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Papa Lyman Remembers-Women in Book Publishing

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Papa Lyman Remembers
Women in Book Publishing and Selling
by Lyman Newlin (Book Trade Counsellor)<cbroadwater@ag.net>

The Follett family was to have been the subject of this column but as I started to write about it, I discovered that I need more time to research the developments accomplished by the third, fourth, and possibly fifth generations. I had about decided to return to chronology when I read an article in a recent New York Times about the appointment of Anthem Disney (no relation to you who know as head of HarperCollins. Add this to the fact that I had just finished putting together a list of reference books I intend to promote in March which has been declared “National Women’s History Month.” Of course, I began thinking about the history of women I have known in book publishing and selling. A brief study of directories substantiated my belief that women in our industry have made a tremendous stride forward in the past generation. The following is not intended as a history as such, rather it is a collection of reminiscences of women I have known and learned from in the course of my experience. I must hereewith throw out a challenge to Nancie Essig or Marline Wasserman to get cracking on a proper history of women in publishing.

Here are some women I remember and to many of whom I am indebted as teachers. I’ll try to mention every woman I have known who fills this description but I am sure I will miss some only because my mental data bank does not always come forth with all the information I call for.

I’ll begin with Anna Bond Patterson, a Sunday school teacher in my boyhood. She was office manager of Chicago’s Economy Book Store, owned by her brother-in-law, Laurence Palne. As I have previously written, Bonnie Patterson helped me get my first real job in 1933 when the N.R.A. came into being. Sara Smith. Among other jobs at Wilcox & Follett Co., credit manager was her main one. She always signed her name to collection letters “S. Smith.” When asked why she said, “A tough letter signed by a woman wouldn’t get as much attention as it should.” Sara was barely five feet tall but her collection copy read like it was coming from a Chicago Bear fullback. Margaret Harding was director of the University of Minnesota Press during the forties. I have to guess that Margaret was one of the first, if not the first, female university press director. I will always be grateful to her for being an early u.p. director to publish books on natural history and the outdoors. Some of her best were Birds of Minnesota by Thomas S. Roberts, MD, and the books of Francis Lee and Florence F. Jacques. Margaret was succeeded by Helen Clapesattle, author of an early u.p. bestseller The Doctors Mayo. I have previously mentioned how great Minnesota book women: Helen L. MacDonald and Jane McCarthy of the Press and Lucille Clark and Elizabeth Dunn of the Minnesota Book Store...
You Gotta Go to School for That?

Library Uniforms & Nifty Accessories

by Jerry Seay (College of Charleston) <seayt@cofc.edu>

The groundswell of ideas and excitement is staggering. I am, of course, talking about the library uniform concept for members of our august profession. Nearly all of the four people who read this column have sent in ideas for a uniform. As I indicated in my last diatribe, there is a vital necessity for such an identifying garment. I for one am getting tired of having to answer the question, "do you work here" with, "what? do you think they let just anybody sleep at the reference desk?" So, in response to my call, you, my public, have responded.

JeY Wann, Acquisitions Coordinator at Oregon State Library, who, by the way, is wearing a nice sweater, a nice wool skirt, and a beat-up pair of Birkenstocks considers the multi-tiered approach. She writes, "I can’t come up with an official uniform suggestion, but it reminds me of a former employee here who was concerned that patrons have trouble telling who’s on the staff and who’s not. Her suggestion was a 3-tiered uniform system: librarians would wear blazers, paraprofessionals would wear (I think) vests, and pages would wear beanies. Whether or not the beanies should include propellers, I don’t know. The person who suggested this was a former Army band member, and perhaps that accounts for her coming up with the idea in the first place."

Now this has possibilities, I mean, besides the great propeller idea. Why not distinguish different staff positions by particular dress code or color? Hey, just think of Star Trek. Why do all the ideas eventually go back to Star Trek? Remember, Scotty and all the engineering crew wore red uniforms. Most officers wore gold, and medical personnel wore blue. Of course, Spock wore blue as well and that was because... er... well, no one really knows. But, with just a glance you always knew how these folks fit in to the grand scheme of things. Imagine such a system in a library... "No Sir, I’m sorry, but we here at circulation wear green uniforms and that question is obviously one for a blue uniformed reference librarian. Please direct your question appropriately or I shall be forced to beam you out."

Though I grant that the idea of sleek librarians strutting around the library in tight fitting nylon coveralls of various colors is enough to drive one wild, I submit that sensible shoes and a well-placed hair bun would give this ensemble just the right balance of sexy professionalism. Of course, this assumes that one is trying for sexy professionalism. Alas, not everyone is comfortable with such bold assertions of raw librarian power. Note that this suggestion came from a former employee. Great minds are rarely appreciated.

So, for those seeking a more down to earth look, if somewhat less flashy, Joan Bartram of Salve Regina University Library in Newport, Rhode Island gives us this idea. She writes, "In the summer of 1968 I received my first appointment as a Collection Development Librarian, I was at the time working at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. My boss was an Englishman, superb bookman, and exemplary eccentric named John Robert Turner Ettinger. Based on his experience as a rare book librarian at Brown he set up an exhaustive training program for me. The first three parts of this training program included work on fermentation (his hobby -- we fermented anything and everything), abandoned schoolhouses in Nova Scotia (he collected them), and the designing of a library uniform.

Joan goes on to say that Mr. Ettinger put her in charge of designing a library uniform. "The brief he gave me to design the uniforms must be put in further cultural context," she writes. "The man was an old Etonian and graduate of Magdalen College, Oxford who had one dozen Eton ties which he wore in rotation with his three identical navy blue suits. Further, he had been in the RAF during World War II. Predictably, the Public Services Uniform echoed the British school girl look -- white shirt, gray flannel skirt, and "old school tie." The Technical Services uniform was reminiscent of the RAF -- coveralls with the institutional crest emblazoned on the front and the wearers name and position on the back. In the end, disagreement on the right colors to use "torpedoed the entire project," writes Joan. "I continued to wear my Mary Quant minidresses to work and the Reference Department never looked like Victoria Station with its alligators of schoolgirls. Over two decades later I'm still not sure if I'd rather look like a gray poupon bottle, as you suggest, or an English school girl as my mentor envisioned?" Well, though I would tend to think twice before donning English school girl attire, I must admit that the "RAF coveralls" look does hold a certain appeal to those of us who consider speed-in-dressing when choosing our wardrobe. You can get into and out of those things in seconds, even while wearing sensible shoes. It would combine practical fashion and identifiability for the librarian on the go.

While the above uniform ideas address the problems of librarian and position identification, there is still the problem of our uniform getting across what we do and who we are. Construction workers wear hard-hats and firemen have big boots. These garments are readily identifiable trademarks of their profession. What about librarians?

Erik N. Anderson, Director of Hanford Technical Library at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory has come up with a uniform that goes far toward addressing this dilemma. Erik writes, "We know that the age of specialization is gone; we are all generalists. Therefore, to hold our profession together, I propose the Good Librarian's Uniform, Eclectic (GLUE). It starts off with smartly tailored khaki pants to express our down-to-business attitude. Add a blue cotton cut shirt in stantling red, reminding one of overseas journal prices. Round off with a corduroy blazer (with elbow patches, of course), demonstrating our strong academic foundation. To tie our rich history to the electronic age, it's topped off with a green eye shade that disguises a 3-D virtual reality headset, which allows us to look into cyberspace and find those non-catalogued electronic-only serials. All unisex, of course.

Eric brings up a great point: accessories! What a great way to round out our uniform: a librarian utility belt. On this utility belt we would attach all the stuff that we need in our day-to-day librarian work -- things like keys (for digging paper out of printers), and paper clips (for digging keys out of printers), and a flashlight (to see to dig keys and paper out of printers). Just add a handheld computer, a coin changer and, presto, each librarian is self-sufficient, fully mobile, and action-packed. Of course, we librarians are already self-sufficient, fully mobile, and action packed; but who among us has a nifty utility belt? Now, that, I think you will agree, is reason enough to have a library uniform. "

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immediately two men entered the room from a side door. One was bearing a large ledger, the other a sheaf of correspondence. One of these gentlemen was presented as head bookkeeper, the other as credit and collection manager. These boys soon destroyed all hopes of help. The trouble was that I had not explained the purpose of my call when I made the appointment. Business woman that she was Mrs. Meyer had assumed that I was coming to arrange to pay a rather sizable delinquent account. I believe that Mrs. Meyer learned something from me: don't be too optimistic when making appointments. I learned that George Delacorte had other places for his money besides struggling publishers. Didn't he contribute substantially to the creation of statutory, fountains and amphitheaters in Central Park for the enjoyment of children?

... Shirley Lambert was secretary to Edward Maguire, sales manager of G.K. Hall and I was assistant to Richard Abel when we met during a Chicago Midwinter ALA ses-

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Papa Lyman
from page 58

sion. From G.K. Hall Shirley did marketing
and editorial work for Pergamon, Libraries
Unlimited, and Fulcrum. Last July she took
over the position of editorial director at Scare-
crow Press from the retiring Norman
Horrockes. I have frequently had occasion to
marvel at Shirley's command of several for-
eign languages and her savvy in marketing. I
predict continued success as lead editor of
this prestigious publisher...

In the days when Wilcox & Follett Co.
owned only a handful of college bookstores,
four at Big Ten universities maintained excel-
 lent trade book departments. I was business
manager of Follett Book Company and as
such one of the few staff members active in
trade book merchandising. Thus I had some
input in the direction of branch store trade
policies. In 1938 Follett's Illinois book store
in Champaign needed a trade department man-
ger/buyer and I was put on the trail of likely
candidates. I had come to respect and admire a
young trade department clerk in Kroch's Book
Store on Michigan Avenue, Chicago. (Kroeh's
had not yet made public its ownership of
Brentano's Chicago and the stores were oper-
ated separately.) Her name was (and still is)
Elsa Lichtenstein. Elsa went through the usual
using gamut and then created and managed the
department at Follett's University of
Illinois College Book Store. After three years
in Champaign, Elsa decided to go to New
York and got a job with Follett's number one
competitor, all people! She started at Barnes
& Noble's retail store at 18th Street and Fifth
Avenue, Elsa served under the presidencies of
John Barnes and Warren Sullivan before
Len Riggio, of NYU Book Store, took over
ownership. Elsa eventually became head of
the art book department of the Barnes &
Noble store in Rockefeller Center. She retired
in 1993 after a career of over fifty years as one
of the best known art book people in the busi-
ness. Her name was and is revered by all
publishers of art books past and present.

Any history of women in publishing should
probably begin and end with Sara Miller
McCune. I first knew her as Sara Miller, a
very pretty and charming member of
Macmillan's sales department. It was she who
helped the department out of the jam created
by sending a huge shipment of books to a
Wisconsin country schoolhouse instead of the
intended University Book Store in Madison.
This created a furor among college store man-
ger/buyers but Sara helped settle it at an ABA
meeting in Chicago. After Macmillan Sara
spent time as sales manager of Pergamon
Press in Oxford, England. Upon her return to
America, she married George McCune who
had been a Macmillan sales manager and to-
gether they founded Sage Publishers in 1964.
After a few years in New York, the business
was moved to California where it has grown
to be one of the leading English-language
publishers of books and journals in the social
and behavioral sciences, with nearly 2000 titles
now in print. Since the sudden death of George
in 1990, Sara has spent time as a foundation
executive, but as chairman of Sage she travels
to visit its offices in London and Delhi, India
while George's son, David has taken over as
president of the company. Sara has taken part
in several Charleston Conferences, contrib-
uted the first publisher profile to Against the
Grain (v.1, no.2, June, 1989, p. 28) and also
was interviewed in ATG (v.5, no.5, November
1993, pp. 32-35).

It is quite possible that I have neglected to
mention some of my acquaintances among
the top American female publishers. As oth-
ers come to mind, I'll include a thumbnail
sketch in a future column.

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and subsequent issues, including 1996.

My thanks to Janet Donzella, Director
of Lewiston Public Library for help with facts
about George T. Delacorte, garnered from

Back Talk
from page 90

sitions, URL address maintenance, and
preservation functions. Our shelves may be
digital, but the work of filling them and keeping
them filled continues to be complicated and
important. Job security for the information
professional is assured.

Last any of this be interpreted as negative
toward the brave new digital world or that I
am pining for the good old days when books
were books and journals were a fiscal disaster,
that is not my intent. I am enthused about the
superior access that will be afforded by digital
monographs and periodicals, by the whole
new educational opportunities that multi-
demia will provide, and by the expanded use of
our special collections will receive. My purpose is
to simply point out that from the vantage point
of someone who is already involved to a fairly
significant degree in the acquisition of digital
materials, this new paradigm does not do away
with the need for librarians — it demands
them.

On the other hand, while our future is
assured, we can't just expect to do everything
the same. We have to focus on the enduring
nature of the functions librarians have always
performed: selection from the universe of pub-
lication that which is useful and affordable,
working with information providers to secure
access to the needed material, providing bib-
liographic access so that you can find what
you want when you want it, providing the
setting where materials can be used effect-
ively, training people how to find what they
need and how to use it when they find it, preserv-
ing today's acquisitions for tomorrow's
researchers, planning and budgeting, and deal-
ing with the politics of the supporting institu-
tions so that capital, material, and personnel
resources are available to make all of this
work. We have work before us. Break up your
funeral flower arrangements into nice bou-
quets for your desks and get back to work.

Rumors
from page 44

doctor was awed that I knew an author in his
magazine!

I just had an idea for a new ATG column — Arguments I Have
Known. The editor would be — ta da — Lyman Newlin! The man is
amazing! Now he even has an email account <broadwater@ag.net>
Read his reminiscences of women he has known (and arguments he
has had) in Papa Lyman, this issue, page 67.

Corrections from the Last ATG (v.8#1, p. 31 —
Lucretia McClure <LMCL@db1.cc.rochester.edu> says there are
a few typos in her Op Ed (v.8#1, p.31). I am sorry, y'all. Now when I
look at them I can't explain "what idiot" would have made these
mistakes! Here goes. A sentence is left out in the second paragraph:
"Medical literature is full of literary treasures as well as elegantly-
described science. Librarians had the pleasure of introducing these
works to readers and helping students on their way to becoming
physicians." And — in the fifth paragraph, five lines from the bottom
the sentence should read, "scientists who will chart" (rather than
check) And — top paragraph of second column, gleaned and
gathered (rather than gleaned and fathered), And, last line of that same
paragraph should say, "read and study" instead of "ready and study." There
you have it. To paraphrase Edna St. Vincent Millay: The person who
eds a journal appears before the public with her typos exposed ...

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