From the Editors:

Here we are again! Although we still need to hear from a few more of the past subscribers, the TBR Newsletter got quite a few nice comments, and even overpaid donations; so the editors will see four more issues through their birth-pangs. Thank YOU for your support and encouragement. This issue includes a few changes. We got several constructive ideas to work on, as you will see in future issues. Where two contributors said the exact opposite, our changes will be as obscure as possible!

As promised, the colored sheet (a xerox of a xeroxed actual cover) was included --- with great subtlety --- in issue #7, to do with as you wish. The reproduction was a disappointment, but we have several extra to sell at cost plus a little plus, if any one wants another. First come, first serve. Send $2.00 donation for each sheet made out to L. HERMAN (please, no TBR Newsletter). [You might want several to cut down to make four note cards, or frame as pictures, or to give to someone, or to just keep with your Margaret Armstrong file.]

We include an extra order sheet with this issue for you to give to someone who might be interested in the newsletter. Feel free to xerox it and hand it out to anyone who seems the least bit of a possibility. When the subscription number hits two hundred, we can go to bulk postage, as well as have more comments to report and information to share.

Charles Gullans and John Espey have sent, as well as the "BIRD" flying in this issue, articles on Hapgood and Jordan. These are indeed something to look forward to. The Editors look forward, as well, to hearing from several people who semi-promised information on other topics!
TBR Newsletter serial reference bibliography (8)

Sewing and covering a book including eight photos from the Butler-Ward Company, New York. [Editor's note: We would reprint this, if we could get good copies of the photos. Any help?]

A description of the flexing machine for spine rounding invented by Charles W. Mears, advertising manager of the Winton Motor Car Company, Cleveland.

“Brown, who had taken over the design of The Craftsman, published by Gustav Stickley, has compiled many samples of lettering by English, European, and American designers, the majority of them active between the 1890s and 1920. The book could be very useful for identifying unsigned bindings.” - Jean-François Vilain.

Gathering and casing by huge machines described step-by-step.


“Librarians have little need now to grumble at the quality of library bookbinding. The criticism should be lodged at the publishers, who print on inferior paper and in weak cloth bindings.” (p.902)

ELISHA BROWN BIRD

by

Charles Gullans and John Espey


Bird graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he had trained as an architect, in 1891. He "worked for various printing firms in Boston. By 1894 he was on his own and contributing decorative illustrations to several American periodicals." [Roberta Waddell Wong, American Posters of the Nineties (Boston: Boston Public Library, et al., [1974], p. 22.] Vogue was one of the magazines which helped to launch the work of the new artist, whose "designed decoration...often had a distinct architectural character. He frequently used rococo ornament, symmetrically arranged. Like Bradley, Bird showed a preference for working in black." [Wong, Will Bradley, p. 101. He was well-known as a designer of bookplates, and from 1898 on he designed a quantity of sheet music for Oliver Ditson Co., Boston, and for G. Schirmer. "For much of his life he worked for newspapers--first as a promotion designer for the Boston Herald, then for the Boston Evening Transcript, The New York World, The New York Times." [Wong, Nineties, 22.]


Two of his earliest surviving posters were for the 19th Annual Mechanics Fair, Boston, 1895, and for "The Nickell / November / 5 cents a copy / 50 cents a year / The Nickell
Co. 180 Summer Str. Boston / Read the Bicycle Department", although neither is of the greatest distinction.

He was one of the founders with Richard Badger and the art editor of The Red Letter, a little magazine, whose first issue appeared in June, 1896. Yet the poster he designed to advertise it had already been reproduced in Poster Lore, No. 2, February, 1896, along with posters for The Echo and The Overland Monthly. The second issue has a cover and decorative work by Bird, and his article on the work of Theodore Brown Hapgood, Jr., with illustrations. The Red Letter poster was again reproduced in Inland Printer, 18 (October, 1896), 72; and an advertisement for the magazine appeared at p. 716. It is certainly one of his most admired posters, and is also reproduced in Wong, Posters, p. 25, along with reproduction on the fold-out for The Poster and The Captured Cunarder. The latter poster and the cover of the book it advertised, carried the same design, although in quite different sizes, of course. It is one of the most arresting images of a decade notable for novel and enduring configurations, and has frequently been reproduced and commented upon.

In March, 1896, he designed the cover and the poster, "The Clowns," again identical images, for Inland Printer; and in 17 (July, 1896), 396, he contributed a headpiece and decorative initials. In the August issue, p. 481, he signed, with the letter "B" surmounting a schematic pair of wings, the advertisement for the Franklin Engraving and Electrotyping Co., Chicago, in black and white. His poster in buff and dark and light blue for the "Daughters of the Revolution Loan Exhibition of Colonial and Revolutionary Relics, Copley Hall, April 19-20 and 21" is illustrated in Inland Printer, 19 (April, 1897), 86.

A group of eight page-headings for the Boston Herald is also printed there, 20 (September, 1898), 726; they are there attributed to E. A. Bird, but the signature BIRD with schematic pairs of wings at either end is obviously his. And in 1899 he contributed five covers for Inland Printer for the months of May, June, July, October, and December; 20 (December, 1899), 389-396, and another signed advertisement for Ruxton's Cover Inks, 29 (September, 1902), 1004/1005.


His bookplate for Winfred Porter Truesdell appears in The Printing Art, 1, no. 1 (March, 1903), 24.
Designed Books:

Cummings, Harle Oren. The Welsh Rarebit Stories. Boston: Mutual Book Co., 1902. "Cover and decorations are by BIRD." The initial decorative letters are signed with monogram three above.


Sidney, Margaret, [pseud., Lothrop, Harriet Mulford (Stone)]. The Judge's Cave. Boston: Lothrop, [c1900]. Snd.


Notes + Queries: Armstrong titles to sell

Mosher Books sent a listing including several fine bindings. Write to Philip R. Bishop P.O.Box 111 Millersville, PA 17551-0111. [(717)872-9209].

He comments that from a dealer's perspective the over $20. bindings are not that easy to sell. [Editors' agree that this is true, but reflect that we all will probably kick our selves in another ten years for passing up good condition bindings at any price.]

Notes + Queries: A few monograms

Alice C. Morse (approx 25 covers for Dodd, Mead/Putnam/Etc.)  

Amy Richards (approx.65 covers for Dodd, Mead/Houghton Mifflin/Stokes/ Scribner's Sons/Appleton/Etc.)

Amy M. Sacker (approx.60 covers for Page/Dana Estes/Little,Brown/Houghton Mifflin/Etc.)

Bertha Stuart (approx 65 covers for Dutton/Harper/Holt/Century/Etc.)

Notes + Queries: DD list

No, I didn't put the "H" list in order. It was so long that it didn't fit into #7 TBR. Did anyone notice?

Notes + Queries: Bird

For the Gullans + Espey article CSUF has only the one Bird title (#1568 Wheelwright). The illustration has been crudely cleaned up and should be looked at with tolerance. The cover description: dark blue on light blue smooth cloth, the pyramids and papyrus bottom are gilt. The name "BIRD" appears in the left bottom stem enclosure. Spine: author/title lettering in gilt at top, papyrus stems decoration + publisher/series lettering in dark blue.

Notes + Queries: Rare Book School

The RBS from Columbia (NY), which has moved to the University of Virginia, is offering its tempting collection of courses this July including "Publishers' Bookbindings, 1830-1910" by Sue Allen. As well, there are twenty-two other fascinating classes to appeal to those with discerning taste. Write to the Rare Book School, 114 Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22903-2498 for more information, or telephone (804)924-8851, or fax (804)924-8824 or e-mail to books @ virginia.edu.
THE COVER STAMPS

By George Becker


Not many years ago the crudest and most primitive devices were used in the production of a book cover. The artist, if such he could be called, who was responsible for the design, seldom went to the trouble of furnishing the engraver with anything more than a pencil sketch, which the latter transferred to a brass plate about one-quarter of an inch thick by coating the plate with beeswax and laying the sketch on it, face downward. When the paper was removed the beeswax retained the marks of the lead pencil. He then began the tedious process of outlining it by hand with a graver and afterward finished it with a chisel.

But the exacting demands of modern artistic taste, the improvement of scientific methods and the pressure of competition have marked a complete transformation in the business of making dies for book covers. A few pencils and gravers, a vise bench, and a grindstone no longer make an engraving establishment. Colored sketches of most painstaking execution, accompanied by a working drawing in black and white, have taken the place of the old pencil sketch. These artistic productions, having passed the ordeal of critical examination, are handed over to the photographer, who, if he understands his part, does all that the beeswax did, and a good deal more. He takes the black-and-white drawing above referred to and reproduces it, in the size desired, directly on a brass plate covered with a sensitive coating, and then having prepared it with acid-proof preparations, he passes it over to the etcher.

The etcher in his turn, with unerring judgment in the strength of his acids, does what the most careful outliner could not accomplish; he produces a perfect facsimile of the original drawing, with all its artistic freedom. The process used is practically the same as the zinc etching process described in the chapter on half-tones and line plates. The plate, having been etched as deep as is safe, is then turned over to the router, whose business it is to cut out all the metal between ornaments and lettering to the proper depth. This done, the engraver, who in former years practically dug out the entire plate with his hand tools, comes in to give the finishing touches and correct any slight imperfection that may remain. It is of the utmost importance, of course, that the dies should be clear-cut and deep, to avoid clogging up in printing, particularly in the plates used for stamping in inks. The experienced and watchful engraver is expected to detect any spots where the etching process has not fully accomplished its purpose. Lettering, especially, should be cut clear, deep, and free from "feather," or ragged edges.

The above process applies to single plates or to plates intended for printing in one color only, or in gold. Where two or more colors are wanted, the
photographer has to make as many prints as there are colors in the artist’s design, as each one calls for a separate plate. The proceeding otherwise remains the same, excepting that to the engraver’s task is added the necessity of making sure of a perfect register or fitting together of the various parts.

The transformation in the demands of publishers and writers has become so great since the days of the primitive little shop above referred to, that a die cutter, working on those lines, would be hopelessly out of the race at the present day. In order to meet satisfactorily the artistic expectation of the present generation a first-class engraving establishment must have: an accomplished staff of artists, supplied with a library of standard authorities on the various schools of art, as well as a good selection of modern art publications; a skilled photographer with a complete photographic outfit, including, of course, a suitable gallery with the best obtainable light, both natural and artificial; and lastly a complete staff of routers and engravers, some of whom should be specialists in lettering, while others should devote their attention exclusively to figures.

Of all the elements that go to make book-cover decoration the lettering is by far the most important. It should receive special care, as in some cases it constitutes the entire decoration. In this itself even more strongly than in the matter of decorative ornamentation, and no amount of ornamentation, whatever its artistic value, can redeem a cover whose lettering is lacking in style, character, or typographical merit of some kind. Experience is such a good teacher that I can usually tell, by looking at a die, not only who designed the lettering, but also what workman engraved it.

Some dies are intended for stamping in gold or colored leaf and consequently have to be heated sufficiently to cause the leaf to adhere to the cloth cover, while others are meant simply for black stamping or stamping in ink of various colors; but all are engraved on brass for the sake of durability. Sometimes, where very large editions are expected, as of school books, steel is substituted for brass.

The die, when finished, is used by the binder in a stamping press. Color work calls for considerable skill on the part of the stamper, who should be an expert in mixing inks as the best-cut die will often show poor results if not properly handled. In fact, the success of a book cover depends on three individuals, — the artist who designs it, the engraver who cuts it, and the stamper who prints it.
A CHECK LIST OF AMERICAN DECORATED CLOTH BINDINGS, 1892-1915

Exhibited at the Book Club of California

October 6 to December 5, 1975

From the Collection of John A. Lehner

INTRODUCTION

The renaissance of American case binding design owed its inspiration to the work of several important English designers. As early as 1861, the Pre-Raphaelite painter, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, turned to case binding design with striking results (e.g., POEMS by Christina Rossetti). Other contributions include books by William Morris, Charles Ricketts and Laurence Housman. Their best efforts are characterized by the use of gold on smooth dark book cloths, with formal repeat patterns of stylized floral elements occurring most often.

During the 1890s at least three significant American designers turned their artistic talents to case binding design. They were Margaret Armstrong, Sarah Whitman, and an as yet unidentified house designer for Harper & Sons. Their early designs stand out from the typical Victorian clutter by their very simplicity. New book cloths were introduced during the nineties, as well as colorful inks and the use of silver colored (aluminum or tin) foils. A notable departure from the English decorative style was provided by Margaret Armstrong’s use of design motifs suggested by the books’ literary content (for example, her use of rope and lifesaver rings for Frank Stockton’s MRS. CLIFF’S YACHT).

During the mid-nineties, several publishing houses were formed by relatively young men with a sensitivity for current artistic and literary trends abroad. Publishers such as Stone & Kimball, Way & Williams, and Copeland & Day hired well known poster artists to design case bindings -- many of which covered both the front and back covers. These lavish designs probably spurred the larger New York publishing houses to commission more elaborate covers.

The work of the Decorative Designers (identified by their characteristic monogram, a D linked with a reversed D), founded in 1895, forms a large part of the Book Club exhibit for several reasons. The sheer quantity of their output, numbering in the thousands, demands attention; more importantly, however, the quality of their designs and the variety of the artistic styles employed accounts for their dominant position.

The primary designers who worked for the Decorative Designers were the founder of the firm, Henry Thayer, his wife, Lee Thayer, and Jay Chambers, father of Whitaker Chambers. Henry Thayer was responsible for most of the lettering. Mrs. Thayer usually executed the floral or other decorative elements, while Chambers did the figural work. Their designs can be classified in several
distinct categories of decorative style. In addition to the Art Nouveau style, well
represented in the exhibit, there is a silhouette style, in which the design is left
standing in book cloth with a background of stamped cloth. Sometimes the
background sky is two-toned, printed in a single run using the split-fount
technique. Formal repeat patterns were often done by Lee Thayer, while another
class of landscape designs may have been the work of C.B.Falls. Some books
appear as miniature posters with considerable graphic impact, while others
depend solely on ornamental lettering.

Another way to categorize the designs is by case area covered by the design and
metallic stamping techniques. Double-case designs, for example, in which the
front cover is repeated on the back, or a non-repeating design extends across the
spine and both covers, are one distinct classification. Another can be
differentiated according to the various ways gold and silver-colored foils are used
-- whether they be bright, matte or chased gold, or embossed gold.

The advent of dust jackets printed in the four-color screen process greatly
retarded the art of decorative cloth binding design after 1909, and the economic
hardships of the World War I era finished the job. Thereafter, only relatively
expensive travel books and some juveniles continued to appear into the 1920s.

KEY TO COVER DESCRIPTIONS

CLOTH TYPE (The first initials describing the exhibit list entry describe the type
of book cloth used:

- S = Smooth cloth, end-to-end weave
- VR = Vertically ribbed cloth
- DR = Diagonally ribbed cloth
- B = Coarse buckram

CLOTH COLOR (The second initials denote the color of the cloth; the prefixes
are: L (light shade); D (dark shade):

- R = Red + B = Blue + Y = Yellow + P = Purple + GR = Green
- O = Orange + BK = Black + BN = Brown + C = Cream +
- W = White + SM = Salmon + GY = Gray + T = Tan + RT = Rust
- PK = Pink + M = Maroon

(Split-fount printings are indicated by a dash between colors.)

DESIGN EXTENT (The third set of initials indicates the extent of the design on
the cloth case:

- F = Front cover only, with or without spine ornamentation.
- FS = Front cover and full spine design.
- FSBR = Front cover design, repeated on back cover.
- FSBN = Non-repeating design covering the entire case.
METALLIC STAMPINGS AND INKS (The fourth set of initials describes the inks and style of metallic foil stampings employed. The abbreviations for colors are as above. Foil treatments are as follows:

G = Gold
GC = Chased or matte gold
GE = Embossed gold
S = Silver-colored foils
SC = Silver, chased

EXAMPLES:

/ S / B / F / G,BK,C,SM /  
   Smooth cloth, end-to-end weave / blue / front cover only /  
   gold, black, cream, salmon /  
/ VR / GR / FS / S,W /  
   Vertically ribbed cloth / green / front cover and full spine  
   design / silver-colored foil, white /  
/ S / BK / F / G,O /  
   Smooth cloth / black / front cover only / gold, white /

REFERENCES


[Editor’s note: These exhibit notes were sent by John Lehner, and since he calls it “one of the best survey exhibits I’ve seen” (!); we were impelled to include it in the TBR for all to benefit. In the next issue will be the four page list of sixty-four items. Note his code system. In the next issue note his display choices, as they do give us a wide sampling of this period.]
Notes + Queries: Antrim

Mary Sawyer copied the cover of a delightful little book by Minna Thomas Antrim entitled: A mimic's calendar. Philadelphia: Altemus Co. [nd, 1905?] According to the title page the "Decorations [are] by the Decorative Designers." As her copy is incomplete, locating another copy would be helpful for xerographing the missing pages. Please contact TBR, if you can help.

The cover seems to be in the same style as two titles at CSUF:

Antrim, Minna Thomas. At the sign of the Golden Calf. Philadelphia: Altemus Co. [nd, c1905] CSUF #3

Antrim, Minna Thomas. Naked truths and veiled allusions. Philadelphia: Altemus Co. [nd, c1901] CSUF #4

The highly decorative ladies on the covers look to be decals or printed on maroon cloth, but have a stamping impression outline. There is gilt lettering and added decorative touches stamped separately. Would someone who has information on these covers comment about the process used.

Information in books cite Antrim as author of 1) The wisdom of the foolish and the folly of the wise. 2) Sweethearts and beaux. Both sound as if they are similar in content with sayings or maxims, like: "Nothing is easier to gain than a reputation for saying clever things, provided one has a retentive memory, and one's hearers have not."

Another title was found in the Herman collection entitled: A book of toasts. Philadelphia: Altemus Co. [nd, c1902] with a champagne quaffing gay 90s lady of similar style. Page 78: "To the Sixth Sense - May the right person say the right thing to the right person in the right way at the right time and in the right place."

Notes + Queries: Bird Addenda

At the last moment of putting this newsletter together, I noticed in the ads in the back of the Wheelwright [1896c1896] that Lamson, Wolfe + Co. also may have published in its Papyrus Series:

Stimson, F. J. (J.S. of Dale). King Noanett: A story of Old Virginia and the Massachusetts Bay. [Ready in May]

Parker, Gilbert. The pomp of the Lavilettes. [In preparation]

Maybe these titles have the same cover as the illustration on page five here?
Decorative Designers Serial Bibliography:  H

HABBERTON, John. *Budge and Toddle; or, Helen's babies at play*. New York: Grosset + Dunlap [nd,c1908] - Signed - Marks
HANCOCK, H. Irving. *Uncle Sam's boys in the ranks*. Philadelphia:Altemus [nd,c1910] (The Boys of the Army Series) - Unsigned - Ogle
HARRIS, Cora. *In search of a husband*. Garden City, New York:Doubleday, 1913. - Signed - Ohio
HARRIS, Cora. *In search of a husband.* New York: Grosset + Dunlap [nd, c1913] - Signed - CSUF #2468
HENTY, George Alfred. *In the heart of the Rockies.* New York: Scribner's, 1902 [c1894] - Signed - Ogle
HENTY, George Alfred. *In the heart of the Rockies: A story of adventure in Colorado.* New York: Scribner's Sons, 1903 [c1894] - Signed - CSUF #2471A (same cover as #2471, except for lettering)
HENTY, George Alfred. *Lion of St. Mark: A story of Venice in the fourteenth century.* New York: Mershon Co. [nd] - Unsigned - CSUF #3483A (same design as Henty: True to the old flag, but maroon w black + tan, gilt lettering on spine)
HENTY, George Alfred. Redskin and cow-boy: A tale of the Western plains. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1903 [c1891] - Signed - Marks + CSUF #2471 (cover: "Copyright 1902 by Charles Scribner's Sons")

HENTY, George Alfred. Through Russian snows: A story of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1902 [c1895] - Signed - CSUF #2471C (same cover as #2471, except for lettering)

HENTY, George Alfred. True to the old flag: A tale of the American war of Independence. Rahway, N.J.: Mershon Co. [nd] - Unsigned - CSUF #3483B (same design as Henty; Lion of St. Mark, but lite olive w bl+tan, gilt lettering on spine)


HERVEY, Harry. Where strange gods call: Pages out of the East. New York: Century Co. [nd, c1924] - Signed - UCLA (dust jacket same design) + CSUF #2473A (dark green cloth with gilt, orange, green + same dj) + #2473B (green cloth w bl + red) + Ogle

HEWLETT, Maurice. The ruinous face. New York: Harper + Bros, 1909 - Signed - Ogle ("Signed frontis, probably by Jay Chambers") + CSUF #2474 + Herman


HOBART, George V. See Hugh McHugh (pseud)


HOLMES, Mary J. The common lot. New York: Macmillan, 1905. - Signed


HOLMES, Mary J. Lucy Harding: A romance of Russia. New York: American
News Co [nd,c1905] - signed - CSUF #3469 ("Stitt" at base of spine) + Herman


HOPE, Anthony. Rupert of Hentzau. New York:Grosset + Dunlap [nd,c1897] - Unsigned - CSUF #2475B (same cover as #2475A)


Hughes, Rupert. The old west. New York:Century Co.,1912. - Signed - CSUF #2479 + Munzer + Ohio + Thing + Marks


Hume, Fergus. The yellow holly. New York:Dillingham Co. [nd,c1903] - Signed - CSUF #3870


Hutton, Baroness von [Hutten zum Stolzenberg, Betsey (Riddle) freifrau von]. Our Lady of the Beeches. Boston:Houghton Mifflin,1902 [c1902] - Signed - Barringer (1904) + Ohio + Ogle + UCLA (Lee Thayer) + CSUF #2483A (cover: Bettina von Hutten) + #2483B (10th impression, no date, cloth less fine)
