



The Women's Print History Project

Season 1 in Review, *The WPHP Monthly Mercury*

Produced by Kate Moffatt, Kandice Sharren, and Michelle Levy

Transcribed by Sara Penn

Project Director: Michelle Levy (Simon Fraser University)

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Season 1 in Review

Kate Moffatt



As we get ready to launch the second season later this week, WPHP Project Director Michelle Levy reviews some of the highlights from our first season.

00:00:00		[music playing]
00:00:08	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> . My name is Kate Moffatt and I'm one of the co-hosts of the podcast, alongside Kandice Sharren. But I'm joined today by our primary investigator, Michelle Levy, to look back at all of our favourite anecdotes, puzzles, and problems related to women's involvement in print during Season 1.
00:00:32		[music playing]
00:00:38	Michelle Levy (project director)	As we prepare to launch Season 2 of <i>The WPHP Monthly Mercury</i> next week, I wanted to take a moment to reflect upon Season 1, to consider the major insights we have gleaned by touring through some first seasons highlights. To that end, I have worked with Kate Moffatt, co-host of the podcast, to assemble a series of greatest hits, if you will, about what we have learned in our first ten episodes, with a bit of a teaser about what is to come.
00:01:09		[music playing]
00:01:18	Michelle Levy (project director)	Over the last few weeks I have had the delightful task of re-listening to all ten episodes. What follows is a series of observations about Season 1, with short excerpts from previous podcasts that illustrate these conclusions. The first observation I came to in listening to Season 1 is that <i>we read books</i> . As a bibliographical database with over 12,000 title records, we are not in a position to read <i>all</i> of the titles (however much we may wish we could!). We use the podcast, as well as our spotlights, as an opportunity to read, and to read books far beyond the canonical works that are usually taught and studied. We have heard about (and heard excerpts read from) Hester Mulso Chapone's <i>Thoughts on the Education of Daughters</i> and Catherine Cuthbertson's <i>Romance of the Pyrenees</i> , to just name a few.
00:02:18	[music playing]	
00:02:24	Michelle Levy (project director)	Some of my favourite moments of reading from Season 1 include Kandice's introduction to Charlotte Caroline Richardson's 1818 <i>Harvest, a Poem, in Two Parts; with Other Poetical Pieces</i> : in Episode 7; Victoria DeHart talking about her discovery of Elizabeth Heyrick's 1824 pamphlet, <i>Immediate, not Gradual, Abolition</i> , and Kate's attempt to provide a plot summary of Elisabeth Guénard's novel, <i>The Three Monks!!!</i> , and I can't resist an excerpt of Kate and Kandice reading Hannah More's <i>Sinful Sally...</i>

- 00:02:38 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Charlotte Caroline Richardson’s *Harvest*, a collection of poems printed for the author in 1818 and sold by a consortium of booksellers. And what a find it was! These poems are agricultural *and* political, linking the end of the Napoleonic Wars to a plentiful harvest. The opening two-part georgic poem “Harvest” includes descriptions of abundance and joyful soldiers returning home after nine years of war, but it is also haunted by images of storms and frosts.
- 00:03:05 Michelle Levy (project director) in Episode 7; Victoria DeHart discussing her discovery of Elizabeth Heyrick’s 1824 pamphlet, *Immediate, not Gradual, Abolition*:
- 00:03:13 Victoria DeHart (guest) Heyrick rattled the other Abolitionists; and one of the more shocking things I learned was that some figureheads of the society, mainly William Wilberforce, tried to suppress the distribution of her pamphlet, *Immediate, not Gradual, Abolition*. Elizabeth Heyrick’s use of print enabled boycotts, changed public opinion, and contributed to the end of colonial slavery. She also helped shape how future movements, like the suffrage movement, use print as a tactic for political reform.
- 00:03:38 Michelle Levy (project director) And Kate’s attempt to provide a plot summary of Elisabeth Guénard’s novel, *The Three Monks!!!*:
- 00:03:47 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Anyway, Kate, tell us about *The Three Monks!!!*
- 00:03:50 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Happy to! So, *The Three Monks!!!* was set in the Italian town of Ferrara, and it follows three young boys, all born on the same day in the same town: Silvino, the illegitimate son of Clementina; Dominico, born out of wedlock to Fansonetta, who claims to be his aunt to save her virtue; and Anselmo, a foundling discovered at the town’s castle, and adopted by the castle’s Duchess, Celesta.
- 00:04:13 Kandice Sharren (co-host) I have to say, I’m impressed that you’ve kept all these people straight.
- 00:04:17 Kate Moffatt (co-host) I took notes! The Duchess had no children of her own—her husband, the Duke, cared only about politics. Like, literally, only about politics. His wife did not impact the country, so, he did not care about his wife. Prior to their marriage, she had, in fact, been in love with the Duke’s younger brother, Alonzo, so, it was doomed from the start, but Alonzo had, at the beginning of this tale, been missing for many years. Because the castle stood between Silvino’s house and Dominico’s house, the three boys grew up together, close and immediate friends, often to be found playing in the

gardens behind the castle, and also, of course, in the subterranean caverns beneath it—because you need subterranean caverns!

- 00:04:52 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Anselmo was as golden as his hair, described by Silvino as “gentle”; Dominico thoughtful and smart, and described as a “visionary” by Silvino; and Silvino himself was fun, amiable, as the novel constantly tells you, and *incredibly* badly behaved. Silvino was eventually caught stealing from the Duchess by Fansonetta, so Fansonetta and the Duchess—the two mothers, so to speak, of Dominico and Anselmo—decided to send their two boys as far as possible from Silvino’s terrible influence: they were sent to become monks at an abbey.
- 00:05:25 Kandice Sharren (co-host) As you do!
- 00:05:27 Kate Moffatt (co-host) As you do! What kind of punishment is there other than to become monks at an abbey?
- 00:05:32 Michelle Levy (project director) And I can’t resist an excerpt of Kate and Kandice reading Hannah More’s *Sinful Sally*:
- 00:05:39 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Powder’d well, and puff’d, and painted,
Rivals all I there out shine;
With [my] skin so white and heart so tainted,
Rolling in my Chariot fine.
In the Park I glitter daily,
Then I dress me for the play,
Then to masquerade so gaily,
See me, see me tear away.
When I meet some meaner Lass
Then I toss with proud disdain;
Laugh and giggle as I pass,
Seeming not to know a pain.
- 00:06:08 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Still at every hour of leisure
Something whispers me within,
O! I hate this life of pleasure,
For it is a Life of Sin.
Thus amidst my peals of laughter

Horror seizes oft my frame:
Pleasure now, Damnation after,
And a never-dying flame.
Save me, Save me, Lord, I cry,
Save my soul from Satan's chain!
Now I see Salvation nigh,
Now I turn to Sin again.

00:06:38 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Is it then some true Repentance
That I feel for evil done?
No; 'tis horror of my sentence,
'Tis the pangs of Hell begun.
But a thousand ills o'ertaken
See me now quite sinking down;
Till so lost and so forsaken,
Sal is cast upon the town.
At the dusk of evening grey
Forth I step from secret cell;
Roaming like a beast of prey,
Or some hateful Imp of Hell.

00:07:07 Michelle Levy (project director) My second observation about Season 1 is that we love guests, who were featured in five episodes from Season 1. Guests have included former and current Research Assistants, who came on the podcast to talk about their work on the database—all of our current RAs appeared in Episode 3, and Reese Irwin in Episode 4, and we heard extended interviews with three scholars who contributed to our knowledge of the women whose lives, works, and books we seek to capture. We were thrilled to talk with Dr. Kerri Andrews about women's walking in Episode 8, Dr. Betty Schellenberg on the Bluestockings in Episode 9, and Dr. Kate Ozment on Delavie Manley in Episode 10. In what follows, we hear Dr. Schellenberg discussing Elizabeth Carter's many virtues and skills, including pudding making:

00:08:05 Betty Schellenberg (guest) She was perfectly willing to hang out with long time, female friends in Deal, in Canterbury, and just talk about silly things. And maybe I'll take the chance to just mention this famous quote by Samuel Johnson, who was a good friend of hers, who said something about Elizabeth Carter can make a pudding as well as she can translate Greek [laughs]. And that's really kind of irritated a lot [all laugh] for understandable reasons, right? Because it seems to be placing her into this domestic framework, even

though she's such an accomplished intellectual. But I think you could look at it more charitably because they were good friends who respected each other. And I think maybe what he's saying, is what I'm trying to say too, that she was grounded. She was just kind of a real person.

- 00:09:05 Michelle Levy (project director) And Kate Ozment on Manley's brilliant strategy to avoid libel charges in the early part of the eighteenth century:
- 00:09:13 Kate Ozment (guest) Libel is written, slander is said.
- 00:09:15 Kate Moffatt (co-host) That sounds right. [laughs]
- 00:09:18 Kate Ozment (guest) Yeah. Libel. That sounds right [Kandice laughs]. Libel and copyright are the only two things that ever get actually legislated. So if you are lying, and somebody can prove it, they'll drag you into court and say, you're lying [Kate and Kandice laugh]. Now, if you're lying about rich people, oh they're definitely going to drag you into court because people actually care about rich people, and she's lying about very—she's not lying—about very rich people. So Manley actually gets arrested for *The New Atalantis*. And so the secret history is not a genre without risks.
- 00:09:48 Kate Ozment (guest) Here's my favourite part, though. Here's how she gets off. It's just, it's chef's kiss, like this is how good it is [Kate and Kandice laugh]. She walks in and they say, "Hey, how did you learn all of this? You can't be saying this stuff." And she goes, "Oh, it's a work of fiction." And so as she sits there, the response is if Churchill—let's just say Sarah Churchill, she wasn't the one who arrested her because she's not a cop—but it was implied that the Churchills were the reasons that Manley got arrested. Sarah Churchill will then have to come out and say, "No, that's true" for it to be proven is libel [Kate and Kandice laugh].
- 00:10:25 Kate Moffatt (co-host) No, I did do this thing that you said that I did that I don't want to admit to that I'm mad about!
- 00:10:31 Kate Ozment (guest) That's exactly the—so her defense is "I didn't use any names. It's fiction. Are you telling me this is true?" And they're like, "No."
- 00:10:46 Kate Moffatt (co-host) It's genius!

- 00:10:48 Kate Ozment (guest) It's *very* good. That's what really made me fall in love with Manley. I was like, I have to write on you.
- 00:10:53 Kate Moffatt (co-host) She's brilliant!
- 00:10:54 Michelle Levy (project director) I have one more favourite moment, which was during Reese Irwin's appearance in Episode 4, where she perhaps over-shared in her description of what she had done to a print bibliography from SFU library.
- 00:11:08 Reese Irwin (guest) I followed that same process, and I used a pencil to circle each entry with a woman's involvement or possible involvement to keep myself going straight, so I didn't get confused, because oftentimes it was buried in the entry. Actually the SFU copy of *John Newbery and His Successors*, it's now quite heavily marked up and the spine has completely cracked from my consultations. [laughs]
- 00:11:35 Michelle Levy (project director) Reese did redeem herself, however, in her superb description of what we are trying to do in the WPHP, suggesting that her sacrifice of the Newbery bibliography was for a good cause:
- 00:11:50 Reese Irwin (guest) Elizabeth's story is a perfect example of why the WPHP works so tirelessly to remedy, which is women hiding in plain sight, or pushed to the margins in favour of a neater, male-centric story of lineage and economic prowess.
- 00:12:10 Michelle Levy (project director) Another common theme that emerges in Season 1 is that we don't *enter* data, we *create* it. As many of the episodes have been used to explore our processes of collecting and verifying our records, the podcast has been an important attempt to offer documentation of our project methodologies and a window into the labour that takes place behind the scenes to verify every one of thousands of title, person, and firm records that appear on the database. I particularly like Kandice's description of data collection and verification in Episode 1:
- 00:13:00 Kandice Sharren (co-host) What we are doing is we're amalgamating different types of data that is scattered across dozens of different sources, many of which have specific limitations like genre, or they don't allow you to track information, like a contributor's gender. So, what our database is doing is pulling together all of this different type of information and making it available in one place.
- 00:13:20 Michelle Levy (project director) And Kate's discussion of how this research can correct and augment existing knowledge in her discussion of Ann Rivington from Episode 2:



- 00:13:29 Kate Moffatt (co-host) There's a section 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.
- 00:13:57 Michelle Levy (project director) In discussing our processes, we also learn about the challenges we face in research on women's engagement with print, and how our sources, as much as we rely on (and have affection for) them, don't make it easy. As we are drawing upon a diversity of sources, and as it is almost never possible to search by gender, discussions from Season 1 often remind us of these challenges. We have Kandice expressing her deep frustration about the end date of the *English Short Title Catalogue*:
- 00:14:34 Kate Moffatt (co-host) *Orlando* has also allowed us to identify a number of titles after 1800, which is our biggest challenge because...
- 00:14:40 Kandice Sharren (co-host) The ESTC ends in 1800!
- 00:14:44 Kate Moffatt (co-host) No!
- 00:14:48 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Behind-the-scenes look at data entry post 1800!
- 00:14:51 Michelle Levy (project director) We have Reese describing her process of combing through print bibliographies of children's literature publishers looking for women:
- 00:14:57 Reese Irwin (guest) So I began with the shortest bibliography, which was *John Harris's Books for Youth*, which I think, looking back, was probably just a matter of "oh, this looks easy!"
- 00:15:09 Kandice Sharren (co-host) [laughs]. Got to start somewhere!
- 00:15:11 Reese Irwin (guest) It had about 300 entries that I had to read through, and I looked for the presence of a woman in all 300 entries.
- 00:15:20 Michelle Levy (project director) And Kate, expressing her thrill in finding a solid block of text, in the *British Book Trade Index*, in which a female firm might be buried:

- 00:15:40 Kate Moffatt (co-host) 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.
- 00:15:55 Michelle Levy (project director) Another observation about our work on the project that emerges strongly in Season 1, and that similarly references the labour involved in data creation, is that our data seeks to capture not only first or so-called important editions, but all editions produced with the involvement of women. In other words there is no such thing as "just a reprint," as one commenter on our site suggested, with some derision. We consider the work of finding bibliographical evidence of reprinting history essential to the recovery work the WPHP is attempting, as without it we lack an understanding of women's presence and influence in print. At the same time, there is no question that dealing with reprint history is labourious, as Kandice and then Reese remind us:
- 00:16:47 Kandice Sharren (co-host) She also wrote works, usually religious in their emphasis, for the lower classes, and many of these were printed in a series called the *Cheap Repository Tracts*, which were short, usually somewhere around 16 to 32 page pamphlets. They were priced cheaply, which meant they could be widely distributed. And this also means, as I believe I reference in my RA interview on the WPHP site, that they are a pain to find and date and add to the database because there were so many different editions.
- 00:17:20 Reese Irwin (guest) And I guess the last thing is kind of like an umbrella thing, we mentioned it earlier, just the vast amount of editions that children's literature had, just because the genre, it really gain ground in the latter half of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries as ideas about children and childhood really began to solidify, I saw some titles with higher than 30 editions, more than a few cases for the title page of a certain edition, so let's say the sixth edition was used over and over again in subsequent print runs. So just a sheer amount of recycling and the rapid production that went on.
- 00:17:55 Michelle Levy (project director) Indeed, we often lack reprinting history on major women writers. In working on women from Jane Austen to Ann Radcliffe, we were surprised to find that their reprints have not been collected in existing sources. Our first episode of Season 2 will discuss a similar issue we encounter in relation to Frances Burney, whose pre-1800 editions of *Evelina* and *Cecilia* were fully captured in our database (thank you, ESTC!), but whose post-1800 editions were missing entirely.

- 00:18:30 Michelle Levy (project director) As we seek to uncover more and more bibliographical details about women's books, and to capture more about their processes of authorship and bookmaking, we often find ourselves having made omissions and oversights in our data model, which we then seek to remedy. In this way, the podcast serves as an oral history of sorts of the WPHP, as we recount our mistakes and seek to adjust our data to account for what we are finding in the real world of women's books. Kandice describes this process of learning as we go in Episode 1:
- 00:19:08 Kandice Sharren (co-host) how authors signed their names, what conventions for titles were, etc. Even just how long a volume was. So, by sort of looking through all these books and refining our process we started to realize some things were missing from the database, and we ended up, during that month-long fellowship, adding a couple of different fields to our entries—so if you look at the title field or the title entry in *The Women's Print History Project*, you'll see we have a field for pagination, and a separate field for the different firms involved in producing [books].
- 00:19:48 Michelle Levy (project director) In Episode 4, Kate likewise discusses the limitations of our genre classifications:
- 00:19:52 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Our data model attaches only one genre to each title record, but, as Kandice has just pointed out, many of these works could reasonably fit within multiple: books relating to education could fall under "Education," but they could also just as easily fit into "Juvenile Literature," "Domestic," "Religion/Spiritual," or "Essays," depending on their scope, approach, and intended audience. Some even count as "novels."
- 00:20:18 Michelle Levy (project director) Indeed, this problem of limiting ourselves to one genre was noticed in a recent review of our project, which prompted us to re-examine our decision and indeed to change course by modifying our data model to allow for the addition of multiple genre tags for any given title. This freedom to change our mind is wonderful, but it also leaves us with a daunting task: of revisiting our 12,000 title records! Flexibility and adaptability, as we so often learn, come at a cost. Perhaps one of the most exciting moments of Season 1 is the realization that, with our desire to capture women in print, we have found women everywhere, writing (and publishing) about everything. It has been delightful to converse with Dr. Kerri Andrews about the tradition of women in the mountains:
- 00:21:10 Kerri Andrews (guest) this material has *always* been there. Carter's letters have *always* been there, but we haven't been able to access that and bring it together and say, "here is a body of work. This is our heritage, look at what they've done." And my book's got really narrow methodology. There are hundreds more women out there who have walked for various

purposes. There are so many more books that need to be written about this. I hope mine's just one of several that get written. But bringing all of that together, starting to get a sense of a significant cultural weight that can drive things forward so that we no longer have to rely on men's accounts to shape and determine how we access the landscape that we have access to these different points of view. I think that's really important, but the fact that these women succeeded without being able to draw on that, I think that that makes their stories even more incredible.

- 00:22:04 Michelle Levy (project director) To hear Kate discussing her discovery of the Black publisher, Ann Sancho, in her shop in Westminster.
- 00:22:11 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 *Exeter Working Papers in Book History* 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."
- 00:22:35 Michelle Levy (project director) My own learning about the fiery speeches Maria Stewart delivered in Boston in the 1830s, denouncing the exploitation of Native and Black Americans at the hands of white colonists and slave owners.
- 00:22:45 Michelle Levy (project director) Maria W. Stewart was a fascinating discovery, for me, in a number of ways. As an educated, free woman, living in the Northeastern United States, Stewart's writing is very different than that of enslaved (or formerly enslaved) women like Mary Prince, who seek to describe, first-hand, the horrors of slavery. As a free woman, Stewart is witness to the pervasive racism within the North, and can describe its deleterious impact on free men, women, and children. Her outspokenness about the causes and consequences of this racism radiates from every page.
- 00:23:28 Michelle Levy (project director) And Kate Ozment discussing how Delavier Manley wrote her secret histories by being fed gossip from the Court of Queen Anne.
- 00:23:38 Kate Ozment (guest) And this is really where she makes a name for herself. So she gets all her gossip because she hangs out with the King's mistresses. And so she gets all the good court gossip.
- 00:23:50 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Wow!

00:23:51	Kate Ozment (guest)	This is why it was so fun for me to watch <i>The Favourite</i> because Robert Harley is her patron in this period.
00:24:00		[music playing]
00:24:06	Michelle Levy (project director)	Finally, and perhaps most importantly, as we wrap up Season 1, it is apparent to me how much we have come together as a team of researchers this past year. The entirety of Season 1 was produced during the global pandemic of 2020 to 2021, and hence necessarily through a period of physical separateness or, to use those loathsome words, of “social distancing.” The WPHP has allowed us to be apart but not socially distanced, as we have worked as a team to learn more about the past and our own world.
00:24:45	Michelle Levy (project director)	In Episode 7, Kate talks about podcasting as form of therapy and on a number of occasions we have used the podcast not only to learn about the past of women’s world of print, but to reflect critically on how women’s intellectual, creative and physical labour of more than two hundred years ago can help situate us in the world today. As we look forward to an opened up world in Season 2, we are grateful that we have had each other to think, work, and laugh with during this most unusual and challenging year.
00:25:20		[music playing]