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The earliest known Australian bookplate

Matthew Fishburn, Hordern House, Sydney;
reproduced with kind permission of Nicholas Ingleton, Sydney

This is perhaps the earliest known Australian bookplate, engraved by convict artist Samuel Clayton for the visiting American merchant Charles Izard Manigault (1795-1874). While visiting Sydney on a trading voyage in 1818, Manigault, an American merchant, and book and antiquarian collector, from Charleston, South Carolina, commissioned Clayton to produce a bookplate for him. As Manigault wrote to his family,

I had some of my visiting cards engraved by one of those talented convicts, S. Clayton of New South Wales, by placing my signature with its usual flourish in his hand, he imitated it and engraved it perfectly, He also did several hundred of my Coat of Arms, now my book plates.

Later, in Canton, Manigault's engraved bookplate was copied as the centrepiece on his personal commission of Chinese porcelain.

Clayton (1783-1853) was a Dubliner transported to NSW in 1816, reputedly for forgery. In Sydney he went on to have a distinguished career as a silversmith, engraver, art teacher and portraitist. The first recorded notice of his work is an advertisement in the *Sydney Gazette* for 4 January 1817, and further advertisements appeared over the ensuing years which reflected his diverse abilities. He is perhaps most famous for engraving the plates for the first issue of notes by the Bank of New South Wales in April 1817, and some of his bank notes and trade cards are recognised as being of preeminent importance as a record of early Sydney printing. It is not known, however, whether he made any other bookplates.

It would be interesting to investigate the question of early Australian bookplates in more

detail. P Neville Barnett in his *Australian bookplates and book-plates of interest to Australia* (1950) lists designs used by figures prominent in the early years of the Colony of New South Wales: John Palmer, C Grimes, John Blaxland and Ellis Bent – however, Barnett argues that all seem to have migrated here with their owners. In the following chapter, 'Early engravers', he shows some bookplates engraved by Raphael Clint who started a business in Sydney around 1835 and died in 1849. Clayton's design for Manigault pre-dates Clint's work by possibly two decades (or more) and is currently the earliest documented bookplate of Australian origin.



Engraved bookplate by Samuel Clayton, Sydney, for Charles I Manigault, 1818

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Further reading

John Houstone, Richard Neville. 'Samuel Clayton'. *Design and Art Australia Online*, see: <http://www.daa.org.au/bio/samuel-clayton/biography/>?

'Raphael Clint'. *Design and Art Australia Online*, see: <http://www.daa.org.au/bio/raphael-clint/biography/>?

Maurie D McInnis. *In pursuit of refinement: Charlestonians abroad, 1740-1860*. Columbia, SC : University of South Carolina Press, 1998

Bookplate and bookmark project in Maryborough, Queensland

Jenny Rogers, Pt Vernon, and Susan Rogers, Maryborough, Qld

Throughout 2013, a group of enthusiastic printmakers, staff of Gatakers Artspace (Maryborough's city art gallery) and the Fraser Coast Regional Council have been working to develop a community access print studio in the historic city. The

studio became a reality after the generous donation of printmaking equipment to the community by Sue Flavel, widow of local artist and printmaker Merv Flavel. Situated in an old warehouse close to the gallery, built in the 1880s to service the booming Mary River port, Gataker's Printspace has become a focus for printmakers of the region and a centre for workshop participation.

A little while ago, the printmakers were invited to participate in the popular Gatakers by Night event – a monthly music, food and art event in the gallery courtyard on a Saturday night – when the gallery hosted a flood fundraising concert; among other things, the printmakers decided to design and sell (for a gold coin) some generic bookplates to show just how easily prints could be produced.

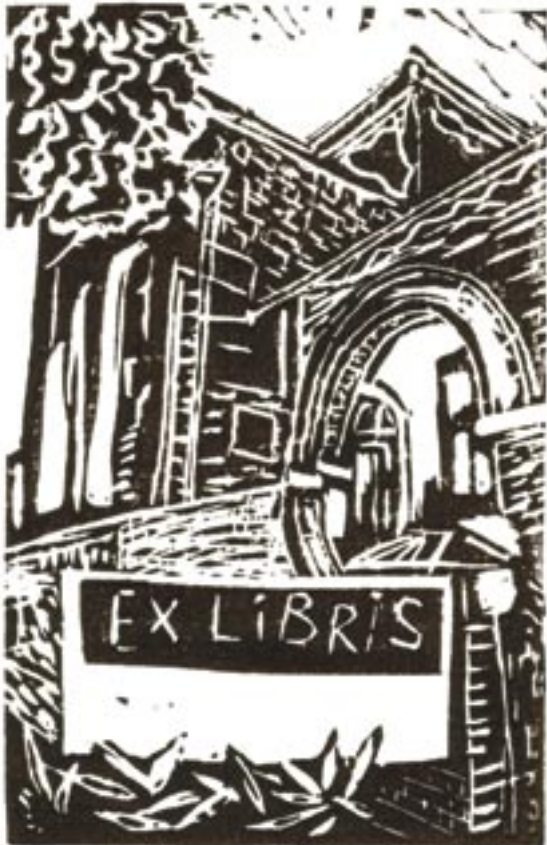
After this, the group was invited to design bookplates and bookmarks for the Fraser Coast Regional Council's Open House, showcasing Maryborough's historic

homes and commercial buildings. Eight printmakers designed and printed 100 bookplates or bookmarks each, based on some of the beautiful buildings and monuments in the town and these were made available to visitors on Open House, 26 October 2013. Prior to Open House, several of the bookplates were also presented as souvenirs to a visiting Chinese delegation here on a Sister Cities exchange visit – Council was looking for suitable gifts for the group and jumped at this opportunity to push the Printspace and the printmakers.

The bookplates have been very popular and the project has been a wonderful start to the printmakers' participation in town events – Council is looking at involving the printmakers again in Open House in 2014, with a different series of images each year with the bookplates becoming collectors' items – and who knows, even providing an introduction to the gentle art of bookplate collecting.



Printmakers at Gatakers. (l-r) Carol Seeger, Jennifer Rogers, Ann Brown, Kaye Doeke and Sophia Holm (not in photo, Val Macintosh, Helen Pinchen and Coralie Gunn.)



Customs House, Maryborough 2013

Linocut universal bookplate 'Customs House' by Coralie Gunn, 2013



*Foresters Hall Maryborough
Val Macintosh*

Linocut universal bookplate 'Foresters Hall' by Val Macintosh, 2013

The first American bookplate ...?

By Rebecca Rego Barry, Editor, *Fine Books & Collections*, USA

This week I am at the University of Virginia's Rare Book School taking a week-long course called 'Provenance: Tracing Owners and Collections', taught by David Pearson. Topics include 'inscriptions, paleography, bookplates, heraldry, bindings as provenance evidence, sale catalogues, tracing owners, and the recording of provenance data in catalogues' – in other words, absolutely fascinating stuff, and a lot of it. I intend to write up a better report once the rigorous week comes to a close, but for now, perhaps an answer to a question posed today during a discussion of bookplates. What was the first American bookplate? Sources report that the 1642 bookplate of Massachusetts printer Stephen Daye (printer of the *Bay psalm book*) was the first. Finding an image, however, proved more than a quick Google search away. So classmates – and



Typographic label by Stephen Day for himself, 1642

interested readers – is this the first American bookplate?

According to *The Bookplate Annual for 1921*, which is where I pulled this image from, ‘The general consensus of opinion is that it is indeed the bookplate of the Cambridge printer.’ (No matter the spelling difference; as we are learning this week, that was very fluid in the 17th c.) However, is it not truly a book label since it was printed and not engraved or etched as bookplates generally are?

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http://www.finebooksmagazine.com/fine_books_blog/2013/07/the-first-american-bookplate.phtml

The first American bookplate, reconsidered

By Rebecca Rego Barry, Editor,
Fine Books & Collections, USA

Prompted by a question raised at Rare Book School a couple of weeks ago, I blogged about what might be the first American bookplate. Since then, some further ideas and opinions give reason for reconsideration.

Lew Jaffe, who runs the ‘Confessions of a bookplate junkie’ blog, commented:

The question is simple enough but the answer is more complicated ... Once you start delving into early 18th century American bookplates you are probably dealing with Anglo-American plates from the libraries of royal governors and large land holders like Lord Baltimore. Most of the bookplates were not dated so I suspect your quest is a major research project.

David Szewczyk of Philadelphia Rare Books & Manuscripts Co gently chastised me for the Anglo-centric use of the word ‘American’. He wrote,

Libraries, both institutional and private, existed in Spanish America more than 100 years before they did in the English colonies. The earliest bookplates for Mexico, as far as we know (but much research is still needed) are in books that belonged to the Jesuit establishments and were a woodcut stamp on pieces of paper that were affixed to pastedowns and other blank areas. Other times the stamp was simply used as a stamp. These date from as early as the 1580s.

And, Steve Ferguson, the curator of rare books at Princeton, sent me a PDF of a 1949 article in *The New Colophon* called ‘A seventeenth century book-label problem’, in which Edward Naumburg Jr makes the

claim that Steven Day’s printed book label bearing his own name is not, in fact, the earliest American book label. He reveals several reasons why he believes this to be the case; mainly, it seems, because the fleur-de-lis type ornament used was ‘not found until 1693 in America, but prevalent in England at the time of his label’. Instead, Naumberg writes, ‘the earliest authentic dated American book-label, printed by Samuel Green on Steven Day’s press at Cambridge’ is that of Samuel Phillips May 31 1652 (twelve years after the *Bay psalm book*). It looks like this. Thanks to those above for contributing to this conversation. Further comments and additions welcomed!

Reprinted with permission from:

http://www.finebooksmagazine.com/fine_books_blog/2013/08/the-first-american-bookplate-reconsidered.phtml

Bookplates in Canberra, April 2013

By Jürgen Wegner, Sydney

Encountered on a recent visit to the Lifeline Book Fair in Canberra, a number of footnotes on Australian bookplates. Mark Ferson beat me with his report on the Jessie Traill exhibition in the last issue; [March 2013] however, there are a few additional points of interest worth mentioning.

The National Gallery of Australia’s exhibition *Stars in the river : the prints of Jessie Traill* is a major one of the work of Australian artist Jessie Traill. Traill was

one of Australia’s most important printmakers of the early twentieth century ... Embracing the medium of etching in the early 1900s, Traill forged a radical path for printmaking in Australia. From sublime aquatints of the natural landscape to her major series documenting the construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Traill’s prints combine poetic sensitivity with an unerring eye for line and form. (Art Events, Autumn 2013).

The Harbour Bridge series will be familiar to many. And where there is art – and especially printmaking – there are often



Typographic label by Samuel Green for Samuel Phillips, 1652

also bookplates. The National Gallery of Australia holds a most comprehensive collection of her work with over one hundred from their collection being on display in this exhibition. Included are two bookplates executed by her.

There is a major catalogue to accompany this exhibition:

Roger Butler, ed. *Stars in the river: the prints of Jessie Traill*. With essays by Tim Bonyhady, Rebecca Edwards, Sarina Noordhuis-Fairfax and Macushla Robinson. Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 2013. 176 pp. A\$29.95

In the thumbnails reproduced at the rear there is one additional bookplate, ie a third. The catalogue also very briefly mentions her in the context of bookplates in two places. It mentions her collection of bookplates by other artists (p. 23) and that, in 1934, she commenced an exchange project with other artists for bookplates (p. 146). I wonder what the extent of her collection was? Surely she must have created more than these three. And what happened to the bookplates in her collection?

Further Reading

Exhibition website: <http://nga.gov.au/Traill/>

Traill biography: [http://adb.anu.edu.au/](http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/traill-jessie-constance-alicia-8840)

[biography/traill-jessie-constance-alicia-8840](http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/traill-jessie-constance-alicia-8840)

Traill bookplates available online:

<http://artsearch.nga.gov.au/Detail.cfm?IRN=175208>

<http://artsearch.nga.gov.au/Detail.cfm?IRN=78512>

<http://cs.nga.gov.au/Detail.cfm?IRN=226675>

Just a few minutes down the road is the National Library of Australia. Its Bookplate coffee shop makes what must be the largest cappuccino in Australia. The coffee shop in honour of its name is decorated with a three framed selection of bookplates. Reproductions only – presumably from one of the collections of bookplates held by the Library.

The exhibition of artists' books on show at the Watson Arts Centre just off the highway

as you drive in, *100% Books by Canberra Artists*, includes one work called *Ex libris for the unknown* ('lino, stamp, 2007'). This is not a bookplate but art with an allusion to bookplates. Two illustrations *Unknown* and *Missing* can be viewed online on Caren Florance's Ampersand Duck website: <http://ampersandduck.com/art/100-books/fogwell-exlibris-unknown-4/>

Postscript

Further to my note on Jessie Traill in *Newsletter* no. 30 and to Jürgen's query about this artist's bookplate collection, some further research was undertaken in your Editor's personal library, where reference to the publications of the various bookplate societies revealed that Miss Traill was a member of the Australian Ex Libris Society from 1929 until its demise on the outbreak of the Second World War, and was a foundation member of the Melbourne-based Australian Bookplate Club (established 1942) but had ceased her association by the time its last list of members was published in 1944.

In searching for evidence of Miss Traill's bookplate collecting, contact with the National Gallery of Australia led to referral to the Australian Manuscripts Team at the State Library of Victoria. With the assistance of librarian Lucy Shedden, a small cache of letters was unearthed, located at MS 7975, Box 811, part 2. These included a form letter dated May 1934 in which Miss Traill thanks the recipient for bookplates and offers to send her etched design in return, once she has had time to print copies. And there are three letters from correspondents who have offered Miss Traill copies of their own bookplates in expectation of exchange: Rosa Gibson of Chatswood (Sydney) dated April 1935 with designs by G D Perrottet and Pixie O'Harris; B Osburn of Millersville (Pennsylvania) dated November 1935; and Nell Adie of Manilla (New South Wales) dated October 1936, enclosing her own bookplate, possibly by L Roy Davies. Those with an interest in the technique of etching may be interested to know that this set of papers included some six pages of handwritten notes for a talk on etching.

Ms Shedden kindly typed up and

emailed a list of Miss Traill's collection of 43 bookplates (found at Box 811, part 1) of Australian, NZ, American and English owners including those of correspondents Gibson and Osburn. Any reader interested in seeing this list should contact the Editor.

MF

Notes and happenings

Recent publications

MARK J FERSON. Some items related to the development of the linocut as an art form, and to a well known Australian ballad that crossed the Pacific nearly a century ago. *Biblionews and Australian Notes & Queries*, no. 379, Sep. 2013; pp. 107-11

Shows the author's 1985 linocut bookplate for himself (p. 108)

NILAVAN ADAMS. Artist profile: Nilavan Adams. *Botanical Art Society of Australia Newsletter*, no. 51, Summer 2013; pp. 1-2

Shows the original painted design for the bookplate for M J Ferson (2013).



Original painted design by Nilavan Adams for Mark Ferson, 2013

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Editorial

It is my pleasure to wish all readers a Happy New Year, concurrently with my duty, as Editor, to take responsibility for the lateness of this nominally December issue, the production of which is being finalised in late January 2014. The past year has been a big one for the Society, as we can, I believe, boast of a successful bookplate exhibition, of our first and very enjoyable 'Show and tell', the Annual General Meeting much enhanced by a fascinating talk from an enthusiastic and talented guest speaker – whom I had been chasing to address us for well over a year – and continuing compliments on the *Newsletter*, due to a range of interesting contributions and beautiful design.

And I do trust that you will – or have, depending on when you read the 'back page' – enjoy the current issue, which features a significant piece of bookplate history, that

Bookplates: the art of this century, by James P Keenan

A new annual directory of the world's top artists, engravers, and printmakers. The bookplate or 'ex libris' is a personal mark of ownership that has been used by individuals and libraries for over five and a half centuries. The bookplate is a label that shows pride in a collection of books.

This new e-book serves as an introduction to contemporary international bookplate art and is published by the American Society of Bookplate Collectors & Designers (ASBC&D, est. 1922). Included are works by 130 artists, representing 31 countries with over 300 bookplate images; brief biographies and artists' quotations, along with opinions from collectors and artists regarding the future of this graphic art form.

With the birth of e-books, will there really be an end to printed books and bookplates? This does not seem likely with graphic artists around the world exploring new frontiers in printmaking. New concepts for ex libris design through computer technology are being created, as well as traditional engraved, hand printed designs. The ASBC&D will help you to make contact with these artists for your personal bookplate.

The ASBC&D is a non-profit organization, and proceeds from this e-book will be used for advancing interest in international bookplate art. This includes marketing, our popular traveling exhibitions, and the limited print edition of this book.

For further information, please email James Keenan at exlibrisusa@gmail.com

In this edition:

- ◆ There are 300 bookplate images by 130 artists, representing 31 countries.
- ◆ Opinions from collectors and artists regarding the future of bookplates.
- ◆ Foreword by Cliff Parfit (UK), a highly regarded expert in this field.
- ◆ Introduction by James P. Keenan, Director ASBC&D (USA)
- ◆ Front Cover art by Nurgül Arıkan (Turkey)

is, the image and story of the verifiably first bookplate executed in Australia; I thank both its owner Nicholas Ingleton and finder/documenter Matthew Fishburn for this important contribution. As a foil to the feature article, we reprint two short articles – kindly drawn to my attention by Messrs Ingleton and Feain – on possibly the first American bookplate, dated 1652, taken from the *Fine Books & Collections* blog. In addition I am grateful to Jennifer Rogers (with assistance of Susan Rogers, who is not related) for an article on bookplate activities in the historic Queensland town of Maryborough, and we should thank Jennifer for making the activities happen as well as writing about them; and to

Jürgen Wegner for his article on last year's bookplate-related finds in Canberra.

Readers might wonder what the 'masthead' bookplate on the front page is about, but in checking the articles on the first American bookplate, I stumbled across the early twentieth century design for the Yenching University, Peking, where library users were admonished to 'Read much! Think more! Talk less!'

Thanks again to all who contribute to the *Newsletter* and to those who support it in other ways; the next issue, March 2014, will mark the completion of our eighth year of publication, so keep those articles rolling in!

MF