

IMLS Grant Award No. LG-03-03-0044-03
Publishers' Bindings Online, 1815-1930: The Art of Books

Report 2: April 1 – September 30, 2004

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Project Overview

On September 23, 2003, the Institute of Museum and Library Services announced the 2003 recipients of the IMLS National Leadership Grants.

Publishers' Bindings Online, 1815-1930: The Art of Books (PBOnline) is a comprehensive project which will provide end users with a valuable and highly searchable database of up to 5000 books and up to 10000 images with rich metadata and a rich cache of value-added materials. This resource will encourage both individuals and repositories to use this as a tool to gain a better understanding of the books in their collections, and to develop a knowledge base relating to design movements and publishing trends in American book publishing and book design in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The project will provide end users with a collection of materials that not only provide an understanding of what was being read but will also illustrate the importance of the book as an *object* and will provide additional insight into America's first century, both in the realms of history and culture and in the areas of graphic and industrial design. The bindings themselves provide a forum for the study of the development of a distinctive American style and the movement from America looking abroad for inspiration, to Europe looking towards America for ideas and imagery.

Overview of April 1-September 30, 2004

Following the successful initiation of the project with a visit in December of 2003 by members of the UW-Madison team to Tuscaloosa, a test bed project was developed and executed as a method of understanding the entire project process. Work on the project was initiated immediately, beginning with email and telephone contact between The University of Alabama Libraries (UA) and the University of Wisconsin Libraries (UW).

In the period of April 1-September 30, 2004, all participants have been working diligently on several aspects of the project. We are currently in full production mode, developing a well-populated database of rich metadata and images. After completing the first year of the project, we are looking ahead towards the additional deliverables and goals of the project, and providing a first version of the publicly accessible database for use and comment by the general public and targeted audiences by March 1, 2005. User studies and database review has been initiated and a directed test of the end product will be held from January 1, 2005 – February 28, 2005.

The following numbers document what has been accomplished as of September 30, 2004 – these reflect totals from both UA and UW-Madison:

- 2421 items (books) selected and described
- 2747 digital files have been created from 996 books
- 1219 metadata records have been created

Participants:

The key participants are listed on the credits page on the project website at <http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/credits.htm> Amy Rudersdorf has taken the position of co-coordinator at UW-Madison for Lee Konrad, who has assumed new duties.

In addition to the six experts on the PBO advisory committee (see IMLS report one and credits page, <http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/credits.htm>), three new advisors have been added to the project. Each of these faculty members will add to the project by serving as advisors relating to pedagogical developments and end user issues.

- **Dr. Jean Lee**, Department of History, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- **Dr. Micki McElya**, Department of American Studies, The University of Alabama
- **Dr. Edward Tang**, Department of American Studies, The University of Alabama

Communication

Email Distribution Lists: The working group continues to make excellent use of the email distribution lists to facilitate discussion and to share documents between the two institutions and with the advisory committee.

Private, Password Protected Site: The private, password protected site, bindings.lib.ua.edu/private/ (user id: working; password: group) continues to serve as a gateway to components of the project as we move well past our initial test phase, including a ***Project Manual*** (<http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/private/bindingsmanualindex.htm>) which features information, documents, links, and guides for all aspects of the project, including the grant narrative, links to forms, information on metadata standards and a link to the metadata input database, editorial resources, descriptive resources such as the variations in color (see appendix A) and identifying grain patterns (see appendix B), digitization standards used, file naming structure, workflow information, quality control information and administrative forms. This is a growing manual and will be an asset to future projects in aiding in the creation of a body of materials to create continuity and communication within a project.

Bindings Email Address: An email account bindings@ua.edu has been established. This will allow end users and other interested parties to contact the project participants to ask questions, provide feedback, and give additional information. The account will be monitored continually by the project manager. Other parties, such as the co-PIs and the co-coordinators at UW-Madison will have access to the email account, as well as others as needed. An archive of all questions and responses will be kept. In addition to providing the email address on the website and as part of the publicity for the project, a web form will be made available that will allow for anonymous feedback.

Travel

In July 2004, the UW-Madison Libraries sponsored the attendance of Barbara Walden, project co-coordinator and selector, at UVA's *Rare Books School* class on American Publishers' Bindings taught by PBO advisory committee person and foremost expert on publishers' bindings, Sue Allen. During the class, Barbara Walden gave a brief presentation about the Project, which was received with great enthusiasm and interest from librarians and book enthusiasts from around the US and overseas.

Jessica Lacher-Feldman, along with bindings project graduate students Kristy Dixon and Eileen Verchot, gave a presentation to the Society of Alabama Archivists' annual meeting in Montgomery, Alabama.

Selection

UA: From April 1 through September 30, 2004, 1391 books were selected and 1301 books were described using the established PBO selection form. This form has served to not only streamline our efforts but to also unify the process between both institutions (See appendix c for links to bindings forms PDFs available at project manual site).

The first 800 of the books in this batch were selected from the *Wade Hall Collection of Southern History and Culture* housed at the W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library. The Wade Hall Collection has a strong emphasis on books about the South and books written by Southern authors. Many of the books selected from this collection are late 19th and early 20th century Southern fiction. Additionally, a large portion of the books selected for inclusion by the end of September 2004 were from the W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library's *Alabama Collection*, which is much broader in scope relative to genre. Mid-nineteenth century books predominate in the selection, and most covers are decorative rather than narrative. As a result, the almost 1400 books selected and described within this six-month period at the University of Alabama have a wide variety of cover decorations, cloth grain patterns, endpapers, and edge treatments and are representative not only of the books within the University of Alabama's collections, but of 19th and early 20th century American publishing, including most major publishing houses in the Eastern, Mid-Western, and Southern United States, including New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, New Orleans, and Mobile. Additionally, Jessica Lacher-Feldman has been working with members of the University of Alabama Libraries' circulation staff to aid in the identification of rare and interesting 19th and early 20th century bindings from the circulating libraries on campus (Gorgas, Rogers, Bruno, and McClure) to be included in the project.

UW-Madison: Over the summer of 2004, UW-Madison completed the identification and selection of the items which it will contribute to the first phase of the database. In addition to works of Stowe, Alcott, Jewett, and Dickinson identified and selected earlier, gift and commemorative books, Bibles and prayer books, Scandinavian-American imprints, German-American imprints, books by known designers where a bibliography of their bindings exists (Margaret Armstrong, John Feely, Will Bradley), miscellaneous important binding examples, and relevant materials in rare book collections in the Wisconsin Historical Society, Ebling History of Medicine, and Steenbock Library were identified. Once identified, all items were individually examined for selection for the project.

Sixty-five Scandinavian-American imprints and 200 German-American imprints have been selected for inclusion. Depending upon decisions about the future direction of the database, UW-Madison could potentially contribute additional materials in both of these categories, as well as many additional materials in other categories. Currently, the selector for the project, Barbara Walden, is working with the campus libraries whose rare book holdings have been selected for the project, in order to coordinate transport, metadata creation and digitization in ways that cause the least disruption to these materials.

Metadata

As the project went beyond the test phase, the metadata was completed using the first sample selection/metadata form developed by the PBO working group. UA's metadata coordinator, Mary Alexander, and UW-Madison's metadata coordinator Amy Rudersdorf established the Dublin Core elements to be used for the project. UW-Madison developed the web interface to accept the entry of metadata records. This interface was developed by Tom Durkin, using FileMakerPro. The web interface allows for direct communication with regard to metadata development between UA and UW-Madison and upon entry is readily viewable by all appropriate parties.

The web-based metadata entry description form (see appendix d) facilitates smooth transition from initial selection and description by the subject specialists to the metadata development by the metadata coordinators.

Website

In order to establish exposure for the project and its mission and goals, a public website with a static URL was established within the first three months of the project. That URL, bindings.lib.ua.edu provides a gateway to the project itself, and will grow along with the project. Additional information, along with an attractive and memorable front end is being developed with an appropriate logo, branding, and important and useful information for our end users. The private, password protected website bindings.lib.ua.edu/private/ serves as a gateway to components of the project including the glossary, bib/webliography, and a comprehensive project manual that provides valuable information to all project participants.

Project Database

The SiteSearch database is available at <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/PBO>. This URL has not been distributed beyond project participants at this point. A link will be made available from bindings.lib.ua.edu by March 1, 2005. As of September 30, 2004, the end of the second six month IMLS funding period, the database currently contains 1293 records and 234 images (72 of the records currently have images) total in the database with approximately half of the content contributed by each repository (The University of Alabama and the University of Wisconsin-Madison).

UW-Madison has been preparing an enhanced SiteSearch interface design for the PBO database. The new interface design will allow users of the PBO database to easily navigate and view the multiple images scanned for a single book. The end product is a very attractive as well as organized and user friendly method for attaching multiple images to a book's single database record. We are working on making changes to the interface and the metadata, and expect to be done with this work by the start of 2005.

Value-Added Components

UA continues to build a collection of published materials on 19th century bindings, including articles and books. This resource is to be used in the development of the project and its value-added components including a glossary, a growing controlled vocabulary of decorative elements and historical/cultural topics and themes, and a growing web/bibliography. Plans are underway for the development of focus groups to aid in the development of teaching tools and additional value-added components.

Publicity and Promotion

Presentations :

- The project has been reported in formal presentations to the Society of Alabama Archivists.
- A paper has been accepted on the project at American Historical Association Annual Meeting in January, 2005.
- A presentation on the PBOonline is scheduled for November of 2004 for the Tuscaloosa, Alabama St. Andrew's Society.
- Plans are being made to develop a full panel presentation for members of UW-Madison and UA at the annual meeting of the American Association for History and Computing, to be held in April of 2005 in Chicago, IL.

Articles and Print Publicity:

-At UW-Madison, an article on the PBO project is included in the May 2004 Friends of the Library Newsletter.

-A brief article on the PBO project will appear in the Fall 2004 Society of Alabama Archivists' newsletter.

-UA Libraries' 2004 holiday card will feature a book from the *Publishers' Bindings Online* project. This greeting card will contain a full colophon and project name and URL.

-Six books from the project along with supporting information about the Publishers' Bindings Online were featured in a set of three postcards which are used to publicize the events sponsored by the Friends of the UW-Madison Libraries.

- UW-Madison's bindings exhibit was publicized in Wisconsin Week (the University's news resource, print and online), @YourLibrary (UW-Madison online library newsletter), and the *Friends of the Libraries News* (both print and online).

Exhibitions:

-During July-September, 2004, an exhibit featuring the IMLS project and books selected for the project from the Library's circulating collections and recent acquisitions was mounted at UW-Madison's Memorial Library. Sponsored by the Silver Buckle Press, the library's working museum of letterpress printing. A Web version of the exhibit is in progress.

-A selection of 19th century publishers' bindings was exhibited in the Gorgas Library on the UA campus. The exhibit included over seventy books and focused on publishers' bindings in a variety of styles and materials with examples produced from a variety of countries, including the US, Denmark, Germany, and Hungary. It served to educate and inform our constituents about PBO project.

Appendices

- a. From Project Manual: Bindings Color Range Identification Guide see:
<http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/private/colors/colors.html>
(Login: working; password: group)
- b. From Project Manual: Examples of Cloth Patterns see:
<http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/private/clothpages/grain.htm>
(Login: working; password: group)
- c. Selection and Description forms are available on the project manual site at:
<http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/private/selectionForm20040622.pdf> and
<http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/private/Bindingthemesformfinal061604.pdf>
- d. Web-based metadata entry form can be viewed at:
<http://webfile.library.wisc.edu/dcg/>
(Login: wail2; password: wail2)