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The designing of book covers is a minor art, but since there is a constant demand for ornamented covers, the more taste and skill that can be devoted to the making of them, the better. When one looks back to the covers of fifteen years ago, one realizes what an advance has been made, and that the standard has been raised higher and higher, until at the present time many a famous illustrator or decorative painter occasionally turns his or her hand to the designing of book covers. - Amy Richards (1906)

(The full article by Ms. Richards will be reprinted soon.)
A new collection of 19th and 20th-century clothbound books has been installed at the University of Virginia, in the glass-fronted bookcases in the Dome Room of the Rotunda. The books are part of the collections of the Book Arts Press, which is moving to the University with the appointment of Terry Belanger as University Professor and Honorary Curator of Special Collections. Belanger currently heads the rare book program of the Columbia University School of Library Service.

Designed by Thomas Jefferson and built in the 1820s, the Rotunda is the principal building of the University of Virginia; the Dome Room, largest room in the building, was used as the library of the University until the opening of the Alderman Library in 1938.

Most libraries arrange their books according to subject or alphabetically by author; but the new Dome Room books are arranged in several series in chronological order, so as to show the development of the history of cloth bookbinding styles. Most of the several thousand books on display are shown spine outwards, but a changing display of the front covers of about a hundred books will also be on view at any one time. The collection includes runs of American and British cloth bindings, both plain and elaborate.

The clothbound books in the Dome Room are the tip of a much larger iceberg; Belanger notes that the Book Arts Press collection contains four copies of the 1911 edition of Harold Bell Wright’s novel, That Printer of Udell’s, six copies of Henry Seton Merriman’s The Vultures (1902), and 29 copies of the first (1867) edition of Whittier’s The Tent on the Beach. Most of the duplicates will be kept in the Book Arts Press in Alderman, where they will be used by classes both during the school year and in the summer institute, Rare Book School, which moves to U.Va. in 1993. “Many of these duplicates are less alike that you might think,” says Belanger, “which is what makes them so interesting to study as physical objects.”

Jefferson designed the Dome Room of the Rotunda as a multi-purpose space, though its primary purpose was to house the University Library. Shortly after the 1973-76 restoration of the Rotunda, the shelves in the glass-fronted bookcases behind the Dome Room’s Composite columns were filled with a miscellaneous collection of seldom-used (and rather ugly) library books. “The Book Arts Press cloth binding collections make the room more cheerful,” says Belanger, “and their location in the Dome Room turns an under-exploited space into a useful one.” The books will remain on permanent display in the Dome Room as part of the expanding programs in the history of the book of the University.

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Trade Cloth Book Bindings: An Overview

(The following was written for the 1979 exhibit I put together at the Library, California State University, Fullerton. It has been changed only in that the item references are dropped. Since this is only a recut of the work of others, more scholarly, detailed, or better articles are requested for future issues of the Newsletter. A separate publication of pamphlet length would be a possibility to help introduce trade bindings to others. Linda)

The binding of book sheets, leaves or pages with some form of covering probably began in the fifty century A.D. Wood, animal skin or metal were early forms of overwear for these, so few, tomes of the written word. Leather quickly became the most popular covering and remained the basic choice until the early nineteenth century. Each book binding was hand created and could vary from a quite simple to a vastly elaborate and costly effort. Important restrictions were the length of time needed to complete each job, the skill of the artisan, and the price of the work and supplies.

In the early nineteenth century a need developed to create inventions and techniques to bind many books, as quickly as possible, by machine. This need was due to the demands of the large and increasingly affluent middle class -- particularly in England -- as a result of the Industrial Revolution. Acquiring reading matter, or flirting with book collecting, was becoming commonplace for the common man, and he wanted books faster than they could be then produced.

The list of inventions and techniques which developed, step-by-step, plot this extraordinary segment of book binding history. It begins with the successful change from plain cloth in hand book binding to a prepared or sized cloth, which was workable and durable. This meant cloth binding was now a practical answer. The change, occurring in the middle 1820s in England, was followed in the 1830s by the invention of a machine able to case sewn sheets (pages) into this cloth covering. These early bindings were simple, modestly decorated, if at all, with blind (uncolored) graining or texturing.

At this time America was supplying raw cotton to England, and England was supplying book cloth to America. Covers from the two countries were quite similar, if not interchangeable. Inventions and developments seemed to ship back and forth across the Atlantic. Other countries were slow or reluctant to develop book binding along these lines. Germany excelled in mechanical ideas and took to the use of cloth, but got bogged down with the most basic of linear designs and decorations. France preferred the paper cover, mainly; but those cloth coverings that were issued had a definite artistic statement. Spain and Italy, without the intense pressures to mechanize continued the tradition of hand work.

During this early boom period of book publication, book covers became the main graphic selling feature to capture the interest of the buying public. Decoration was more and more planned and sophisticated. Along with the technique breakthrough of successful gold application to cloth in 1832, increasingly complex blind embossing and gilt designing were possible. These embossed cover patterns were due to the invention of stamping press machinery.
Engraved brass dies (or plates) were refined, and the technique reached its highest point in the 1850s and 1860s.

In 1845 the use of black as a second color element (other than gold) was perfected for book cover decoration. In the 1870s, as the techniques were further refined, other colors were added. Prior to this cloth color onlaying was the main method to add brightness to the blind, gilt and black decorations. The elements were all together by this time to create the famous Victorian bindings of the 1860-1880s. This period, typified by the formality, charm and over-detail of the age, was also noted for the refining (and overrefining) of design and materials. Such experimentations as sunken lacquer panels, printed graining, and other touches were possible. In this period, also after 1874, book decorators began to be employed, as such, by book publishers; thusly setting the importance of the decorated cover on a commercial level.

During the 1890s there developed new artistic concepts in book decoration. Basic and tastefully sound, the Golden Age brought a new awareness of the importance of a high standard of design and production to book binding. Technical limitations were no longer deciding the finished product. In this period, at the turn of the century, were featured artistic guidelines influencing mass production and commercial interests. Leading English artists such as William Morris, Aubrey Beardsley, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Charles Ricketts, and Walter Crane were involved in the new interrelationship of design and its extension in book production. American artists, designers, and decorators, also, contributed much to this artistic advancement. The Golden Age, roughly 1895 to 1915, was the culmination of over seventy years of dialectic progress in cover developments to keep ahead of the demands and costs of mass producing reading matter.

Paper dust jackets (or wrappers) were used increasingly in place of decorated covers after 1908, largely because of economic pressures; and by 1915, to all extents and purposes, the main thrust of decorated cloth was historical. In 1939 the paperback gained a firm footing, and even plain cloth covers were challenged.

**America's Golden Age (1895-1915)**

Trade cloth book binding in the United States, although mainly influenced by English techniques, methods, and artistic concepts, began to make its own statement just before the turn of the century. The large publishing houses like Scribner -- Century -- Appleton -- Dodd, Mead -- Doubleday -- Houghton Mifflin -- and Macmillan, all saw the advantages of hiring professional artists to design illustrations, covers, end-papers, and page decorations to enhance the appeal of their products. The book publishing business had mushroomed and competition was fierce. More and more titles were being offered to the buying public. Fiction, particularly, demanded the sales help of attractive, eye-catching decoration, design and gimmicks. Reprints further complicated the market.

Book illustration has already been researched extensively from the art approach, and is worthy of a separate dissertation and exhibition at a latter date; so the less studied areas of cover design, end-papers and page decorations will be stressed in the following examples.
End-paper and page decorations were usually, as the cover design, done by a different artist or artists than the one hired for the book's illustrations. If these added touches of internal detail were included, there generally was a special need -- maybe for a Christmas gift dressing, or to lengthen a short text, or to create an "art" feeling. One more touch to help the book find its way onto the public's living room bookcase.

Before the Golden Age many cover designs were taken from a stock pattern book. As quality was heightened, designs came from the text, from illustrations purchased for the book, and from individual publishing house and hired designer talents. By the more advanced period, cover designers and decorators had achieved an established place and many bindings were signed. That is, the artist put his name, initials, or monogram on the cover. Recognition was now established as a consideration at a consideration -- the rate was sometimes as much as $25. per cover decoration.

Important American names were beginning to do their own influencing, along side their English peers: Margaret Armstrong, Frank Hazenplug, Will Bradley, and the company of Decorative Designers were among many pouring out designs and artistic design innovations. Mrs. Gullans and Espey surmise in their essay on Decorative Designers that in the period of 1890 to 1915 there were thirty noted American designers and over 250 others at work and responsible for thousands of cover decorations.

Charles Dawson, book decorator, humorously gives us insight into the color of his world when he talks about book cover colors: "For ordinary cloth-covered novels, four printings are, as a rule, the limit, but the artist who can scheme out a colour combination to secure the effect of three or four printings by only two workings, is likely to win the grateful affection of the publisher and an occasional lunch."

In the Grolier exhibit of 1894 were cited these following basic considerations in cover design: Besides the usual elements of good design, the relationship of the color of the cloth and the general character of the book, the inks, and the dyes were important. Lettering, also, was basic, and gilding was always acceptable. The design had to be practical and cost was always a factor.

Artistic styles of this period are currently receiving renewed attention; and the mention of Art Nouveau (Jugendstil), Art Deco, Arts + Crafts, Aesthetic, japonisme, and others can send cognitive signals to the viewer without much further explanation. Examples will illustrate major influences; but there is great difficulty in clean demarcations, as most book decoration seems a mixture of influences, styles, and ideas pragmatically brought together to satisfy a myriad of book publishing criteria.

An appealing cop-out is to follow the suggestions of English-woman Esther Wood writing in the Special Winter number 1899-1900 of The Studio: "The treatment of a cover-design -- or, as our American friends aptly call it, a "cover-stamp", this clearly marking it off from tooled work -- seems to fall naturally into three methods. It may be symbolic, suggesting in imagery the subject and spirit of the book, or it may verge on the pictorial, and point the contents in an illustrative manner, or it may seek pure decoration, and concern itself only with the beautifying of a given space......"
Dust wrappers, of course, have been around for hundreds of years and printed ones from the 19th century. But, after 1908, when it was realized that they were a much cheaper way of doing for the book, what the decorated cover did, and more; they became an important part of the book. Today a Modern First -- first edition of a popular, current author -- is not complete without the dust jacket, as issued. Indeed, it can mean hundreds of dollars to a collector of specific authors, when acquiring an out-of-print title.

(I was thinking as I retyped the above that a separate publication of a short history with illustrations would be a good project for someone doing a master's thesis or for someone talented in obtaining grants. In fact several Newsletter readers might like to work through this network to put something together. Please muse about it.)

Notes + Queries: Newsletter

If anyone has pages missing, please note and the editors will send copies immediately.

N + Q: Preservation

"Buy some 3 mil Mylar and cut 'dust wrappers' for your bindings. It has a memory, so it must be creased where it folds in - but it is nearly indestructible and safe for the long term." - John Lehner (Editors note: Other types of plastic may be unstable and after time and acid build-up may discolor or damage binding through acid migration. Buy good quality supplies from: Brodart, Highsmith, Light Impressions, University Products, or the like.)

N + Q: Grolier

Martin Antonetti, librarian of the Grolier Club, writes that their publication Commercial bookbindings: an historical sketch (1894) is still available at $25. (47 East 60th Street New York, New York 10022) (Editors note: highly recommended for reference collection.)

N + Q: Illustrators

John Lehner responds: "Best bet is to assume cover is NOT done by illustrator. What few exceptions I've seen can be: a) an illustrator who signs illustrations with a monogram, does the cover, and uses it (the monogram) again on the cover. An example is Walter King Stone whose monogram was indecipherable on flowers every child should know, but became known through a book he illustrated. b) a well known cover designer like Amy Sacker, who occasionally illustrated a book, Antonnia is an example. Guessing is sure to be disappointing in long run!"

N + Q: Project

Here's an idea: get a grant to travel to several good collections of trade bindings to photograph for laser disc publication. Market disc of basic introduction to binding design.


CARPENTER, Frank G. Australia, New Zealand and some islands of the South Seas: Australia, New Zealand, Thursday Island, the Samoas, New Guinea, the Fijis, and the Tongas. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page + Co., 1924 (c1924) - DD - CSUF #2553


CARPENTER, Frank G. Canada and Newfoundland. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page, 1924 (c1924) - DD - CSUF #2564 + Ogle coll. (Lee Thayer)


CARPENTER, Frank G. The Holy Land and Syria. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page, 1922 - DD - Gullans UCLA (Carpenter's World Travels = "Mrs. Thayer designed the whole series.")

CARPENTER, Frank G. Lands of the Andes and the desert. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page + Co., 1924 (c1924) - DD - CSUF #2566

CARPENTER, Frank G. Lands of the Caribbean. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page + Co., 1925 (c1925) - DD - CSUF #2567


CASTLEMON, Harry. Frank on a gun-boat. New York: Hurst + Co. (nd) - DD

CASTLEMON, Harry. Frank the young naturalist. New York: Hurst + Co. (nd) - DD - CSUF #2416

CATHERWOOD, Mary Hartwell. The days of Jeanne d'Arc. New York: Century Co., 1897 - DD - CSUF #2417


CHANCE, Lulu Maude. Little folks of many lands. New York: Ginn (nd, c1904) - ? - PAQ (Jay Chambers)


CHAPMAN, Allen. Ralph of the roundhouse; or, Bound to become a railroad man. New York: Grosset + Dunlap (nd, c1906 by The Mershon Co.) - DD - CSUF #3794 (Series cover on these three same except for lettering.)

CHAPMAN, Allen. Ralph on the army train; or, The young railroad engineer's most daring exploit. New York: Grosset + Dunlap (nd, c1916 by Grosset + Dunlap) - DD - CSUF #3473

CHAPMAN, Allen. Ralph on the Overland Express; or, The trials and triumphs of a young engineer. New York: Grosset + Dunlap (nd, c1910 by Grosset + Dunlap) - DD - CSUF #3474


CHARLES, Frances. The awakening of the duchess. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1903 (c1903) - DD - Gullans UCLA (Jay Chambers) with dj + Ogle coll. + CSUF #2418

CHRISTIE, Nimmo. The black chanter and other Highland stories. New York: Macmillan Co., 1903. - CSUF #2419 B signed + CSUF #2419 A unsigned adaptation


CHURCHILL, Winston. The crisis. New York: Grosset + Dunlap (nd, c1901) - DD (part of cover design with two tulips + stems entwined) - CSUF #2420


CLARK, Henry Scott. The Legionaires. Indianapolis: Bowen-Merrill, 1899 (2d) - Unsigned - Ogle coll.

CLARK, Imogen. Old days and old ways. New York: Crowell, 1925. - DD - Ogle coll. (with signed dj)


COFFIN, Charles Carleton, 1823-1896. Following the flag from August 1861 to November 1862 with the Army of the Potomac. New York: Hurst + Co. (nd, c1865?) - DD - CSUF #2533A (stock cover with two boys standing with sports equipment)

COLLINS, A. Frederick. Wonders of chemistry. New York: Crowell Co. (nd, c1922) - DD - CSUF #3997


COMRE, Margaret S. A loyal Huguenot maid. New York: Jacobs (nd, c1902) - ? - PAQ (Lee Thayer?)


In the Spring 1992 (#4) issue will be two articles of interest and value:

Identification points for early Decorative Designer bindings
by John A. Lehner

Diagnostic characteristics of trade bindings by the Decorative Designers by David B. Ogle

See attached form for information on how to obtain the next TBR Newsletter.
Notes + Queries: Received

Sincere thanks go to Ida Glover, Bookseller (25 Spring St. Cambridge, New York 12816) for sending a copy of Laurie Crichton's *Book decoration in America 1890-1910* to the TBR reference shelf. (Wayne Hammond, Chapin Library, Williams College, mentioned that it is now out-of-print with no plans for reprinting.)

Catalog #9 (The Turn of the Century Pt.3) from Thomas G. Boss Fine Books (355 Boylston St. 2nd floor Boston, MA 02116 - (617) 421-1880 + FAX (617) 536-7072). It has 240 pages and several illus. of covers in b + wh.

Catalog #1 (Decorative Covers) from Gordon + Gordon Booksellers (Anne + Louis Gordon) (P O Box 128 West Park, New York 12493 - (914) 384-6361). It lists 91 items.

Catalog #10 from Winifred Tillotson, Old Books 215 Hunt Drive Fayetteville, New York 13066 - (315) 637-3955. Arranged by designer it lists 42 items.

Note from Thomas Beckman (817 N. Monroe St. Wilmington, DE 19801) re buy/sell/trade, with an especial interest in GWE including illustrations, posters, bookplate designs, oil + watercolor paintings, etc. (Editors note: Home addresses will be included only when requested by the individual.)

N + Q: Mosher

Jean-Francois Vilain requests information on sources of T.B. Mosher's covers. He and Phil Bishop are working on a centenary exhibit of this bookman from Portland, ME. There might be English bindings which inspired the American covers and any relationship or leads are of interest. (Write to him c/o F.A. Davis Co./Publishers 1915 Arch St. Philadelphia, PA 19103 - (215) 568-2270 + FAX (215) 568-5065).

N + Q: Feely

A study by Sue Allen on "Book-cover stamps engraved by John Feely, 1842-1877" will be included in the Fall 1991 publication from William Andrews Clark Memorial Library (UCLA) entitled: *Decorated cloth in America: publishers' bindings, 1840-1910*. (Editors note: more information on this publication as we get it.)

N + Q: Butterflies

One of the more common motifs or design elements of the decorated binding was the butterfly or moth. Lowell Thing would appreciate learning of interesting or exceptional covers (other than MA's well-known *A weaver of dreams*) containing butterflies for a possible future article or at least a short bibliography. (He would also like to receive price quotes for such books offered by dealers. Please call him evenings at (914) 331-4985 or send copy to TBR for forwarding.)
THOMAS MAITLAND CLELAND: GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Cynthia Bruns

Thomas Maitland Cleland was born in Brooklyn, New York in August of 1880. As a small boy, Cleland was educated in public schools where he performed indifferently due to his lack of interest in school. He attended the Art Institute on West 23rd street until the age of 16 when his formal schooling ended. Very shortly he was drawn into the world of printing and found something which for the first time fascinated him. Cleland threw himself into what would become his life's work with great zeal. He designed type, type ornaments, illustrated books, book bindings, published advertising pamphlets, and any other sort of free lance work in the field of printing. It was during these years that he enrolled in the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. Though he never worked in the theater, the influence of pageantry and dramatic placement can be seen in his work.

In 1900 he established the Cornhill Press which produced only for a few years. It was a labor of love rather than a financial success. In 1904 he went abroad for the first time and greatly influenced by the architecture, painting and ornaments of Europe, primarily Italy and France. The influence of 18th century motifs from these two countries can be seen in his work. In 1905 he married Elinor Lane Woodruff. From 1906-1908 he was art editor to McClure's Magazine. He developed a rich distinctive artistic style characterized by careful and exacting execution. Cleland explored printing of half tones with pen and ink techniques to make up for the loss of color when reproducing 17th century and 18th century copperplate engravings for the magazine. It was an innovation in the magazine printing business and would become much copied.

After returning home from service in World War I, Cleland published a small book explaining the Munsell theory of color, The Grammar of Color. He wrote the text for the book and did all diagrams and illustrations. The book is an example of his devotion for quality printing. It is also very readable and could be just as useful to a student today as when it was written. The text is written in a clear and concise manner and the diagrams carefully explain the theory.

It was at this time that he established his own press again, as a response to his dissatisfaction with supervising the work of other print shops. Cleland was forever impatient with the failing and shortcoming of the print shops that he had to work with. Working now in his own print shop he produced a wide variety of print and design work ranging from a series for the Strathmore Paper Company, to posters, catalogs, almanacs, calendars, advertisements and the like. He established a his well-earned
reputation for quality work at all times. Eventually, Cleland's work became in great demand. He gave up the printing end of the business as the demands for his design work became more intense. In the late 1920's his work became increasingly pictorial as he moved away from purely ornamental design work.

In 1929 Cleland's work was the subject of a volume entitled The Decorative Work of T.M. Cleland. The work illustrated the wide variety of materials that Cleland's work had been used for but just as clearly illustrated his love of quality and exacting design. The books contains a foreword written by his friend and colleague, Alfred E. Hamill. It contains a brief description of Cleland's life and some discussion on his work. The book is also a fascinating depiction of quality graphics of the period.

In 1940 Cleland received the Gold Medal from the AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Artists) at their annual opening of the "Fifty Book of the Year" exhibit. It has here that he stirred up a worthwhile controversy with his address entitled, "Harsh Words." In this speech Cleland rails against the low quality of book design and printing. He also attacks innovation for the sake of doing something unusual just to be considered "modern." As he says in his speech, "One wonders if any standards at all would survive the flood of cheap and easy mechanization, careless workmanship and bad taste." (page 40) These are certainly words that could be spoken today and I think he would be just as disturbed in the state of the graphics and printing that is produced today as he was in 1940.

Cleland designed book covers throughout much of his career. I have seem his covers dated as early as 1892 and as late as 1935. A significant number of his covers are dated 1906-07 when he produced a number of book covers for McClure, Phillips, and Company. His work can be easily recognized by the simple monogram of "C." The monogram is at times placed in the lower left hand corner of the book design but also watch for it in the middle of the design, lower half. The monogram is at time almost incorporated into the design so it can take a sharp eye to spot the "C." Cleland was very demanding of others in the quality of work produced and he was just as demanding of himself. The design work for the book covers he must have looked upon as routine, as his life's work was in the design of commercial pieces. However, his work shows a pattern of quality and also quite a bit of variety. The themes within his book covers range from landscapes, to illustrations, to rich decorative designs reminiscent of the Italian Renaissance. In looking over the work that Cleland did and his writings, I have come to the conclusion that we could use more people with Cleland's impatience with shoddy work and with his demand for quality and lasting competence in the publishing field.

Sources Consulted:


Bibliography of Book Covers:


6) Curwood, James Oliver. The County Beyond: A Romance of the Wilderness. New York: Grosset and Dunlap Publishers, 1922. Signed C - CSUF #1276

7) Ford Paul Leicester. A Warning to Lovers and Sauce for the Goose is Sauce for the Gander. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1907. Signed C - CSUF #1635 (all inner pages decorated by Cleland with four different designs)

8) Hough, Emerson. 54-40 or Fight. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1909 Signed C - CSUF #1375 and #1375A


**THE MARGARET ARMSTRONG CORNER**

As I write this column, we have not received the before mentioned and long awaited, *Margaret Armstrong and American Trade Bindings* by Charles Gullens and John Espey. This is not disparagement but rather curiosity and anticipation as we look forward to what promises to be an interesting bibliography. As soon as our many Margaret Armstrong collectors receive their copy I would like to hear from you with your opinions and comments on this research tool for inclusion into an upcoming issue of this column.

Cynthia Bruns

******************************************************************************

From: David Margolis
Margolis and Moss
Fine Books, Prints,
Photographs and Ephemera
P.O. Box 2042
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504

This is a copy of Helen Maitland Armstrong's 1903 bookplate. Do any of your readers have or know of any Margaret Armstrong bookplates? My guess is that she created some, but I do not remember seeing any.

We presently have about 20-25 Margaret Armstrong bindings in stock. If any readers are interested, we will gladly send them a listing.

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Hamilton Fish Armstrong, the younger brother of Margaret Armstrong, wrote an especially nostalgic book on his youth. The book, *Those Days*, is written in golden glow of childhood memories as he reminisces on his youth, his family, and all the adventures of being young at the turn of the century in New York. The book is especially interesting for the background on the Armstrong family. They were an wealthy and rather eccentric New York family with roots back to the revolution. In the book the author tells how Margaret got started in designing book covers at the age of 16 and eventually developed a diverse career that spanned fifty years in the field of art and also as an author. The book is a pleasure to read and should be of interest to the Margaret Armstrong collector.
Describing an item for sale or listing for other purposes is still very much an individual problem. Pricing, too. A set of standards for color, condition, design category, design description, etc. is very much needed.

There will always be a problem, in my opinion, with pricing when the supply and demand concept is applied without an in-depth knowledge of what is actually or potentially available. Fair mark-ups are always understood (but not always liked) by the intelligent buying public. Dealers are in business and it is important to keep the good ones solvent. (I worked in a rare book shop in Beverly Hills for several years, and know what librarians and collectors owe to good dealers.) More knowledge of publication runs, designer output, and such will help here; but it will take years.

The physical standards we can start on right now. Please send me input on how color should be described. Are there existing charts for sale + available to everyone which can be used? Do stamp collectors have some answers? Can we create a basic list without recourse to seeing a chart?

Also condition descriptions should be standardized. Please send notes of damages + oddities which keep a cover from being "mint", and we can at least pull together and publish a list of known problems. Bad, fair, good, mint is just the starting position.

I have used the 1899-1900 categories noted in the articles in The Studio as a means of classifying my own collection: symbolic (suggesting in imagery the spirit of the book); pictorial (point the contents in an illustrative manner), and decoration (concerns itself only with the beautifying of a given space). These really do not cover the possibilities, or actually describe the cover. Are any of you using a basic formula which can be shared?

Lowell Thing sent a listing of his library which has added to the basic information of author, title, imprint (place, publisher, date of issue) a short description of the image on the cover. It does add an extra touch of value. If he has guidelines or an overall classification for his notes, they would be the sort of thing to build standards. Down the road what will be needed to help sort through variations problems, design modifications, color changes? We will need to know what to look for, and what questions to ask. How do we start to get on top of controlling these details?

George Barringer got the ball rolling on the above with this paragraph from a recent letter: "It would be worth the effort, I think, to start even at this early date to establish standards for description. In the period most dear to our hearts (1825-1875) we need to fret over the vagaries of embossed cloth; towards the turn of the century color becomes more of an issue, and perhaps the Centroid system could help all of us communicate more understandably--too many dealers have sold me a lovely "green" book that was "blue" to me. Too bad for the color blind, it says here."

I agree wholeheartedly George, except everyone knows that the 1896-1916 period is of more interest. (Ecce signum!) Your ideas on a data base are also of much interest and will be explored in 1992, when I have courage to send my 70 point description chart out to the lions. (Linda)
Worldwide technical developments 1795-1825 leading to trade binding. Notes first illustrated publisher's binding (precasing machine) in America in 1795.

Pamphlet (53 pages) with three color microfiche of Victorian bindings 1825-1900.

"An excellent publication; much heretofore unknown data on cover designers." - Tom Beckman

Considers American 19th century gift books and annuals.

American books in paper covers from an 1895 perspective.

Early American scene. Edited by Lehmann Hellmut-Haupt.

British binding technology re 1910.

Profiles American all-over patterns on 19th century bindings.

General commentary with specific American typographers and printers viewed in perspective with William Morris. A few covers are discussed.

Important work. "Ken Leach, who contributed most of the bindings described by Wolf, also put together a great collection of early dust wrappers." - Gene Freeman