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Exploring 19th Century Gift Books in a Special Collection: A Collection Analysis

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Introduction

The 19th century was a period in history when people in society were becoming progressively more literate and interested in reading and writing for communication, entertainment, education, business, and creative purposes. The Industrial Revolution sparked a culture that after a hundred years became comfortable with and acclimated to mass production. One machine that was improved upon during this time period was the printing press; along with this were improvements made to the craft of engraving and book making (Mourão, 2012). Books and other types of publications became easier to provide to the public from cheap to expensive, depending on the craftsmanship and materials used to create them. It should be emphasized, however, that even though the printing press was improved upon, the process of book binding was not completely mechanized during the 19th century. Certain tasks of the book making process were alleviated by improvements made to particular printing machines, but not the whole process.

Another important influence that carried most of the 19th century was Queen Victoria's reign from 1837 until 1901 in England. While Cruse (1935) claims that she was probably not as fond of reading as the period named after her was, she did happen to have morals and opinions that definitely influenced the fashion and personality of the time. This time period, even though it primarily referred to England, influenced the culture and style of many other countries like America, for example.

The gift book is a genre that includes the keywords: annuals, keepsakes, tokens, and souvenirs. Mourão (2012) explains that the titles might sometimes reference history or contribute to the memory of an occasion. These books were described as being very decorative and alluring with gilt edges, beautiful bindings, and lovely engravings to delight and

impress the recipient. Some books were produced in soft covers that one could pay an extra fee to have beautifully bound; books without hard bindings had a more disposable nature about them (Maser & Spawn, 1983).

The trend of giving a book as a gift also focused on the lasting quality of the object; a person who chose to pay for a book to give as a gift was concerned with how well the book would last from generation to generation. Books were bound decoratively not only to delight their recipient, but also to have a high presence of quality that would look appropriate amongst other items of high quality like furniture (Maser & Spawn, 1983). For one who was not privileged but fortunate enough to be literate, books were a luxury item they may have foregone eating and warmth in order to obtain; this may be because of the manner in which the act of reading can both educate and entertain (Cruse, 1935).

Popular titles for these books included names of flowers, gems, themes of female beauty, holidays, special occasions, and anniversaries. One very popular gift book theme was the Christmas holiday. Gift books also contained literature that was designed to be elegant and attractive in order to make an impression or honor the recipient. The lavish prose along with engravings that were sometimes reproductions of actual paintings or sculptures contained in gift books made them a highly sought form of amusement and pleasure.

Women progressively became the target audience and large contributors for this kind of publication (Library of Congress, 2012). Literature found in this genre has sometimes been described as lacking intellectual substance but having high moral standards in order to sway women of the day (Mourão, 2012). While some very famous English and American literary authors beloved today may have been featured in a gift book anthology or even produced a complete work in the genre; the overall reputation of it being of low cerebral quality did repel some who wanted to create literary work that was

not morally censored. Faxon (1912) referred to the appearance and content of this genre by describing them as “butterfly books” (p. xv).

Understanding the masses’ demand for art and literature, specific publishers decided to produce gift books and profit from the trend. Faxon (1912) makes reference to the popularity of the gift book as a “craze” or a “fad” that eventually died down around the 1850s. Mourão (2012) also makes this observation. Supplying this genre to the masses created access to literature for groups in social levels other than the upper class. Mourão claimed that gift books were extremely well-liked in the Victorian middle-class; they were considered fashion accessories and status symbols. Books in Victorian culture could also symbolize a mode of defense against unfamiliar social environments or situations so it would make sense that some would be designed to be attractive in appearance (Ablow, 2011).

It is important to explore this book variety because it symbolizes the book as a product for early consumers. America was one country where this type of literature became tremendously fashionable within a budding consumerist culture. Characteristics concerning this genre of print materials are important features that can often be used to describe a work for organizational and retrieval purposes in library catalogs today. Sometimes these elements are the very bare essentials that are needed to create an indexed record for a work within a collection.

Antique books possess many distinctive qualities that are useful in uncovering and understanding a society and its media culture; Maser and Spawn (1983) claim that book bindings can uncover cultural patterns of early America. Books from this era and genre are significant items to preserve and provide access to, especially for an academic research community like the one found at The University of Southern Mississippi (USM). Exploring an era’s media can help to describe the way of life and style of the time period; this is one purpose for collecting out of print books in special collections. By observing the uniqueness of gift books and annuals from the 19th century; one can determine the way of life, visual styles, popular authors, engravers, and publishers.

Gathering this type of information can be helpful so that the collected works in a special collection can be promoted and thus be made available to patrons such as students and faculty who might utilize them for research. The use of primary sources by a library’s patrons can symbolize a healthy collection. In order to facilitate this type of relationship between patron and special collections, it may be important to understand and explore items in a collection with the goal of better promoting their existence.

Statement of Problem

Descriptions of 19th century literature can be limited because items may be out of print, hard to find, or undocumented. USM’s McCain Library and Archives offers a limited selection of 19th century gift books and annuals; these books can be used to evaluate certain distinct characteristics regarding publishers, dates of publication, authors, and binding styles. This study can help to determine prominent genre characteristics for this era, which may be otherwise difficult to determine considering the scarcity of some of the titles and their editions.

Another use for this study is to identify titles in this genre within McCain’s holdings and determine the strengths and weakness of the genre’s presence. This is significant because special collection libraries should find ways to promote access to their collections. There are several universities that promote their gift book collections. If McCain has a strong gift book collection this may help the institution to collaborate with other collections and having a strong collection may entice researchers to visit USM’s McCain Library and Archives. One reason the identification of the genre may be somewhat vague is because it may seem like all books from the era fit the description of a gift book. Another reason information regarding this book genre can be scarce is due to the overall lack of awareness of the genre along with title and content fluctuations due to shifts in publishing standards associated with the era (Faxon, 1912).

Research Questions

R1. How many gift books does McCain Library have in their collection?

R2. Who are prominent authors of McCain Library's selection of gift books?

R3. Who are publishers of McCain's collection of gift books?

R4. What publication dates are found within gift books located at McCain Library?

R5. What types of binding were used for books in this study?

Definitions

19th Century: A period in history that includes 1800-1899.

Bibliometrics: A method of using mathematics and statistics for analysis regarding usage and/or the historical development of a collection (Johnson, 2009).

Collection Assessment and Analysis: Both are methods of evaluating a collection, however, assessment mainly refers to analyzing a collection for strengths and weaknesses usually with the participation of patrons. Collection analysis focuses on a collection and not patrons (Johnson, 2009).

Gift Book: A 19th century book genre described as having decorative, gaudy binding, containing engravings, prose, and commonly having titles that include the terms: annuals, keepsakes, tokens, mementos, offerings, gems and souvenirs (Faxon, 1912).

Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC): According to Zeng and Qin (2004), an OPAC is a computerized catalog which allows patrons "to search, locate, and retrieve descriptive information about library materials" (p. 323). WorldCat can be described as being an OPAC that allows libraries around the world the ability to share their holdings as members. USM's University Libraries online catalog can also be described as an OPAC.

Limitations & Delimitations of the Study

This study is limited to books found in USM's McCain Library and Archives that were published between the years 1800-1899. Publication dates that precede

or exceed the era were excluded. Literature that was identified within the genre included novels, novellas, poetry, drama, and anthologies. Content, however, was not a focus of the study.

Because the genre consists of anthologies of work, only authors and editors that appeared on the title page or that were cataloged and used to index the work within the collection were counted. No more than two editors or authors were noted even if they appeared on the title page. Publishers and city of publication found on the title page were counted. Only books in English and having complete English translations of non-English text were included.

Titles that are considered magazines, periodicals, or that consisted of multiple volumes and lacking hardcover bindings were excluded from the study. In the case of a hardcover book qualifying as a title in the genre having two volumes, only the first volume was counted. A soft-cover book was accepted if it did not appear to be part of a periodic series; apparently some gift books were bought in soft-cover form and bound later at an extra cost.

Assumptions

It is assumed that the online public access catalog (OPAC) at Cook Library is an accurate and current reflection of the University Libraries' collection including McCain Special Collections and Archives. It is further assumed that the items in the OPAC and in the WorldCat database are indexed correctly so that pertinent items are retrieved. It is also assumed that USM's McCain Library and Archives does have titles in this genre.

Importance of the Study

The goal of this study was to investigate patterns regarding authors, publishers, dates, and binding styles in order to better describe the genre. The manner and frequency in which books of this particular genre were distributed as well as any collaborations between authors and the publishers may also help to better understand the characteristics of the gift book. The visual quality of each book represented by its binding was observed because style and materials used to make them can be considered a quality exclusive to the publisher of the book. Observing the binding of these books

helped to determine whether the gift book titles held at McCain possess the proper characteristics that qualify a book for this genre.

By evaluating books from this period the results of the study identified authors, publishing companies, and binding styles that were prevalent within a selection of books from USM's McCain Library and Archives. By exploring this book genre from 1800-1899, the study recognized qualities that were popular throughout the era and therefore provided a descriptive evaluation of the sample selection. This type of collection analysis is valuable because it can provide much-needed information about items that may need to be addressed in order to further understand the collection and its uniqueness. By learning about these publishing characteristics concerning gift books from the 19th century it may be possible to better describe and represent the collection for promotional attention within the academic user community.

This study may also be useful in unearthing resources regarding the items that may be beneficial to further research or maintenance of the collection. Due to the rarity of some of the books, this type of study may support information regarding them that scholars may otherwise not have been able to find. By doing this, perhaps pathfinders, bibliographies, and finding aids can eventually be created to assist special collection librarians in order to promote access to these materials.

Literature Review

Collection development and management is a common reason for analysis conducted on any type of library collection. There are specific techniques in bibliometrics that allow a researcher to evaluate collected works by using exact methods; Eugene Garfield and his work in bibliometrics, Lotka's Law, and Bradford's Law are a few evaluative techniques commonly used to explore publications and citation frequencies. These methods can be rigid and seem somewhat controlled because collections and information being derived from their study are often times generally focused on finding data relative to the productivity of a resource and how this frequency relates to the overall health of a collection.

Evaluating special collections may warrant the use of a more flexible approach because these types of materials can represent variable standards. Special collections deal with many items that are delicate, one of a kind, and rare; they are not mass produced and only recently has there been an incentive to digitize them for preservation and access purposes.

Chai and Xiao (2012) analyzed the citations of a journal called *Design Studies* in order to investigate future trends and core themes in design research. Their methodology included using a standard bibliometric analysis technique of aggregating author co-citations; it also addressed issues of human errors regarding data entry and analysis that can skew results (Chai and Xiao, 2012). By studying publication pattern analysis, a collector or researcher interested in gift books may be able to see when the genre was popular and when it became less of a trend in Victorian Culture.

Surveys are another popular form of assessment that often measures patron usage regarding various types of collections. Gray (1987) used an analysis technique developed by a state archivist named Gerald Newborg who employed a survey method to evaluate how patrons were using a manuscript collection. When exploring and evaluating special collections and archives, common bibliometric methods may not be suitable in order to answer questions regarding antiquated publications, documents, or objects. Kingston (2011) describes how particular archives acquired during the French Revolutionary War were eventually managed by trial and error situations over many years. A special collections librarian may have to improvise when it comes to analyzing these types of collections; research techniques may need to be tailored to fit the project (Kingston, 2011). For example, Kingston's (2011) article describes archivists from several hundred years ago and how methods of collecting official documents regarding the French Revolution influenced the collection development and management of the modern archive. His description of past archivists and their compilation and analysis of documents helps support the importance of promoting special collections. Kingston (2011) explains this earlier process consisted of combining cataloging with analysis; by doing this an

archivist could learn to prioritize characteristics of items in a collection and thus better promote them.

It is apparent that an important feature in researching a special collection is scope. Borin and Yi (2011) conducted a study on how to apply an analytical approach to measure the scope, and usage of a collection. This study emphasizes defining a collection's capacity as an important figure needed to qualitatively manage the collection. The question of how many gift book titles are found at McCain is a variable that needs to be defined.

In order to determine the scope of a special collection, collected works may need to be recognized or compared with collections with similar holdings. This can be done by using WorldCat's Collection Analysis (WCA) tool or by manually comparing items using a check list. An example using WCA can be read in an article where Lowery (2011) conducted a criteria and usage based assessment of an atlas collection by comparing the atlas holdings at the University of Illinois at Chicago to a standard atlas bibliography. Some challenges were apparent in using WCA because the author felt that atlases could vary depending on the location in which they are collected.

Since there are only a limited set of titles for the gift book genre being evaluated, titles indexed as gift books in WorldCat's database were used to locate titles in USM's online catalog. The titles were located in order to pull the actual book from McCain's holdings for physical observation which helped to determine the condition of the book. There can be variation in titles associated with this book genre as well as binding conditions, so using multiple inventories or collection bibliographies to locate titles allowed for more accurate results.

In a unique account regarding a special collection, Rothfeld (2005) provides an historical analysis of how books taken by the Nazis during WWII were processed in an attempt to return them to or locate their owners. These books were given the title "Ex Libris" and the way in which Rothfeld describes how the task was managed is related to how gift book titles were identified and studied; the appearance of gift books did help to identify the genre in the same

way that certain characteristics of "Ex Libris" books were used to find their previous owners. Investigating particular characteristics regarding the genre helped to understand their uniqueness and promote their existence in a way that benefits the library and its patrons.

Another example of a core list being generated for a unique collection can be found in a study conducted by Lai (2010) who describes the compilation of core titles for a music conspectus used to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the music collection found at Hong Kong Baptist University. Due to the small size of the collected works being evaluated, an automated evaluation analysis service like WorldCat Collection Analysis (WCA) was not utilized.

Other reasons for a collection analysis may focus upon determining the quality of a particular subject within a collection. Many libraries have been using OCLC's Collection Analysis tool to cross examine library collections. Powers (2011) performed a collection analysis of the art and art history section of the University of South Florida's academic library. This study was used as a collection development tool that would help make the budget more efficient based on usage. By using this comparative technique, USF was able to gauge what their library needs based on what other libraries have.

Masuchika (2012) also conducted a subject focused qualitative study involving Asian American Studies at Pennsylvania State University that used a basic method of comparing the collection's holdings to a core list; this comparative method was used to compare PSU's collections to those held by other universities in order to measure its strengths and weaknesses. Another study focusing on a genre or resource subject is Scanlon's (2011) study which evaluated a collection's resources regarding the Taliban. This study was based on how the collection compared to other university holdings; title, author, and publisher were collected as data and documented on an Excel spreadsheet. The study of gift books helped to evaluate the strength of a specified genre in McCain's collection. While this might not directly affect efficiency, it may assist in better identification or understanding of the

uniqueness of books that may be out of print or hard to find.

Another use of bibliometric analysis based on a resource genre is Enoch's (2010) study which researched the poetry holdings of 72 elementary schools to identify their distinguishing features. This kind of exploration of a type of book is useful for exhibition purposes; an exhibition of items needs to display a variety of books that compliments the genre. One good way to do this is by conducting an analysis that will help determine what types of items regarding a subject matter should be included or excluded from an exhibit. The results of studying 19th century gift books will help to support the future promotion of the collection and provide a means to create a bibliography, pathfinder, and finding aid for the selection. The study concerning antiquated books was actually inspired by the process of pulling books for an exhibit at a special collections library and archive.

One really good example of a special collection of rare books being evaluated is Maser and Spawn's (1983) study, which was published in book format. His study involved 62 entries that were used to investigate book bindings from 1680-1910 (Maser & Spawn, 1983, p. 12). By focusing on books and their bindings from this time span, Maser and Spawn were able to learn more about early American culture. While his study primarily focused on the evolution of book binding and how it related to specific book binders of the different periods, it did select books from a collection to study. This is similar to the study on 19th century gift books because it used a university collection and examined characteristics of the books in order to uncover a pattern specific to the time period.

Faxon (1912) put out a bibliography of gift book titles that were gathered as a result of his studies to try and learn more about the genre. The study regarding gift book titles at McCain resulted in a bibliography and used a university collection in order to study the genre.

Jorgensen, Marty, & Braun (2012) aimed to answer questions regarding what institutions' collections consist of and which ones are notable to their user

communities. This needs assessment survey proved to be an important study that was helpful in discovering preservation and access strengths and weaknesses. This was similar to the study on 19th century gift books in that the study's goal was to evaluate whether McCain's holdings included a specific book genre that may help promote the overall collection in the future.

Methodology

Physical attributes regarding 19th century gift book characteristics included binding style, specific titles, date, publisher, location of publisher, authors, and editors were gathered by examining the gift book titles in McCain Library and Archive's holdings. Titles of gift books were searched for online by using bibliographies or collection inventory of books in the genre. By searching the Internet, online collection inventories were found.

Faxon's (1912) bibliography was used as a source of gift book titles; these titles were accumulated and documented by studying the library collections of the Library of Congress, New York Public Library, Philadelphia Mercantile Library, Boston Public Library, Columbia University Library, Harvard University Library, and the Boston Athenaeum. Faxon based this research on two publications: the *Boston Public Library Bulletin* from October, 1893 and the *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* from July, 1902. The bibliography generated by Faxon includes 2,000 volumes; the three groups in which Faxon divided his gift book titles included American, English, and a section devoted to "Addenda and Errata" gift books and annuals. Titles from these lists that were used to locate books in McCain were taken from the 1,009 titles in bold. Descriptions of variations of these titles are included in Faxon's list, but not used in the study.

WorldCat was used to locate book titles that were indexed as "gift books." WorldCat's bibliography of works indexed as "gift books" resulted in 294 titles. WorldCat includes book bibliographies found at library institutions all over the world that choose to share their library inventory in order to create access to materials.

These inventories were used to locate gift book titles within McCain's holdings. Each title found by using these bibliographies was searched for in USM's online library catalog by using McCain Library and Archives as a location limiter in the search browser. Whenever titles from a bibliography were located, the call number and title of the book was documented. The list consisting of titles and call numbers that were present at McCain Library and Archives was then used to pull the physical work from its holdings. Looking at the actual book helped to ensure the accuracy of the title, publishers, authors, editors, dates, and to determine the condition of the binding. Observing the books in person was very important in determining whether or not the bindings were original.

Characteristics regarding publisher, binding, author, and publishing dates were documented as they appeared in the actual text by using Microsoft Excel as an organizational tool. Each title was given a row on an Excel spreadsheet that allowed for its author or editor, city of publication and publisher, publication date, and condition of binding to be documented. Documentation of each of these attributes was then used to determine patterns regarding the collection. Authors and editors were counted with the goal of finding any name or names that occurred more than once. The frequency of the appearances of editors over authors was also documented. The same approach was used to count city of publication, publisher, publishing date, and binding condition. A range of dates was established within a chart in order to visualize a pattern associated with the data. Authors, editors, cities, and publisher are attributes that were best visualized by using a table of figures.

Bindings were recorded as being original or rebound. Binding colors were also documented as well as the presence of pages with gold edges or "all edges gilt" which is a term used to describe a book having page edges that are gold (Antiquated Booksellers' Association of America, 2012). Binding materials were also determined as being leather, cloth, or paper.



100 Years of Publishing: 19th Century Literature at McCain Library and Archives

Data Analysis

The Scope of McCain Library's Gift Book Holdings

Six bibliographies were used as checklists to find titles within USM's online catalog: the University of Wisconsin's Digital Collections, the Antiquarian Book Seller's Association of America, WorldCat's listing of titles indexed as "gift books," Columbia University Libraries Rare Books and Manuscripts online, University of Pennsylvania Libraries gift books, and Frederick Winthrop Faxon's bibliography of the genre from 1912. Each of these inventories contained duplicate titles because within the genre books may have multiple names and can be year, publisher, or editor sensitive. This means that a gift book that has one title may have a completely different title the next year, or even if a different editor or publisher takes over it. Another issue is that sometimes the book would be given a new title for a new year and the old title would still remain on the title page. Variables like these can cause variations in title when cataloging the work into an inventory. For example, one bibliography may have referred to *The Token* as such; Faxon's bibliography may have referred to it as the *Teacher's Token* or given five examples of gift books that start with the word "Token."

Ultimately, 1,905 titles were searched for in McCain's collection. It must be taken into consideration that Faxon's (1912) bibliography containing over 1,009 titles from two library bulletins; he also used seven libraries to compile the list. Compared to Faxon's bibliography, McCain only holds 45 titles that may or may not represent exact

titles or editions of what he mentions in his bibliography. Ockerbloom (2012) compiled 469 titles for the University of Pennsylvania’s gift book and annual files. The University of Wisconsin’s Digital Collections (University of Wisconsin Libraries, 2012) provided 121 titles as well as images and descriptions for each title it had. The Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America (ABAA) provided only 12 titles in which they felt determined a possible collection (Mac Donnell, 2012). McCain only holds two of the twelve titles mentioned by the ABAA. Columbia University’s Libraries Rare Books and Manuscripts online (2012) also have a bibliography of 37 titles with images of the actual books. From these 37 titles, McCain only holds six. Table 1 is a list of the bibliographies and how their titles compare with that of McCain’s gift book holdings.

Table 1. Scope of McCain’s Gift Books Compared to Bibliographies Used for Study

| Bibliographies | Number of Titles | % of Titles |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Faxon’s Gift Books and Annuals | 1009 | 4% |
| University of Pennsylvania Libraries | 469 | 9% |
| WorldCat | 294 | 15% |
| University of Wisconsin Digital Collections | 121 | 37% |
| Columbia University Rare Books and Manuscripts | 37 | 43% |
| Antiquated Booksellers’ Association of America | 12 | 25% |

Authors and Editors

Within the 45 titles selected for the study, a total of six characteristics were identified regarding authors and editors. Actual naming of an author responsible for a gift book, annual, souvenir, or keepsake resulted in a high percentage. The proportion of editors responsible for titles in this genre outnumbered that of the authors by only one. Many books in the

collection did not specify an author, editor, or any collaboration; 12 of the 45 titles lacked any specific reference to a creator. In some cases, the editor would be referenced with the term “various” accompanying their name. The term “various” was used to describe the lack of detail regarding the creator or creators’ identities or an abundance of names associated with a work. Some titles either referenced the collaboration of “various” entities in creating the work or actually listed the names of authors and editors. Table 2 details the creators of gift books by these aforementioned categories.

Table 2. Creators of Gift Books by Categories

| Credits Found on Title Page | Number of Appearances | Percentage in Collection |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Editors | 13 | 29% |
| Authors | 12 | 27% |
| n/a | 12 | 27% |
| Two Authors | 4 | 9% |
| Non-specific | 3 | 7% |
| Various | 1 | 2% |

Another observation regarding authors and editors of this sample was that three of the 45 titles were non-specific in regards to whether or not the referenced name was the author or editor. For example, C.S. Guild, Edmund Routledge, and Laura E. Richards are found on the title pages but there is no explanation as to if they were authors or editors. Edmund Routledge is responsible for publishing such titles as *Routledge’s Every Boy’s Annual*, *Every Girl’s Annual* and *The Young Ladies’ Book*. The *Every Girl’s Annual*, however, is accredited to being edited by Alicia A. Seith and published by Routledge. These inconsistencies in crediting specific entities for an anthology related to the genre can most likely be attributed to variations within the process of creating the actual book and lack of concrete standards for acknowledgment of intellectual work.

Prominent Publishers

Genre titles located for this evaluation did not share very many similarities regarding publisher (Table 3). Prominent publishers found within this collection of gift books and annuals include George Routledge and Sons, Leavitt and Allen, R. Worthington, and the

Longman & Green Co. While these figures display the presence of a pattern regarding prominent publishers, they do not necessarily make a definite statement about which publisher contributed the high distribution of gift books in the 19th century.

Table 3. Publishers of Gift Books at McCain Library

| Publishers | Number of Appearances | Total Percentage |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Longman & Green Co. | 4 | 9% |
| George Routledge & Sons | 3 | 7% |
| Leavitt & Allen | 3 | 7% |
| R. Worthington Co. | 2 | 4% |

These figures can be affected by the title being from several editions or versions. It also seems that publishers did not exclusively put out gift books as their only product; the genre usually represents an anthology of works. While the figures may not display a prominent pattern regarding gift book publishers, it does show that of 45 titles, only 12 titles were from five similar publishers.

The Longman and Green Company published four of the books found in the collection of gift books under various iterations of their company name. These titles include: *The Animal Story Book*, *The Green Fairy Book*, *Heath's Book of Beauty*, and *The Literary Souvenir*. George Routledge & Sons, a London publisher, published three books found in the collection: *Routledge's Every Girls' Annual*, *Routledge's Every Boys' Annual*, and the *Young Ladies' Book: A Souvenir of Friendship*. Leavitt & Allen also published three of the titles found in the collection. These titles include: *The Passion Flower*, *The Rose Bud*, and *The Token and Atlantic Souvenir*. Two titles found in the collection were published by the R. Worthington Company. These titles include: *Christmas Box* and *Buds and Blossoms*.

Prominent Publishing Cities and Dates

The selection of gift books found at McCain Library and Archives were primarily published in Boston,

New York, London, or Philadelphia. Nine titles were published in Boston, 13 in New York, 13 in London, and seven in Philadelphia (Table 4). According to Lehmann-Haupt, French, and Rogers (1967) these were some of the prominent cities of early American book binding, except of course, London. Hartford, Connecticut and New Haven, Connecticut were locations that were found in only two of the 45 books.

Table 4. Publication Location of Gift Books at McCain Library

| City of Publication | Number of Titles Published | Percentage |
|---------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| London | 13 | 29% |
| New York | 13 | 29% |
| Boston | 9 | 20% |
| Philadelphia | 7 | 16% |
| Hartford | 1 | 2% |
| New Haven | 1 | 2% |
| n/a | 1 | 2% |

Dates associated with publishing range from the 1820s to 1890s. There was a higher concentration of gift book titles published during the 1840s and 1850s (Fig 1). Faxon (1912) does mention that the actual gift book trend weakened after the 1850s. Analysis did not reveal any significant patterns of collaboration between publishers, publishing cities, or date, which may be due to a limited collection size that includes mostly American cities.

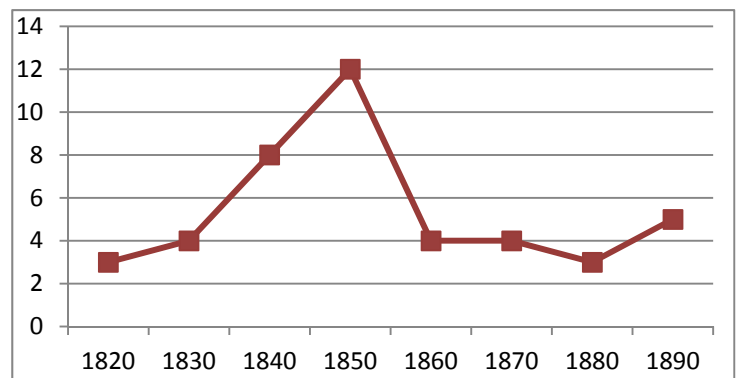


Figure 1. Dates of Gift Books Found at McCain

McCain Library and Archives' Gift Book Bindings

Titles pulled for the study from McCain's stacks were examined mainly to determine if their bindings were original. Determining this feature is very important to the strength of the collection. A collection primarily consisting of rebound titles would be more suitable for practical reading use; binding copy is a term that generally describes a rebound book (ABAA Glossary, 2012). Having too many binding copies of gift book titles would create a weak collection mainly because this type of book is studied for its binding and categorized by the appearance of its binding. Fortunately, the gift books that were located at McCain mostly had their original bindings; of course some may have been worn with age or somewhat damaged and fragile. Only five books found in the collection had rebound covers. These include: *The Rosette*, *Christmas Box*, *The Juvenile For-Get-Me-Not*, *The Token and Atlantic Souvenir*, and *Youth's Keepsake*. The rest of the selection had appropriate bindings; these were then used to evaluate materials, prominent colors, gold decorations, and gilt edges.

The most popular binding material found in McCain's gift book collection was cloth; 21 of the titles had this type of binding. Only seven were leather and two were made of paper board which is like condensed cardboard. Another observation regarding the physical appearance of the gift book was binding color. Bindings in this collection consisted of five prominent colors: blue, brown, green, white, and red (Fig 2). Sixty percent of the books consisted of one of these five colors; while 11% had been rebound and the remaining 29% were either too worn or damaged to determine color. Some of the books in the selection were faded and actual color was too hard to determine. Ultimately, the most popular color for gift books in this selection is brown; forty percent of the selected books were this color. Twenty-five percent were blue; red, green, and white were present but not in abundance.

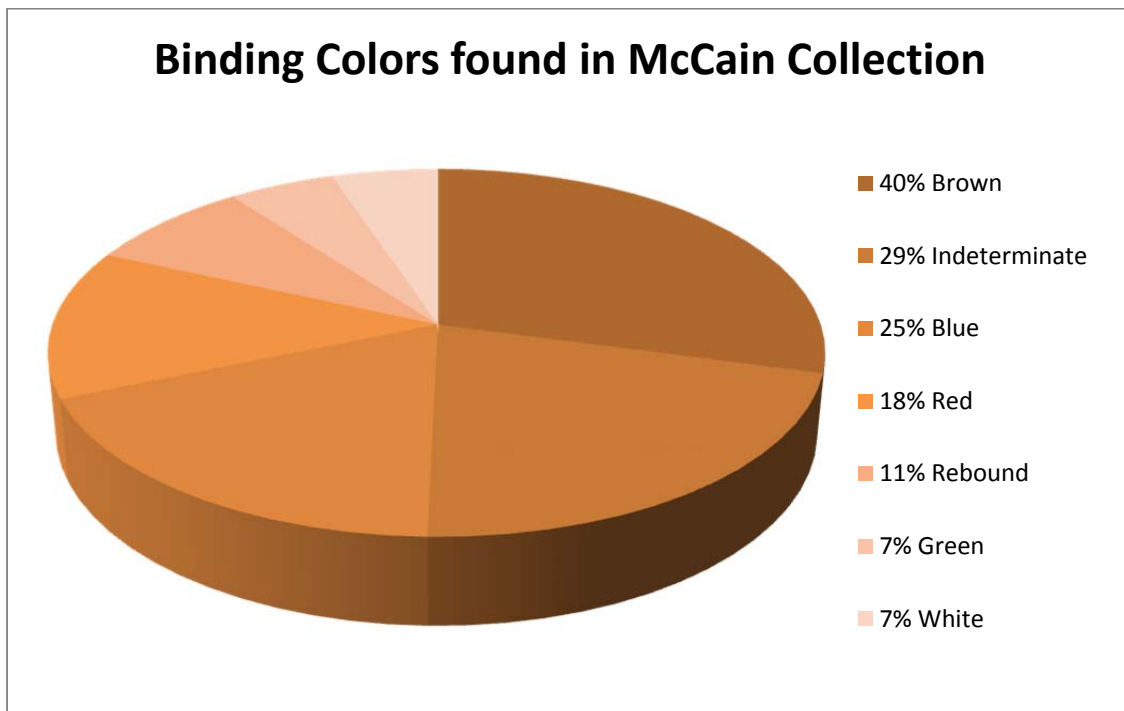


Figure 2: Binding colors found in McCain Collection

Table 5. Binding Materials and Ornamentation

| Binding Materials | | Ornamentation | |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Materials | No. of Books | Decorations | No. of Books |
| Cloth | 24 | All Edges Gilt | 17 |
| Leather | 7 | Gold Decorations | 15 |
| Undetermined | 6 | Fore Edge Painting | 1 |
| Paper Board | 3 | | |
| Original Binding | 40 | | |
| Rebound | 5 | | |

A total of 33 books had gold decorations somewhere on the actual binding and all edges gilt. *The Oriental Annual* was the only book that possessed a fore edged painting on the edge of its pages. This is a hidden image that is painted onto the edges of pages. When in regular position the pages appear gilt but when fanned out an image emerges. Apparently, most of the titles that had gold decorations also possessed all edges gilt. Table 5 (above) shows the various distributions of binding characteristics throughout the collection of titles for the study.

Inconsistencies within the Gift Book Genre

Investigating the gift book genre within McCain's holdings was successful in evaluating its strengths and weaknesses. There were challenges during the evaluation for various reasons; these include titles, type of publication, and year of publication. These factors made finding an actual title within a collection somewhat difficult. Gift books can appear to have more than one title that may have previously caused confusion when cataloging or entering the title into a collection or bibliography. Another factor was that gift books also included some works that were actually periodicals. Titles within this genre were also either published during various years or some years represent a completely different version of the title.

Other issues regarding gift book titles included the appearance of keywords: gift, memento, keepsake, souvenir, and annual. These specific keywords presented the question of whether all books from the 19th century that contained them could actually be classified in the genre. Keywords associated with gift books may also contribute to titles that are either not cataloged or indexed as gift books. It was important to compile a list of gift book titles from other

collections and research in order to stay within a certain set of perimeters when locating titles from McCain's holdings. Investigating titles that were not specifically cataloged as gift books might be conducted in a separate study to create a larger bibliography within the genre for the purposes of identifying more gift book titles within McCain's holding.

Binding was yet another issue that was inconsistently represented by each title. Original bindings varied from year to year and books and some titles had been repaired or rebound. This becomes a challenge when, for example, McCain did have the title, but the binding was completely different from what another bibliography described.

Conclusion

The overall study regarding the presence of gift books at USM's McCain Library and Archives was successful in that titles for the genre were located and a better understanding of the genre was initially established. By using bibliographies and inventories from other institutions, data were gathered for evaluation of the possible existence of a gift book collection at McCain. By analyzing the data patterns associated with gift books a few interesting characteristics of the genre were revealed. These characteristics are usually mentioned when researching gift books. For example, it is often hinted that gift books may have irregular titles or multiple titles; this was found to be an obstacle that made location of an actual title difficult. The same title of a gift book may be by a different author, publisher, and even publishing city. By understanding and researching the binding of each title, it could then be either accepted or excluded from the study; this task was accomplished by using

online collections that provided images of their gift books and comparing this to books found at McCain. Another obstacle was trying to find a complete, master list of titles; using a list with an abundance of titles like Faxon's (1912) bibliography proved to be the best approach.

Authors, editors, publishers, and collaborations between them could be found on gift book title pages. By observing the results regarding them one could see that there were inconsistencies in the 1800s with crediting work of all contributors within the work itself. Publishers found may not have shown a pattern within the collection and this may be because of the limited size of the collection. However, the gift books found in McCain Library were from four prominent cities associated with bookbinding and publishers: Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and London.

The binding condition of many of these types of books held at McCain ranged from very good to fine. A majority of titles located had their original bindings intact and the overall conditions of these bindings were of high quality. Of course, there was the occasional rebound book or title that was extremely fragile from the wear and tear of over 100 years. Using the 45 titles pulled for the study, McCain could actually have an exhibit focusing on this type of book. Only five of the sample collection had been rebound; this might point out titles that McCain may want to acquire in order to strengthen their gift book collection. While the statistics provided may seem scarce, the overall existence of the gift book at McCain Library and Archives is apparent. This study documents that there is a collection of 45 gift books at McCain that are in good condition. It also indicates that there are some inconsistencies associated with the genre based on the era in which they were created; these inconsistencies may not conclude that patterns found were weak or scarce, but that perhaps further investigations should take place in order to learn more about the nature of the gift book in hopes to identify more titles in McCain's holdings.

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