the book or manuscript) and one or two are so small that the writing is legible only with a magnifying glass.

The General Index also needs attention. Taking a few pages of the text at random, on page 87, we find the names of Geerte Groote and Johan Scutken, neither of whom is included in the index, to say nothing of the *Devotio moderna*, and Richard Rolle, whose name appears on this page as well as on pages 84-86. On page III we find the Madrid bookseller Alonso Gómez, who does appear in the index, cheek by jowl with Francisco López the Elder, who does not. And where are Francisco de Cormellas, Pedro de Robles, Juan de Villanueva, Juan de Escobedo, and so on? The compilation of an index is undoubtedly an affair of dull diligence, but it remains essential, and it is even more essential for a collection of papers as rich and varied as we have here. May we hope that the index to the third volume will be more detailed and more comprehensive?

But all in all, this is a splendid compilation: erudite, well written, well researched, well annotated, and well presented. For those interested in the early history of the printed Bible it is an essential reference book, full of fascinating information, and a credit both to its learned contributors and its meticulous editors.

DAVID N. BELL

*Memorial University of Newfoundland*


In his spiritual autobiography (1765) the Connecticut farmer and carpenter Nathan Cole relates that sick with a mortal disease, and “filled with a pineing desire to see Christ's own words,” he crawled out of bed and struggled to the window where his bible lay. “And I believe I felt just as the Apostles felt the truth when they writ it, every leaf and letter smiled in my face; I got the bible up under my Chin and hugged it; it was sweet and lovely; the word was nigh me in my hand, then I began to pray and praise God.” Quoted near the end of *Volume I* of *A History of the Book in America: The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, Cole testifies to the passion with which
colonial Americans felt themselves a people of the Book (406). But they also populated a vigorously growing economy. As the first printer in Pennsylvania, William Bradford, had pointed out nearly a century earlier, printing was "my imploy, my trade and calling, and that by which I get my living.... Printing is a manufacture of the nation" (204).

Canadian book historians will pay close attention to this sister project of our own History of the Book in Canada (in progress), not least to ask how colonial book history might play out in a cultural environment where the Great Awakening which animated Nathan Cole was of more limited influence, and where the state control that colonial Americans believed threatened a free book trade would not be repudiated, but transformed into the moderate state protection of contemporary Canada. The geographical scope of the volume is also relevant, because the area it surveys, as is the case with Canada, is not dominated by the great Iberian themes which govern so much of the history of the Americas; except among the Pennsylvania Germans ably discussed here by A. Gregg Roeber the ties of the printers who built the book trade in Boston, New York, and down the coast were firmly with England. One immediate effect of the comparison is to dispel a Canadian’s sensitivity about the belatedness of printing in Nova Scotia and Quebec. The usual triumphant account of the early monuments of American printing, The Whole Booke of Psalms (1640) and the Eliot Indian Bible (1661-63) now yields to a narrative of the slow and difficult actuality of the book trade’s inception, as in David Hall’s account of scribal publication in the Chesapeake, or Calhoun Winton’s of the southern book trade in the eighteenth century. There we find situations much more typical of the wider scene of printing in the Americas in general—not just British North America and the territories outside the thirteen colonies, but also in Central and South America. As we shall see, however, the volume does not address one of the major differences between book history as it has evolved in Europe and the nations generated during the period of colonial expansion. Up to now, the boundaries of book history as a field have been determined largely by societies without profound aboriginal dimensions. How would the field as a whole be re-inflected by societies—those of the Americas are an example—where the aboriginal dimension is a pressing reality?

The chronicle of American book history began with Isaiah Thomas’s The History of Printing in America (1810), but was primarily bibliographical up until Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt’s The Book in
America (1939, second edition 1951). In his introduction to Lehmann-Haupt, the late Lawrence C. Wroth laid down boundaries for such an enterprise: the English colonies in America were distinguished from those of France and Spain by the fact that each was a separate state: "self-governing, independent colonies, neither military outpost nor trading station" (3). These boundaries remain in place (indeed, are not even argued for, as were Wroth's) in the present volume. As a result, the project is organized not according to questions posed by the nature of the book itself, as is the recently-published volume of the history of the book in Britain, but by the process of American state formation. As Wallace Kirsop has already noted (English Studies in Canada 25: 3/4 [1999]: 489) New Orleans and Louisiana are consequently excluded, though there was a French-language print culture there before the Revolution. And nothing can be said about the early importation of books into Spanish-speaking areas. How then does a project beginning with the thirteen colonies, and thus organized according to the process of American state formation, accommodate itself to the very different questions—specifically book-historical questions—posed by Robert Darnton's "communications circuit" ("What is the History of Books?" Daedalus, 1982) or the revision of that diagram by Thomas Adams and Nicolas Barker ("A New Model for the Study of the Book," in A Potencie of Life, 1993)?

The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World, writes David D. Hall, "is a collaborative history of the uses of print and books in the thirteen mainland British colonies that in 1776 formed the United States" (1). It aims to provide a sustained description of book-trade practices, including journalism. "Ours is not a history of communication in early America, which would require a much larger canvas" (12). Though he stresses the authors' attempt to "locate our story of writers, readers, and book-trade practices within a wider history of social structures and social movements" (12), this has been accomplished largely though not exclusively in terms of writing and publishing in English by colonial men and women, and within the frame provided by the printed book. The result is a superbly detailed account of the specifics of the book trade in village, town, county, and countryside. No review is likely to do justice to the riches of such a closely documented and valuable history, yet with some important exceptions it remains the history of a trade. A collaborative work by ranking specialists in the field, it begins with a chapter introducing the volume and dealing with the European encounter with Native Americans by the senior scholar David D. Hall, and it
ends with one on eighteenth-century literary culture by David S. Shields, a member of the younger generation who already commands his field, British North America, with an authority like that of Hall in the field of colonial theological reading and writing. In his introductory chapter Hall modestly sets out the task: "As we use the term book in these pages, it encompasses the familiar format of the codex, whether in manuscript or print, as well as its intellectual content" (2). His leading theme is the way in which the early history of the book in America was conditioned by the providential view of print culture exemplified in John Foxe's "Book of Martyrs" (1563), a book the Puritans cherished. In their varied forms, he argues, books lent cohesion to the different national groups who came to the colonies, through the English government's need for record-keeping, its involvement in mercantile capitalism, and the problem of licensing. He is closely attentive to the flaws of earlier imprint bibliography, with its neglect of the imported books people actually read, and orality and scribal publication are promised their role, as are the problem of authorship, Rolf Engelsing's "reading revolution," and the concerns of Jürgen Habermas's "public sphere."

The concept of the "public sphere," however, is construed somewhat narrowly, for the volume formally excludes the European encounter with Native Americans in its own sub-section of Hall's introduction. Well-read in the literature as his notes show, and deeply conscious of the wrongs done to Native peoples by the colonists, Hall nevertheless describes the encounter entirely from the perspective of the missionaries and teachers who were party to it and of those Natives who embraced literacy. There is no recognition of the cultural differences between the Native tribes encountered, no examination of their existing sign and interpretative traditions, nor of the interaction of those systems with the practices of the colonists. At one point Hall wonderingly observes, "books, or pages from books, may have played a variety of functions far beyond what Eliot and the missionaries intended—possibly as grave goods, perhaps as signs or instruments of healing, or as elements in some system of exchange quite apart from the program set up by the colonists" (25). Here I must declare an interest; having published elsewhere on the topic, I see this as a tragically missed opportunity.

If the space between white settler and Native inhabitant is not overcome, the authors are nevertheless aware that for early Americans, "overcoming the space between colony and metropolis was a critical task" (142) as Hall writes of the New England clergy in a later
chapter. Hugh Amory’s chapter on “Re-inventing the Colonial Book” re-states the problem in the specific terms of the book trade: how did old-country loyalties define what constituted a colonial book? Citing Perry Miller, he reminds us that the early colonists wrote not for themselves, but for a European audience, and they used European means to reach it. If, as Charles E. Clark later notes, copying from London papers “was a way of overcoming the cultural and geographic boundaries that separated outlying peoples from the metropolitan center of their empire” (353), in subsequent chapters, at first by Hall and Amory in alternation and then by John Bidwell, James Green, James Raven, and others, we see how that audience was transformed into a local one, the writers for it into American authors, and scattered print craftsmen and postmasters into the beginnings of a powerful industry.

In tracing the fortunes of the notable Green family of printers (a scion of which may have been the first to print in Canada) Amory initiates a topic continued by other authors: how a colonial printer produced not books, so much as the conditions in which books could make him a living. He did so by creating that over-production which Amory argues marks print culture sharply off from scribal culture, and leads inevitably to the search for a market for the excess. Later chapters interweave with this theme the evolving tension between printer and governing power, which (as in seventeenth-century Quebec) was wary of prints’ potential for fomenting political dissent. Interwoven too are the demands of economics—of trade networks and credit—in a great age of mercantile activity. These are enthrallingly raised (for this economically-illiterate reader) in John Bidwell’s chapter on printers’ supplies and capitalization, on the rapid development of paper mills, on “prize papers,” and on the role of paper in the Revolutionary War. One consequence of Bidwell’s work is to assert the fundamental importance of the supply network even over family and professional connections (183). The book may have been a metaphor in Puritan spiritual life, but the conditions governing the trade inexorably determined the direction of print culture in the thirteen colonies, and prepared the way for the contestation over cultural authority which David Hall later marks when the influence of theology as a discipline begins to fade.

James N. Green contributes one chapter and part of another, and together they make up one of the outstanding contributions to the volume. Writing first on the book trade in the middle colonies, 1680-1720 and then on the same area from 1720-90, Green has the
good fortune to deal with the titanic figure of Benjamin Franklin, and he does a superlative job. First, Franklin's printing career is detailed with an expert's knowledge of the original sources, especially of the means by which he cultivated his territory, built up partnerships and then a network, and out-thought and out-maneuvered almost every other businessman who came in contact with him. Second there is Franklin's geo-political thinking about the possibility of a British North America, one which would unify the colonies with the territory outside the Proclamation Line of 1763 that demarcated settled land from "Indian territory," to the outrage of land-hungry colonists. Finally there is the portrait of Franklin himself, despite his matchless intelligence a paradoxical mixture of self-proclaimed modesty and real deviousness, of craft and craftiness. Green has a gift for using sparse resources to make the personalities of American print history—the Bradfords, the Rivingtons—come to life, and I'm sorry he did not have a chance to write about Isaiah Thomas, the narrative of whose life and work lies scattered in several different chapters. Finally it is Green who is able to bring together the themes of the volume so far to show how printing in the colonies moved from the conditions of state control towards the conditions fostering a liberal democracy. Franklin's genius lay not just in printing or in business, but in establishing and then exploiting the elements of a specifically republican book world.

David Hall, in two chapters on "Practices of Reading" (this written with others) and "Learned Culture in the Eighteenth Century," rightly reminds us that the surge of statistical information about books, libraries, and reading in the 1760s "must not prevent us from acknowledging the many exceptions: the African-Americans who were slaves; the colonists of European descent who remained unable to read or could not afford to buy even the cheapest forms of print; and those who were thwarted by the imperfect ways in which books were distributed from having ready access to them" (378). Franklin is his first example; in childhood the great printer had access only to some books on polemical divinity, Plutarch's Lives, and an uncle's manuscript sermon notes. These chapters deal with one of the most difficult problems for book historians. "The practice of reading was always socially and culturally mediated" writes Hall (379), but even if we know what "society" is (as Hall's list of exceptions shows, that term has been generously construed here), how do we define "culture"? It is all too easy to solve the problem by crossing over into pure literary history, to recount the authors read, the
genres exploited, the libraries collected. Except in the last case, book history elides invisibly with literary analysis, and the greatest challenge of book history as a field—to keep in focus at all times the processes of production, the varieties of consumption, and the cultural fields of both producer and consumer—is evaded. There is much wonderful material in all the later chapters—on libraries, one of my special interests, and—delightful to relate—on spellers. (Raised on the old Ontario Speller, I used to send my semi-alphabetic students to the Goodwill for copies.) But too often the approach verges on the statistical and descriptive.

Throughout the volume Hall continually makes the case for the interaction of orality, manuscript, and print in the spiritual life of colonial Americans, but it proves almost impossible for many of his fellow authors to pay more than lip-service to the genuine book trade questions raised by the persistence in their sources of scribal publication: private access to paper, various recipes for ink, habits of mise-en-page, the production of multiple copies, the ways in which manuscript copies were put into and kept in circulation, and their interaction with the parallel, and eventually dominant, print culture. Manuscript books—apparent in the Franklin home, in the persistent use of manuscripts by the Quakers, in the mingled manuscript and print library of Thomas Prince—implicitly yield place to the assumption that a printed book is a real book, and a manuscript is only a temporary substitute. Though the persistence of manuscripts of statutes and legal cases is treated seriously, an important question is still begged: such manuscripts were made and circulated because—an essential for lawyers and legislators—they were more up-to-date than print. This rather undermines the view that the defining difference between manuscript and print is the over-production of the latter and its consequent creation of an opportunity for marketing.

A major point of the chapters on reading is to demonstrate that in the American colonies, the “reading revolution” did not take place until after 1800, and thus falls outside the scope of this volume. The authors’ scene is therefore the more limited but nevertheless cosmopolitan one of the seventeenth and eighteenth century “republic of letters.” The republic, however, was interested in more than “letters,” and the absence of a wider cultural and technological canvas is a particular loss in the field of scientific writing, reading, and printing, which Hall’s otherwise very rewarding chapter on “Learned Culture in the Eighteenth Century” treats too briefly. As a Canadian interested in the literary, codicological, and publication
history of exploration writing outside the Proclamation Line, I have had my eyes opened to the constant interchange that went on between learned Europeans and certain of the explorers in the field. We should not have to wait for a later volume in the series, and the exploits of Lewis and Clark, to investigate this rich lode for the book historian. A broader canvas, however, is indeed possible, as David S. Shields strikingly demonstrates in the final chapter on “Eighteenth-Century Literary Culture.” With his characteristic energy Shields shapes this potentially very conventional topic into a full-scale exploration of all the means—literary, social, and technological—available to colonial Americans of the time. Deftly juggling the themes of orality, manuscript production, reading circles, and print resources, his chapter offers a model of possible responses to the challenge of book history as book history.

A thoughtful “Afterword” by Amory and Hall does not exploit these possibilities as fully as it might, but nevertheless prepares us for the next volume in the series by reminding us of the complexity of jurisdictions in the US which eventually leads to freedom from control of the press and remains today as pivotal a factor in American life as it was when Wroth used it to define the options of “the book in America” in the 1930s. They note the shaping of “authorship” by the fact that in a young literature, there was no canon, and therefore no premium on a particular writer’s work, and observe the resulting development of copyright at the instigation of authors trying to make their way, rather than—as in London—the stationers with their privileges. A concluding stress on the interaction between orality, manuscript, and print (I sense Hall’s voice here) reminds us of that broader canvas proposed at the beginning, but not always fully exploited in the individual chapters.

There are three excellent Appendixes, two (on Statistics and on “Durable Authors”) generated by means of the North American Imprints Program data-base, and another one, citing the ever-useful John J. McCusker’s How Much Is That in Real Money? (1992) on the difficulties of calculating book prices. The illustrations are excellent. A complaint, however, about the end-notes and the “Select Bibliography.” The learned and profuse notes condense author-title citations in such a way that the reader has to comb back through their thicket to the beginning of a chapter to discover (if one ever can) the full citation. This would be no problem if the bibliography weren’t quite so select. It is topically arranged and has thoughtful head notes, but it seems to skim the surface in comparison with the
research represented in the notes, and will be of use chiefly to the
teacher. Finally, my copy is not a distinguished example of the
book arts; the pages are well-designed and very readable, but some
sheets are either badly imposed or folded, and binding glue (though
the book appears to be stitched) has frequently seeped into the
gutters.

Despite certain reservations above, it must be stressed that *The
Colonial Book in the Atlantic World* is a major contribution to book
history as it moves outside the arena of the European book into the
larger world. How wide that scene of writing, reading, and text
production might be was suggested a century ago, by the planners of
the Library of Congress. In his charming book *On These Walls*
(1995), John Y. Cole describes their efforts, which I saw recently in
the east mosaic corridor of the Jefferson Building and the old entrance
to the great Reading Room, where some of the research for this
volume will have taken place. “Adorning the East Corridor are six
lunettes by John White Alexander that depict *The Evolution of the
Book*. The subjects are, at the south end, the *Cairn, Oral Tradition,
and Egyptian Hieroglyphics*, and at the north end, *Picture Writing,
the Manuscript Book*, and the *Printing Press*” (30). Today, few but
tourists see the lunettes, as those in pursuit of book learning now
enter the Reading Room from the east entrance. Yet here one spacious
pictorial scheme predicts as an integrated set of possibilities the
multiple modes of publication a modern book historian needs to
keep in perspective. The digital, of course, had yet to be imagined,
but the capaciousness of the artistic programme allows for many
possibilities. The succeeding volumes in this influential project will
show us how these possibilities continue to be worked out.

**GERMAINE WARKENTIN**

*University of Toronto*

---

Chartier, Roger. *Publishing Drama in Early Modern Europe*. The
$32.00 (paper). ISBN 0-7123-4635-X.

Roger Chartier’s is the fourteenth of the Panizzi Lectures inaugurated
by D. F. McKenzie in 1985 and his is a fitting tribute to McKenzie,
who died soon after this series was presented. Chartier is deeply