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西方出版概况

Highlights of Western Publishing

总主编 / 苏世军 主 编 / 王艳 周宇

河南人民出版社

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前 言

这套出版贸易英语系列教材从策划、选材、编写到交稿付梓已历时五个春秋,在此期间有相当一部分内容已成为我院英语专业的必修课教材,也作为国家新闻出版总署教育培训中心英语学习班讲义试用,而且还将继续使用。这种教学实践是检验我们编写工作的试金石,开阔了我们的思路,丰富了我们的素材,增添了我们的信心。

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基于这种理念,这套出版贸易英语系列教材包括《西方出版概况》(Highlights in Western Publishing)、《西方编辑理论与实践》(Theory and Practice of Western Editing)、《西方版权法》(Western Copyright Law)、《西方版权沿革与贸易》(The Evolution and Trade of Western Copyright)、《西方出版物市场营销》(Western Marketing for Publications)等五种,其内容分别简述如下:

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交流应注意的编辑问题、禁书典型等方面,系统地论述了当代西方编辑的理论与实践。

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本套教材立项后曾荣获2002年北京市教委精品教材项目的资助,这对我们的编写工作给予了极大的鼓舞和鞭策。在编写过程中还得到了英国曼彻斯特都市大学印刷媒体学院高级讲师克里斯托弗·格林博士、美国俄亥俄大学新闻学院教授安娜·古博·陈

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编 者

2004年8月于北京

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Chapter 1

Book Publishing—Past, Present, and Future

The book as we know it today is a relatively modern phenomenon in the history of humankind, dating from only about the first century AD, when the first great codex consisting of flat sheets of parchment bound on one side and protected by a stiff cover of leather, was published. Prior to that, words had been inscribed on a variety of materials and in various forms.^[1] The original editions of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, published in 1771, and itself a landmark in the history of publishing, describes the development of the book:

Books were first written on stones, witness the Decalogue given to Moses; Then on the parts of plants, as leaves of the palm tree; the rind and barks ... and the Egyptian papyrus. By degrees, wax, then leather, were introduced, especially the skins of goats and sheep, of which at length parchment was prepared; Then lead came into use, also linen, silk, horn, and lastly paper itself.

The first books were in the form of blocks and tablets; but as flexible material came to be written on, they found it more convenient to make their books in the form of rolls: These were composed of several sheets fastened to each other and rolled upon a stick, or umbilicus; the whole making a kind of column, or cylinder, which was to be managed by the umbilicus as a handle, it being reputed a crime to take hold of the roll itself ... The whole volume, when extended, might make a yard and a half wide, and fifty long. (CITE PASSAGE ORIGIN)

In spite of its cumbersome size and shape, the roll remained the form of choice for the book over the centuries in ancient Greece and Rome; great libraries like the one at Alexandria, for example, often contained tens, even hundreds, of thousands of volumes.

The development of the codex changed all this, however, and bound sheets soon replaced the roll, although both the inscribing and binding of these first “modern” books was done by hand, usually in the monasteries of Europe. The next great leap forward in book publishing came some fourteen centuries later with two remarkable developments: the introduction of paper

as an inexpensive alternative to parchment and the invention of movable type. Movable type made it possible to print books in volume on a printing press, a method that not only earlier methods obsolete but also had the effect of making it possible to produce many more books so inexpensively that for the first time the book became accessible to the common people, not just to the nobility and to religious and secular scholars.

During the intellectual ferment of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, the availability of books became a potent force in disseminating ideas and led to an astonishing rise in the literacy rates of England and Europe. Indeed, when the first settlers arrived in the New World in the early 1660's, the literacy rate in England alone was sixty percent, as compared to ten percent just a century earlier. It was inevitable that a demand for books would accompany those first settlers to the colonies. In a sense, the American book industry was born when, in 1638, the first printing press arrived in the colonies and was set up in Cambridge, Massachusetts; in 1640, the press printed *The Whole Book of Psalms, or Bay Psalm Book*, as it is better known, the New World's first best-seller.

Other colonial printers followed suit, although they claimed they could not afford to print anything except that which was paid for in advance, or the work of authors (usually British) whose popularity was great enough to virtually assure that reprints of their books would sell. For instance, Sir Walter Scott's novel, *Waverly*, sold 8 000 copies on its first day of publication; and the novels of Samuel Richardson and Laurence Sterne often went into several editions. Almanacs were also popular; some of them, notably Nathaniel Ames's *Almanak*, sold 50 000 copies or more each year. But for the most part, the American author, who wanted a book published, had to assume all costs to have the book printed and distributed; even such popular Americans as Washington Irving followed this practice. Gradually, however, as printers began to accumulate capital, their operations grew, as did their ability to spot a potentially sellable book. It was not long, therefore, before the entrepreneurial spirit overcame caution, and book publishing, as we think of it today as an expansion of the printing business, became an entity in the new American republic.^[2]

The Colonial Times to 1900: Beginnings

Mathew Carey was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1760; and early in his life, he was apprenticed to a printer, where his reading, coupled with his strong political beliefs, led him to attempt writing himself. Resentful of British domination of his beloved Ireland, he penned a series of anti-British pamphlets that soon came to the attention of the British authorities, who

threatened him with prison for subversive activities. To escape jail, he fled to France, where he found a job working for Benjamin Franklin and met the Marquis de Lafayette.

In 1784, he left the Continent for good and sailed to America. He soon found work in Philadelphia as a reporter for the *Pennsylvania Herald*. His friendship with Lafayette paid off well in 1787, when the marquis offered him money to start his own newspaper, the *American Museum*. The paper was a success from the first and provided Carey with the capital to begin publishing books, the first two of which were American versions of the Roman Catholic and Protestant Bibles. Both were highly successful. Encouraged, he decided to branch out into other more secular areas of book publishing.

One of Carey's first great successes came in 1793, when he published a novel by a British woman, Susanna H. Rowson. *Charlotte Temple: A Tale of Truth* sold upwards of 50 000 copies. He followed this success by arranging to publish the works of Sir Walter Scott before competitors were able to; before long, Carey was the leading publisher in the United States.

When he retired in 1825, he turned the business over to his son and son-in-law, Henry Carey and Isaak Lea, two gifted and energetic young businessmen who continued to expand the Carey publishing empire. By the late 1820's, the firm was releasing nearly one out of the every four books published in the United States. The company survived until the mid-1980's; called Lea & Febiger, it specialized in medical books and journals.

Perhaps inspired by Carey's success, others began to test the book publishing waters. Joshua B. Lippincott began his career as a bookstore clerk in Philadelphia and ended up the store's owner. He soon began publishing religious books and was so successful that a few years later, he was able to buy out a major book jobber and expand enormously. By 1853, sales from the store and revenues from his published books reached nearly \$2 million, an almost inconceivable sum for that time.^[3]

Another Philadelphian, Presley Blakiston, began his career for Carey & Lea. In 1843, he and a friend, Robert Lindsay, decided to try publishing on their own and specialized in books on medicine and science. From the first, Lindsay and Blakiston was successful and became Blakiston Son & Co. when Lindsay retired; eventually, it was bought by McGraw-Hill.

But it was in New York that American publishing found its true home. By 1807, when a young man names Charles Wiley opened a bookstore there, New York was already the largest city in the United States and well on its way to becoming the nation's cultural center. Wiley's love of books and ideas led him to offer to help his intellectual writer friends by publishing their books, a practice fraught with risk since there was no guarantee that any of these unknown authors' books would sell. Then Wiley happened to meet James Fenimore Cooper, with whom

he reached a publishing agreement; before long, enough of these books had sold so that Cooper's popularity began to approach that of Sir Walter Scott. Upon Wiley's death at age forty-four, the firm was taken over by his son, John, who eventually went into partnership with George Putnam; and Wiley and Putnam became one of America's leading publishers.

In 1848, though, the partnership dissolved. John Wiley concentrated on publishing scientific and technical books; his company, now known as John Wiley & Sons, Inc., remains to this day one of the country's largest publishers of the same kinds of books that the original John Wiley published. Putnam, always more interested in *belles lettres*, went his own way, although he came close to ruin as a result of the peccadilloes of a partner who used company funds to indulge in wildcat speculation. Putnam's stint as Collector of Internal Revenue for New York City helped him to bail the company out. As the Putnam Publishing Group, a part of Penguin Putnam Publishing, the company survives and is a major of both adult and children's books.

But it was the four Harper brothers of New York who left the most lasting mark on nineteenth century publishing. Their rapid expansion and willingness to innovate, coupled with an amazing quality of entrepreneurial daring, led to Harper & Brothers' position as the largest publisher in the world by mid-century.

Like most of their contemporaries, the Harpers entered the world of publishing as printers. But within a year of opening their print shop in 1817, they had published their first two books, which they marketed ingeniously and which sold quite well. Soon they began to publish "serious" books, most of which were religious in nature, in keeping with their Methodist upbringing. Pious, thrifty, hard-working entrepreneurs all, the brothers soon surpassed their archrival, Mathew Carey, in both number of titles published and in profits. A disastrous fire wiped out their expensive plant in 1853; but undaunted, the Harpers resumed production within a few days. ^[4]

Even the deaths of the four brothers from 1869 to 1877 did not now slow the company down, as all had sons who took over and applied the same talent and dedication to the business that their fathers had. By the 1880's, Harper & Brothers was doing an extremely high volume of business for a publishing house of that era—some \$4 million per year. At the same time, the Harpers had a powerful influence on the quality of publishing. By the turn of the century, their roster of authors included such luminaries as Wilkie Collins, George Eliot, Henry James, Thomas Hardy, and Mark Twain. Their books ranged from popular fiction through scholarly history to authoritative texts in science and medicine; and although the company would later face a traumatic financial reorganization, it managed to survive and still exists today as the

respected firm HarperCollins.

A number of others entered the field during the Nineteenth Century, many of which are leaders and whose company names remain familiar to readers and librarians to this day. Some of these are G. and C. Merriam Company (1832); J. B. Lippincott (1836); Little Brown and Company (1837); Bobbs-Merrill (1838); A. S. Barnes (1845); Charles Scribner (1846); David Van Nostrand (1848); E. P. Dutton (1852); Rand McNally (1868); Cornell University Press (the first university press in the United States, 1869); R. R. Bowker (1872); Henry Holt and Company (1873); T. Y. Crowell (1876); Funk & Wagnalls (1878); Houghton-Mifflin (1882); Silver, Burdett and Company (1885); W. B. Saunders Company (1888); The Grolier Society (1895); Doubleday, McClure and Company (1897); and McGraw Publishing Company (1899).

In 1900, the American Publishers Association (later to become the Association of American Publishers) was established, with Charles Scribner as its first president. As John Tebbel, in his monumental *A History of Book Publishing in the United States*, puts it, this was a period “when the general organization of the industry was established and the problems which still beset it were defined.”

1900 to 1940: Going Commercial

The years from 1900 to 1940 can be characterized as an era of commercialization, when many lasting (and some not-so-lasting) partnerships were formed, when more new publishing houses were established, when houses merged and unmerged, and when the very nature of the publishing business changed radically. The long tradition of father-to-son-to-grandson succession as owners and managers of the powerful publishing houses established before 1900 began to decline, and the forces of finance capitalism started to come to the fore, as when the Harper family firm was reorganized by J. P. Morgan in 1899.

No small reason for the weakening of the family ownership tradition was the attitude of the publishers themselves toward their business. Earlier printer-publishers had been businesspeople first and “publishers” second; but gradually, a transformation occurred to the philosophy that publishing was somehow a cut above other businesses. As Henry Holt maintained to his dying day, it was not a “business” at all, but a “profession.”

Holt, as a matter of fact, was one of the first major publishers who did not start his career in the printing industry. Rather, he wanted to be a writer, studied law but never practiced it, and finally entered into business with a young Philadelphia publisher. In short, Holt was a

gentleman in what he considered a gentlemanly profession, and he quickly became disillusioned by some of the crasser aspects of business, which never failed to offend his sensibilities.^[5] In 1905, the Atlantic *Monthly* carried a long article in which Holt decried what he called “the commercialization of literature”; and speaking of himself, no doubt, exhorted his readers to remember that “a few publishers exercise an appreciation of literature in large superiority to financial considerations.” In another article published some months later, he decried the “accidents” [which had] within the past few years so far removed the publishing business from the control of publishers into that of financiers.”

By the turn of the century, however, several economic panics, the threat of war with Spain, a series of costly printers’ strikes, serious competition among publishers for potential “best-selling” authors, and increases in the cost of doing business—coupled with publishers’ own failure to adopt modern business practices—all opened the way for the financiers. Banks and investment trusts that supplied publishers with capital insisted on greater efficiency in the interest of larger and surer profits. The era of “genteel publishing” had ended; and for better or worse, the American book-publishing world would never be the same.

1940 to the Present: Years of Turmoil

[Prior to World War II, the book industry] suffered from a paucity of business acumen ... When an endeavor, by its very nature, attracts people who find their rewards in its nonmaterial aspects, it is not normally going to find the best talent in American business management flocking to its doors.^[6] *Nor is it likely that the people whom it does attract will arrive with the persuasion that sound management ability is one of the prime requisites expected of them. Thus, many publishing houses become victims of a vicious circle; because they were not successful businesses, they did not enlist the interest of good business people—with the result that they remained largely unsound from a business standpoint.*

John P. Dessauer, *Book Publishing: What It Is, What It Does*

The book industry before World War II was in trouble; sales were low, markets were limited as booksellers and struggled to survive, and the Great Depression had, as Dessauer puts it in the book cited above, “intensified what was then, even more than now, a minority interest in books.” As a result, the book industry remained a minor segment of American business and was not looked upon favorably by investors with capital to invest.

World War II changed all this in several ways. Older readers and history buffs may recall the

ubiquitous slogan, "Lucky Green has gone to war," referring to the fact that Lucky Strike cigarettes, long recognized by their distinctive green package, changed to a white pack to save certain ingredients in the green ink for the war effort.^[7] Books, too, went to war; millions of copies of inexpensively bound "Armed Forces Editions" were distributed at no cost to members of the armed forces all over the world, creating a huge new pool of readers (and eventually buyers) of books. On the home front, wartime austerities kept people at home, where books (and the radio) became a primary source of inexpensive entertainment, especially in the new twenty-five cent paperbound format introduced during this period.

When the war ended, thousands of GI's returned to peace and a virtually free college education, giving college and university textbook sales a huge boost. Many of these same GI's married and settled down, creating the "baby boom" of the 1950's, which in a few years gave rise to a vast increase in the elementary/secondary school population, thus booking the sales of textbooks in this area as well.

Business being what it is, it was not long before investment counselors started to take notice of the once nearly moribund publishing industry and began to encourage their clients to invest capital in this "new" growth industry. Both individuals and corporations, some outside the book industry entirely, began to infuse capital into the business while, in other cases, publishers themselves began to initiate mergers with and acquisitions of other publishing companies. As a result, the book-publishing industry began to grow from the cottage industry it had been at the beginning of World War II to a more than \$26 billion a year business by 1999.

A look at the number of titles published from 1945 to 1999 indicates the magnitude of that growth better than anything else could. From a total of slightly more than 11 000 titles published in 1941 (and even fewer than that published during the rest of the war years because of paper shortages and other factors), by 1999, the industry was releasing more than 60 000 new titles annually and gave every indication of matching or even increasing that figure well into the millennium. Whatever the feelings about this new era of acquisitions and mergers on the part of those in publishing, there is no doubt that the infusion of new capital into the book industry resulted in spectacular growth for this once-threatened business.

The Current Scene

While it is true that the publishing industry at the beginning of the 21st Century is a far cry from what it was a few decades ago in terms of number of titles published as well as dollar volume, changes in the very nature of publishing and book distribution have been every bit as

spectacular and perhaps more profoundly influential on book-publishing's future as dollar gains.

Many feared that the large number of mergers and takeovers over the last fifty years would result in a decrease in the number of titles published so that only the most profitable titles, regardless of a book's innate worth, would see the light of day. People also worried that runaway consolidation of publishing houses would lead to only a few of the biggest and most powerful surviving. There is little doubt that certain publishers did feel some corporate pressure to improve the "bottom line" by publishing guaranteed best-sellers at the expense of midlist titles, and that some houses did become giants as a result of the merger trend; so these fears were by and large well-founded. ^[8]

Rather than decreasing, however, the number of titles published annually increased fivefold. In 1955, 12 000 new titles were published by 1999, more than 60 000 appeared in *Books in Print*. In 1955, about 110 000 titles were in print; 44 years later, *Books in Print* listed more than 1.9 million. Although some publishers did concentrate their efforts during this period on producing "blockbusters", this phenomenon remained confined to a narrow range of trade publishers. Meanwhile, not only have the numbers of publishers increased tremendously, but publishing has also begun to take on a regional nature it never had. The industry is no longer confined to New York, Boston, and a few other major cities (Chicago and Philadelphia primarily), but has spread to all regions of the country, as was evidenced a few years ago when Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich decentralized much of its New York operation to Cleveland, Ohio and Orlando, Florida; HarperCollins has long maintained a major operations in San Francisco. In short, the book business has not only made impressive gains in size since 1940 but has also become a national phenomenon.

The spectacular growth of the mass-market paperback business, and its equally rapid decline over the two decades before 1998 (although this segment of the industry showed a substantial increase in late 1998 and 1999), had a great impact on the industry as a whole. While other book categories such as hardcovers and trade paperbacks showed increases in sales during those years, the drop in mass-market paperback sales was approximately 25 percent. Three principal factors account for this;

1. the ruinous rate of returns: more paperbacks are returned to the publisher by bookstores and wholesalers than are sold, with some distributors returning as much by 70 percent of shipments
2. price: a paperback reprint at \$8, \$9, or \$10 (now-common prices) is not that attractive when the \$27 hardcover is being discounted at 30 percent or more
3. the increasing trend for mass-market paperback publishers to publish in hardcover; this

means that those mass-market paperback publishers who choose not to publish in hardcover simply cannot obtain reprint rights to many best-sellers

Bantam Books, once a publisher of paperback books only, began to publish in hardcover in the early 1980's and had a string of hardcover best-sellers led by Iacocca and Yaeger, Bantam, of course, retained paperback rights to these and their other best-selling hardcover titles, and other paperback publishers followed suit.^[9] In the mid-1980's, the president of Warner Books referred to the paperback industry as "a very nervous one", and his words held true for more than a decade.

Another factor that has affected the book-publishing industry is the growth of the chain bookstores. Some idea of this growth can be seen in this accounting: .

A little more than ten years ago (1970), the four major chains [at that time, Waldenbooks, Crown Books, Barnes & Noble] sold just under 12 percent of all trade books published in the United States; by 1980, that figure had tripled. In 1984, just the two largest chains [Waldenbooks and B. Dalton Book-sellers] [sold] more than half of the trade and mass-market books published in this country. (Audrey Eaglen, "Chain Bookstores and Library Collection Building", Collection Building, Spring 1984, Vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 24 - 26)

The chain bookstores depend on huge volume and high profit levels for their success, and they achieve these goals by patterning their operations after those in food supermarkets.

It's no accident that the chain stores are almost always located in or very close to a suburban shopping mall with its supermarkets, discount stores, and shops, and even look like small supermarkets, with point-of-purchase displays near the cash registers ... bright lighting, colorful signage; carefully calculated loss-leader displays; only a few staff, who usually are young and cut form an entirely different mold than the traditionally knowledgeable and helpful independent bookseller; and scientifically designed walk and display patterns that enable you to browse (but not too long-aisles are narrow as a rule) while directing your browsing toward those items which are normally known as "impulse" items ... All this is, of course, predicated on one vitally important element, a "product" that will sell and sell fast; high volume and high turnover is the name of the game. Accordingly, the titles chosen to be stocked by the chains will of necessity consist largely of those titles that are practically guaranteed to sell quickly and well: fad books, best-selling authors' books, easy reference books, recreational books such as puzzle and joke books, bargain "cheap" books (remainders), mass market children's books ... most of which will be paperback ...^[10] *In short, whatever books, for whatever reason, have had enough "media hype" or have enough intrinsic appeal to the lowest-common-denominator reader, will be stocked, and whatever shows up on the chains sophisticated computer inventory reports as a "hot," i. e. ,*

fast-selling, item will be restocked, again and again if necessary, until its "item velocity" has slowed down enough to warrant its being dropped from inventory and shipped back to its publisher. (Ibid., p. 25)

The lesson should be clear: if publishers are to survive and make a profit, they must consider the potential market that the chain bookstores represent when making decisions about what to publish and what not to publish. It is not unreasonable to assume that publishers will attempt to publish as much as possible that will sell to this market, nor is it unreasonable to predict that given "bottom-line" pressures, many publishers will consider the chains' needs the standards by which they decide what to publish. If this happens, librarians' options for purchasing books of *all kinds* to build strong collections will become increasingly limited.

Interestingly enough, the situation seems to be just the reverse among wholesalers, even though they, too, are a very large market for publishers' wares. The two largest wholesalers are Baker & Taylor, which traditionally has sold primarily to libraries, and Ingram Books, which began as a wholesaler to the retail book trade but has increasingly wooed the library market in recent years. Whether or not this serves as a counter-influence to the chains' impact on publishers remains to be seen.

A final major influence on contemporary publishing is what Thomas Whiteside has termed "the blockbuster complex" in his book of the same name—that is, the tendency to publish titles that may become enormous best-sellers at the expense of the other books. A few decades ago, mass-market paperback publishers were the worse offenders; just one book, Judith Krantz's *Princess Daisy*, brought \$3.2 million from Bantam for paperback reprint rights; with a cover price of \$3.95, it is hard to believe that Bantam ever sold enough millions of paperback copies to earn that sum back. Another paperback publishing company, Pocket Books, bought the rights to reprint John Irving's *The Hotel New Hampshire* for a similar sum and later revealed that it lost a million dollars on the deal.

By the mid-1980's, however, many hardcover publishers had also become obsessed with blockbusters. James Michener's *Texas* was a groundbreaking book in that it had a first reprinting of 750 000 copies and was also the first pop fiction title to break the \$20 price barrier; both those factors probably contributed to sales that were described as "disappointing." Michener's book was eclipsed by Crown's first printing of Jean Auel's *The Mammoth Hunters*, whose run was one million copies—at that time the biggest first printing of a hardcover book in the history of publishing. Within a few months of its publication date, *Mammoth Hunters* was listed in several book-remainder catalogs. Gambling on potential blockbusters continues to this day. In 1998, Warner Books published *Belladonna*, a novel by