." ¹

Bell would bring his passionately held beliefs on the free reprinting of books with him to Philadelphia, where he established himself the following year as a bookseller, auctioneer, and publisher. In 1769, he advertised for sale by subscription William Robertson's *History of the Reign of Charles V*, in which he echoed his earlier arguments in defense of reprinting, this time with the weight of William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England* behind them:

Surely, the precedent of the people of Ireland's reprinting every work produced in London, and the great Lawyer Blackstone's authority concerning the internal legislation of colonies, are demonstrations of the rectitude of reprinting any, or every work of excellence in America, without the smallest infringement of the British embargo upon literature. . . . Would it not be incompatible with all freedom, if an American's mind must be entirely starved and enslaved in the barren regions of fruitless vacuity, because he doth not wallow in immense riches equal to some British Lords, the origin of whose progenitors are lost in the chaos of antiquity?

"The Editor hopeth," he concludes, "that the facts above are sufficient support for Americans, to persevere in reprinting whatsoever books merit their approbation, without leave or licence from the Bibliopolists or Monopolists of Great-Britain."  

---

Bell, described by historians as "flamboyant," "colourful," "witty, energetic, skeptical and imaginative," is the acknowledged forerunner to the many British booksellers who would come to the United States after the Revolution to carry on the reprint trade. Like Bell, they brought with them their beliefs and book publishing skills, the cultural baggage of their homelands. These transplanted ideas would continue, as Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt points out in his study of book publishing in America, "for more than a century to represent American opinion upon the subject of reprinting English books."

Indeed, the switch after the Revolution from importing large numbers of popular books from Europe to reprinting them at home is the main theme in the story of the growth and development of the early national book trade. Although booksellers would continue to import a significant number of books from Europe—particularly specialty books, belles lettres, and novels—historians have documented the rise of a "vigorous" American

---

4 Lehmann-Haupt, The Book in America, 111.
industry in the first few decades of the Republic. But, as James Gilreath acknowledged more than a decade ago, "no one has adequately explained the driving force behind the sudden new energy." 

Many scholars have attributed the increase in American production to nationalistic motives, whether political or literary. Americans, having achieved political independence, sought to maintain it and, understandably, to achieve cultural independence as well. As Benjamin T. Spencer has written, "Throughout the 1780's and 1790's the determination of the young country to have a self-sufficient culture was signified not only by numerous demands for an independent literature but also by

---


nationalistic research in the fields of American history and American diseases."

Nationalism is a complex and tenuous concept, not least when applied to the fluid context of early America. A spate of recent works, focusing primarily on the celebratory practices and rituals of early Americans, have emphasized the malleability and contradictions of American nationalism. Nationalism, writes Len Travers in his book *Celebrating the Fourth*, is "not an objective, empirically definable entity"; it is "primarily a mental construct, a belief in and, more important, an emotional response to, membership in a parent society." Andrew Burstein, in *Sentimental Democracy*, describes nationalism as the "connectedness" of a people, "their shared loyalty to national principles, and the persistence of a common cultural idiom."

When such definitions are applied to the motives of those in the early American book trade, the situation becomes more

---

10 Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth*, 9; Burstein, *Sentimental Democracy*, xvii.
complex still. As the example of Bell illustrates, a good portion of colonial booksellers came from abroad, particularly Ireland, and the number of foreign printers and publishers only increased in the final decades of the eighteenth century. Writes one historian with regard to the emigration of Irish booksellers to America, such a "massive transfer from one national book trade to another" is "unique in the annals of publishing." If American booksellers during this period were attempting to develop a national literature, perhaps, then, David Waldstreicher's contention that nationalism is an "abstraction" derived from competing beliefs and strategies that are "practiced locally in distinct, changing ways by different groups for a variety of purposes" is most appropriate for an analysis of early national book publishing. What were the interests and publishing strategies of American booksellers after the Revolution and how did they influence the development of the American book trade?

A partial answer may be found by looking at the historical context in which these booksellers were operating as well as by examining the literary output of their presses. This study situates that context in Philadelphia, the recognized publishing center of the early Republic--one that, in the words of William

---

11 Cole, Irish Booksellers and English Writers, xi.
12 Waldstreicher, In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes, 10.
Charvat, "discovered (in a sense established) the common
denominator in the literary taste of the whole country."\textsuperscript{13}

Philadelphia's preeminence in publishing was linked to the development of transportation networks that connected the city with outlying areas, networks that were crucial for the distribution of books to the provinces. These advances included improved roads as well as new turnpikes in the 1790s and canals and steamboats in the early nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{14}

Technological developments were not limited to distribution networks. By the end of the eighteenth century, Philadelphia had taken the lead in the American design and manufacture of books. One early innovation was the founding of the first American paper mill in 1690. By 1775, Christopher Sower, Justus Fox, and Jacob Bay of Germantown were producing type commercially, and, in 1796, the Philadelphia firm of Binney and Ronaldson established the

\begin{flushright}
\footnotesize
\end{flushright}
first fully equipped and independent typefoundry in the United States.\textsuperscript{15}

As the largest seaport city, Philadelphia was also a likely destination for the scores of foreign booksellers who were transplanting their businesses to the United States. John Tebbel estimates that, between 1760 and 1820, "there were no less than 212 printers, publishers, and booksellers, in various combinations of those functions, operating in Philadelphia for varying periods of time."\textsuperscript{16} Between 1768 and 1776, these entrepreneurs introduced to American readers many British classics and substantive works, including Montaigne's *Letters*, William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, and the works of William Shakespeare, and they continued to do so after the Revolution. In 1798, Thomas Dobson of Philadelphia published the largest project in America to date: an encyclopedia in eighteen large quarto volumes. In 1803 in Philadelphia were published the first editions of the *Spectator* and *Don Quixote*.\textsuperscript{17}

Of the booksellers who were attracted to the thriving


publishing center of Philadelphia, "towering above them all" was the Dublin-born Mathew Carey, often described as the "prototype of the modern publisher."\textsuperscript{18} Carey's life and contributions to American publishing have been well documented. The number of books he published from 1785 to 1821— an estimated eleven hundred titles— is one measure of his success.\textsuperscript{19} Another is the book distribution network for which he was largely responsible, which by 1820 extended to all parts of the United States and even to Europe and South America.\textsuperscript{20} As Charvat points out, if one wanted to get the "widest possible distribution" for his book, he took it to "New York or Philadelphia— preferably to Philadelphia, and most likely to Mathew Carey."\textsuperscript{21}

Carey's success makes him the likely focus in any study of the development of book publishing in the early Republic. Carey's career in America, which began in Philadelphia in 1785, continued through war and economic setbacks, positioning him to become the head of the greatest publishing house in America in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. His career thus "bridged the

\textsuperscript{18} Tebbel, \textit{History of Book Publishing}, I, 56.
\textsuperscript{20} Green, \textit{Mathew Carey}, 7-8; Bradsher, \textit{Mathew Carey}, 15.
centuries," making it an appropriate lens through which to view the changes in the book trade over time.\textsuperscript{22}

In addition to the many original works he published or those he reprinted, Carey imported thousands of titles as well as acquired books through exchange with other American publishers, making his sale catalogs a particularly relevant gauge for suggesting the literary tastes of the country.\textsuperscript{23} This study will thus focus on two of Carey's book catalogs, his first of 1791 and one issued in 1816, his last year as sole active head of his book publishing business.\textsuperscript{24}

In his study of American booksellers' catalogs, Clarence S. Brigham noted that Boston bookseller Isaiah Thomas saved only half a dozen of his book catalogs, suggesting that the catalogs were of little value to him, "just as we today consider book catalogs as ephemeral material quickly to be discarded."\textsuperscript{25} But for

\textsuperscript{22} Green, Mathew Carey, I; Tebbel, History of Book Publishing, I, 106.

\textsuperscript{23} See also Bradsher's argument that the output of Carey's presses was typical because there was little or no specialization among publishers at this time (Mathew Carey, vii).

\textsuperscript{24} See Appendixes I and II for the list of books identified in each of these two catalogs issued by Carey. For the statistical analysis, most of the 346 titles (92 percent) in the 1791 catalog were identified. For the 1816 document, only the 189 titles in what would today be described as the front list--composed of the newest or most significant works--are listed; of those titles, 95 percent were identified.

historians of the book, booksellers' catalogs can be an essential tool for analyzing publishing strategies and, as mentioned above, making conjectures about the literary tastes of a particular period. For early America, Robert B. Winans believes that "the best evidence for studying what books were distributed . . . and the most dramatic display of the primacy of the imported book, is found in the catalogues of books published by booksellers and libraries." "One must turn to these catalogues," he argues, "for a full picture of the mixture of imported and domestic books available to the American reading public." Brigham lends weight to this argument when he describes New York bookseller H. Caritat's 1796 catalog, containing 215 pages and nearly twenty-seven hundred titles, as "most useful" for the "study of late eighteenth-century literature" because of "its magnitude and also the fullness of its entries." Indeed, Brigham notes, most eighteenth-century catalogs contained from one thousand to

---


fifteen hundred titles. Some, like Philadelphia bookseller Robert Campbell's 1796 catalog with twenty-one hundred titles, were even larger.29

Using booksellers' catalogs as evidence of early American publishing strategies is not without difficulties. Although after the Revolution most American booksellers issued catalogs of their books, most did not provide the full names of the authors of the works, listed only an abbreviated form of the title, and did not provide any publication information, thus making it difficult to identify specific editions.30

In compiling the list of books from the two catalogs issued by Mathew Carey that are the basis of this study, the identification of the editions was facilitated by the use of the electronic bibliographic database WorldCat provided by OCLC (Online Computer Library Center).31 The identification of editions was confirmed, when necessary, by consulting Charles Evans and

29 Ibid. See also Winans, Descriptive Checklist of Book Catalogues.
31 OCLC describes itself as "the world's largest library consortium." WorldCat holds more than "46 million cataloguing records created by libraries around the world, with a new record added every 15 seconds" (http://www.oclc.org). On the potential usefulness of such databases, see Michael Winship, "Publishing in America: Needs and Opportunities for Research," in Hall and Hench, eds., Needs and Opportunities, 97.

When identifying each of the titles in the two catalogs, two assumptions were made.33 First, if more than one edition was found, I chose the edition closest to the publication date of the catalog—unless format or size indicated otherwise—since Carey was more likely to advertise and sell newer books than those that had been sitting on a shelf for years. Second, if both an American edition and a foreign edition were found, I chose the


33 These assumptions follow closely the research methods used by Robert A. Gross in identifying the holdings of Concord's Charitable Library Society (1795-1820) and the Concord Social Library (1821-1851). See Gross, "Reconstructing Early American Libraries: Concord, Massachusetts, 1795-1850," in *Books and Libraries in Thoreau's Concord* (Worcester, Mass., 1988), 335. Gross was, in the end, able to check his findings against the Concord Free Public Library's cumulative accessions catalog, and the identifications "proved remarkably accurate" (337). See also Ronald J. Zboray's methodology in compiling inventories from a mid-nineteenth-century bookstore, *A Fictive People:*
American (additionally favoring those produced within the Mid-
Atlantic region or within the distribution network that Carey had
built), assuming that it was less expensive for Carey to reprint
titles or exchange books with other American publishers than to
import them. If a work was from a known supplier of Carey's from
abroad, however—particularly from his contacts in Ireland—the
foreign edition was given precedence.

A close reading of these catalogs, then, may reveal not
only the changing publishing strategies used by booksellers in
the early Republic but may also allow a glimpse into the social
and cultural worlds in which they lived and worked. In early
national Philadelphia, that world was composed of many influences
from abroad; to these influences and their consequences we now
turn.

Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public (New
York, 1993), 246, n. 11.
CHAPTER 1

THE WORLD'S MOST PROLIFIC BOOK PIRATES:

IRISH BOOKSELLERS IN AMERICA

National reflections are in every case illiberal as they are unjust,--but from Americans, they are something worse. . . . They are . . . ungrateful to the highest degree. It is a fact too recent, and too notorious, to admit a doubt, that a great part of those armies, that nobly gained America her independence, were "aliens" or "foreigners," many whose countrymen are now subjects of obloquy and reproach.

--Mathew Carey, Autobiography

In 1791, Mathew Carey wrote to Dublin printer John Chambers that three to four thousand of their countrymen had arrived in Philadelphia that year--an estimate that would hold true for the balance of the 1790s. Indeed, more than sixty thousand Irish emigrants would arrive in the United States during the decade.¹ Many of these newcomers, along with smaller numbers of emigrants

from England and Scotland, were political exiles who were escaping repression in their home country and who had been involved in the radical societies established there.² Most in the largest group, the Irish exiles, came to America between 1795 and 1806 as a result of the failed revolutionary movement in Ireland, particularly the rebellion of 1798. These émigrés brought with them to America their political, economic, and cultural values and traditions.

Within the last two decades, historians have begun to recognize and assess how these émigrés collectively influenced and shaped American political culture in the early Republic.³ In their studies of Anglo-American radicalism, Richard J. Twomey and Michael Durey both locate the émigrés within a broader movement of "transatlantic republicanism" and emphasize their common insistence on political liberty and economic opportunity, principles they believed were denied them at home. As Twomey writes: "The radical republican movements in Britain and America

² Durey suggests that "the proportions of English, Irish, and Scottish radicals who fled to the United States probably accurately reflect the relative intensity of political conflict in each of the countries in the 1790s" (Transatlantic Radicals, 4).
were not strictly separate or indigenous. Transatlantic republicanism shared traditions of self-organization among common men" and an ideology rooted in democracy and egalitarianism.4 The émigrés practically demonstrated these beliefs in America, the authors contend, through their support of protective tariffs, American manufacturing, and technological progress.

In his study of the impact of the Irish émigrés on American politics in the early Republic, David A. Wilson maintains that subsuming this group "within the general category of transatlantic republicanism not only reduces their political significance but also blurs the distinctive relationship between their Irish and American experiences." To understand the Irish emigrants in America, he writes, one must necessarily "locate their attitudes and actions within a specifically Irish context."5 The soundness of Wilson's argument becomes evident with a glimpse into the political activities of the Irish émigré who is the principal focus of this study, Mathew Carey.

In October 1783, a little more than a year before he was to emigrate to America, Carey established in Dublin a pro-Irish newspaper called the Volunteers Journal. In his autobiography, Carey writes that the object of his newspaper "was to defend the

---

4 Twomey, Jacobins and Jeffersonians, 11.  
5 Wilson, United Irishmen, United States, 4, 8.
commerce, the manufactures, and the political rights of Ireland against the oppression and encroachments of Great-Britain." In the winter of 1784, for example, he advocated "the grand measure of protecting duties, the only one adequate to counteract the pernicious effects of our blasting connexion with England." Carey would make strikingly similar arguments for the good of the American economy a year later in the Pennsylvania Evening Herald. Thus, in the February 22 issue, he lamented the "unhappy predilection for foreign frippery and gewgaws" and took pleasure in the state legislatures' "turning their attention to every object that can check the progress of importation, and tend to the promotion of domestic manufactures." In such statements, Carey reveals the source of his views on political economy, views he carried with him to the United States: a deep-seated Anglophobia born of the depredations inflicted by England on him and his fellow patriots in Ireland. The American Society of United Irishmen, writes Wilson—in which Mathew Carey and his

---

8 Pennsylvania Evening Herald, Feb. 22, 1785, cited in Rowe, Mathew Carey, 38. Rowe thus contends that Carey's economic views in Ireland were the result of his "opposition to the hated England," and, in America, they were "the effervescence of a seething spirit of antagonism in things foreign" (38).
brother James were involved "up to their necks"—strongly believed that "Britain was the primary source of evil in the world." 

Wilson's thesis—that Irish émigrés infused Irish political, economic, and cultural values and traditions into American culture—becomes especially relevant to an examination of publishing in the early Republic because of the significant number of Irish émigrés employed in the American book trade. Richard Cargill Cole estimates that, by the mid-1790s, thirty-nine Irish bookmen had emigrated to the United States, most of them to Philadelphia. As Scottish political émigré James Thomson Callender wrote in 1796: "Take away all the Scots and Irish booksellers from Philadelphia, and [a reader] could hardly supply his library. With three or four exceptions the whole trade centres on foreigners. The case is much the same in New York and Baltimore." The number of Irish booksellers would increase to more than one hundred in the early years of the nineteenth century. 

One could argue, then, that, just as the sources of the émigrés political views in America were drawn from their Irish

---

9 Wilson, United Irishmen, United States, 10, 11.
experiences, so too were their book publishing strategies. The Irish connection is particularly apparent with regard to how the booksellers acquired their stock, how they published books, and what types of books they published and advertised in their catalogs.

"Humanity and Patriotism both cry aloud, Books, Books, Books"

So exclaimed Mathew Carey's famous traveling book salesman, Mason Locke Weems, on the eve of the War of 1812.\textsuperscript{11} Weems, described as the prototype of the modern book agent, was in a position to gauge the demand for books in America. From the mid-1790s through 1825, Weems distributed books for his employer not only through Pennsylvania but in Maryland, Virginia, and North and South Carolina as well as, on occasion, New Jersey and New York. In his travels, Weems encountered "every sort and condition of man," writes one historian, from the Pennsylvania farmer and southern husbandmen to the city merchant and gentleman-planter.\textsuperscript{12}

What Weems and the booksellers of the early Republic found was a continuing taste among Americans for books written by


English authors and manufactured in London. Before the Revolution, not surprisingly, booksellers satisfied this demand by importing large quantities of books from England. "By 1770," writes James Raven, "more books were exported annually from England to the American colonies than to Europe and the rest of the world combined." This vigorous export trade to the colonies would resume after 1783 and continue through the end of the century.

Irish readers shared the American preference for the fashionable book printed in London. Even Irish authors chose to publish their books in London because of the implicit authority and respectability an English imprint conferred upon the text. One scholar of the Dublin book trade estimates that, from 1701 to 1780, Ireland imported books from London worth ninety-two

---


thousand pounds. But, as a result of this demand for English books in Ireland, Irish booksellers, long before those in America, had recognized the financial advantages of an indigenous reprint trade. This trade was made possible because the legal protection afforded to literary property by the British Copyright Act of 1709 did not apply to Ireland until 1801, following the Union of Ireland and Great Britain in 1800. Reprinting English works was thus a legal means of supplying books to Irish readers throughout the eighteenth century and "became the staple of the Dublin book trade"—and the thorn in the side of London booksellers.

When Mathew Carey emigrated to America in 1785, he, along with other Irish and Scottish booksellers who came to the United States after the war, brought this reprinting tradition with him, a tradition that, as noted earlier, had only just begun in America in the 1760s with such booksellers as Robert Bell in Philadelphia and James Rivington in New York. With regard to setting himself up for business in Philadelphia, Carey writes in his autobiography: "I soon supplied myself with types, but had no press. A Scotch bookseller and printer, of the name of Bell, had

---

16 Ibid., 66.
recently died in Philadelphia, and his stock, in which there was a press, was to be sold at auction about this time."17 As if Bell was passing the reprinting mantle to him, Carey bought Bell's press and thus began his career as the most successful reprinter of English works in America.

In 1792, the year Carey ceased publishing his magazine, the American Museum, and turned his full attention to publishing books, he began to recognize the need to build up his stock. For booksellers during this period, their stock was their capital; it was the "ballast" of their business, as one historian describes it, "the basis of their credit and the collateral for the money they borrowed."18 Carey writes in his autobiography: "My store, or rather my shop, was of very moderate dimensions; but, small as it was, I had not full-bound books enough to fill the shelves—a considerable portion of them were occupied by spelling-books. I procured a credit at the Bank, which enabled me to extend my business; and by care, indefatigable industry, the most rigid punctuality, and frugality, I gradually advanced in the world."

---

17 Carey, Autobiography, 10.
Carey extended his business by importing a significant number of books from England and Ireland, "without which," he wrote, "I cannot have a proper assortment."\(^{19}\)

Carey's assortment of books was reflected in his sale catalogs, which in turn reflected trends in the book trade generally. In Carey's first book catalog, for example, published in 1791, of the more than three hundred titles listed, a little less than half, 48 percent, were imported, and an only slightly smaller proportion, 34 percent, were reprints, most of which, at this early point in his career, he had acquired from other American booksellers in the region.\(^{20}\) One of those booksellers was Thomas Dobson, a Scottish bookseller who had emigrated to Philadelphia in 1784, and who, in turn, was receiving a large number of imports from his former employer in Edinburgh, Charles Elliot.\(^{21}\) Of the 109 reprints listed in the 1791 catalog, twenty-five carry Dobson's colophon. Another American bookseller

---

\(^{19}\) Carey, Autobiography, 22; Carey to the Rev. James Carey, [1792], Lea and Febiger Collection, HSP, cited in Remer, Printers and Men of Capital, 50.

\(^{20}\) Catalogue of Books, Stationary, Cutlery, etc. for Sale at Carey, Stewart, and Co's Store, No. 22, North Front-Street, Philadelphia (Philadelphia, 1791), Appendix I, below (for the original list of short titles, see Evans 23247).

\(^{21}\) Green, "Book Publishing in the United States," HBA, II, 3. From Elliot, Dobson began his bookselling career in America with a stock worth more than three thousand pounds (3). On the importation of Scottish books to America before the Revolution, see Warren McDougall, "Scottish Books for America in the Mid 18th Century," in Robin Myers and
supplying Carey with reprints was William Spotswood, a former colleague of Carey's in Dublin who also emigrated to Philadelphia in 1784.\textsuperscript{22} Spotswood's imprint appears on twenty-two of the reprints sold by Carey. A little less than half of all the reprints in the catalog, then, were supplied through Carey's connections with other recent transplants to the Philadelphia book publishing scene. Only 18 percent of the titles listed in the catalog were works originally produced in America.

These numbers on book imports and reprints become more indicative of publishing trends generally when the titles are broken down by the date of publication. Of the works published before Congress ratified the Treaty of Paris in 1783, 77 percent were imported, confirming the general tendency of colonial printers and booksellers—owing to readers' demands as well as British mercantile policies—to acquire their books from abroad. Only 16 percent of the pre-1783 books are reprints, and, not surprisingly, just 7 percent are original American editions. The trend changes markedly with books published after 1783. The number of imported books in this second period, 1784-1791,

---

\textit{Michael Harris, eds.,} \textit{Spreading the Word: The Distribution Networks of Print, 1550-1850} (Detroit, 1990), 21-46.

\textsuperscript{22} On Spotswood's career in Dublin and in America, see Cole, \textit{Irish Booksellers and English Writers,} 177-182. Spotswood collaborated for a time with Carey and another former Dublin bookseller Christopher Talbot
decreases by half, to 39 percent, and an equivalent proportion, 40 percent, are identified as reprints. Moreover, 21 percent of the books are American originals. Thus, as soon as American independence was formally established, Carey began replacing imported books with reprinted titles and original American publications.

TABLE 1
PERCENTAGE OF TITLES BY DATE OF PUBLICATION
IN MATHEW CAREY'S 1791 CATALOG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Group</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Reprints</th>
<th>Original Works</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-1783</td>
<td>77.0</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1784-1791</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contributing to the increase in reprinted works and original American editions was the Copyright Act of 1790, granting the copyright for maps, charts, and books to citizens of the United States for fourteen years. At the same time that the act provided an incentive for American authors, it also

---

on the production of the *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*, the *Columbian Magazine*, and the *American Museum* (178).

encouraged the reprinting of foreign works; a clause in the act reads: "Nothing in this act shall be construed to extend to prohibit the importation or vending, reprinting or publishing within the United States of any map, chart, book or books, written, printed, or published by any person not a citizen of the United States, in foreign parts or places without the jurisdiction of the United States." Also a factor in the increase in reprints and American works was the growing support among Americans, particularly Carey and other booksellers—owing in large part to their inherited Anglophobia—for protective tariffs for American manufactures. In 1791, for example, Alexander Hamilton, in the "Report on the Subject of Manufactures" that he submitted to Congress, wrote: "The great number of presses disseminated throughout the Union, seem to afford an assurance, that there is no need of being indebted to foreign Countries for the printing of the Books, which are used in the United States. A duty of ten per Cent instead of five, which is now charged upon the Article, would have a tendency to aid the business internally." Although the duty would remain at 5

---


25 As noted above, Carey brought these protectionist views with him from Ireland. See also Green, "Book Publishing in the United States," HBA, II, 9.
percent until the Tariff Act of 1816, Hamilton's advice is illustrative of the increasing protectionist sentiment of the time.26

Further bookselling strategies can be discerned from Carey's 1791 catalog through an analysis of how many books were imported from each of the major exporters of books to America, England, Ireland, and Scotland, as well as the countries on the Continent. Before the Revolution, England supplied the largest proportion of books, 46 percent, followed by Ireland at 16 percent, Scotland at 11 percent, with 27 percent from the rest of the Continental countries combined. After 1783, the imports from England remained about the same, 43 percent, most likely owing to the general and continuing demand for English goods. The proportion of books exported from Ireland, however, jumps

significantly to 37 percent, whereas Scotland and the Continental countries decrease to 3 percent and 17 percent, respectively.

One major reason for the increase in Irish book exports—at the expense of the Scottish and Continental editions—was the Irish Parliament's passing of the Act for Facilitating the Trade and Intercourse between This Kingdom and the United States of America in 1783. Direct imports from Ireland to America had been forbidden since 1696, although the law was amended in the eighteenth century for some articles, such as linen and foodstuffs. In 1780, political unrest in Ireland precipitated the British government's lifting of the trade restrictions and, three years later, the passing of the 1783 act by the Irish Parliament.27 As one historian points out, exporting books to America must have "commenced to assume some importance during the ten years immediately preceding the American Revolution in order to have become so extensive immediately [after] the legal impediments were removed."28 Evidence that Irish books were smuggled into America before the lifting of the trade restrictions is supplied by Benjamin Franklin in 1747. Writing to his principal contact for books in London, William Strahan,

27 Pollard, Dublin's Trade in Books, 136-137.
Franklin complains that he could have sold more London editions of the *Universal History* if a cheap Irish "piratical Edition" had not been recently exported to the colonies.\(^{29}\)

Another reason for the increase in Irish book exports after the Revolution was the large number of Irish booksellers in the United States who had business connections with their colleagues in Dublin. Carey's main Dublin supplier was Patrick Byrne, who had a successful business in Ireland from 1779 until 1801, when he, too, emigrated to Philadelphia to set up shop.\(^{30}\) Writing to Byrne in 1788, Carey noted, "We are deluged with books from England and Ireland," going on to request from Byrne substantial "literary food" for his American readers: "history, voyages, philosophy, science, and well chosen school books."\(^{31}\) Carey's other Dublin suppliers include his brothers Thomas Carey and William Paulet Carey, his cousin the Reverend James Carey, John Chambers, Bernard Dornin, John Jones, William Jones, Thomas M'Donnell, James Moore, John Rice and James Rice, and William Wilson.\(^{32}\) Many of these names are represented in the Dublin


\(^{31}\) Mathew Carey to Patrick Byrne, Oct. 22, 1788, Carey Letter Books, Box 14, B45, cited ibid.

imprints found in Carey's 1791 catalog. Other Irish émigré booksellers also used their Dublin connections to supply their stock. Henry and Patrick Rice, for example, in their 1789 book catalog, advertised that they had "imported in the last vessels from London, Dublin, and Glasgow, a large and general assortment of books, and stationary ware, which they will dispose of by wholesale and retail on very moderate terms." In 1798, they announced in William Duane's Aurora: "From the nature of their connections in Dublin, they are enabled to sell Irish editions (as they have hitherto shown) at the very lowest prices." Duane, himself an Irish emigrant, would advertise in his newspaper many recently imported Irish editions for sale between 1798 and 1803.

By 1816, the number of imports, as represented in another of Carey's book catalogs, would dwindle to a mere 2 percent, whereas reprints would constitute more than 70 percent of the new titles advertised in the catalog. The success of the American reprint trade was owing in large part to how these books were manufactured and published.


35 *Catalogue of Books, in Various Departments of Literature, for Sale, by M. Carey, No. 121, Chestnut Street, Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1816), front list, Appendix II, below (for the full list of short titles in the catalog, see Shaw and Shoemaker 37167).
"Among our Christian Mammonites cheapness is everything"

Throughout their long correspondence, Mason Locke Weems continually entreated Mathew Carey to send him inexpensive books to sell, the above excerpt being but one example of many.\footnote{Weems to Carey, May 22, [18]09, in Skeel, ed., Mason Locke Weems, II, 406.} The American people, he wrote, want "handsome little saleable assortments" to choose from, but, most of all, they want them cheap. "Experience has taught me," he wrote to Carey in January 1797, "that small, i.e. quarter of dollar books, on subjects calculated to strike the Popular Curiosity, printed in very large numbers and properly distributed, would prove an immense revenue to the prudent and industrious Undertakers." He adds: "People here think nothing of giving 1/6 (their quarter of a dollar) for anything that pleases their fancy." Selling books successfully, he concludes, "cannot be effected without the character of cheapness."\footnote{Weems to Carey, Jan. 22, [17]97, Feb. [?], 1801, Feb. 26, 1810, ibid., II, 72, 167, III, 12.}

The Irish booksellers in America had learned this lesson well in their home country, where demand for English books remained strong throughout the eighteenth century. To compete with the superior London-printed editions of popular works and to achieve the widest possible distribution of their books, they had
to offer the Irish reader an incentive: a reduction in price. In
order to sell books cheaper, production costs had to be lower.
Reducing costs could be done most effectively through an
economical use of the most expensive element in book production,
paper. 38

Irish booksellers already had a distinct advantage over
their London counterparts owing to the lower cost of imported
dpaper in Ireland. But the greatest savings came from differences
in paper quality, edition format, and edition size. Scholars note
that advertisements for Dublin books often mention the type of
dpaper used, such as royal printing paper, royal writing paper, or
dfine paper, and prices differed accordingly; more often than not,
to keep prices down an inferior brand was used. Moreover, Dublin-
dprinted books were, for the most part, at least one size smaller
than those printed in London, which were often issued in folio or
dquarto editions. 39 By using a smaller format, a printer would use
dfewer sheets and save paper. Thus, as one historian of the Dublin
dtrade notes, in Ireland it was "principally the epoch of the
duodecimo." Indeed, this format was used extensively there from

38 Pollard, *Dublin's Trade in Books*, 111.
39 For a folio, the largest book size, the paper used is cut so
that there are two pages from a sheet. For a quarto, the next largest
size, the paper is cut four from a sheet. Smaller sizes are octavo,
eight pages to a sheet; duodecimo, or twelvemo, twelve pages to a
the 1720s until the end of the century. Books issued in the larger octavo format were also popular, particularly in the 1790s, as an alternative to the small pocket editions. In addition to the format used, the size of the edition, or the number of copies printed, was perhaps the most fundamental factor in determining the amount of paper used. According to one estimate, the most common print run for Dublin books was five hundred copies, half that of the average London print run.40

Irish booksellers justified these reprinting practices by an appeal to literary fairness. In 1785, for example, a writer in the Dublin Journal argued:

The English booksellers, when they have purchased any copy which they esteem valuable enough to enter at Stationers' hall, publish an edition of it in such a size and at such a price as compensates for the whole of their purchase; and the sale of this valuable edition is not confined to England, but every buyer as well in Ireland as elsewhere, who is able to purchase, gives the splendid edition the preference. The Irish editions, which afterwards appear, are only published with a spirit of accommodation, and are

---

40 Pollard, *Dublin's Trade in Books*, 111, 115-120; Phillips, *Printing and Bookselling in Dublin*, 193, 285-286. For an extensive analysis of the paper used in the production of books in Ireland, see Phillips's discussion, 151-196. For the most comprehensive list of eighteenth-century Dublin book sizes and prices, see *A General Catalogue Of Books in All Languages, Arts, and Sciences, That Have Been Printed in Ireland, and Published in Dublin, from the Year 1700, to the Present Time; the Whole Alphabetically and Classically Arranged under the Several Branches of Literature, with Their Sizes and Prices* (Dublin, 1791).
suited to men who love literature, but cannot afford the expense.41

Although the Irish reprints most likely did reach a wider portion of the population, one survey of Irish public libraries has found that most readers were from the landed and professional classes and remained so throughout the eighteenth century. The typical Irishman was a Roman Catholic farm laborer, who earned less than a shilling a day and probably could not speak English. Thus, even if he could speak English, a popular novel like Henry Fielding's Tom Jones, which sold for eighteen shillings in London but only half that in the cheaper Dublin format, would still be well beyond his means.42

Nevertheless, when Irish reprints began to appear in America in large numbers, similar arguments were made in support of the cheaper editions—some, ironically, by America's own elite. Benjamin Franklin wrote to Benjamin Vaughan in 1785: "If books can be had much cheaper from Ireland (which I believe, for I bought Blackstone there for twenty-four shillings, when it was sold in England at four guineas), is not this an advantage, not

---

42 Cole, Irish Booksellers and English Writers, 16-17, 22-39.
to English booksellers, indeed, but to English readers, and to learning."

Another famous American Thomas Jefferson would also support the cheaper Dublin reprint editions. He was a regular customer of Patrick Byrne, who specialized in reprinting English law books—both in Dublin and in Philadelphia—and selling them at greatly reduced prices.

The demand for cheaper reprinted editions was not lost on American booksellers, many of whom imported reprints from their Irish colleagues or, increasingly, printed their own editions of English works, much like those manufactured in Dublin. As in Dublin, the vogue was for the smaller duodecimo and octavo formats. Although most of the Philadelphia booksellers did not list sizes and prices in their sale catalogs during the 1790s, or they did so sparingly and inconsistently, Patrick Byrne's catalog of 1802, which does have sizes and prices for most of the titles, is illustrative not only of the prevalence of the smaller editions but also the correlation between the size of a book and its price. Byrne, who had emigrated to the United States the previous year, had stockpiled books in his Dublin warehouse, most

---

43 Franklin to Benjamin Vaughan, Apr. 21, 1785, quoted ibid., 8.
44 Cole, Irish Booksellers and English Writers, 184.
45 A Catalogue of the Quire Stock of Books of P. Byrne, with the Bound Price on Each Article Offered, as Sold by Him to the Public (Philadelphia, 1802) (Shaw and Shoemaker 1974).
of them unbound, and drew on this stock for his American customers. In a random sampling of the titles listed with prices, the largest proportion, 55 percent, were in the duodecimo format, followed by 41 percent in the octavo format. Only 2 percent were quarto editions, and less than 1 percent were folios. Moreover, a statistical analysis indicates a strong direct correlation between the price of a book and the format in which it was printed. The larger the book, the more expensive it is, regardless of other criteria, including the type of binding used, if any, the number of illustrations in the work, or the genre in which the book is grouped.

---

46 Cole, *Irish Booksellers and English Writers*, 60. The practice of selling books unbound, in sheets or quires (quires being specifically twenty-four sheets of type), was often used on the wholesale level, that is, publishers sold books in sheets or quires mostly to other publishers. In many cases, however, books were sold in sheets and quires directly to customers so that they could have them bound according to their own preferences. See Phillips, *Printing and Bookselling in Dublin*, 276.

47 For the random sampling, every third title was counted, yielding a total of 257 titles.

48 The Pearson's correlation coefficient, or Pearson's r, is -.65 (counting each edition of a multivolume work as a separate title). The coefficient is negative, indicating an inverse correlation, because the variable representing the size of a book is given a higher number (2, 4, 8, 12, 18, 24, 32) the smaller the book actually is. Thus, the higher the number for the book size, the lower the price.

49 See, also, in his discussion of novels reprinted in America, Robert B. Winans's research indicating that length rather than popularity may have been the determining factor in a publisher's decision to reprint a particular English title. A longer work would most likely affect the size of the book and, thus, increase production costs. Winans, "Bibliography and the Cultural Historian: Notes on the Eighteenth-Century Novel," in William L. Joyce et al., eds., *Printing and Society in Early America* (Worcester, Mass., 1983), 181.
Further evidence that American booksellers preferred smaller book formats, like their Irish counterparts, and that the size of a book was the fundamental factor that determined its price, can be found in Mathew Carey's 1816 catalog. In his large back list of books, a random sampling of the titles shows that 41 percent were produced in the octavo format, and 27 percent were duodecimo editions.\textsuperscript{50} The decrease in the use of the duodecimo is the result of an increase in the number of even smaller books: 19 percent of the books were eighteenmo editions, and 8 percent were in the twenty-fourmo format. The thirty-twomo also makes an appearance in this catalog, with 2 percent of the titles in that format. There were no folio editions, and less than 1 percent were quartos. The book sizes thus seem to have gotten smaller over time. A full count of the front list of the catalog, composed of Carey's newest books and titles that were still in press, bear out this conclusion. Duodecimos accounted for 41 percent of the books, octavos, 18 percent, twenty-fourmos, 7 percent, and thirty-twomos, almost 2 percent. The books in both the back list and the front list also show a strong direct correlation between the size of a book and its price. The smaller

\textsuperscript{50} For the random sampling, every fifth title was counted, producing a sample of 530 titles.
the book, the cheaper it is, regardless of binding, illustrative material, and genre.\textsuperscript{51}

\begin{table}
\centering
\caption{Percentage of Titles by Book Size in Patrick Byrne's 1802 Catalog and Mathew Carey's 1816 Catalog}
\begin{tabular}{lccc}
\hline
Book Size & Byrne & Carey & Carey \\
& & Back List & Front List \\
\hline
Folio & 0.5 & 0.0 & 0.0 \\
Quarto & 2.0 & 1.8 & 2.6 \\
Octavo & 40.6 & 41.4 & 18.4 \\
Duodecimo & 55.4 & 27.3 & 40.8 \\
Eighteenmo & 1.5 & 19.1 & 30.3 \\
Twenty-fourmo & 0.0 & 8.3 & 6.6 \\
Thirty-twomo & 0.0 & 2.2 & 1.3 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

American booksellers, then, followed closely Irish practices with regard to book manufacturing, but the Irish connection can also be seen in other publishing conventions of the period. As more booksellers began replacing imported English books with their own reprints, more cooperation among the growing number of booksellers was needed, particularly so they would not flood the market with many editions of the same text. The same mechanism used in Ireland to limit competition was thus introduced in America: as part of the "courtesy of the trade,"

\textsuperscript{51} The Pearson's $r$ for the back list is \textasciitilde-.47; for the front list, the correlation is even stronger, \textasciitilde-.60.
the bookseller to advertise a particular title first would have the sole right to publish it—and, often, subsequent editions of that text. With this system in place, publishers could exchange titles with each other to increase or diversify their stock as well as decrease their reliance on imported books from England—thus, in some measure, giving vent to their anti-British sentiments.

To further facilitate cooperation and the exchange of books among booksellers, organizations were created such as the Philadelphia Company of Printers and Booksellers, established in 1791, and its successor, the Philadelphia Company of Booksellers, in 1802. The aim of these organizations was to share both the risks and the profits involved in producing books and, ultimately, in creating a national book industry. A similar organization, the Company of Booksellers, had been active in eighteenth-century Dublin for the same purposes. The year 1802 also saw the booksellers' participation in the first literary

---


54 Remer, Printers and Men of Capital, 57-62; Green, Mathew Carey, 9; Pollard, Dublin's Trade in Books, 168-169.
fair in America, modeled after those in Germany. The American fair, held in New York, was, as one scholar notes, "the brainchild of Mathew Carey," and its purpose was for participants to discuss "how best to create American markets, how to find readers, and how, ultimately, to get books to them."\(^5\)

One essential means through which booksellers would get books to American readers, and to each other, was their sale catalogs. An analysis of such catalogs can reveal what types of books "the world's most prolific book pirates"—as David Kaser has called early American booksellers—sought to distribute.\(^6\)

What books were available to American readers in the early Republic?

---

\(^5\) Remer, Printers and Men of Capital, 62, 63. On the activities of the booksellers at the fairs, see also Green, "Book Publishing in the United States," HBA, II, 18-19.

\(^6\) David Kaser, Book Pirating in Taiwan (Philadelphia, 1960), vii, quoted in Cole, Irish Booksellers and English Writers, 156.
CHAPTER 2

AN ENSEMBLE OF TEXTS:

THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF THE AMERICAN BOOKSELLER'S CATALOG

The culture of a people is an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles, which the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they more properly belong.

—Clifford Geertz, *Myth, Symbol, and Culture*

"The People among whom I am going, differ very widely in their political sentiments, and in their religious characters, etc.," wrote Mason Locke Weems to Mathew Carey in 1811. "In one neighborhood the Majority are Methodists, in another, Baptists. Here they cry out for Jefferson, there for Adams. Hence, Books which in one place w[oul]d go off like a flash, w[oul]d in another lie till doom's day on the shelves." The solution, he believed, was simple: "Let me go thro' the Country, thro' the Rich and flourishing settlements especially, and ascertain the books, and then do you follow my instruction to a title. The books, thus going of right sorts to right places, will sell off in a trice." Carey, however, "instead of following this plan, than which not Washington cou'd have devised anything better,"
merely "push'd off" the books "perfectly at random, and left to chance whether they w[oul]d suit or not."¹

Weems's plea for a more careful analysis of public tastes suggests that, by the early nineteenth century, the market for books in America had changed significantly since Carey first opened for business a quarter of a century before. Indeed, it had grown and diversified along with the general population. In 1790, the United States had 3.9 million residents; by 1811, when Weems was writing, that number had almost doubled.² As Weems also implies, publishers did not necessarily keep abreast of the changes in the nature and extent of American readership. But, was Carey's marketing strategy really as "random" as Weems indicates?

The intellectual tenor of the times would suggest otherwise. Carey and other American booksellers of his generation were heirs of the Enlightenment, when, as Michel Foucault writes, a new curiosity about the world is said to have inspired intellectual innovators, "if not to discover the sciences of life, at least to give them a hitherto unsuspected scope and

precision." 3 This curiosity, coupled with the Enlightenment emphasis on reason and order, produced the classification systems of botanist Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), naturalist Georges-Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon (1707-1788), and chemist Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier (1743-1794). Such scientific taxonomies, in turn, greatly influenced not only the methodologies of other sciences but created an increased interest in the classification of knowledge generally. Foucault writes:

The ever more complex preservation of what was written, the establishment of archives, then of filing systems for them, the reorganization of libraries, the drawing up of catalogues, indexes, and inventories, all these things represent, at the end of the Classical age, not so much a new sensitivity to time, to its past, to the density of history, as a way of introducing into the language already imprinted on things, and into the traces it has left, an order of the same type as that which was being established between living creatures." 4

Foucault also emphasizes that any classification system is necessarily defined and limited by the culture in which it was created. For American booksellers, that culture is reflected in their sale catalogs, one of the primary means through which they conveyed information about the books they sought to distribute to the expanding reading public. How was the information in these

---

4 Ibid., 132. On the effect of eighteenth-century scientific taxonomies on the wider culture, see also Daniel R. Hendrick, When
catalogs organized, and what does this classificatory scheme say about the nature of the book trade in the early Republic?

In his book, *A Fictive People*, historian Ronald J. Zboray navigates his way through the small bookstore of Homer Franklin in 1840s New York. Although he is addressing a later period, his methodology, which seeks to uncover the "popular epistemology" behind the proprietor's decision to stock certain titles and the arrangement of those titles on the shelves, is particularly useful for uncovering the classification of knowledge in booksellers' catalogs of the early Republic. Taking a cue from Zboray, then, the first category to be considered is the types of books, or genres, found in the catalogs.

"So many clever books and so cheap"

Mason Locke Weems confessed to Mathew Carey that he wanted nothing more than for the public to point to him and say, "There goes the little Parson that brings us so many clever books and so cheap." Although he continually complained to Carey about the

---


assortment of books his employer sent to him, an analysis of Carey's stock as represented in his book catalogs indicates that Weems did have a varied lot to sell.

Carey's first American book catalog, issued in 1791, contained at least twenty-one different genres; the top five genres represented in ascending order are religion, education, history, poetry, and fiction.\textsuperscript{7} Titles in these genres would also compose the greatest portion of books in other catalogs of the time as well. Not surprisingly, religious books composed the largest category, 14 percent, in Carey's catalog and an even greater proportion, 21 percent, in the catalog issued by the Philadelphia Company of Printers and Booksellers in 1794. This latter catalog consists of books published by members of the Company, a majority of the Philadelphia booksellers, and is thus particularly representative of the American market for books at the time.\textsuperscript{8}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{7} Catalogue of Books, Stationary, Cutlery, etc. for Sale at Carey, Stewart, and Co's Store, No. 22, North Front-Street, Philadelphia (Philadelphia, 1791), Appendix I, below (for the original list of short titles, see Evans 23247).
\item \textsuperscript{8} A Catalogue of Books, Published by the Different Members of the Philadelphia Company of Printers and Booksellers, and Now for Sale, at Wm. Spotswood's Book-store (Philadelphia, 1794) (Evans 27506). These were also the top five genres in Patrick Byrne's catalog of 1802, with the exception that law books, his specialty, replaced poetry titles; see A Catalogue of the Quire Stock of Books of P. Byrne, with the Bound Price on Each Article Affixed, as Sold by Him to the Public (Philadelphia, 1802) (Shaw and Shoemaker, 1974).
\end{itemize}
Included among Carey's religious titles, and contributing to their large number, are Bibles. Indeed, the Bible, always popular among American readers, was the foundation of Carey's business and the means through which he would weather the economic hardships posed by the Embargo of 1807 and the War of 1812. Carey commenced his Bible business in 1790 with the publication of the first Catholic Bible in America, the Douay edition. In a letter to Carey in 1800, Weems was quick to point out the importance of the Bible market and Carey's continued participation in it: "Thank God, the Bible still goes well. . . . A great deal of our future success in life (as Printers, Bibliopolists etc.) will depend on the satisfaction you shall give in this undertaking." Carey needed little persuading. He paid Hugh Gaine of New York seven thousand dollars for the standing type of his duodecimo school Bible, and was thus able to reprint as many editions as he believed necessary while eliminating the typesetting and proofreading costs. Carey wrote to Weems: "I have purchased the types of Gaine's School Bible, standing . . . I shall have no objection to furnish you with

---

thousands of them yearly, as well as the common school Testaments."\textsuperscript{10}

By 1816, religion would still be among the top genres in Carey's book catalogs, but with one essential difference. Carey's 1816 catalog included both a large back list, presumably made up of most of the titles in Carey's stock, and a front list, composed of the newest titles and even some that were still being printed.\textsuperscript{11} The composition of Carey's back list is strikingly similar to his 1791 catalog, with religion as the largest category. This similarity is not surprising, given that many titles in Carey's stock had been published at different times over the course of twenty years. In the front list, however, fiction solidly replaces religion in the top category, with 23 percent of the titles (from 9 percent in the 1791 catalog). Religious books now compose only 7 percent of the list.


\textsuperscript{11} \textit{Catalogue of Books, in Various Departments of Literature, for Sale, by M. Carey, No. 121, Chestnut Street, Philadelphia} (Philadelphia, 1816). The titles in the front list are given in Appendix II, below. For the full list of short titles in both the front list and the back list, see Shaw and Shoemaker 37167. Many of the new titles also appear in Carey's back list, suggesting that he probably intended to issue the front list and the back list as separate catalogs as well.
The change in the number of fictional works in the catalog could reflect an increased demand for novels among American readers, as historians have long suggested.\textsuperscript{12} Almost certainly

\textsuperscript{12} See, esp., Cathy N. Davidson, Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America (New York, 1986); William J. Gilmore, Reading
contributing to the larger proportion of fictional works in Carey's catalog, however, are inherited Irish book publishing practices. Irish booksellers had, in fact, been reprinting popular English novels on a large scale since the mid-eighteenth century, particularly the works of such authors as Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, and Tobias Smollett. They had become so proficient at it that they often reprinted the works in Dublin, in a smaller format and at a greatly reduced price, within a month or two of the London publication—a practice that would be mirrored in America beginning in the second decade of the nineteenth century. Evidence for the practice is found in Patrick Byrne's 1802 catalog, in which 29 percent of the titles, the largest proportion, are fictional works. As mentioned previously, for a number of years after his arrival in America in 1801 Byrne drew on the books he had stashed in his Dublin warehouse, most of which were reprinted works. Further evidence for Irish reprinting practices is suggested by the large number of novels and romances, more than seven hundred, listed in the

---


General Catalogue of Books, a work that purportedly lists all the books published in Dublin from 1700 through 1791.14

Carey's 1791 catalog also provides a window through which to view the types of books that American booksellers were likely to import or reprint as well as those genres most likely to yield original American works. Of those titles imported, 52 percent are in the categories of history, belles lettres, and what today we would categorize as literature, including fiction, poetry, and dramatic works. Such a grouping indicates that Americans were still dependent on England and Europe for the majority of its polite literature or substantive works. Moreover, within these same categories, 57 percent were either imported directly from England or were reprints of English works.15

Of the American original publications, one-third were either educational titles or children's literature. This grouping may seem likely, given the emphasis American leaders and intellectuals placed on educating the citizens of the new

---

14 Catalogue of the Quire Stock of Books of P. Byrne; Cole, Irish Booksellers and English Writers, 60; A General Catalogue of Books in All Languages, Arts, and Sciences, That Have Been Printed in Ireland, and Published in Dublin, from the Year 1700, to the Present Time; the Whole Alphabetically and Classically Arranged under the Several Branches of Literature, with Their Sizes and Prices (Dublin, 1791). The catalog lists more than five thousand titles.

15 That is, of the 128 titles identified in these genres, 73 were either imported from England or were reprinted English works.
Republic. Benjamin Rush, for example, in his "Plan for the Establishment of Public Schools" (1786), wrote that education could "convert men into republican machines" that would "produce regularity and unison in government."\(^{16}\) Noah Webster also advocated popular education to instruct citizens in the laws of the country and to inculcate republican values. Children, the future leaders of the United States, were the likely targets of these new approaches to education advanced after the Revolution.\(^{17}\)

Yet, another possibility exists for the prevalence of these two categories among original American works in the catalog: children's books and schoolbooks were, for the most part, small books and thus could be inexpensively produced. An analysis of the book sizes in similar catalogs reveal as much.\(^{18}\) In Byrne's 1802 list, of all the genres represented, 57 percent are duodecimos or smaller. For schoolbooks and children's books, the

\(^{16}\) Benjamin Rush, quoted in Davidson, *Revolution and the Word*, 63. See also Patricia Cline Cohen, *A Calculating People: The Spread of Numeracy in Early America* (Chicago, 1982).


\(^{18}\) Carey's 1791 catalog lists the size of books only occasionally, thus it could not be included in the analysis.
proportion is much higher, 93 percent. Strikingly similar proportions are found in Carey's 1816 back list: 57 percent of all genres are duodecimos or smaller; 87 percent of the books in the same formats are schoolbooks and children's books. Moreover, a good portion of the education books, 14 percent, were reprinted English works, including such popular titles as Thomas Dilworth's *New Guide to the English Tongue* and Jean Heuzet's *Selectae e profanis scriptoribus historiae.*\(^{19}\) A determining factor in the booksellers' decision to publish the titles in these genres, then, might have been their cost efficiency more than any strong desire to promote patriotic education.\(^{20}\)

Even in 1816, after the War of 1812 had supposedly freed America from its dependence on British culture, booksellers' catalogs reveal a continued reliance on English works.\(^{21}\) Among the new titles in Carey's 1816 catalog, English reprints dominate the list, even among those genres in which one would expect to find

---


\(^{20}\) On popular English novels printed in America in abridged form, which were often listed as children's books, see Robert B. Winans, "Bibliography and the Cultural Historian: Notes on the Eighteenth-Century Novel," in William L. Joyce et al., eds., *Printing and Society in Early America* (Worcester, Mass., 1983), 182. Winans notes that these novels were almost certainly read by adults as well.

\(^{21}\) On the War of 1812 as a turning point with regard to America's cultural dependence on Britain, see Earl L. Bradsher, *Mathew Carey:
American original works: education and children's books. Of the small number of education books listed, eighteen of twenty-two are reprints. There are only four children's books, and three of those are reprinted works. Significantly, there is only one political work—a category that would likely predominate in the new nation—Carey's own *Olive Branch; or, Faults on Both Sides, Federal and Democratic: A Serious Appeal on the Necessity of Mutual Forgiveness and Harmony*.

One genre in Carey's 1816 list, however, does suggest the beginnings of an American national self-consciousness. For the first time, geography is among the top five categories in Carey's catalogs. Moreover, of the ten geography titles listed in the catalog, all but three are original American publications.

Among the reprinted geographical works is Oliver Goldsmith's *History of the Earth and Animated Nature*, published by Carey in 1795 in four octavo volumes that included fifty-five plates—a particularly large format for the time. As James N. Green has pointed out, Carey, in producing such a volume, "was gambling that books as fine as those published in London could be published in America." That he chose to gamble with a geography text is perhaps indicative of the esteem in which he held the

---

*Editor, Author, and Publisher; a Study in American Literary Development* (New York, 1966), 65.
genre—and his sense that, despite the book's cost, American readers would want to buy it. Indeed, the edition size was unusually large, three thousand copies. Carey's instincts were correct, for, at the time his catalog was printed, another edition of Goldsmith's book was "In the press."

Alongside this substantial reprinted work in Carey's catalog, original American geographical publications jostle for supremacy. New editions of Carey's General Atlas and Carey's American Pocket Atlas, both originally published in 1796, are represented, as is Carey's American Minor Atlas (1802). Carey's fascination with the physical landscape around him is evident in his commissioning a work that would become The Traveller's Directory (1802), a survey of the major roads and their surrounding areas from New York to Washington.

The growing importance of geography as a genre, reflected in Carey's catalog, was demonstrated by the commercial success of such works as Jedidiah Morse's American Universal Geography and the increasing demand for geography textbooks and geographical works of all kinds throughout the country. This thirst for

---

22 Green, Mathew Carey, 10.
23 Ibid., 17.
24 See Gilmore, Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life, esp. 64, 68, 216; Martin Brückner, "Models of World-Making: The Language of Geography in American Literature, 1750-1825" (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1997).
geographical knowledge could have profound implications for the development of American literary culture. As Martin Brückner writes, "With the idea of an American nation being initially a mere territorial construct sketched on paper, it was the geography textbook in particular that gave the impulse of nation-building a narrative form." This narrative form, through which a diverse American population could be united through the knowledge of their common linguistic, social, and political institutions, was then appropriated by American authors not only to situate American characters but to suggest the possibility of indigenous literary production. "In the end," contends Brückner, it was the geography textbook that paved the way for the American novel."25

Geography texts may have created the space for an American national literature eventually to emerge, thus serving as a precursor to an American cultural nationalism, but American booksellers yet inhabited a different world. This world was reflected in the order they imposed on it.

---

An Ensemble of Texts

As more and more books were produced and circulated in the early Republic, booksellers required some organizational scheme, or "intuitive map," as Ronald J. Zboray calls it, for managing their large inventories. In addition, and perhaps most important, they needed efficiently to convey information about their books to the public and to each other. Catalogs were an essential tool for doing so. How booksellers arranged their stock in the catalogs can reveal not only which genres they believed were most popular with American readers; more fundamentally, it can uncover the underlying taxonomies of knowledge within which they operated.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, writes Daniel R. Headrick, two systems of ordering information vied for preeminence on the pages of the growing number of encyclopedias and reference works. Proponents of the first believed that information should be presented as data that could be retrieved swiftly and efficiently; they thus recommended organizing information along alphabetical lines. Advocates of the second system sought to create learned works designed to educate the

---

26 Zboray, A Fictive People, xx.
reader; a narrative, or thematic, approach characterized their organizational scheme.  

American booksellers, then, presumably with the intention of ordering their large inventories for quick reference, favored the alphabetical method. All of the four catalogs examined, with the exception of Carey's 1816 front list, arrange the books alphabetically. A survey of the list of bookseller's catalogs compiled by Robert B. Winans, moreover, indicates that, of those printed between 1790 and 1800, 74 percent use the alphabetical method to some degree. Interestingly, within the same catalog, books are sometimes alphabetized according to the surname of the author and other times by the short spine title, suggesting some epistemological confusion. Those listed by spine title are more often works of fiction, even when the author is known. This is the case for most of the fiction titles in Mathew Carey's 1791 catalog and all of the novels in Patrick Byrne's 1802 catalog. Thus, readers are confronted with the seemingly anonymous Paul and Mary and The British Recluse in Carey's list. Such an

---

27 Headrick, *When Information Came of Age*, 160.
28 In addition to Carey's 1791 and 1816 catalogs, *A Catalogue of the Quire Stock of Books of P. Byrne and Catalogue of Books, Published by the Different Members of the Philadelphia Company of Printers and Booksellers* were examined.
arrangement suggests that fictional works do not carry as much authorial weight as titles in other genres, perhaps owing to the low regard with which many Americans viewed novels and novel reading after the Revolution.\(^{30}\) A hierarchy of value can, moreover, be discerned within the category of fiction itself; the names of better-known authors often follow the titles in the catalogs, as in the case of Oliver Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* and *Tales of the Castle* by Madame Genlis in Byrne's catalog. Thus, although alphabetization theoretically conferred equal status on all the entries, authorial reputation did play some part in the organization of the catalogs.\(^{31}\)

One potential problem with using alphabetical order for organizing knowledge at this time was that many words did not yet have accepted spellings.\(^{32}\) Even proper names were often spelled


\(^{31}\) See, however, Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, trans. Lydia C. Cochrane (Stanford, Calif., 1994), 31, for Foucault's contention that, in a "radical reversal" of the authorial conventions of the Middle Ages, eighteenth-century authors commonly listed their personal names on the title pages of literary works, whereas authors of scientific treatises were likely to remain anonymous. Challenging Foucault, Chartier argues that, just as in the Middle Ages, "later scientific texts were also 'accepted . . . and accepted as 'true,' only when marked with the name of their author'--an 'author,' however, who was long understood as someone whose social position could lend 'authority' to intellectual discourse" (59).

\(^{32}\) See Headrick, *When Information Came of Age*, 162-163.
differently. Such spelling issues could negate the intended purpose of arranging entries alphabetically—speed and efficiency. And, sometimes, booksellers or printers simply made mistakes. In Byrne's catalog, for example, although the entries were theoretically arranged alphabetically by surname of the author, Richard Burn's *Justice of the Peace and Parish Officer* is listed six lines before his *New Law Dictionary*. Additionally, many catalogs, such as Carey's 1791 list and his 1816 back list, are only roughly alphabetical, that is, they are grouped according to each letter of the alphabet but with no apparent order within each grouping.

Perhaps the most significant problem with the alphabetical method is what has been termed the fragmentation of knowledge.\(^3\) Thus, titles belonging to the same genre, which logically should be grouped together, are scattered throughout the catalogs. One way booksellers sought to maintain the supposed efficiency of the alphabetical system while displaying the titles according to some coherent system of knowledge was through the use of subject headings. Yet these, too, were often vague and fraught with inconsistencies. Listed under educational works in Carey's 1816 front list, for example, were not only grammars, dictionaries,

\(^3\) Ibid., 165.
and other reference works, but history books, such as Oliver Goldsmith's *History of Greece*, fables and children's literature, geography texts, and memoirs of notable figures, including Mason Locke Weems's *Life of Washington*. Although such works may seem appropriate for educational use, confusing the issue were similar titles listed under different headings. Geographies, for example, were included in a separate subject heading, "Voyages, Travels, Geographies, and Topography," and history books and memoirs were also listed under "Miscellaneous." Avoiding the problem posed by the overlap among genres, Byrne, after first listing all of his law titles, groups all other works in his 1802 catalog under "Miscellanies." Such difficulties with the classification of knowledge was shared by the booksellers' counterparts in Ireland. The *General Catalogue of Books*, which boasts on its cover that all titles are "Alphabetically and Classically Arranged under the Several Branches of Literature," had to add a note to the reader on its contents page: "Miscellanies may in general be referred to, when a Book is not found in the Class expected, but those of Novels and History in particular."  

Significantly, the earlier catalogs, Carey's list of 1791 and the 1794 catalog issued by the Philadelphia Company of

---

Printers and Booksellers, use subject headings as a way of calling attention to the book's smaller size—a sure selling point. The latter catalog, which only occasionally lists a book's actual size, has headings for such small books as "Grammars," "Pamphlets," "Plays and Farces," and "Small Histories and Chap Books." Carey lists titles under similar categories: "Pamphlets," "Dramatic Pieces," "Children's Books," "Spelling Books," and "Testaments." By calling attention to the small size of the book, and thus its inexpensive price, these booksellers were emphasizing the book's value as a commodity.

By 1816, Carey would provide a much more detailed list of titles that included specific sizes and prices for each item. Thus, his subject headings could, to a greater extent, reflect the content of the book. Indeed, Carey's front list is an example of the second system for ordering knowledge, the narrative form. This system developed in the eighteenth century from a critique of the classificatory scheme proposed by Linneaus. This attack came from Buffon, who believed that the idea of classification in general was merely a human construct and thus as "arbitrary as the alphabetical order in a dictionary." Buffon writes with regard to the Linnean system: "This manner of thinking has made us imagine an infinity of false relationships between natural
beings. . . . It is to impose on the reality of the Creator's works the abstractions of our mind." For Buffon, description was the key to unlocking the mysteries of the natural world: "The only true way to advance science is to work at the description and the history of the different things which compose it."35

In Carey's catalog the narrative is composed of lengthy descriptions of each title, many culled from the pages of British literary journals and magazines—such as the Gentleman's Magazine, the London Review, and the British Critic—thus lending the weight of authority to the story. Moreover, not only are the full names of each author, editor, and translator provided for most every title, but they are augmented by professional and personal affiliations. The editor of Samuel Cooper's Dictionary of Practical Surgery, John Syng Dorsey, is also "Adjunct professor of Surgery in the University of Pennsylvania," and the author of the novel Morntton is described as the "Daughter of the celebrated Dr. Cullen." Such descriptors not only connect one element of an entry to another; they also make connections with other works, broadening the narrative. Henry Mackenzie is thus characterized as "Author of 'Man of Feeling' and 'Man of the World'" as well as Julia De Roubigné.

---

35 Buffon, quoted in Headrick, When Information Came of Age, 28. See also Foucault, The Order of Things, 126.
Such narrative descriptions could also serve to entice the reader into buying the book. Although Carey had previously used promotional extracts and endorsements in some of his catalogs, such as his *Catalogue of Books, Pamphlets, Maps, and Prints* published in 1795, they were not as detailed or extensive as those in the 1816 front list. Combined with other detailed information about the book, particularly its price, the consumer had all the necessary information to choose among an ever growing number of publications. Books, more than ever, had become commodities to sell quickly and efficiently to an expanding and increasingly diverse reading public. Cary's 1816 book catalog, with its table of contents listing the relevant subject headings as well as its running heads on every page, had, in fact, become a book itself, a commodity to sell.

---


Let us now cease to look longer to England, but depend only on ourselves.
— Mathew Carey, Volunteer’s Journal, 1784

Mathew Carey’s plea to his Irish countrymen to liberate themselves from English influence would be echoed in America in the publishing practices and strategies of the many Irish booksellers who emigrated to the United States at the end of the eighteenth century. To produce small books cheaply was their desideratum, which helped both to create and to sustain a demand for literature by an expanding American reading public.

Although these Irish émigré booksellers claimed to be promoting an American literary culture, such practices differed little from the publishing program they had pursued in their native land. The nationalism that these booksellers embraced was an economic nationalism, one bounded by the marketplace in which they operated, the public they sought to serve. For them, nationalism was not so much an emotional response to a particular society or adherence to a common culture but, as David
Waldstreicher has argued, a strategy employed to promote their own economic and political interests.¹

The publishing strategies of the Irish booksellers in America would have a profound influence on the development of the book industry in the next century. The technological innovations of the nineteenth century, particularly those in printing, paper making, and book binding, would allow American publishers to produce more books than ever before—and both quickly and economically.² Book entrepreneur George Palmer Putnam wrote in his book trade journal, the Booksellers' Advertiser, in 1836:

"Verily in this age of ballooning and railroading—printing by steam—when the machinery of book-making is such, that it is only necessary to put your rags in the mill and they come out all Bibles—all ready printed—there is no telling what human invention will accomplish next."³ An American national literature was ripe to emerge.

But the cultural influence of England, demonstrated in the demand for English books, continued unabated, ushering in what John Tebbel calls the "Age of Piracy." Beginning in the second decade of the nineteenth century, American publishers, owing to the lack of copyright for foreign publications, competed to reprint the latest English books, particularly novels that had proved to be best-selling titles in England. The book publishing enterprise founded by Mathew Carey, now run by his son Henry Charles, was a major player in the reprint wars.4

The profitability of these reprinting practices led the New York publishing firm of Wiley and Long to send to London in 1836 its junior partner, George Palmer Putnam, to explore the possibility of establishing an office there for importing English books to the United States. The time was right, and, the following year, the London office opened for business with Putnam, now a full partner in the company, as its director. Echoing the booksellers' catalogs of an earlier era, the new importing firm advertised to American consumers that it could "usually deliver English Books in New York at prices as low, and sometimes much less, than those of London publishers." The

---

company was, in the words of Putnam's biographer Ezra Greenspan, "at the crosscurrents of the Anglo-American waterway" in the international trade in books.\(^5\)

One of Putnam's first publishing ventures in London, however, signaled a change in the direction of cultural influence. Putnam took the lead in reprinting a new American work, Edgar Allen Poe's *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, beating the London publishers in the race for the English copyright.\(^6\) An American publisher, heir to the Irish reprint tradition, had brought the competition for imported works—American works—to London. Mathey Carey and, indeed, Robert Bell, would have appreciated the irony.

---

\(^5\) Greenspan, *George Palmer Putnam*, 60, 66, 68, 70, 73.

\(^6\) Ibid., 74.
APPENDIX I

Catalogue of Books, Stationary, Cutlery, etc. for Sale at Carey, Stewart, and Co's Store, No. 22, North Front-Street, Philadelphia
(Philadelphia: Carey, Stewart, and Co., 1791)

Agriculture


Belles Lettres


Hervey, James. Meditations and Contemplations: Containing Meditations among the Tombs; Reflections on a Flower-Garden; A Descant on Creation; Contemplations on the Night; Contemplations on the Starry Heavens; and a Winter-Piece. 16th ed. London: R. Thomson, 1790. Orig. pub., Paisley, Scotland, 1744.

Percival, Thomas. *Moral and Literary Dissertations . . . to Which Are Added a Tribute to the Memory of Charles de Polier, Esq., and an Appendix.* Dublin: Mary Graisberry, 1788. Orig. pub., Warrington, Eng., 1784.


Waller, Edmund. *The Works of Edmund Waller, Esq. in Prose and Verse; to Which Is Prefixed, the Life of the author, by*

Biography and Autobiography


Trenck, Friedrich, Freiherr von der. The Life of Baron Frederic Trenck; Containing His Adventures, His Cruel and Excessive Sufferings, during Ten Years Imprisonment, at the Fortress of Magdeburg, by Command of the Late King of Prussia; also Anecdotes, Historical, Political, and Personal. Philadelphia: W. Spotswood, 1790. Orig. pub., London, 1788.

Children's Literature


Bunyan, John. A Heavenly Rest for a Weary Soul; or, The Pilgrim at His Journey's End; Being the Last Legacy of a Father to His Children. . . . Vol. 4 of The Father's Last Gift to His Children. Glasgow, 1780. Orig. pub., Glasgow, 1779.

The Child's New Play-thing; or, Hobby Horse; Designed for Their Amusement, in Order to Make the Learning to Read a Diversion Instead of a Task. . . . Dublin: R. Jackson, 1789. Orig. pub., London, 1743.


Entertaining Fables for the Instruction of Children; Adorned with Cuts; to Which Is Added, The Trial of an Ox for Killing a Man. Glasgow: J. and M. Robertson, 1789. Orig. pub., London, 1770.
The History of Little Goody Two-shoes, Otherwise Called Mrs. Margery Two-shoes with the Means by Which She Acquired Her Learning and Wisdom, and in Consequence Thereof Her Estate. Philadelphia: Young and McCulloch, 1787. Orig. pub., London, 1764.


Jack Horner's Pretty Toy, Containing the Favorite Rhime of the Kid and the Bonny Bush of Blackberries; Also the Pretty Play of Blind-man's Buff, etc. Dublin, n.d.


Tom Thumb's Folio; or, A New Threepenny Plaything for Little Giants; to Which Is Prefixed, an Abstract of the Life of Mr. Thumb, and an Historical Account of the Wonderful Deeds He Performed; Together with Some Anecdotes Respecting Grumbo, the Great. Boston: Samuel Hall, 1791. Orig. pub., London, 1768.


Conduct of Life


Chesterfield, Philip Dormer Stanhope, fourth earl of, and Francois duc de La Rochefoucauld. The New Complete Letter Writer; or, The Art of Correspondence, Containing Letters . . . to Which Are Added the Principles of Politeness . . . of the
Late Lord Chesterfield; also, Moral Maxims and Reflections by the Late Duke de La Rochefoucauld. Philadelphia: William Spotswood, 1790. Orig. pub., Glasgow, 1785.

[Cresswick, Mr.]. The Female Reader; or, Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose and Verse Selected from the Best Writers for the Improvement of Young Women; to Which Is Prefixed a Preface, Containing Some Hints on Female Education, with a Complete System of Geography. Dublin: Dornin, 1791. Orig. pub., London, 1789.


The Young Lady's Library; or, Parental Monitor. Dublin: Graisberry and Campbell, 1790.

Education


Sarjeant, Thomas, and Thomas Gurney. *An Easy and Compendious System of Short Hand; Adapted to the Arts and Sciences and to the Learned Professions.* Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson and Lang, 1789.


**Fiction/Literature**


Agnes De-Courci: A Domestic Tale, in Two Volumes. 2 vols. Dublin: Burnet, Wogan, Byrne, Colbert, Moore, Jones, and Dornin, 1789. Orig. pub., Bath, 1789.

Bennett, [Agnes Maria]. Juvenile Indiscretions: A Novel; in Five Volumes. 5 vols. London: W. Lane, 1786.

Bonnote, [Elizabeth]. Olivia; or, Deserted Bride. 3 vols. London: W. Lane, 1787.


Lambert, Anne Thérèse de Marguenat de Courcelles, marquise de. The School of Virtue, a Novel, on a New Plan; to Which Is Added, the Fair Solitary; or, Female Hermit, a Novel. 2 vols. Philadelphia: William Spotswood, 1790. Orig. pub., London, 1789.


Geography


------. Geography Made Easy: Being a Short, but Comprehensive System of That Very Useful and Agreeable Science . . . : Calculated Particularly for the Use and Improvement of Schools in the United States. New Haven, Conn.: Meigs, Bowen, and Dana, 1784.

History

Adams, John. *Flowers of Ancient History, Comprehending, on a New Plan, the Most Remarkable Revolutions and Events, as Well as the Most Eminent and Illustrious Characters of Modern Times.* . . Dublin: Grueber and McAllister, 1789.


Fleury, Claude. *Les moeurs des Israélites: où l'on voit le modèle d'une politique simple & sincere pour le gouvernement des*


Platina. B. *Platinae Cremonensis opus, de vitis ac gestis summorum pontificum as Sixtum IIIII. Pont. Max. deductum.* N.p., n.d.


Smith, Samuel. *The History of the Colony of Nova-Caesaria, or New Jersey: Containing an Account of Its First Settlement, Progressive Improvements, the Original and Present*
Constitution, and Other Events, to the Year 1721. . . .
Philadelphia: David Hall, 1765.


Law


Medicine


**Military**


Simes, Thomas. *A New Military, Historical, and Explanatory Dictionary; Including the Warriors Gazetteer of Places Remarkable for Sieges or Battles*. Philadelphia: Humphreys, Bell, and Aitken, 1776.


**Moral Philosophy**

Aesop. *Select Fables, in Three Parts: Part I. Fables Extracted from Dodsley's; Part II. Fables with Reflections, in Prose and Verse; Part III. Fables in Verse: To Which Are Prefixed, the


Lucian of Samosata. The Select Dialogues of Lucian; to Which Is Added, a New Literal Translation in Latin, with Notes in English. Translated by Edward Murphy. Philadelphia: Joseph James, 1789. Orig. pub., London, 1744.


Natural History


Periodicals

American Museum. 8 vols.


Plays/Drama


Leacock, John. The Fall of British Tyranny; or, American Liberty Triumphant, the First Campaign: A Tragi-comedy of Five Acts. Philadelphia: Styner and Charles Cist, [1776].


Woods, William. The Twins; or, Which is Which? A Farce; in Three Acts; Altered from Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors. Edinburgh: C. Elliot et al., 1780.

Poetry


Goldsmith, Oliver. *The Traveller; or, A Prospect of Society, a Poem; Containing: a Sketch of the Manners, of Italy, Switzerland, France, Holland, and Britain; to Which Is Added True Beauty, a Matrimonial Tale; Likewise the Adventures of Tom Dreadnought.* . . . 1st American ed. Philadelphia: Robert Bell, 1768. Orig. pub., London, 1764.


Ovid. *Ovid's Metamorphoses in Latin and English, Translated by the Most Eminent Hands; with Historical Explications of the
Fables, Written in French by the Abbot Banier. . . .

------. P. Ovidii Nasonis sulmonensis, epistolarum heroidum liber, cui accesserunt A. Sabini poetai epistolae tres ad Ovidianas epistolas responsoriae. . . . Edited by Nicolass Heinsius. Dublin: Samuelis Fulleri, 1730.


Politics and Contemporary Comment


Henderson, Alexander. The Bishops Doom: A Sermon Preached before the General Assembly Which Sat at Glasgow anno 1638, on Occasion of Pronouncing the Sentence of the Greater Excommunication against Eight of the Bishops, and Depositing or Suspending the Other Six. Edinburgh: John Gray and Gavin Alston, 1762.


Littlepage, Lewis. Answer to a Pamphlet Containing the Correspondence between the Honorable John Jay, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and Lewis Littlepage, Esquire, of Virginia, at Present Chamberlain and Secretary of the Cabinet of His Majesty the King of Poland. Philadelphia: Enoch Story, 1787.


[Markoe, Peter]. The Algerine Spy in Pennsylvania; or, Letters Written by a Native of Algiers on the Affairs of the United States of America, from the Close of the Year 1783 to the Meeting of the Convention. Philadelphia: Prichard and Hall, 1787.


Reference

Antonini, Annibale. Dictionnaire italien, latin, et français; contenant non seulement un abrégé du Dictionnaire de La Crusca. . . . Venice: Chez François Pitteri, 1745.


The Ready Reckoner; or, The Trader's Sure Guide Adapted to the Use of All Who Deal by Wholesale or Retail; Exhibiting at One View, the Amount of Value of Any Number of Quantity of Goods or Merchandize. . . . Reading: Benjamin Johnson, 1789. Orig. pub., London, 1757.


Religion

Appleton, James. *A Collection of Discourses on the Various Duties of Religion, as Taught by the Catholic Church; Comprising All the Sundays and Festivals of the Year*. Dublin: P. Wogan, 1790. Orig. pub., Reading, 1786.


Carroll, John. *An Address to the Roman Catholics of the United States of America*. Annapolis, Md.: Frederick Green, [1784].


Crisp, Stephen. *Scripture Truths Demonstrated in Thirty-two Sermons or Declarations of Stephen Crisp Late of Colchester in Essex, Deceased . . . as They Were Delivered by Him at the Public Meeting-houses of the People Called Quakers*. Philadelphia: Joseph James, [1787]. Orig. pub., London, 1707.


Episcopal Church. The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, according to the Use of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America: Together with the Psalter, or Psalms of David. Philadelphia: Hall and Sellers, 1791. Orig. pub., Philadelphia, 1786.

The Experience of Some of the Most Eminent Methodist Preachers . . . in a Series of Letters Written by Themselves, to the Revd. John Wesley. . . . Dublin: Bennett Dugdale, 1782?


Hall, Archibald. Grace and Holiness; or, Complete Redemption. Effected by the Son of God without the Law; and Believers Death to the Law, a Doctrine according to Godliness. London: G. Keith et al. 1777.


Hieroglyphic Bible. Boston: Munroe and Francis, 1790.

The Holy Bible, Translated from the Latin Vulgate . . . ; The Old Testament, First Published by the English College at Douay, A.D. 1609; and the New Testament, First Published by the English College at Rheims, A.D. 1582. . . . 1st American ed. N.p., n.d.


Manning, Robert. Moral Entertainments on the Most Important
Practical Truths of the Christian Religion. 2 vols. Dublin:

---. The Shortest Way to End Disputes about Religion. Dublin:

Mannock, John. The Poor Man's Catechism; or, The Christian
Doctrine Explained; with Short Admonitions. Dublin: R. Cross

Martin, David, ed. and trans. La Sainte Bible, qui contient le
Vieux et le Nouveau Testament. . . . Edited by Pierre Rogues.

Methodist Episcopal Church. A Pocket Hymn-Book; Designed as a
Crukshank, 1791.

Murray, John. Thoughts on the Doctrine of Universal Salvation as
Preached, Maintained, and Propogated, by Mr. John Murray, and
Others of the People Called Universal Baptists. Philadelphia:
Printed for the author by Prichard and Hall, 1790.

O'Connor, John. An Essay on the Rosary and Sodality of the Most
Holy Name of Jesus. 2d ed. Dublin: P. Wogan, 1788.

Ostervald, Jean Frédéric. A Compendium of Christian Theology.
Translated by John McMains. Hartford, Conn.: Nathaniel Patten,
1788. Orig. pub., Strabane, 1785.

Price, Richard. Sermons on the Security and Happiness of a
Virtuous Course, on the Goodness of God, and the Resurrection
of Lazarus: To Which Are Added, Sermons on the Christian
Doctrine as Received by the Different Denominations of
Christians. Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1788. Orig. pub.,
London, 1787.

The Protestant Manual of Christian Devotions: Composed of
Instructions, Offices, and Forms of Prayers, in a Plain,
Rational, and Scriptural Method, for the Morning and Evening on
Every Day in the Week. . . . London: J. Hodges, 1750.


**Songs**


*The Vocal Remembrancer: Being a Choice Selection of the Most Admired Songs, including the Modern, to Which Are Added Favourite Toasts and Sentiments*. Philadelphia: William Spotswood, [1790].
Travels


Bossu, M. *Travels through that Part of North America Formerly Called Louisiana.* London: T. Davies, 1771.


Consett, Matthew. *A Tour through Sweden, Swedish-Lapland, Finland, and Denmark; in a Series of Letters.* London: J. Johnson, W. Goldsmith, T. Lewis, and R. Christopher Stockton, [1789].


APPENDIX II

Catalogue of Books, in Various Departments of Literature, for Sale, by M. Carey, No. 121, Chestnut Street, Philadelphia
(Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1816) [Front List]

Biography and Autobiography

[Cornelius, Nepos]. Cornelii Nepotis Vitae excellentium imperatorum cum versione Anglicana, in qua verbum de verbo . . . ; or, Cornelius Nepos' Lives of the Excellent Commanders: With an English Translation. . . . Edited by John Clarke.


Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1816.

Belles Lettres

The American Poetical Miscellany; Original and Selected.

The American Prose Miscellany; Original and Selected.

Bunbury, Henry William. An Academy of Grown Horsemen: Containing the Completest Instruction for Walking Trotting, Cantering,

Butler, Samuel. The Moral Mirror; or, A Looking-glass for Sots, Parasites, Gluttons, Clowns, Praters, Time-Servers, Pretenders, Knaves, Knights of the Post, Atheists, Zealots, Hypocrites, etc., etc., etc. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1813.


Children's Literature


Conduct of Life


Chesterfield, Philip Dormer Stanhope, fourth earl of. Principles of Politeness, and of Knowing the World, by the Late Lord Chesterfield; with Additions, by the Rev. Dr. John Trusler; Containing Every Instruction Necessary to Complete the Gentleman and Man of Fashion, to Teach Him a Knowledge of Life, and Make Him Well Received in All Companies; for the Improvement of Youth; but not Beneath the Attention of Any. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1800. Orig. pub., London, 1775.


Education


Ash, John. Grammatical Institutes; or, An Easy Introduction to Dr. Lowth's English Grammar; Designed for the Use of Schools, and to Lead Young Gentlemen and Ladies into the Knowledge of the First Principles of the English Language, with an Appendix . . . ; to Which Are added, Select Lessons to Instil Just Sentiments of Virtue into Youth. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1804. Orig. pub., London, 1761.


[Edgworth, Richard Love, and Maria Edgworth]. The Parent's Friend; or, Extracts from the Principal Works on Education
from the Time of Montaigne to the Present Day. 2 vols.

El Director de los niños para aprender á deletrear y léer 6
método para facilitar los progresos de los niños quando se
mandan por la primera vez á la escuela. Philadelphia: Mathew
Carey, 1811.

Ferguson, James. Ferguson's Lectures on Select Subjects in
Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Hydraulics, Pneumatics, Optics,
Geography, Astronomy, and Dialling; a New Edition, Corrected
and Enlarged, with Notes and an Appendix. . . . Edited by
Robert Patterson and David Brewster. 2d American ed. 3 vols.

Gough, James. Compendious Expositor of English Words Derived from
the Latin, Greek, and French. 4th ed., rev. Philadelphia:
Mathew Carey, 1808.

Greenwood, James. The Philadelphia Vocabulary, English and Latin;
Put into a New Method, Proper to Acquaint the Learner with
Things as Well as Pure Latin Words; for the Use of Schools.
Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1806. Orig. pub., Philadelphia,
1787.

Gurney, Thomas. Gurney's Easy and Compendious System of Short
Hand; Adapted to the Arts and Sciences, and to the Learned
Professions. Edited by Thomas Sergeant. 3d American ed.
Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1813. Orig. pub., Philadelphia,
1789.

[Heuzet, Jean]. Selectae e profanis scriptoribus historiae:
quibus admista sunt varia honeste vivendi praecepta, ex iisdem
scriptoribus deprompta; Haec editio Philadelphiensis
prioribus certe emendatior, et juventati utilior accurante
Ric. Dabney. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1815. Orig. pub.,
Lipsiae, 1734.

-------. Selectae e Veteri Testamento historiae: ad usum eorum qui
Latinae linguae rudimentis imbuuntur. New ed. Philadelphia:
Mathew Carey, J. Johnson, H. Maxwell, T. and W. Bradford and
J. Conrad ["Printed for the Philadelphia Company of


Fiction/Literature


Cottin, [Sophie]. Elizabeth; or, The Exiles of Siberia; A Tale, Founded upon Facts. 5th ed. 2 vols. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1814. Orig. pub., Newcastle, 1800?


Ross, Mrs. Paired, Not Matched; or, Matrimony in the Nineteenth Century: A Novel. 2 vols. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey; Boston: Wells and Lilly, 1816.


The Young Mother; or, Albinia: A Novel. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1813.

Geography


Carey's American Pocket Atlas . . . with a Brief Description of Each State and Territory; Also, the Census of the Inhabitants of the United States, for 1810; the Exports from the United States for Twenty Years. 4th ed., impr., enl. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1814. Orig. pub., Philadelphia, 1796.


History


Johnson, R[ichard.] *A New Roman History, from the Foundation of Rome to the End of the Commonwealth; Designed for the Use of


Law


Toulmin, Henry. The Clerk's Magazine and American Conveyancer's Assistant: Being a Collection Adapted to the United States, of the Most Approved Precents . . . ; Containing Nearly Double the Number of Such Precedents, Usually Inserted in Similar Publications; Interspersed with Various Legal Principles, and Copious Extracts from the Laws of Different States, Relating to Apprenticeships, the Conveyance of Lands, the Mode of Authenticating Foreign Deeds, etc. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1806.
Medicine

Black, Joseph. Lectures on the Elements of Chemistry. . . .


Military


Moral Philosophy


Poetry


Moore, Edward. Fables for the Ladies, by Edward Moore; to Which Are Added, Seven Select Fables, by Other Authors. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1811. Orig. pub., London, 1744.


----- --. The Poetical Works of the Rev. Dr. Edward Young; with the Life of the Author. 2 vols. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1816. Orig. pub., Philadelphia, 1805?

Politics and Contemporary Comment


Reference

Bracken, Henry. Farriery Improved; or, A Complete Treatise on the Art of Farriery Wherein Is Fully Explained the Nature, Structure, and Mechanism of That Noble and Useful Creature, a Horse, with the Diseases and Accident's He Is Liable to, and the Methods of Cure; Likewise Rule for Breeding and Training of Colts, Practical Receipts for the Cure of Common Distemper Incident to Oxen, Calves, Sheep Lambs, Hogs, etc; to Which Is Perfixed [sic], Ten Minutes Advice to the Purchasers of Horses. 3d American ed. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1809. Orig. pub., London, 1737.


Walker, John. A Critical Pronouncing Dictionary, and Expositor of the English Language ... to Which Are Prefixed, Principles of English Pronunciation ... Likewise, Rules to Be Observed by the Natives of Scotland, Ireland, and London for Avoiding Their Respective Peculiarities; and Directions to Foreigners, for Acquiring a Knowledge of the Use of This Dictionary; the Whole Interspersed with Observations, Etymological, Critical, and Grammatical. 4th ed., from the London stereotype ed. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1815. Orig. pub., London, 1791.

Religion


Coret, Jacques. L'ange conducteur dans la devotion chrétienne, réduite en pratique en faveur des ames devotes. ... New ed. Paris: Valleyre, 1804. Orig. pub., Namur, 1795?


[Ely, Ezra Stiles]. The Second Journal of the Stated Preacher to the Hospital and Almshouse in the City of New-York, for a Part
of the Year of Our Lord 1813; with an Appendix. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1815.

Exercicio quotidiano, oraciones y devociones para antes y después de la confesión, y sagrada comunión. Madrid: n.p., 1800. Orig. pub., Madrid, 1772?


The Holy Bible: Translated from the Latin Vulgate, Diligently Compared with the Hebrew, Greek, and Other Editions, in Divers Languages; the Old Testament, First Published by the English College at Doway, A.D. 1609, and the New Testament, First Published by the English College at Rhemes, A.D. 1582; with Annotations, References, and an Historical and Chronological Index. 1st American ed., from the 5th Dublin ed., rev., corr. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1805.


Petites Étrennes Spirituelles, Dédies a Madame La Dauphine,
Contenant; Les Prières et Offices et La Messe, Latin-Francais;

Taylor, Jeremy. Discourses on Various Subjects. 3 vols. Boston:
Wells and Lilly; New York: A. T. Goodrich, 1816. Orig. pub.,
London, 1807.

Songs

Adgate, Andrew, and John Jenkins Husband, comps. Philadelphia
Harmony; or, A Collection of Psalm Tunes, Hymns, and Anthems
Selected by A. Adgate; Together with The Rudiments of Music,
on a New and Improved Plan, by A. Adgate; with an Improved
Mode of Teaching Music to Facilitate the Progress of a
Learner, by John Jenkins Husband. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey,

Travel

Bolingbroke, Henry. A Voyage to the Demerary: Containing a
Statistical Account of the Settlements There, and of Those on
the Essequebo, the Berbice, and Other Contiguous Rivers of
Guyana. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1813. Orig. pub., London,
1805.

Eustace, John Mawman. A Tour through Italy: Exhibiting a View of
Its Scenery, Its Antiquities, and Its Monuments; Particularly
as They Are Objects of Classical Interest and Elucidation;
with an Account of the Present State of Its Cities and Towns;
and Occasional Observations on the Recent Spoilations of the
French. 2 vols. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1816. Orig. pub.,
London, 1813 [Listed as "In the press."]

[Grant, Anne MacVicar]. Memoirs of an American Lady: With
Sketches of Manners and Scenery in America, as They Existed
Previous to the Revolution. 2 vols. in 1. Boston: W. Wells,
Thomas B. Wait and Co., and Hastings, Etheridge, and Bliss,

Heriot, George. Travels through the Canadas; Containing a
Description of the Picturesque Scenery on Some of the Rivers

Humboldt, Alexander von, and Aimé Bonpland. Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of the New Continent during the Years 1799-1804. . . . Translated by Helen Maria Williams. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1815. Orig. pub., London, 1814?


Salt, Henry. A Voyage to Abyssinia, and Travels into the Interior of That Country: Executed under the Orders of the British Government, in the Years 1809 and 1810; in Which Are Included, an Account of the Portugese Settlements on the East Coast of Africa, Visited in the Course of the Voyage; a Concise Narrative of Late Events in Arabia Feliz; and Some Particulars respecting the Aboriginal African Tribes, Extending from Mozambique to the Border of Egypt; Together with Vocabularies of Their Respective Languages; Illustrated with a Map of Abyssinia. Philadelphia: Mathew Carey and Boston: Wells and Lilly, 1816.


BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources


United States from the Genesis of Printing in 1639 Down to and Including the Year 1800. New York: P. Smith, 1941-1942.

General Catalogue of Books in All Languages, Arts, and Sciences, That Have Been Printed in Ireland, and Published in Dublin, from the Year 1700, to the Present Time; the Whole Alphabetically and Classically Arranged under the Several Branches of Literature, with Their Sizes and Prices. Dublin: John Rice, 1791.


**Secondary Sources**


Chartier, Roger. *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth*


VITA

Virginia L. Montijo

Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on August 12, 1964. Received a bachelor of arts degree in history and international relations in 1986 from Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia. Worked in both book and journal publishing before entering the graduate program in history at the College of William and Mary in 1992. Joined the staff of the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture in 1995 as manuscript editor and is currently senior editor in Book Publications at the Institute.