



## The Women's Print History Project

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### Women in the Imprints, *The WPHP Monthly Mercury*

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Music by Ignatius Sancho, "Sweetest Bard," *A Collection of New Songs* (1769), played by Kandice Sharren

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Moffatt, Kate, and Kandice Sharren, hosts. "Women in the Imprints." *The WPHP Monthly Mercury*, Season 1, Episode 2, 15 July 2020, <https://womensprinthistoryproject.com/blog/post/26>.

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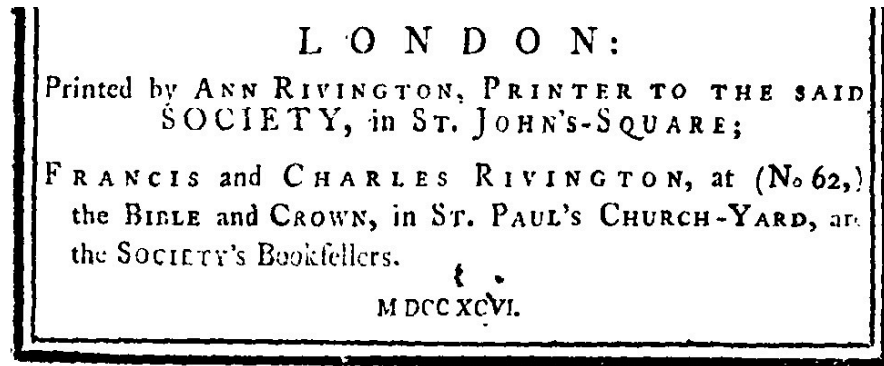
Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada



# Women in the Imprints

Kate Moffatt and Kandice Sharren



D U B L I N :  
Printed by ALICE JAMES, at Newton's-Head, in  
Dame-street, 1758.

L O N D O N :  
Sold by MARTHA GURNEY, Bookfeller, No. 34, Bell-Yard, Temple-Bar. 1775.  
[ Price ONE SHILLING. ] 86d

Entered at Stationers-Hall.

An imprint naming Ann Rivington, from the title page of *A Sermon Preached in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, London* (1796), an imprint naming Alice James, from the title page of *Meditations and Contemplations* (1758), and an imprint naming Martha Gurney, from the title page of *An account of the arguments of counsel with the opinions at large of the Honourable Mr. Justice Gould, Mr. Justice Ashurst, and Mr. Baron Hotham* (1775). ECCO.

In this month's episode of *The WPHP Monthly Mercury*, "Women in the Imprints", hosts Kate Moffatt and Kandice Sharren delve into the world of what we call female-run firms: the women who were publishers, printers, and booksellers. Using Kate's Spotlight on Black bookseller Ann Sancho as our jumping off point, this episode explores the processes for, and the difficulties of, discovering the often invisible and hidden women of the book trades.

What does one do when resources for the book trades—even comprehensive, reliable, and detailed ones—do not include gender data? Or when the data they do include conflicts with the data in two or three other resources? How does one establish who, exactly, a "widow" may be when a resource does not provide her name?

Alongside Ann Sancho, Episode 2, "Women in the Imprints" introduces you to Dublin-based printer Alice James, Shropshire- and London-based publisher Frances Houlston, London-based printer Ann Rivington, and abolitionist printer Martha Gurney as it seeks to illustrate how we respond to these questions, and more, in our efforts to create

coherent data about women publishers, printers, and booksellers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. We share both the frustrations and joys of widows who successfully continued a bookselling business for years after their husband's death but who remain unnamed in resources, surnames with no distinguishing first initials, and the potential confusion of a husband and wife with the same initials, providing a behind-the-scenes look at the process of creating data for women in the book trades on the WPHP, and the importance of our doing so.

## WPHP Records Referenced

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Ann Sancho (firm, bookseller)

Ann and William Sancho (firm, bookseller)

Sancho, Ignatius (person, author)

*Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African* (title, first edition)

*Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African* (title, second edition)

*Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African* (title, third edition)

*Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African* (title, fourth edition)

*Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African* (title, fifth edition)

Crew, Frances Anne (person, editor)

William Sancho (firm, bookseller/publisher)

"The Search for Firm Evidence: Uncovering Ann Sancho, Bookseller" (spotlight, firm)

Mrs. Vertue (firm, publisher)

Mrs. Vertue (person, publisher)

Johnson, Samuel (person, author)

Garrick, David (person, author)

Alice James (firm, printer/publisher)

Alice James (person, printer/publisher)

John Exshaw (firm, publisher)

James Hoey, Jun. (firm, publisher)

James Joey, Sen. (firm, publisher)

William Sleater (firm, publisher)

Peter Wilson (firm, publisher)

George Faulkner (firm, publisher)

Houlston, Frances (person, publisher)

Frances Houlston [Shropshire] (firm, publisher)

Frances Houlston and Co. (firm, publisher)

Frances Houlston and Son (firm, publisher)

Frances Houlston and Son [Shropshire] (firm, publisher)

Frances Houlston and Stoneman (firm, publisher)

Ann Rivington (firm, printer)

Rivington, Ann (person, printer)

John Rivington (firm, publisher)

Martha Gurney (firm, bookseller)

Gurney, Martha (person, bookseller)

“Martha Gurney: Abolitionist Bookseller of Holborn Hill” (spotlight, firm)

“Black Women’s and Abolitionist Print History Spotlight Series” (spotlight, series)

“The First Slave Narrative by a Woman: The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave” (spotlight, title)

“The Transatlantic Publication of Phillis Wheatley’s Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral” (spotlight, title)

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Wheatley, Phillis (person, author)

Heyrick, Elizabeth (person, author)

Child, Lydia Maria (person, author)

*The Woman of Colour* (title)

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*British Book Trade Index*

*London Publishers and Printers, c. 1800-1870*

*English Short Title Catalogue*

*HathiTrust Digital Library*

*Exeter Working Papers in Book History*

*Dictionary for Members of the Dublin Book Trade, 1550-1800*

*Scottish Book Trade Index. National Library of Scotland*

## Further Reading

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00:00:00		[music playing]
00:00:07	Kate Moffatt (co-host)	Mrs. Ann Sancho owned a bookselling business with her son, William Sancho, in London in 1807. I found her while I was combing through Ian Maxted's <i>Exeter Working Papers in Book History</i> website, looking for evidence of women involved in the book trades. Ann Sancho was tucked a couple of sentences deep in her son's entry, where an insurance policy from 1807 lists "Ann and William Sancho, of Castle Street Leicester Square, booksellers."
00:00:32	Kate Moffatt (co-host)	If the name "Sancho" sounds familiar, it might be because her husband, Ignatius Sancho, was well-known during the period as a Black "man of letters." He was well-connected during his lifetime, and had a successful posthumous publication of his letters to Laurence Sterne and others—it went into five editions, all of which you can actually see in the WPHP because the collected letters were compiled by Lady Frances Crewe.
00:00:53	Kate Moffatt (co-host)	He was also the first Black man to vote in England and the first to receive an obituary in a London newspaper. Ignatius and Ann's son, William Sancho, is also thought to be the first Black publisher in Britain—he actually published the fifth edition of his father's letters. The current scholarship about Ignatius Sancho and the existing records of William Sancho's business, however, make little mention of Ann Sancho at all—let alone divulge further details of her involvement in the book trades.
00:01:18		[music playing]
00:01:26	Kate Moffatt (co-host)	Hello and welcome to <i>The WPHP Monthly Mercury</i> , the podcast for <i>The Women's Print History Project</i> . The WPHP is a bibliographic database that collects information about women and book production during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. My name is Kate Moffatt—
00:01:40	Kandice Sharren (co-host)	and I'm Kandice Sharren—
00:01:42	Kate Moffatt (co-host)	and we are long-time editors of the WPHP, and the hosts of this podcast. On the third Wednesday of every month, we'll introduce you to anecdotes, puzzles, and problems related to recovering evidence of women's involvement in print.
00:01:55		[music playing]
00:02:00	Kandice Sharren (co-host)	On June 26, 2020, we published a spotlight written by Kate on the WPHP site about Ann Sancho, the only Black woman in the book trades we've found so far. According to an 1807 insurance policy, she ran a bookselling business with her son, but we've

struggled to find any further concrete evidence of her involvement in the firm. This is not unusual; our difficulties finding information about Ann Sancho reflect the challenges we face in our ongoing efforts to paint an accurate picture of women's involvement in the book trades in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Today, we'll be using her as one of our case studies to chat about the adventure that is finding and collecting evidence of female-run firms for the WPHP.

- 00:02:43  [music playing]
- 00:02:52 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Kate, do you want to start by just telling us how you found Ann Sancho?
- 00:02:57 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Yes, so, I was looking specifically for women in the book trades, and I was combing through one of our firm resources that we use a lot, Ian Maxted's *Exeter Working Papers in Book History*. I was working my way through it entry by entry, which is a pretty typical process for me when I'm looking for firms run by women, and I actually found Ann in an entry for her son, William Sancho.
- 00:03:17 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So, what does an entry in the *Exeter Working Papers* look like?
- 00:03:21 Kate Moffatt (co-host) So this resource is actually a website that compiles information from Ian Maxted's various and mostly out of print publications that appeared between the 1970s and the 1990s. The most useful part of the website for our purposes is the information on members of the London book trades between 1775 and 1800, which lists them alphabetically, so I worked my way through them all, alphabetically.
- 00:03:43 Kate Moffatt (co-host) And entries are typically a short paragraph that include any of the following: which is the active years of trading, the names that they traded under the addresses of their business premises, biographical information that's available, and other partners that participated in the firms. It also sometimes holds quotes from resources that talk about those people or insurance policy information or the titles that name them in imprints. And although the dates are technically 1775 to 1800, they do often include information about firms either before or after those dates.
- 00:04:15 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Which includes William Sancho, and who, actually, William Sancho, all of this information is in his entry [both laugh], and more! It's a massive paragraph! It's, we checked, it's over a single-spaced page. And, Ann Sancho was hidden inside this massive paragraph, which, to be honest, I always get really excited about big paragraphs like that for men [Kandice laughs], because I know that they often contain evidence of women's involvement somewhere, so I get really thrilled.



- 00:04:41 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So, they have kind of visual clues that point you towards women's involvement.
- 00:04:46 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Yeah, exactly, like a visual clue that I should look there for women.
- 00:04:50 Kandice Sharren (co-host) And, there's no way to streamline this process, search the entries, by gender, that kind of thing?
- 00:04:57 Kate Moffatt (co-host) No, unfortunately not. In order to find women, I do have to systemically go through every entry looking for the ones that belong to women, cause some women do have their own entries, but also looking through all the information that's included in men's entries for mentions of women, which happens surprisingly often, women are mentioned as an aside, basically, in men's entries more than you would think—they are often referred to as “wife” or “widow”, or, if they are briefly named it's as “Mrs. Vertue”, which tells me almost nothing about her.
- 00:05:28 Kate Moffatt (co-host) And these entries don't typically contain a lot of further information past that about these women. If we're lucky, they'll include a first name and the dates and the addresses when and where the woman was active. And if we're unlucky, we will literally get nothing more than “his widow continued the business after his death” [both laugh], and then we have to do a lot more digging to figure out who his widow was and what her involvement in the book trades actually looked like.
- 00:05:53 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So the entry for William Sancho included Ann Sancho's full name, and that's not necessarily typical. Did that make it easier to find more information about her?
- 00:06:03 Kate Moffatt (co-host) It did. It was much easier. It's not typical at all, and Ann Sancho was surprisingly visible when I started looking for her biographical data. I mean, I am being a bit generous with my use of the word “visible” here because I'm essentially saying that she just showed up in a Google search—but that makes her more visible than a lot of the other female-run firms I've searched for who have no results, and she showed up largely because her husband, Ignatius, was well known as a Black “man of letters” during the period, and he was also actually the first African to have their prose published in England.
- 00:06:32 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So for context, the population of Black people in Britain grew quite a lot during the seventeenth century as Britain became more involved in the slave trade. This meant that captive and enslaved Africans were brought to Britain as well as the Caribbean, although they went to the Caribbean in much, much larger numbers.



- 00:06:49 Kandice Sharren (co-host) At the time we are talking about, from the mid-eighteenth century onward, the Black population of Britain was probably between 10,000 and 20,000 people. According to Peter Fryer, most sources agree on somewhere around 14,000 and 15,000, but, as he notes, these are probably on the high end of the spectrum and there would have been significant fluctuations in this number throughout the period as well. So it's really hard to kind of pinpoint a precise population but there was a fairly visible black presence in Britain during the late eighteenth century.
- 00:07:26 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Many of the black people in Britain worked as household servants, or perhaps occupied a sort of ambiguous space between a servant and an enslaved person. Some also worked as craftsmen and labourers, and there are also records of Black women who were sex workers, essentially. Many Black people were limited to low status work that often was quite precarious or didn't necessarily pay very well, and this was enforced by legal restrictions on Black people learning trades in London.
- 00:08:00 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Ironically, having a Black servant in your household was actually a status symbol, so even though Black people were limited in what they could do, having one in your household signified wealth; and many wealthy families flaunted their Black servants, educated them, publicly showed off their skills, even though they weren't allowed to go and learn trades on their own; sometimes the people who employed them or in some cases the people who enslaved them would cultivate skills in them for display.
- 00:08:35 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Which is just so messed up!
- 00:08:37 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Yeah, very messed up. And, I'm saying this because it points out how Ignatius Sancho was unusual and that he owned his own business, which was a grocery, but he owned it because he had been a butler for an aristocratic family, the Montagus, for many years; and they were extremely fond of him and when he retired for health reasons, they set him up in a shop in Westminster. So his connections allowed him to become a business owner, but he is also an exception because he was in some way somewhat typical.
- 00:09:09 Kandice Sharren (co-host) When Sancho died in 1780, Ann inherited his grocery business; and it was on these same premises that William and Ann took out the insurance policy for the bookselling business that Kate found referenced in the *Exeter Working Papers*. Widows inheriting their husbands' businesses was a fairly common practice. Hannah Barker has estimated that roughly ten percent of print trade businesses were run by women, many of whom were widows, and there is no reason to assume that this was not true of other types of businesses.

00:09:41	Kandice Sharren (co-host)	So, at any given time, up to possibly more than ten percent of businesses were solely owned by women or primarily owned by women, which is quite a high number. So it wasn't particularly unusual that Ann Sancho was a Black woman in London during this period or that she was a woman who owned a business, what was unusual was that she was a Black business owner.
00:10:03	Kate Moffatt (co-host)	So you can see that information about Ann and Ignatius Sancho is pretty well recorded, which means it was relatively easy to discover her biographical data. When we're searching for biographical data, we're really only trying to get the basics: birth date, death date, place of birth, and place of death. We do also link to authority records and images in the database, if they are available.
00:10:23	Kate Moffatt (co-host)	But I did, I found Ann's information relatively easily: her place of birth and death were the Caribbean, which we don't know which island, and London, respectively. We know she was born in 1733, and died in 1817, so she actually lived to be 84. And the date of her marriage to her husband and then also the names of their six children. These are really widely known. Which was interesting because biographical information is typically harder to find than business information for women in the book trades, but that was not the case with Ann Sancho.
00:11:12	Kate Moffatt (co-host)	And I quickly realized that the results were coming up mostly because of her husband, Ignatius Sancho, who, aside from being connected to the Montagus and owning a grocery, was also well-known and really well-connected to other public figures during his lifetime, such as Samuel Johnson and the actor David Garrick, and he's been the subject of current scholarship in recent years as well. So Ignatius has an <i>Oxford Dictionary National Biography</i> entry, he has a wikipedia page, there are articles and books about the posthumous publication of his letters and his status as a Black man of letters.
00:11:23	Kate Moffatt (co-host)	Because he was the first black man to vote in a British election, and to have an obituary published in a London newspaper, and also because of the popularity of his published letters, details of his life have been fairly well recorded, which sort of transfers to Ann a little bit. His letters actually include things like, in a letter to Laurence Sterne, he asks that Sterne lend his voice to the abolition cause—he asks, and this is a quote, "I think you will forgive me; I am sure you will applaud me for beseeching you to give one half hour's attention to slavery, as it is at this day practised in our West Indies."
00:11:55	Kate Moffatt (co-host)	And his letters also do things like contain affection for his wife, Ann; there is one letter from October 11, 1772, where he writes, and this is a quote: "I am not ashamed to

own that I love my wife – I hope to see you married and as foolish.” So we have this information about Ann in relation to her husband, Ignatius—and we also have information about her through her son, William Sancho.

- 00:12:19 Kate Moffatt (co-host) And he is actually known as the first Black publisher in the “Western world” according to the British Library (we’re not totally sure what they mean by “Western World,” but he and Ann are the only Black publishers in our period that we’ve actually been able to identify). So this information that’s available about her family means we do have to acknowledge that my ability to find Ann Sancho in the first place is framed by both her connection to these two men and also the impact that their race has had on their recovery, right? She was in William’s entry on *Exeter Working Papers* blog, and she’s named and discussed—albeit briefly—in almost all of the results for Ignatius Sancho, that’s the reason that she comes up when I do a Google search.
- 00:12:57 Kate Moffatt (co-host) It’s worth mentioning that we actually often do these Google and *Wikipedia* searches as a means of finding further resources, so, given that women aren’t always named in the big resources like the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, we actually get really excited about finding wikipedia entries for these women—not because we like using *Wikipedia* in particular—but because it means there are more resources out there that have information about them, that have probably been cited, that we can use.
- 00:13:24 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Ann sancho doesn’t have her own ODNB or *Wikipedia* entries though, does she?
- 00:13:29 Kate Moffatt (co-host) No, sadly, she does not. I did, I checked all of our normal resources and when nothing came up, that’s when I resorted to a Google search. The fact she has no entries of her own is kind of surprising, given the amount of biographical information that is actually available for her and also that we have this record of her son’s bookselling business that mentions her involvement—as Kandice mentioned, being a Black woman who owned a business was kind of a big deal.
- 00:13:54 Kate Moffatt (co-host) But finding information about her involvement in the bookselling business, though, has been next to impossible. And we do like to collect information both biographically and for the businesses of the women who were in the book trades, so that we can include them in both our firms and persons datasets.
- 00:14:11 Kate Moffatt (co-host) So it’s great that I have all this biographical information about Ann Sancho, but we do also want the business information about her as well because we have those separate kinds of records, and by keeping those records separate, the persons and the firms, we are able to distinguish between people who acted as individuals and people who acted

in a business capacity. So, women in the book trades are therefore able to be attached to titles in two ways: as contributors, which corresponds to their person record, and then also as firms, which corresponds to their firm records.

- 00:14:40    Kandice Sharren (co-host)    So, for firm records we collect information like the full names of all the partners, when possible, the street addresses of the business, whether or not a woman was involved in the business, and their active trading dates. One of the things that drives us absolutely bonkers [both laugh] while we are making these records is that businesses moved around a lot, some more than others, and part of our data structure means that we have to create a new firm record for each time a business moved to a new address; and we're doing this that at some point in the future we can map the book trades on a street level, which would be especially interesting for some of the major cities like London, where there were just tons of people involved in the book trades in different places and where you were geographically had important implications for how you were understood as a business.
- 00:15:37    Kandice Sharren (co-host)    The resources that we tend to use most frequently for finding firm data, all those Kate has kind of indicated, we do tend to sometimes just say screw it and Google things to see if anything comes up at all, are, as we've already discussed, Ian Maxted's *Exeter Working Papers in Book History* website. This is one of our gold-star resources! [both laugh] Phillip A.H. Brown's *London Publishers and Printers c.1800-1870*, which is a book. Another book by Mary Pollard, which is the *Dictionary of Members of the Dublin Book Trade*, that is a monstrous book, it's enormous!
- 00:16:18    Kate Moffatt (co-host)    They moved around a lot. Dublin people moved around a lot.
- 00:16:21    Kandice Sharren (co-host)    Yeah, the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, the *British Book Trade Index*, and *Scottish Book Trade Index*. Imprints are also a very important source of information for us. So, they are usually found on title pages in this period. They are at the bottom of the title page and they tell us things like the place of publication, usually the city, the date that the work was published, some or all of the publishers, printers, and booksellers involved—these are what we call firms in the database—so imprints are useful because they often include addresses and in sufficient number they can give us a sense for how long a business existed or was at a particular address if none of our other sources indicate this.
- 00:17:10    Kandice Sharren (co-host)    They can also be frustrating because sometimes they only give very limited or very vague information. For example, if a book was printed for Mr. Smith in 1798 and that's the only information that it gives us, that doesn't tell us very much, [Kate

laughs], it could be any number of people named Smith working in London in 1798. So, they are often a starting point for confirming the information that we have or expanding on it. They are also not always completely helpful when it comes to identifying women's involvement and we're going to get into this a little bit more in a second here.

- 00:17:54    Kandice Sharren  
(co-host)    Women were frequently involved in bookselling businesses, but would sometimes continue using their husbands' names after their husband died; or they would be involved in the family business without being included in the actual imprint itself, so, even if, let's stick with Mr. Smith, even if Mr. Smith's wife was a very active part of the business, she's not going to be named in the imprint because he's the owner of the business and the partner, so imprints can often give us information missing elsewhere, but they also sometimes conceal it or make it difficult to ascertain the true reality of the business.
- 00:18:38    Kate Moffatt  
(co-host)    Yeah, and I mean aside from the insurance policy under Ann Sancho and Williams Sancho's names we don't have any imprints or resources that name Ann Sancho as being involved, and, we do have imprints for William Sancho and these are worth looking at given that, as Kandice just said, sometimes women were involved but not named in imprints, right, and this might actually be what happened with Ann Sancho. We've been able to find digitized copies of only two of the titles published by William Sancho, although he did publish more than that.
- 00:19:07    Kate Moffatt  
(co-host)    Those two were the fifth edition of his father's letters: *The Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, An African*, which was published in 1803, and *A Hundredth Good Points of Husbandrie* which was published in 1810 and copied from the first edition from 1557. But the *Exeter* website does also list one title. Entries, as we mentioned, sometimes will indicate imprints that included these people; they do list one title in William Sancho's entry that actually only lists Sancho in the imprint. It doesn't include an actual name or any distinguishing initial, which makes us curious because it could have been Ann, it's not saying that it wasn't Ann. It's not saying hey! This was only William Sancho.
- 00:19:51    Kate Moffatt  
(co-host)    It was published in 1808 and the title is *Am I not a friend and a brother?: a sermon preached at the Free Chapel, West Street, St. Giles's, on Wednesday evening June 15th, 1808: for the benefit of the African and Asiatic Society and published at the request of the committee for the benefit of the institution by William Gurney*. Quite a mouthful. But the imprint read that was Printed by W. Nicholson, for Hatchard, Ogle, Williams and Smith, Button, and Sancho. So, this means because it just says "Sancho"—this is

something we run into sometimes—if there's no distinguishing initial, it may have been printed by a woman who was involved in the family.

- 00:20:29 Kate Moffatt (co-host) This one in particular I thought was interesting because it was published in 1808, which is a year after the insurance policy was taken out that names Ann Sancho in it. Unfortunately, we haven't been able to find a digitized version of this, and without significant further research we really don't have enough evidence to actually attribute it to Ann, which means we don't actually have any titles attached to Ann Sancho in the database because we can't attribute any of these to her with any amount of certainty.
- 00:20:57 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So, in the case of Ann Sancho we know she was in business as a bookseller but we don't have any records of specific books she was involved in publishing. Is this a normal problem?
- 00:21:09 Kate Moffatt (co-host) No! Actually, not at all. Usually once we find out a business was run by a woman we don't have a hard time finding titles associated with them. The hard part is usually the process of figuring out that the name they traded under belonged to a woman and being able to ascertain that it was in fact them. So, for example, if we discovered Alice James was trading as "A. James", for example, once we know that "A. James" is Alice James, it's pretty easy for us to search for the titles that were published by "A. James"—figure out which ones were published during her active years, and then with a bit of extra sleuthing work to make sure those titles were actually hers, we can know that A. James was actually Alice James.
- 00:21:50 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So, it isn't always clear from imprints that a printer or a bookseller was a woman?
- 00:21:55 Kate Moffatt (co-host) No. Gender is not indicated in imprints, except occasionally by name if a woman printed under her or published or traded under her full name. A., or Alice James is actually a really good example. She's a printer and publisher we have in the database. And she is a good example because women, like men, often published with just their first initial and last name during the period. Alice James is actually very exemplary of what the process of finding firms run by women typically looks like for us, where we have lots of bibliographical data, lots of titles attached to their business, and it's finding the biographical data, including their gender, that is the hard part.
- 00:22:31 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Alice James I actually found while searching entry by entry, as I do, through Mary Pollard's *Dictionary of Members of the Dublin Book Trade*. And Alice James had her own entry in the dictionary, which was amazing. It gave us all the information that we try to collect for our firms—including her full name, which told us her gender, the

street address of the business, and the years that she was active—which was from 1757 until 1761.

- 00:22:54 Kate Moffatt (co-host) So, once I figured out that “A. James” was Alice James, I could search “A. James” in our eighteenth-century title resources, such as the ESTC, and I got to find and add a bunch of titles that were published by Alice James into the database. During that process I actually discovered that we already had quite a few titles in the database published or printed by Alice James, because they were attached to a woman in another way—we just didn’t know at the time that “A. James” was also a woman! And this is an issue we run into—when they print with no first name or with just an initial, it really does make their gender impossible to see until you know it from another source.
- 00:23:29 Kate Moffatt (co-host) And, the initials get complicated because the chances of there being another publisher, who has the same last name if it’s common having a first name that has the same initials, is also a possibility, right? The chances of there being, say, an “Alexander James” who also printed in Dublin during those years is possible. I did look, I did check, I haven’t found an Alexander James, but the possibility is there, right? So while I was finding titles for “A. James”, while I was looking for those, I did also have to do a bit more sleuth work and pay attention to the types of books that she typically published that we had in the database.
- 00:24:04 Kate Moffatt (co-host) She’s in the imprint for quite a few religious texts, lots of dramas and theatre, and also some legal titles. And I also paid attention to the publishers listed with her. She tended to publish with a group of Dublin publishers and printers [Kandice laughs] who we know very well, because a) they moved around a lot, and b) they published and printed *a ton* in Dublin. So, the names I saw her printing and publishing with were very familiar, and they included John Exshaw, James Hoey (junior and senior), William Sleater, Peter Wilson, and George Faulkner.
- 00:24:37 Kate Moffatt (co-host) So, Alice James was a nifty one but she is definitely more typical, and she is the opposite problem of what we saw with Ann Sancho. I haven’t actually been able to find any biographical data for Alice James in our usual sources. Her Person entry in the database—it’s very skeletal.
- 00:24:53 Kandice Sharren (co-host) And this is something that we run into a lot—often, we will have some or even many titles by a publisher already in the database before we realize that person was a woman. So, I remember finding out that the “F. Houlston” in “F. Houlston and son” was *Frances* Houlston. And I found out while I was working on some publications of children’s rating we had quite a few titles of hers already in the database under her



different sort of business imprints which include “F. Houlston and Son”, “F. Houlston and Co.”, and “F. Houlston and Stoneman”, and that meant that I had to backtrack and add Frances Houlston as a contributor to each work that had one of these firms attached to it.


- 00:25:37    Kandice Sharren (co-host)    So, each entry that has a female publisher or printer or bookseller attached to it also has them attached as a contributor, so as a Person. One of the things that can be complicated with this is that various resources will provide slightly different types of information or they won't always provide enough information to confirm that it is the same Person all the way through. So, I initially found her full name in Phillip Brown's *London Publishers and Printers*, which gives us all of the different names she traded under and their addresses.
- 00:26:17    Kandice Sharren (co-host)    The *British Book Trade Index* gives slightly different information. So it tells us about Frances Houlston's 65 Paternoster Row address, which is in London, but it also tells us about an F. Houlston and a Mrs. Houlston, who were located in Wellington, Shropshire, who were trading around the same time as the London business. And we need to look at these carefully to make sure that there wasn't more than one F. Houlston in the company.
- 00:26:42    Kandice Sharren (co-host)    What if her husband's name was Frederick? We'd have to go and figure out which years were Frances and which ones were Fred [both laugh]. We'd have to make sure that the London Frances and the Shropshire F. Houlston are actually the same person. It gets complicated trying to sort out the varying resources and these sometimes conflicting or incomplete records that we find in them.
- 00:27:05    Kate Moffatt (co-host)    I was actually looking at the records for the podcast when I was preparing, and I did a quick search for Frances Houlston mostly to remind me of who she was, and it actually brought up a rare books listing from someone called Suzanne Schulz-Falster Rare Books, and it brought up the listing for a collection of chapbooks printed by Frances Houlston and Sons. And the listing actually includes information about a Frances Houlston in Shropshire taking over her husband's business after his death in 1800, and printing in partnership with her son Edward in 1804.
- 00:27:34    Kate Moffatt (co-host)    And the listing even mentions that the two were so successful that by the 1820s they were also printing in London, which suggests to us that all of these various conflicting resources, they are all actually talking about the same person, but it also made me think: her son's name is Edward. E and F can look really similar in an imprint. E. Houlston and F. Houlston could look almost the same, not just because of wear and tear, but even because of mistypes or misprints, right?

- 00:27:59 Kate Moffatt (co-host) But, either way, finding tidbits like these are essentially how we discover a lot of the biographical and firm data for women in the book trades. This is a rabbit hole one of us will probably follow down until we can find a reliable resource that it came from supporting that Frances Houlston in Shropshire was also the same Frances Houlston printing or publishing in London.
- 00:28:18 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So we've talked about a woman whose biographical information was easy to come by and some women whose bibliographical information was easy to come by. Do you want to walk me through some other possible scenarios?
- 00:28:30 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Yeah, we've had some fun ones, actually, over the years. And, a favourite on the database is Ann Rivington, which probably sounds familiar to anyone who's listening who has any experience in book history in this period because the Rivingtons were a *very* visible family, and that is why we know about her, because she is connected to the Rivingtons. She was a printer, although they were booksellers and publishers. And then she's actually included in the ODNB entry for the Rivington family, which is great! The ODNB is usually really reliable. She doesn't have her own entry, but no one in the family does.
- 00:29:05 Kate Moffatt (co-host) She has a heading, like a link to her name, which means that she is searchable and that there's a section kind of dedicated to her that says her active dates in the book trades were from 1786 to 1791. That's about a five-year window. And it's worth noting, because we originally had her in our database according to those dates indicated by the ODNB, but when we actually went back and started it—I think Kandice went back for something to look at the different titles printed by her in the database—and realized that her active dates went well beyond what the ODNB was suggesting.
- 00:29:38 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Part of the reason that that happened is because we knew fairly early on she was a woman. She often signed her name in imprints as Ann Rivington, using her full name—thank you Ann! We really appreciate that! [Kandice laughs]. This was before we started actively looking for the firm resources that would give us more more comprehensive information about dates and businesses. And because we looked at her titles in the database, we are like “oh her dates are different!” so we had to go back into our firm resources that we had since started using and find her in those and include that information.
- 00:30:08 Kate Moffatt (co-host) And it was just this massive rabbit hole really, because, as it turns out, all of those different resources also have conflicting dates for her involvement in the book trades [laughs]. The ODNB, the BBTI, the *London Book Trades* book, and the *Exeter Working Papers* website all list varying active dates and partnerships. Our data landed


somewhere neatly in the middle of what resources suggest largely because we have enough records of hers in the database that we can suggest a pretty solid argument for those active years.

- 00:30:37 Kate Moffatt (co-host) It did get confusing trying to figure out what information to attribute to Ann in the database, not only because the influx of new resources, but because some of those sources call her “Anna”, and the ODNB actually names *another* “Ann” Rivington, so we are like, “oh my gosh! What if there is more than one Ann Rivington?” [Kandice laughs]. But that Ann doesn’t get her own heading, and she wasn’t in the book trades, we don’t think, so it’s, we are pretty sure there is only one Ann Rivington.
- 00:31:01 Kate Moffatt (co-host) But this is something we run into a lot, right? Information is incomplete, or it’s missing, or it’s conflicting with other sources, even for those resources that tend to be comprehensive. And even for high profile women who were connected to high profile families. We have to double-check everything, we have to amalgamate data from various sources and really work to create something that’s coherent.
- 00:31:21 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Ann Sancho and Ann Rivington share that in common—both are connected to what we could call “high-profile” families or individuals, and both are lacking comprehensive records of their involvement in the book trades, in one way or another.
- 00:31:35 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Part of the issue with Ann Rivington, however, is that the ODNB entry plays into pretty conventional narratives about women’s involvement, in which they inherit a business or take over a business and quite quickly hand over control of their business to male managers or male partners. The truth is that she does seem to have just continued printing on her own in the same premises during that period.
- 00:32:00 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Ann Sancho is also high-profile in her own way, due to the prominence of her husband and her son, which is not typical for most women in the book trades during the period. Her exceptional position, it can’t be denied, but she is still obscured by some of the hierarchies that are at play. Ignatius Sancho had cultural capital—his status as a man of letters means he attracts attention in a way that bookselling businesses didn’t and don’t currently. Although William Sancho was an exception in his own right as the first Black publisher in London, he doesn’t attract nearly as much attention as his father Ignatius. We really don’t know very much about him compared to his father.
- 00:32:37 Kate Moffatt (co-host) We actually talk further about this phenomenon, which we call creative versus creative-adjacent labour, in a book chapter that is coming out this November—and it establishes this hierarchy, and it acknowledges how gender plays into it. And you can see that this holds true for Ann, but to a greater degree: as a bookseller, she wasn’t


responsible for the creative production of works; as a woman, she didn't appear in imprints for the business, and she only appears in William's records as an aside. So, finding further information about Ann Sancho would require pretty intensive research, likely at archives—two tasks that are not, unfortunately, very easy for this project to undertake.

- 00:33:18    Kandice Sharren (co-host)    So, we do face some limitations, as Kate indicates here, in our data-collecting and data-creation processes. We're limited, first off, to only print and online resources—we know that there must be a *lot* more information available in various archives about women involved in the book trades, or women involved in print generally, but we don't have the access, time, or resources to go through all of those, especially given how time-consuming it already is to go through the records that Kate has been going through one by one, to find evidence of women.
- 00:33:56    Kandice Sharren (co-host)    Time is eternally one of our limitations [both laugh]. We simply—and I say this as the project manager for the project who has to pay attention to these things—we simply do not have the time to go down a multi-hour rabbit hole for *every* single firm we find that was run by a woman. We did for this podcast today, and Kate went down a rabbit hole for her Ann Sancho spotlight that is up on the site, but it's just not viable to do that for all of them, much as I would like us to be able to.
- 00:34:30    Kandice Sharren (co-host)    This is why we include records for firms run by women in the database even if we have limited or almost no data for them. It means that we have a record that we found that they exist, and that if we find more information or we magically get enough resources to go down these kinds of rabbit holes in the future we can go back and build on what we've already found rather than starting from scratch.
- 00:34:57    Kate Moffatt (co-host)    And that's basically what we're trying to do—we are trying to allow for our future and fuller recovery. We started collecting information about women in the book trades, specifically looking for women who ran firms, because it leads us to more titles that women were involved in producing, and also because it gives us a clearer picture of women's involvement across all levels of production.
- 00:35:16        [music playing]
- 00:35:24    Kandice Sharren (co-host)    As the examples we've discussed today show, the work of creating a comprehensive resource that accounts for female labour in the book trades is itself a labour-intensive process. It is also for us a labour of love filled with rabbit holes that, like Alice, we are often tempted to disappear down. This labour is necessary because information about women in the book trades is often only available in roundabout ways. As Kate has pointed out, information about women is often buried in records of male booksellers,

when it exists at all. Where no resources exist, it is usually because women were invisible altogether, unnamed, or only identified by an initial and a surname in imprints.

- 00:36:07    Kandice Sharren (co-host)    The invisibility of female members of the book trades, it does not only obscure their labour, it limits our ability to understand the context in which their books were produced. when talking about the abolitionist publisher and bookseller Martha Gurney, who's featured in our first spotlight on a female-run firm, Timothy Whelan has noted even when publications to which her name is affixed have been mentioned and discussed by scholars, Gurney herself has remained a phantom, disembodied, and genderless, a consequence of her having signed her imprints as M. Gurney.
- 00:36:39    Kandice Sharren (co-host)    As Whelan notes, however, she would not have been so to her customers in Bell Yard and Holborn Hill. By collecting business data about female-run firms, biographical information about the women in these firms, and then linking this firm and biographical information to bibliographical data about the books they produced and circulated, we do the important work of re-embodying these women within the context of the labour they performed and the books they produced.
- 00:37:09    Kandice Sharren (co-host)    As of today, July 13, 2020, we have 4767 firm records; 464 of which are firms owned by women; which is almost exactly the ten percent of the total that Hannah Barker estimates as the percentage of women who ran businesses during this period. As the only Black woman that we're aware of, included in these figures, Ann Sancho is exceptional and the windfalls and hurdles we've encountered while searching for further information about her life and her business cast our process into relief.
- 00:37:43        [music playing]
- Kandice Sharren (co-host)    The music included in this episode was composed by Anne Sancho's husband, Ignatius. The sheet music was first printed for the author in 1767 under the title *Minuets, cotillons & country dances for the violin, mandolin, German flute & harpsichord, composed by an African.*
- 00:38:06    Kandice Sharren (co-host)    Next month we'll be joined by our entire team of amazing research assistants who are going to speak to their contributions to the "Black Women's and Abolitionist Print History Spotlight Series" that we are currently publishing. The series began on June 19th and will continue every Friday until July 31st. If you're interested in reading them as they are being posted, they are available on the WPHP website.
- 00:38:34    Kate Moffatt (co-host)    In addition to Ann Sancho, our next episode will discuss Black writers, including Mary Prince and Phillis Wheatley; prominent white abolitionists like Elizabeth

Heyrick and Lydia Maria Childs; and the anonymous 1808 novel *The Woman of Colour*. We'll chat about some of the research questions, methodologies, and common threads that we encountered while working on this spotlight series.

00:38:55  [music playing]

00:39:05 Kandice Sharren (co-host) This has been the second episode of *The WPHP Monthly Mercury*. We will be releasing an episode every third Wednesday of the month. If you're interested in learning more about what we discussed today, we've compiled a list of suggestions for further reading and links to some relevant entries in the WPHP in a blog post that you can find at [womensprinthistoryproject.com](http://womensprinthistoryproject.com).

00:39:27  [music playing]