

Julia Rogers Research Prize Submission

The Rose: or Affection's Gift for 1847:

History, Culture and Society as Relating to the American Gift Book

Katherine Sedovic

Nominating Professor: April Oettinger

March 14, 2011

For the final project in ART 382: The Art and History of the Book, I was required to write an essay based on original research I completed on a book from Goucher's Special Collections and Archives. What intrigued me about the project was the fact that my chosen book would be one with no previous research. As an art history major, this project provided me with an opportunity to acquaint myself with the process of original research, and with the multiplicity of resources found in the Goucher College Library.

During the two months I spent researching *The Rose: or Affection's Gift for 1847*, I utilized a variety of library resources. To begin with, my chosen book's placement in Special Collections and Archives necessitated that I spend time there exploring my primary source; reading excerpts and examining everything from the engravings, paper type and type face, to the publication information, binding and cover. While working in Special Collections, I also discovered the wide range of reference materials kept there, including Bamber Gascoigne's *How to Identify Prints*, a text that was instrumental in determining the type of illustrations in *The Rose*.

In addition to the resources in Special Collections and Archives, I also took advantage of the library's more prevalent resources, including texts from the general collection, articles found on databases such as JSTOR, and books received through Interlibrary Loan, all of which provided me with a vast array of information regarding my topic of study; American gift books in the 1800's.

Overall, the resources in Goucher's library played an intrinsic role in shaping and developing both my preliminary research and final essay. Having access to such a

wide variety of sources proved instrumental to writing a comprehensive essay on a previously un-researched text, and also helped me to explore the many facets of original research, allowing me to develop a greater appreciation for the effort and perseverance required to complete such a project.

The Rose: or Affection's Gift for 1847 is a prime example of an American gift book, a type of book popular in the early to mid 1800's, a period sometimes known as the "Age of Annuals" or the "American Renaissance", due to the flowering of American literature and illustration that took place.¹ Although at first glance, *The Rose* may appear rather prosaic and uninspiring, due to its small size and plain exterior, there is in fact much to be discovered by exploring and analyzing the countless aspects and characteristics of *The Rose*. By conducting detailed research on American gift books in general, and on *The Rose: or Affection's Gift for 1847* in particular, (researching elements such as its text, illustrations, audience and publisher) it is possible to learn not only much about the history of *The Rose*, but also much about the genre of gift books and the society and culture that led to their great popularity and application.

Gift books, or literary annuals, first became popular in England in the 19th century. For example, it was in 1823 that the first British literary annual; *Forget Me Not* was published.² However, the style and format of American gift books is based off of that of French and German literary almanacs, with the first American gift book (*The Atlantic Souvenir*) being published in 1826.³

Gift books were usually small in size, in order to render them more personal, and were often bound in a publisher's cloth and gilt cover, making them at once attractive and affordable.⁴ In addition to appealing to their target audience, gift

¹ James F. O'Gorman, *Aspects of American Printmaking, 1800-1950* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1988), 31.

² University of Liverpool, "Literary Annuals," *University of Liverpool: University Library*.

³ Wikimedia Foundation Inc., "Gift Book," *Wikipedia*.

⁴ The Philadelphia Rare Books and Manuscripts Co., "American Gift Books," *Gift Books: Philadelphia Rare Books*.

books were also enticing to both their publishers and contributing authors. Due to the popularity of gift books, publishers benefited greatly, resulting in higher pay for the authors, an unusual occurrence during this era of book history, when authors were treated more as menial workers than as respected artists.⁵

Literary annuals were usually published once a year, always under the same title (often named after flowers, such as *The Floral Forget-Me-Not*; *The Iris: An Illuminated Souvenir*; and of course, *The Rose*) but with new contents.⁶ Although it can be assumed that *The Rose* was published in such a fashion, it is difficult to obtain evidence, since as is shown by the lack of material referencing it, *The Rose* was not one of America's most popular gift books.

American literary annuals reached their peak in popularity in the 1820's, when they were given as a keepsake or souvenir, especially during the holiday season, as evidenced by the line "A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to its patrons" in the preface of *The Rose*, which signifies the time of the year at which it was published.⁷ To be sure, during one such peak year, there were as many as thirty different annuals available for purchase during the holiday season.⁸

This time period is sometimes thought to exhibit a "gift economy", where the purpose of exchange was to promote the continuation of and importance of relationships.⁹ As Cindy Dickinson writes in her article "Creating a World of Books,

⁵ Ralph Thompson, *American Literary Annuals and Gift Books* (New York: The H.W. Wilson Co., 1936), 1.

⁶ Cindy Dickinson, "Creating a World of Books, Friends and Flowers: Gift Books and Inscriptions, 1825-60," *Winterthur Portfolio* 31.1 (1996): 53-66.

⁷ Emily Marshall, *The Rose: or Affection's Gift for 1847* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1847), preface.

⁸ Ralph Thompson, 1.

Friends and Flowers: Gift Books and Inscriptions, 1825-60", "What renders a book more valuable as a keepsake than almost any other is, that, like a friend, it can talk with and entertain us".¹⁰ During the early to mid 1800's, the public was enamored with the idea of the continuity of relationships that the gift of a book could help to establish. Unlike other presents that the receiver would most likely either consume or grow out of, a book could be read again and again, even be returned to in later life, or passed down for use by a new audience.

Accordingly, it became common practice to include a personal inscription on one of the volume's front end-sheets, to act as a record of the relationship that prompted the giving of the book.¹¹ Today, this practice makes it easier for book historians to trace the path of a gift book by researching the persons mentioned in the inscription. Unfortunately, although *The Rose* does have plenty of blank pages for an inscription, it does not contain one, possibly because it began its life as a donation to the Goucher College Library by Sara Hardt Mencken, class of 1920. *The Rose* currently resides in Goucher College's Special Collections and Archives, where it serves as an example of a 19th century gift book and as a primary resource for student and faculty research.

Considering that gift books were usually published in late autumn, they presented themselves as ready presents for people of all ages. As Dickinson also states in her article:

⁹ Stephen Ferguson, "Collecting in 19th Century America." *Rare Book Collections at Princeton*. The Trustees of Princeton University.

¹⁰ Cindy Dickinson, 61.

¹¹ Cindy Dickinson, 57.

Books have long been considered appropriate presents. From the mid 1820's until the American Civil War, book publishers in England and America formally acknowledged such a tradition by publishing elegantly bound yearly volumes of prose, poetry, and illustrations in anticipation of Christmas and New Year's Day.¹²

Certainly, as small, compact, beautiful books containing collections of poetry and prose complimented by illustrations (most often steel engravings, in many cases copies of artwork by respected American artists such as William Guy Wall, Thomas Doughty and Alvan Fisher) gift books became a popular token of love, friendship or remembrance, to be given from a parent to a child, or from one friend or lover to another.¹³ As the *Atlantic Souvenir of 1826* advertised itself:

Nothing would seem more naturally to suggest itself, as one of those marks of remembrance and affection, which old custom has associated with the gaiety of Christmas, than a little volume of lighter literature, adorned with beautiful specimens of art.¹⁴

Another part of the charm of gift books was their connection to the "old world" and tradition. Just as the format of American gift books was influenced by that of European countries such as France and Germany, so was the manner in which they were utilized, as classic gifts symbolizing the continuity of tradition in an increasingly complex and hectic world.

¹² Cindy Dickinson, 53.

¹³ Georgia B. Barnhill, "Literary Annuals." *Annuals at the American Antiquarian Society*. American Antiquarian Society.

¹⁴ *Atlantic Souvenir of 1826*. Quoted in Cindy Dickinson, 53.

Although a broad audience enjoyed gift books, it is possible to find much evidence of their being marketed towards children. For example, many gift books, such as *The Rose*, tout the strong virtues and moral standards exhibited in their texts.¹⁵ In the preface of *The Rose*, for instance, editor Emily Marshall draws readers' attention to the fact that:

The strong moral influence which poetry and fiction always exert, when produced by real genius, will be recognized as one of the chief recommendations which the tales and poetry, now offered to the public, possess.¹⁶

As evidenced by the former quote, literary annuals were often chosen for children by adults, based on the belief that they contained the type of fiction best suited to positively influencing young, impressionable minds. Certainly, in "Christmas Gift Books", author R.R.T., cites "those baser souls who make a practice of purchasing gift books for the elevation of the young..."¹⁷ American gift books of the 19th century contained poetry and short stories that were meant to both remind children of good morals and religious values and also to introduce them to famous American authors, such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allen Poe, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, all of whom are known to have contributed to the text of gift books.¹⁸ By presenting a child with a gift book, parents and relatives aimed not only to provide the child with

¹⁵ R.R.T "Christmas Gift Books," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 37.213 (1920): 323-324.

¹⁶ Emily Marshall, iv.

¹⁷ R.R.T., 323.

¹⁸ Florida State University, "Gift Books, Literary Annuals and Children's Annuals in Special Collections," *Gift Books*.

tangible proof of their love, but also with the means to comprehend American history, culture and morality.

As reading material for a more mature audience, gift books acted as a form of leisure reading, as a childhood token, and as a means by which the reader could reacquaint themselves with the values and morals so clearly elucidated within their pages.¹⁹ For example, in *The Rose*, many of the short stories, such as “Makanna; or the Wrongs of Amakosa”, “Carl Blüven and the Strange Mariner”, and “A Visit to Empoöngwa; or a Peep into Negroland” can be seen as a form of “armchair travel literature” in that they transport the reader to the strange and faraway lands in which the stories take place. At a time in history during which world travel was not possible for many, this type of literature provided people with glimpses of places they would otherwise be unable to visit.²⁰

Literary annuals also served as a way in which adults could revisit the morals and values taught them during their childhood. For Ms. Turner, a young woman who received *The Floral Forget Me Not* as a gift in 1854, the book becomes a place where she can both question and reaffirm her religious beliefs. In one of the many margin notes that Ms. Turner uses to commentate on the text of her gift book, she writes:

I think this [“The Dying Boy to the Sloe Blossom” by E. Elliot] is beautiful yet- a spirit of infidelity or atheism is all through it, for who would yearn for earths fading flowers when the unfading flowers of heaven are so near. ²¹

¹⁹ Cindy Dickinson, 63.

²⁰ -----, “Genre of Leisure Reading,” (Goucher College, Baltimore: ART 382: The Art and History of the Book).

²¹ Turner. Quoted in Cindy Dickinson, 63.

Clearly, during the mid to late 1800's when American gift books enjoyed the most popularity, they evolved to have a multitude of meanings for their broad audience. From teaching values and morals to young children, to providing a literary escape for older readers, to serving as a type of journal for the reader to record his or her beliefs in, literary annuals served in whatever way best fitted their readers.

Although the manner in which gift books were presented (including cover design and marketing techniques, both of which lie in the domain of the publisher) affected its target audience, even more important was the actual text of the book. Considering that *The Rose* was geared towards a broad audience, including both children and adults, *The Rose: or Affection's Gift for 1847* contains a great variety of poems and short stories, in order to please its varied audience.

For example, its prose and poetry vary in topic from a woman's adventures in Africa, to the death of a parent, to morning walks. As editor Emily Marshall points out in *The Rose's* preface, it "exhibits an unusual degree of novelty and variety in the subjects, which frequently travel far out of the beaten track so long occupied by works of this class".²² From such a quote it is possible to conclude that in the years since the literary annual was first introduced to America, the style and manner of gift book prose and poetry had become rather stagnant and repetitive. From the perspective of Emily Marshall, *The Rose* sought to rectify this through its choice of a variety of new, entertaining and morally uplifting works.

Also acting to bring new life to literary annuals are the illustrations of *The Rose*, which are just as varied as the text they accompany. *The Rose's* illustrations are

²² Emily Marshall, iv.

steel engravings, an illustration technique that was first used in the 1820's as a more durable and plate-saving alternative to traditional copper engravings.²³ With increased usage and popularity, steel engravings soon became the common illustration method of the 1800's.²⁴ Literary annuals such as *The Rose* obviously contributed to this change, as Bamber Gascoigne mentions in his manual, *How to Identify Prints*:

Sentimental subjects illustrated in the flood of ladies' annuals which were the publishing phenomenon of the 1820's and 1830's and which turned steel engraving for a while into a boom industry.²⁵

It was also during this time in America that there was a shift in the public view of illustrators, in which they became viewed more as artists and professionals than as craftsmen, resulting in increasing respect for their work.²⁶

In the engraving process, the engraver uses a burin, or graver (a tool with a sharply pointed "v" shaped section) to scoop away unwanted metal, utilizing both etching and engraving techniques. During this time, the burin is driven away from the engraver, resting almost parallel to the steel plate that is being engraved, resulting in crisp, steady lines that are usually pointed at each end. The engraver is able to control the depth of the line through the degree of pressure he exerts on the burin.²⁷ The engraver next uses a variety of cross-hatching techniques to achieve tonal differences

²³ John Taylor Arms, *Handbook of Print Making and Print Makers* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1934), 33.

²⁴ Philip V. Allingham, "The Technologies of 19th Century Illustration: Woodblock Engraving, Steel Engraving and Other Processes," *The Victorian Web*.

²⁵ Bamber Gascoigne, *How to Identify Prints* (Thames and Hudson, 2004), 13 a.

²⁶ James F. O'Gorman, 31.

²⁷ John Taylor Arms, 33.

within the engraving.²⁸ To add this detail to the engraving, the engraver uses other tools such as the “tint-tool”, curved graver and “threading-tool”, all of which create a variety of lines and textures.²⁹

By the time the engraver is finished, the end result is an engraving made up of many shallow, pale lines, which is then printed like an etching (a process where the plate is rolled with ink, the excess wiped off, a piece of damp paper laid over it, and the whole package pressed on the bed of an etching press).³⁰ A steel engraving is recognizable therefore, both through the different patterns of line created by cross-hatching and by the clear, delicate and thin character of the lines, due to the hardness of the metal.³¹

In the case of *The Rose's* steel engravings, although small (so as to fit the pocket-sized book), by looking closely or by using a magnifying glass, it is possible to determine the great variety of cross-hatchings that make up the illustrations. It is fascinating to do so, as the engravings all have a character of their own, based upon the manner of line that was used, in order to convey differences such as lights and darks, people and landscapes.

Of course, without the work of a publishing company, *The Rose*, or any other 19th century book for that matter, would never have come into being. Certainly:

In the publisher's realm, the efforts of writers, engravers, printers, and publishers combined to create a product that offered refinement, sentiment,

²⁸ Bamber Gascoigne, 53 f.

²⁹ John Taylor Arms, 33.

³⁰ John Taylor Arms, 3, 4, 33.

³¹ Steve Bartrick, "Line Engraving," *Antique Prints and Maps*, Steve Bartrick Antique Prints and Maps.

and a good read in one package.³²

The Rose: or Affection's Gift for 1847 was itself published by the well-known American publisher, D. Appleton and Company. D. Appleton and Company was founded by Daniel Appleton in 1825.³³ However, it was not until 1831 that the company published any books. D. Appleton and Company began as a Massachusetts general store with an adjoining book department, furnished with books shipped over from England. The book department was run by one of Appleton's four sons, William Henry, until he and his brother-in-law, Jonathan Leavitt, decided to transform the department into an actual bookstore. 1831 marked the beginning of D. Appleton and Company, publisher, with the publication and following successes of *Crumbs from the Master's Table* and *Gospel Seeds*.³⁴ The company soon went on to publish a variety of other books, becoming a well-known and respected American publishing house.

Foremost among D. Appleton's published works are: Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species* (1859), *Picturesque America* (1872), Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), Sarah Bernhardt's *Memories of My Life* (1897) and Edith Wharton's *An Age of Innocence* (1920).³⁵ One of the company's most notable successes however, was their publication of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in 1865. The publication of the first edition of *Alice* to be available in America was the result of a lucky guess in which the company purchased 1,900 unbound first edition copies from England, where author Lewis Carroll and illustrator

³² Cindy Dickinson, 53.

³³ Grant Overton, *Portrait of a Publisher and the First Hundred Years of the House of Appleton: 1825-1925* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1925), 27.

³⁴ Grant Overton, 28.

³⁵ Paperbarn, "House of Appleton," *Publishing Houses*.

John Tenniel were disappointed with the print quality. Although *Alice* sold poorly at first, with time it became both a sensation and a classic, validating D. Appleton's decision to introduce the book to American audiences.³⁶

In later years, D. Appleton and Company underwent a series of mergers and buyouts, illustrative of the ways in which American publishing changed throughout the 20th century. For example, in 1933, the company was merged with Century Company (founded in 1881), forming D. Appleton-Century Company. In 1948, D. Appleton-Century Company was consolidated with F.S. Crofts Company (founded in 1924) to create Appleton-Century-Crofts Inc. Eventually the company was bought by Prentice Hall in 1974, with whom the former D. Appleton and Company remains today.³⁷

As for *The Rose: or Affection's Gift for 1847* itself, it was edited by Emily Marshall, evidence of the fact that women edited the majority of gift books, perhaps in response to their mostly female audiences.³⁸ *The Rose* is a small, pocket-sized volume consisting of 252 pages, a characteristic typical of its genre, as most gift books contained about three hundred pages.³⁹ Gilt-edged pages (most likely crafted of wood pulp), wide margins and three blank end-sheets at both the beginning and end of the book characterize the text block of *The Rose*. It is bound in a maroon conservator's cover with the words *The Rose* stamped in gold on its spine. It is unfortunate that the original cover of this copy of *The Rose* no longer exists, as it

³⁶ Grant Overton, 7.

³⁷ Paperbarn.

³⁸ Wikimedia Foundation Inc.

³⁹ Cindy Dickinson, 54.

would without doubt provide even greater insights to the tone and style of the text, especially as relating to the connection between word and image.

In regards to its text, *The Rose* contains a collection of 35 poems and short stories by various authors. The poems and stories are presented in a classic Times New Roman typeface and are accompanied by ten steel engravings by E. Finden, copied from sketches by Major Denham, which refer to selected scenes from the text. Although the addition of *The Rose's* original cover would certainly add to the depth of information that can be gleaned by comparing its text and illustrations, even without the cover there is still much that can be discovered. For example, beyond the simple fact that the illustrations are not merely engraved copies of works of art, but instead relate to the poems and short stories of the book, the selected illustrations and the fashion in which they are rendered provides *The Rose* with a specific tone and feeling, one of exoticism mixed with Victorian America. The rather eccentric selection of poetry and prose mirrors this impression, as the short stories and poems cover a broad range of topics. For example, "A Visit to Empoöngwa; or A Peep into Negroland" by Mrs. Lee contains descriptions such as:

His good-humored fat face was decorated with his national insignia; namely, his side-locks and whiskers braided so as to form long stiff horns, and tipped with beads, although projecting very far beyond his nose.⁴⁰

While stories of exotic lands and people (such as described in the former quote) provided readers of *The Rose* with excitement and intrigue, and were heightened by dramatic engravings of African natives, Persian sultans and the like, other stories and

⁴⁰ Lee. Quoted in Emily Marshall, 49.

poems presented more traditional world views, such as an anecdote describing the perils of match-making (“Match-Making: A Sketch” by Mrs. Mitford) or the poem entitled “To a Pen”; “Write to the young and fair that life is but a dream”.⁴¹ These latter poems and stories were also accompanied by steel engravings, which, like their more sensational fellow engravings also captured the feel and imagery of the text (through landscapes and images of 19th century men and women, for example).

Although additional information regarding *The Rose: or Affection’s Gift for 1847* (such as its original cover, and preceding or subsequent volumes) would increase the amount of available knowledge about both *The Rose* in particular and the genre of gift books in general, there is still much that can be determined through a detailed analysis of *The Rose*. As is illustrated, with such an analysis, insights into the history of *The Rose*, and the society and culture responsible for the creation of American gift books can be gained, resulting in a better understanding of the history of the book. Certainly, by studying gift books such as *The Rose*, understanding not only of that particular book, but also of its specific audience, publisher, authors and illustrators is obtained, providing new observations of the culture, history and possibly even future, of the book.

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⁴¹ C. Quoted in Emily Marshall, 85.

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