



The Women's Print History Project

Working for the (Wo)man feat. Sara Penn, Julianna Wagar, Amanda Law, and Belle Eist, *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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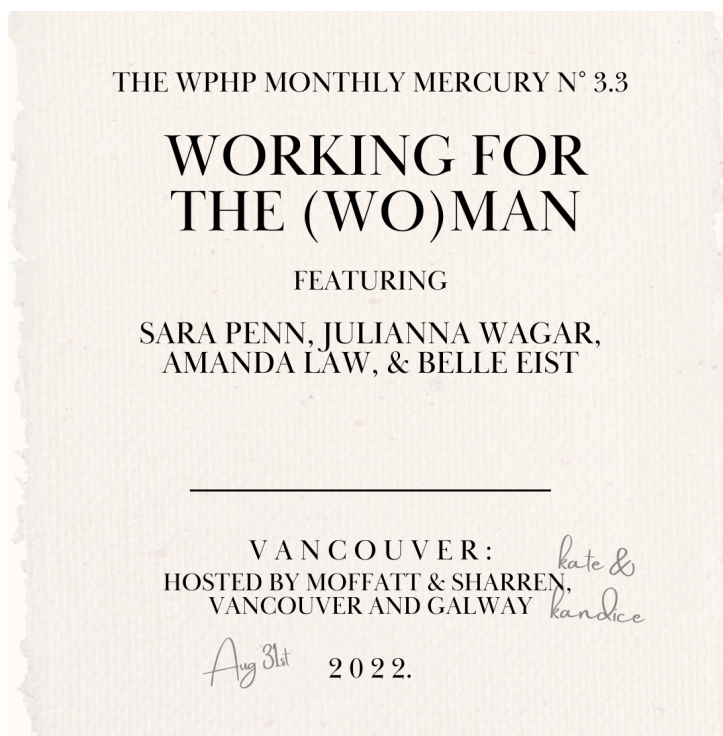
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Working for the (Wo)man feat. Sara Penn, Julianna Wagar, Amanda Law, and
Belle Eist
Kate Moffatt and Kandice Sharren



This August, the WPHP has been sharing the Spotlights that make up our newest Spotlight Series, “[Down the Rabbit Hole: Researching Women in the Book Trades](#).” Over the course of the month, posts from Research Assistants Sara Penn, Julianna Wagar, Amanda Law, and, as of this coming Friday with the last post of the Series, Belle Eist, have focused on women who worked in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century book trades.

While the WPHP is a title-centric database—the data we capture is centered around what is captured in the books themselves—we do have an extensive, and growing, dataset of women who worked as publishers, printers, and booksellers during our period. The labour required to include books in the WPHP that women published, printed, and sold is not insignificant, and yet, as the Spotlights shared this month highlight, there is always, even still, more to the story than what we manage to capture in the WPHP.

In this month’s episode, “Working for the (Wo)man,” you’ll hear from our Research Assistants themselves about their Spotlights and the women they researched: the feuding men and women of the Farley family of Bristol printers, the King’s and Queen’s Printer Agnes Campbell who began her career with her husband’s debt and by the time she died was the wealthy Lady Roseburn, the printer Jane Aitken, whose imprints tell a very different story than the life she lived, and Ann Vernor, the woman behind an imprint we’ve had in the WPHP for the last seven years while completely

unaware that she was at its helm. We also feature a Spotlight about Anne Dodd, trade publisher, by WPHP Contributing Scholar Kate Ozment, which allows us to delve into our data model and its—you guessed it—limits.

You can read more about our “Down the Rabbit Hole” Spotlight Series [here](#), and we highly encourage you to read the Spotlights. These blog posts involve independent and original research, the creation and analysis of new datasets, and a lot of labour that isn’t always visible in our database. As this podcast makes a concerted effort to acknowledge and make visible some of that invisible labour of working on a digital humanities project, we’re particularly thrilled to center and showcase the labour of our Spotlight-writing Research Assistants in this month’s episode.

As a quick aside: this month, one of our episodes—Episode 2, Season 2: “[Collected, Catalogued, Counted](#)”—was featured on *The Spoken Web Podcast*, Kate’s *other* podcast that she works on. If you enjoy what we do here on *The WPHP Monthly Mercury*, you’ll enjoy their podcast, too, which engages with literary audio held in university collections in Canada and beyond as part of the *Spoken Web* project.

Guests

Sara Penn earned her M.A. from Simon Fraser University’s Department of English. She researches print and manuscript cultures of Britain’s long eighteenth century, with particular interests in women’s book history, bibliography, and digital humanities. She is largely responsible for editing, updating, and formatting all WPHP content.

Julianna Wagar has recently completed her BA at Simon Fraser University in English and Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies. She is an incoming MA student in English at SFU. Her research interests include eighteenth-century Scottish literature, women’s literature, and Scottish women’s travel writing.

Amanda Law recently completed her BA (Hons) in English with a Humanities minor at Simon Fraser University, and is an incoming MA student in the Department of English at UBC. Her research centers on Asian American representation in young adult and popular cultural productions.

Belle Eist is completing her BA in English with a minor in Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies at Simon Fraser University. Her research interests surround the social mores of the long eighteenth century and the women writers who sought to disrupt them.

WPHP Spotlights Referenced

“What Does it Mean to Publish? A Messy Accounting of Anne Dodd” (Kate Ozment)

“The Farley Family, their Feud, and the Bristol Print Trade” (Sara Penn)

“A Royal Printer: Agnes Campbell in Scotland’s Book Trade” (Julianna Wagar)

“Printed (Bound, Published, and Sold) by Jane Aitken” (Amanda Law)

“Hidden in the Imprints: Introducing Ann Vernor, Bookseller and Publisher, Active 1793-1807” (Belle Eist)

***The WPHP Monthly Mercury* Episodes Referenced**

Season 1, Episode 2: “Women in the Imprints”

Season 1, Episode 6: “Mind the (Data) Gaps”

Season 2, Episode 2: “Collected, Catalogued, Counted”

WPHP Records Referenced

Anne Dodd (firm)

Elizabeth Farley (firm)

Sarah Farley (firm)

Hester Farley (firm)

Clifton: a poem, in two cantos. Including Bristol and all its environs. By Henry Jones, author of the Earl of Essex, Isle of Wight, Kew-Gardens, &c. (title)

More, Hannah (person)

Samuel Farley (firm)

Agnes Campbell (firm)

Spence, Elizabeth Isabella (person)

Issobell and Elizabeth Anderson (firm)

Jane Aitken (firm)

Robert Aitken (firm)

Rush, Rebecca (person)

Kelroy, a Novel. (title)

Ann Vernor and Thomas Hood (firm)

Thomas Vernor (firm)

Further Reading

Barker, Hannah. “Women, work and the industrial revolution: female involvement in the English printing trades, c. 1700–1840,” *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities*, ed. Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus. Longman, 1997, pp. 81–100.

Mann, Alistair. “Book Commerce, Litigation and the Art of Monopoly: The Case of Agnes Campbell, Royal Printer, 1676-1712.” *Scottish Economic & Social History*, 1998, pp. 132–156, DOI: 10.3366/sesh.1998.18.PART_2.132.

Maruca, Lisa. *The Work of Print: Authorship and the English Text Trades, 1660-1760*. U of Washington P, 2007.

Raven, James. *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade*. Yale UP, 2007.

Spawn, Willman. "A Jane Aitken Binding." *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, vol. 91, no. 1, 1981, p. 109.

Wakely, Maria, and Graham Rees. *Publishing, Politics, and Culture: The King's Printers in the Reign of James I and VI*. Oxford UP, 2010.

- 00:00:27 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Hello and welcome to *The WPHP Monthly Mercury*, the podcast for *The Women's Print History Project*. The WPHP is a bibliographic database that collects information about women and book production in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. My name is Kate Moffatt—
- 00:00:42 Kandice Sharren (co-host) and I'm Kandice Sharren—
- 00:00:43 Kate Moffatt (co-host) and we are long-time editors of the WPHP and the hosts of this podcast. Join us on the last Wednesday of every month this season as we interview more brilliant scholars, take a trip across the Atlantic for our first-ever live and in-person episode, and, as always, dive into the ins-and-outs—and sideways-and-upside-downs!—of working on women in print.
- 00:01:06  [music playing]
- 00:01:16 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Out of the 6,226 firm records that we have in the WPHP, we have identified 553 publishing, printing, and bookselling businesses in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with women listed as a partner. At the time of this podcast episode, they have contributed to 3090 titles in the database, just over 2100 of which have been verified and are publicly visible, and this number is constantly increasing as we continue to find and collect data about the titles they published, printed, or sold—we are very, very aware that this number is not yet anywhere near representative of women's involvement in the book trades during our period.
- 00:01:54 Kate Moffatt (co-host) One of the reasons this is the case is because identifying and adding these firms and their related titles is different—and typically more labour-intensive—than our usual process for verifying titles. The sheer volume of works to be added is a barrier to accounting for these women's involvement, in addition to the difficulty of finding and accounting for them in the first place.
- 00:02:15 Kate Moffatt (co-host) We talked about it more in the second episode of our first season, but essentially, our women-run firms work involves combing through firm-specific resources to identify references to print trade businesses owned by women, and then searching for titles that list those firms in other resources. This is complicated by multiple factors, including the fact that women often go unnamed in our resources, listed only as “the widow of so-and so,” or that their gender is often obscured in the imprints by the use of initials instead of first names.

- 00:02:44 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Because this process is so involved, adding and verifying titles associated with female-run firms often falls by the wayside. This August, in an attempt to kickstart the process, the WPHP has been publishing another Spotlight Series —this one, titled “Down the Rabbit Hole”, is all about researching women in the book trades. For anyone new to the WPHP, our Spotlight Series are made up of blog posts about a particular topic, usually shared on a weekly basis over the course of a month or so. Members of our team research and write blog posts about titles, people, or firms in the WPHP, and doing so requires not only engagement with our data, but often independent and original research.
- 00:03:19 Kandice Sharren (co-host) The result this month is five spotlights that highlight a wide range of business practices undertaken by women in London, Bristol, Edinburgh, and Philadelphia. We’re excited to feature our four Research Assistants who wrote spotlights for this series on the podcast this month. Throughout the episode, Sara Penn, Julianna Wagar, Amanda Law, and Belle Eist are going to tell you about the rabbit holes they fell down while exploring the weird and wonderful world of women in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century book trades.
- 00:03:57 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Our spotlight series kicked off with WPHP Contributing Scholar Kate Ozment’s spotlight on Anne Dodd, whose position as a ‘trade publisher’ in the early eighteenth century does not fit neatly into our data model—we capture the contributions of publishers, printers, and booksellers as indicated in the imprints on title pages. But as Kate points out in this spotlight, a trade publisher could be both publisher or bookseller, or both; that trade publishers did not always, or even often, sign their names in imprints in ways that reliably, or even honestly [Kandice laughs], indicated the actual role they played in a title’s publication; and that the term ‘publisher’ had different meanings throughout the eighteenth century.
- 00:04:36 Kate Moffatt (co-host) So Kate asks, where would Anne Dodd, trade publisher, fit? This spotlight highlights just how much information doesn’t fit into our data model, actually [Kandice laughs]. As long-time listeners know, we love to talk about the limitations of the WPHP in this podcast; mostly because they can sometimes be hard to see when you’re working directly with the data. One such limitation this spotlight takes up is what we can capture about women in the book trades. There is a tension between our title-centric approach—which limits what we capture to information that is printed in the book itself—and our desire to capture the nuances of women’s labour—like the fact that many women worked uncredited in a husband’s business prior to taking it over at his death.

- 00:05:18 Kandice Sharren (co-host) By putting the term ‘publisher’ under pressure, and showing how it meant different things at different times in our period, Kate draws attention to how our standard for categorizing someone’s role in the production of a book according to the terminology in the imprint is, ultimately, an editorial decision. And it’s one that doesn’t fully account for women’s involvement in businesses prior to ownership—we only capture women-run book trades businesses—or the labour that doesn’t fit neatly into our model, like that of trade publishers.
- 00:05:45 Kandice Sharren (co-host) This emphasis in Kate’s spotlight on the messiness of women’s labour in the book trades was a very fitting point from which to start the series: each of the subsequent spotlights take up this messiness in one way or another as our Research Assistants fall down rabbit holes and work to untangle the complex and very human history of some of the women in the book trades captured by the WPHP.
- 00:06:09 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Sara Penn’s work on three women in the Farley family of Bristol printers highlighted a different limitation of the WPHP data: the kinds of titles that we capture. Our focus on ‘books’ (capaciously defined to include any standalone titles) excludes most periodicals. This means that our data about the Farley women, who printed newspapers, does not accurately reflect their contributions to print.
- 00:06:32 Kate Moffatt (co-host) We have a small number of records for books attached to these women in the WPHP, and we are continuing to find and add the other works they were involved in—but, currently, Elizabeth Farley is listed as a bookseller or printer on 10 titles, and Sarah Farley is similarly listed as a bookseller or printer on 25. Some of these are Bristol-specific: a few early Hannah More publications appear in their records, as does a poem about Clifton, an area in Bristol. But these women also successfully ran and printed two Bristol newspapers and periodicals for more than 20 years, and that considerable contribution is not something that will ever be captured by the WPHP.
- 00:07:07 Sara Penn (R.A) My spotlight, “The Farley Family, their Feud, and the Bristol Print Trade,” focuses on three eighteenth-century women: Elizabeth, Sarah, and Hester Farley. These women fascinate me for a few reasons. First, although they’re all linked to a line of Farley men in the newspaper printing business from the late sixteenth century, they were notable printers, booksellers, and publishers in their own right. The Farleys primarily contributed to family-run newspapers and journals—genres that we do not include in the WPHP—but they also contributed to a number of books of all kinds—which we do include.

- 00:07:43 Sara Penn (RA) Second, Elizabeth, Sarah, and Hester are also linked to a long-lasting feud carried on by their husbands and uncles. This feud lasted for at least three generations and scholars note that the commercial rivalry between the women was no less vicious than that of the men's. And third, the Farleys were all located in Bristol, a portion of England that I've encountered less often in my work on the WPHP.
- 00:08:11 Sara Penn (RA) I'm thrilled to be a part of the August spotlight series because the research allowed me to step out of my comfort zone to explore new women, locations, and genres in the book trade. That said, the process wasn't always straightforward, and it almost never is working with contributors to print beyond authorship. (This is one of the many joys of working on the WPHP, as you can see! As Kandice muses in Season 1, Episode 2, "the work of creating a comprehensive resource that accounts for female labour in the book trades is itself a labour-intensive process.")
- 00:08:41 Sara Penn (RA) In the grand scheme of things, though, I must admit that I had it fairly easy. For example, Kate basically served me Sarah Farley on a silver platter and she mentioned that Sarah is possibly related to Hester Farley. And, spoiler alert, the *British Book Trade Index* and *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* showed that the women were indeed cousins! Or, more specifically, Elizabeth was Hester's mother, and Elizabeth's husband was Sarah's uncle.
- 00:09:08 Sara Penn (RA) But fear not, dear listeners, my spotlight includes a family tree. But anyway, the BBTI, ODNB, and even *Wikipedia* only mention Elizabeth, Sarah, and Hester in passing, so I turned to other archival sources to piece together their family history. For example, I largely consulted primary sources on Bristol newspapers and journals because they, in my view, helped piece together a fuller history of the Farleys that was sometimes missing from secondary scholarship of which there is very little.
- 00:09:38 Sara Penn (RA) That said, an essay by Bristol historian Madge Dresser led me to the diary of eighteenth-century writer Sarah Fox, which details the personal lives of the Farley women. I also noticed that sources discussing the Farleys' more famous contemporaries, such as Susannah Wesley or Hannah More, help to better trace the many and impactful contributions of Elizabeth, Sarah, and Hester. I hope that my spotlight will show that we've only scratched the surface of what it means to bring together bibliography, digital humanities, and contributors beyond authorship to light.

- 00:10:11 Kate Moffatt (co-host) So as Sara mentions, I found the Farley women in the BBTI, the *British Book Trade Index*, while I was final-checking some data last year—I think I was looking for something for a title. And it was the BBTI that suggested, I think it was Hester Farley, may be related to Sarah or Elizabeth. But because we don't capture familial ties or anything in the WPHP, I didn't follow that particular rabbit hole. I wish I had because—I'm really glad Sara did—because we could have missed out entirely on this multi-generational feud! [Kandice laughs] of renaming newspapers and I'm so desperate to know what it was exactly they didn't get along about. [laughs]
- 00:10:47 Kandice Sharren (co-host) And we'll never know. That's just another hole in our data.
- 00:10:52 Kate Moffatt (co-host) We'll never know! We'll never know.
- 00:10:53 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Something else that doesn't, doesn't fall into our purview.
- 00:10:57 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Something else that we missed. Another little gap: the family feuds.
- 00:11:01 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Yeah, and we've got that related firms function, but you're the one who's been kind of testing it out, so maybe you can speak to this a little bit better, but we're not using it to capture family relationships, right? Because right now we've got every time a business moves addresses, it's like they get a new record because it—otherwise it doesn't work with our system.
- 00:11:24 Kate Moffatt (co-host) And that was why, that was why we actually brought that feature in was like we've got—say someone moved five times, and so we've got six different addresses for the same person. We wanted to make sure that there was a way for users of the database to be able to see that those were all the same person for us to have them all connected to each other in those records. But it sometimes gets a little bit confusing because they're related, but they're not actually for relatives.
- 00:11:50 Kate Moffatt (co-host) It's not for people who are related to each other *unless* they were printing together and so they appear in an imprint together. That's kind of what we've used it for, is to connect the different businesses or different addresses for a single business or to connect the people who worked together in something. So if you've got Sam and Max working together and they appear as Sam and Max in an imprint, but Sam also published by himself and Max almost also published by himself.
- 00:12:16 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Oh, okay. Yeah.

- 00:12:17 Kate Moffatt (co-host) You would connect those individual ones to that record that accounts for both of them. But, and if they were brothers, great, we've got them connected, but we definitely don't relate them just because they're brothers, if that makes sense to me. We wouldn't actually capture those family ties.
- 00:12:31 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Yeah. And in this case you could search 'Farley' in the firms and see all the Farleys come up, but you won't know if there are going to be other Farleys potentially too. And also, especially with women, their names change sometimes if they get married again, so it's not always reliable. But that's one way to—
- 00:12:49 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Yeah, and I think that's totally for our own sanity [Kandice laughs]. I think it would literally be another project altogether if we were trying to trace marriages and family ties between firms and businesses.
- 00:13:00 Kandice Sharren (co-host) The family tree in Sara's spotlight would be like a red string on a board. [laughs]
- 00:13:13 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Yeah. But we can't ignore the fact that even though we don't actually try and capture that data in the WPHP that we are often following family ties in order to find more information about people. And that's definitely something I think Sara was doing here too with Hester and Sarah and Elizabeth.
- 00:13:32 Kandice Sharren (co-host) And all the dudes as well.
- 00:13:34 Kate Moffatt (co-host) And all the guys who were also having these feuds that the women carried forward [laughs]. Yeah, that's how we kind of find information about people quite often is by following those little traces.
- 00:13:48 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Sara wasn't the only one who had to grapple with the data problems raised by familial ties. Julianna Wagar's exploration of the life and work of Agnes Campbell, Royal Printer, led her to discover that not only did Campbell print more than 800 titles during her career, and over 400 titles between 1700 and 1716, she also passed her business on to her daughters.
- 00:14:09 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Due to Campbell's role as Royal Printer, Julianna was able to find out a lot about her relatively easily—which is rare—but information about her daughters remains far more elusive and it's only through Julianna's detailed research into Campbell that they have WPHP records at all. This spotlight traces how complex a woman in the book trade's history can be, even when we have lots of documentation, as we do for Campbell.

- 00:14:38 Julianna Wagar (RA) For my spotlight “A Royal Printer: Agnes Campbell in Scotland’s Book Trade” I wrote on Agnes Campbell, a Scottish printer in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century. She worked as the King’s and Queen’s Printer after her husband died and became one of the wealthiest printers in Scotland’s history. It was initially difficult to focus on one aspect of Campbell’s business, as she was highly successful and well-documented due to her position as the King’s and Queen’s Printer. A highly sought after position which gave Campbell exclusive right to print political and religious texts, such as the bible, in Scotland for the reigning king or queen. It was surprising to me that there was quite a bit of scholarship on her, mainly done by Alistair Mann. I relied heavily on Mann’s research as well as general research done on the King’s and Queen’s Printers. As someone new to scholarship on firms, it was quite a different research and writing process for me.
- 00:15:25 Julianna Wagar (RA) While my work on Elizabeth Isabella Spence last year flowed out of me, Campbell was much harder to understand and a lot of my work was researching the legalities of her patent and trying to form a chronological narrative of her business endeavours. I found it incredibly rewarding, as I was piecing together the life of an incredible woman who actively resisted her oppressors, other printers vying for her position, and continues to be remembered as a powerful businesswoman. Truly, the most surprising part of my research was uncovering 78, 197 Scottish pounds Campbell left behind for her daughters and the lack of scholarship there is on them.
- 00:16:04 Julianna Wagar (RA) Elizabeth and Issobell Anderson worked for their mothers firm after she passed away in 1716, printing for the Church of Scotland, yet there is almost no record of their work. Campbell’s position meant that she was well documented, while her daughters are more typical examples of women in the book trades, who lack such thorough documentation of their work, possibly because they occupied less visible positions. I only uncovered their names by digging through multiple papers on Campbell, as they are typically only referred to as her daughters. This is one of my favorite aspects of *The Women’s Print History Project* because we actively recover the lives and histories of incredible women writers and firms, like Agnes Campbell and Elizabeth and Issobell Anderson, and add their names to relevant scholarship.
- 00:16:45 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So Kate, you were the one who found Agnes Campbell as well. Do you wanna talk a little bit about that?

- 00:16:51 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Yes! But I can't actually take full credit. I found out about Agnes Campbell because a friend of mine, Brecht Nijman, who worked on Campbell for her thesis, told me about her because she was obsessed with her. And I was like, "I am also obsessed with women in the book trades, so please tell me more." But anyways, Brecht was super, super helpful in pointing us in the right direction, even for things like how to find Campbell's titles in the ESTC since, as I think Julianna also points out in her spotlight, Agnes Campbell never printed under her own name.
- 00:17:19 Kate Moffatt (co-host) She was printing as the relict of Andrew Anderson or as the heirs and successors of Andrew Anderson. And that was all very much because of the legality of the patent that her husband had before he died. But it was very much, "thank you Brecht!" It was very much because of Brecht that we were able to really dig into that and find more about her. So that was, that was really cool.
- 00:17:42 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Yeah. Have I ever told you how much I love the fact that women in this period get described as relicts?
- 00:17:48 Kate Moffatt (co-host) You have! And its very on brand for you—
- 00:17:53 Kate Moffatt (co-host) It makes them sound like they're dead, which I find so disturbing. It's like, "no, he's dead, not her." He's dead, she's still alive, but for some reason, shes can'ed a relict—
- 00:18:05 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Right! Exactly. That's exactly what it sounds like. It makes me crazy! [both laugh] It makes me crazy.
- 00:18:11 Kandice Sharren (co-host) I guess the other thing with Agnes Campbell, so she published a massive, massive number of records. But because she was the royal printer, a lot of these are for us as literary scholars, quite boring [both laugh]. There's a lot of legal material in there, like royal proclamations, that kind of thing, where it's obvious these are historically important documents. But they aren't things that we would necessarily come across in a lot of the resources we tend to look at, which look at literary genres, right? So, we've got *The English Novel* bibliography, Jackson's *Romantic Poetry*, things like that.
- 00:18:58 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Yeah, I was going to say, I think in our sources episode—was that Episode 6 of Season 1?
- 00:19:04 Kandice Sharren (co-host) I think so?

- 00:19:06 Kate Moffatt (co-host) I can't remember, but maybe. I'll make sure to link it in the blog post for this episode. But in our sources episode we talk a bit about what we have access to absolutely kind of informs and can create a bit of a bias in our data in terms of what we actually have. So like—
- 00:19:21 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Or what we have information about.
- 00:19:23 Kate Moffatt (co-host) We've never had a resource that's like, "here's all the legal proclamations from Scotland" [both laugh.] We never came across Agnes Campbell prior to me hearing about her from my friend because she wasn't printing things that would've appeared in the genre specific sources we were working with, which I do, I think is really interesting.
- 00:19:43 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Yeah. Well and also I think because the *Scottish Book Trade index* is completely different from the *British Book Trade Index*, right? So it's a totally different process trying to find things in it.
- 00:19:54 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Yeah. Finding women in both of the *Book Trade Indexes* is really tricky. It's not the kind of thing that you can easily go through systematically. So it makes it a lot harder to do that. And even if we could do it systematically, both are actually such massive, massive projects. It's something we're still trying to figure out is how to grapple with all of our data from the SBTI and the BBTI. Because it's really difficult. But yeah, she would've [unintelligible]—
- 00:20:21 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Yeah, so even though these are in the ESTC, especially with the firms, if we don't know the firm exists, we don't usually find it. Right?
- 00:20:28 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Exactly. We have to be able to search for it. Exactly. Amanda Law's work on Jane Aitken focused on large-scale analysis of imprints—and what they may or may not tell us. The narrative provided by the majority of Jane Aitken's imprints in the WPHP is, as Amanda discovered, only telling a partial history about Aitken's involvement in the book trades. In this case, while Aitken's imprints identify her as a printer, other sources point to a wider range of business practices.
- 00:21:01 Amanda Law (RA) I wrote my spotlight on American printer, publisher, bookseller, and bookbinder Jane Aitken and how imprint data often does not tell us the full story of a woman's involvement in the book trade. Writing this spotlight was quite a different experience for me than the other ones I've written for the WPHP because while there is more information out there on her compared to the other women featured in this series, very little of it is reliable scholarship beyond the basics of her family history and biography.

- 00:21:28 Amanda Law (RA) Instead, I turned to analyzing the imprint data we have for her in the database. I spent the first couple months of the summer verifying the over one hundred titles attached to her in the database, imported from the American Antiquarian Society. While this was a pretty tedious and often confusing task (which resulted in a lot of questions for Kate and Kandice), it gave me a detailed picture of how Aitken appeared in her imprints, and allowed me to flag the imprints that stood out and that form the basis of my spotlight.
- 00:21:56 Amanda Law (RA) I opted not to include as much biographical information in my spotlight on Aitken, but there were some things that I found interesting and worth noting that didn't make it in. When Aitken inherited the printing and bookbinding business from her father, Robert Aitken, she also inherited his debts, which were mostly incurred from signing for the debts Jane's brother-in-law owed. Aitken began her business already at a disadvantage, and despite being a prolific printer, publisher, bookseller, and bookbinder, seemed to be constantly working to keep her business afloat as well as supporting her two younger sisters.
- 00:22:27 Amanda Law (RA) Some of her most notable works include printing the first English translation of the New Testament published in America, the Thomson Bible of 1808, and binding over four hundred volumes for the American Philosophical Society. Despite her efforts, her business failed in 1813 and her equipment was sold. John Vaughan, a librarian for the American Philosophical Society and a friend of Aitken, bought this equipment and leased it back to her so that she could continue printing, which is why the WPHP has titles attached to Aitken beyond her last firm end date.
- 00:22:59 Amanda Law (RA) Unfortunately, her business continued to fail and she was put into debtors' prison just outside Philadelphia. Writing this spotlight demonstrated to me that, although the WPHP records a lot of information in our data, there are also limitations to what can be captured. It is only by putting the data together, prodding the gaps, and even jumping down these holes that we gain a fuller picture of who these women were and the work they did in the book trade.
- 00:23:26 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So I'm excited about this spotlight partly because I'm the one who found Jane Aitken. [laughs]
- 00:23:32 Kate Moffatt (co-host) You found Jane Aitken! Way to go, Kandice!
- 00:23:33 Kandice Sharren (co-host) I know. I know. And I found her in a really roundabout way. So, she was the printer of Rebecca Rush's 1812 novel *Kelroy* which is an early American society novel, which I had ordered from Broadview because I was like browsing the Broadview Press website one day, looking for books that might be—

00:23:59 Kate Moffatt (co-host) As you do! [laughs]—

00:24:00 Kandice Sharren (co-host) interesting to read. And I was like, “Oh, this one looks fun” [laughs]. So I ordered it and I read the introduction and then I got to the part—you know how they reproduce the title page—at the front of the book I got to it and, as a WPHP person, I always read the imprints now and it was printed by Aiken!

00:24:17 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Always, me too.

00:24:18 Kandice Sharren (co-host) And I was like, “oh my God.” So, Jane Aitken was I think the first American woman-run firm in the WPHP because it was right when we kinda decided to expand to do American titles.

00:24:33 Kate Moffatt (co-host) But we hadn't actually brought stuff in yet.

00:24:35 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Yeah, but hadn't actually brought it in yet. So, I got to add it [laughs]. We absolutely would've found her without my efforts thanks to the American Antiquarian Society cataloguing system, which flags her. And she's one of the American volumes of the dictionary of literary biography under her father's entry, Robert Aitken, but there is a section in it on her. So we would've found her regardless.

00:25:08 Kandice Sharren (co-host) I just feel like she's mine. [laughs]

00:25:10 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Yep. She's yours, that's fine.

00:25:11 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Well, I think now she's more Amanda's than mine, but [laughs], Amanda's just done a lot more work.

00:25:17 Kate Moffatt (co-host) That's true [laughs]. And to be fair, I think I was going to say just a quick little plug, if anybody listening to the podcast out there in the world has any really good resources for American book trade businesses during our period, please, please tell, please tell us. We are absolutely desperate for them. Trying to track down the information about—we've got all these resources for the UK ones, but we don't have any, almost anything for the American—

00:25:45 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Yeah. We need to build some of those up. Because it took quite a while for us to get our British and Dublin list going.

00:25:53 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Yeah. But that being said, I was going to say that I think this is such cool work that Amanda was able to do. Because it's actually really difficult to get this kind of fully comprehensive sort of data, or as nearly comprehensive as we can get it for

- women in the trades; even when we do have tons of sources and like we do know how to search for them in the ESTC or whatever, it not that's not easy to do.
- 00:26:14 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Not least because databases don't always make the publisher field easily searchable. And if they do, sometimes you've got women with names like "A. Reilly" and you're like, "oh my gosh, is this Alice Reilly? Or is this some random guy named Andrew?" I don't know. It's tricky labour to create this kind of a data set and I think this spotlight really highlights the value of doing that kind of tricky labour. Like. She's found some really cool stuff.
- 00:26:41 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Yeah. And I think what's in the imprints and what's not in the imprints, and where you would find that information that's not in the imprints as well. Our final spotlight this month showcases an exciting discovery by one of our Research Assistants, Belle Eist. The firm she focused on, Vernor and Hood, has been in the WPHP from pretty much the beginning of the database, but until this year we had no idea that 'Vernor' actually referred to *Ann Vernor*, who was the widow of Thomas Vernor, who was a partner in the firm until his death in 1794. So when Belle told us that her research into Mary Pilkington in a class she was with Michelle had revealed this to her, we obviously freaked out. [Kate laughs]
- 00:27:30 Belle Eist (RA) My research for this spotlight series focused on Ann Vernor, a bookseller and publisher operating in London between 1794 and 1807. Following the death of her husband, Thomas Vernor, Ann Vernor quietly took up co-ownership of the firm alongside Thomas Hood. Together they began publishing the *Lady's Monthly Museum*, a popular monthly periodical, as well as selling and publishing more than 600 titles, which are recorded in the *English Short Title Catalogue* and are slowly being imported into our database.
- 00:28:05 Belle Eist (RA) Signing imprints only under her married name, Ann Vernor was not a visible woman in the imprints. Because the WPHP relies on imprint data to create our firm records and also to determine which titles to import into the database, titles published, printed, or sold by women like Ann Vernor, whose imprints lacked any sort of gendered indicator, were not included in our initial imports of titles from the ESTC or AAS. Determining that there was, in fact, a woman working in the firm after Thomas Vernor's death has allowed us to begin importing any titles published during the thirteen years in which Ann Vernor was active within the firm.

- 00:28:46 Belle Eist (RA) The impressive number of titles the firm published and sold during her tenure highlights a prolific career that has not previously been recognized in scholarly research. As the hundreds of titles she worked on are slowly imported into the WPHP, it is exciting to think that our database will be the first to recognize her contribution to the publication of over 600 titles thought to be produced by men at every stage.
- 00:29:12 Belle Eist (RA) Because her presence as the operating ‘Vernor’ in the firms ‘Vernor and Hood’ and ‘Vernor, Hood, and Sharpe’ after 1793 is not reflected in any other databases or scholarly sources, the process of finding evidence for her involvement in the firm required research into less conventional academic sources, such as the free genealogical website *Wikitree*, as well as collections of primary materials, like the London Metropolitan Archives Collections Catalogue, where Thomas Vernor’s will (a key piece of evidence for Ann Vernor’s hands-on role in the business) is housed.
- 00:29:49 Belle Eist (RA) Ann Vernor’s story highlights that many women were likely to have been running and working in firms behind the scenes, but their labour and contribution to the book trades is not preserved, as it was for many of their male counterparts, in sources that we at the WPHP utilize to supplement our firm data, such as the *British Book Trade Index* or the *Exeter Working Papers*. Fueled by our contemporary view of the patriarchal social norms of the era, conventional assumptions that book trade business partners were almost inevitably men—which I had to push back against to disprove the involvement of her oldest son, George Vernor—impede ongoing recognition for women booksellers and publishers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
- 00:30:31 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So I think Belle’s kind of in some ways ties together a lot of the things we’ve been talking about, how there’s all these family relationship networks that create firms. But also, what genre or what type of thing you’re publishing, determines whether you’re going to be in the database or not, or if we’re going to find you very quickly. So the reason Vernor and Hood were in the database is because they published some fiction. And one of the very first things that I did when I first started working on the project was hand enter every single novel written by a woman between 1770 and 1829 [both laugh]. Thanks to Raven Garside, so I remember Vernor and Hood because I was hand typing those. [laughs]
- 00:31:22 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Yeah, and I remember Vernor and Hood because I’m pretty sure I was going through and verifying a bunch of titles, so Vernor and Hood was constantly popping up. It’s a firm that’s attached to quite a few titles in WPHP. Actually, I wonder how many. Keep going. I’m curious about how many we actually have.

00:31:39 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So anyway, it's so funny because normally we'll have figured out sooner than this if it was because we went through and we verified all those and researched all those firms ages ago. But I think what Belle's spotlight shows is even if you do your due diligence and do your best to check, you might not find the woman, in this case possibly because she wasn't the public face of the business or something.

00:32:10 Kate Moffatt (co-host) She wasn't super visible.

00:32:12 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Yeah. So, it's an interesting one because it took so long and it was the letter from Mary Pilkington and Belle was digging so deep into—

00:32:29 Kate Moffatt (co-host) She was reading the will, she was absolutely looking for the insurance documents. She was like, "I am going to figure out if this is"—because how could it have gotten missed and yet it got missed. You know?

00:32:41 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Which I think really makes me wonder who else we've missed or—



00:32:47 Kate Moffatt (co-host) It absolutely makes me wonder what else we might have missed, as soon as I—

v32:50 Kandice And we might never find.

00:32:52 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Yeah, that too. Because I think that's the other thing to think about too is this is a big firm. There are hundreds of entries already, I think in the WPHP attached to Ann Vernor and there's tons more in the ESTC that Belle is currently working on bringing into the database. Obviously that's a massive job. It's a lot of labour. But I think the other thing to remember is this was something that really caught her interest and that's amazing.

00:33:19 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Yes, absolutely, follow that rabbit hole down, but there's, there's no way that any of us, Belle, me, you, there's no way any of us can dedicate that much time or that many hours to every single firm that we come across, where we think there may have been a woman involved; we will dedicate more hours to that kind of research than we will to say the ones that are just a group of men, and it's very clear from the start that it's a group of men. But it is interesting to think about the amount—that's a lot of hours. It's a lot of labour. It's a ton. It's a ton of labour that doesn't even really appear in the data afterwards, you know?

00:33:54 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Well, and I almost think too, part of the reason that we didn't dig into this more is because we did have a record for Thomas Vernor in the WPHP. So then when we had Vernor and Hood, we probably just assumed it was Thomas still.

- 00:34:11 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Yeah, yeah. And I think there are even resources, I'd have to follow through on this and I'm sure Belle has, but I think there were even resources that suggested it was still Thomas Vernor continuing along. And it wasn't until Belle realized that she was like, "he died [both laugh] way before half of these are published" [laughs]. And that is often, that is often how we figure it out. We're like, "Hey, this person died. There's probably something here and we need to do a bit more digging."
- 00:34:42 Kandice Sharren (co-host) In addition to drawing attention to the various questions we have to ask when working with book trade businesses run by women, this spotlight series provided members of our team with the opportunity to conduct original research, build and analyze new datasets, and write for a public audience. It is a ton of work, most of which isn't visible just by looking at the records for the database.
- 00:35:03 Kandice Sharren (co-host) The spotlights, therefore, serve not just as a record of eighteenth and nineteenth-century women's labour in the book trades, but also as a record of the labour that members of our team put into finding these women and their titles. Many of these Research Assistants are former students that I have taught in undergraduate classes, and it is so thrilling to see them adopt independent and original research projects in this way. So, all of that is just a very long way of saying that these spotlights are really very cool. And you should go read them if you haven't already.
- 00:35:36 Kate Moffatt (co-host) As a quick aside, we're thrilled to share that this month, one of our episodes — Episode 2 of Season 2, "Collected, Catalogued, Counted," featuring Dr. Kirstyn Leuner—was featured on the other podcast that I work on: *The Spoken Web Podcast*! [Kandice laughs]. That episode of *The WPHP Monthly Mercury* emphasized how important collecting and cataloguing can be; the result can be that that work is then counted, in projects like Dr. Leuner's and our own—and the *Spoken Web* project, which is seeking to do similar work to make available literary audio in university collections in Canada and beyond. If you like what we do here on *The WPHP Monthly Mercury*, you'll enjoy their podcast too.
- 00:36:14  [music playing]
- 00:36:23 Kandice Sharren (co-host) This has been the third episode of Season 3 of *The WPHP Monthly Mercury*! 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. You can also find us at @TheWPHP on twitter and on Instagram @womensprinthistoryproject.
- 00:36:47  [music playing]

00:36:56 Kandice Sharren [outtakes, part 1] This one titled “Down the Rabbit Hole” is all about
(co-host) researching women in the book trades. Ooh, my voice disappeared there.

00:37:03 Kate Moffatt I heard that [both laugh].
(co-host)

00:37:05 Kate Moffatt [outtakes, part 2] Information available because it is printed in the book itself. I
(co-host) don't know why I added available there. It doesn't make sense at all.

00:37:13 Kandice Sharren [outtakes, part 3] A complex woman, hero for our times. [both laugh]
(co-host)

00:37:22 Kate Moffatt [outtakes, part 4] Speaking of imprints, Amanda Law's work on Jane
(co-host) Aiken's—were we speaking of imprints? Other sources points us to a wider range
of business practices. I said that sentence really strangely, I think I was trying to
figure out what that dot dot dot was—was it a period or...? [both laugh]

00:37:36 Kandice Sharren I think it was more, like, drama! [both laugh]
(co-host)

00:37:40 Kate Moffatt Oh! Hold on, let me try again. [both laugh]
(co-host)

00:37:45 Kandice Sharren Suspense! [both laugh]
(co-host)

00:37:47 Kate Moffatt Was that mysterious?
(co-host)

00:37:50 Kandice Sharren Yes, good job.
(co-host)