

MACMILLAN & CO. IN NEW YORK:
TRANSATLANTIC PUBLISHING IN THE LATE
NINETEENTH CENTURY

Elizabeth DeBlock

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MPhil
at the
University of St Andrews



2017

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Macmillan & Co. in New York:
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in the Late Nineteenth Century

Elizabeth DeBlock



University of
St Andrews

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of
Master of Philosophy
at the
University of St Andrews

26 September 2017

Abstract

This thesis follows the British publisher Macmillan & Co. as it set up its first international branch office in New York, from 1869 to the 1891. It outlines how Macmillan's New York Agency functioned in a distant market, at a time when international copyright law did not exist. I investigate how the Agency navigated political, social, and economic challenges as it sought to become the first successful branch offices of a British publisher on American soil. First, I establish how Macmillan & Co. traded on a transatlantic level during the 1850s and 1860s, and ask why Alexander Macmillan, made the decision to open the branch office in 1867. Second, I reconstruct the opening of the Agency in 1869, its first few years in business, and the hardships, challenges, and successes it endured in order to become economically profitable to the mother-company. Lastly, I evaluate how the relationship between the Agency and the London office shifted once a new generation of business management came of age in the early 1890s, and as international copyright laws came into effect between American and Great Britain. This is the first ever in-depth look at how a British publisher agency operated on American soil. It offers new insights into how the transatlantic trade operated, as well as shows how international businesses operated within new markets lacking international laws.

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Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I must acknowledge my supervisor, Dr. Aileen Fyfe, for all her support and guidance throughout this project. Her generosity, kindness, insights, and direction made this thesis possible. It has been an incredible experience learning from her.

I must thank the Russell Trust, the Royal Historical Society, and the Economic History Society for their generous research grants. The grants allowed me to complete the research essential to this dissertation in archives held at Reading University and the British Library. The librarians and archivists at both institutions were nothing but helpful during my time researching. I thank Elizabeth James for helping me decipher the nineteenth-century hand writing in the very beginning of my time at the British Library. I also need to thank Michael Winship for providing information from his research at the Ticknor & Fields archive.

To my family, thank you for the support during this process. Finally, to my husband James, thank you for all the reassuring cups of tea filled with love and encouragement.

This is for my aunt, Lisa Frutchy.

Note on Money and Exchange Rates

Great Britain used a system with three units: the pound, the shilling, and the penny.

$$£1 = 20s. = 240d$$

The United States used a system with two units: the dollar, and the cent.

$$\$1 = 100¢$$

Values provided in letters are mainly used to state prices. When calculations are needed, the exchange rate used has been approximated to $£1 = \$5$.

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Introduction

Today, the name Macmillan is associated with a global publisher that produces hundreds of new titles each year and continues printing from a backlist of titles by authors such as Rudyard Kipling, Alfred Tennyson, Henry James, Hugh Walpole, and Thomas Hardy. The development of Macmillan's transnational publishing started in 1869 with the opening of a small office, known internally as the Agency, in New York. As it was known then, Macmillan & Co. was a British publishing firm focused on educational and literary material under the guidance of Alexander Macmillan. While Macmillan & Co. was not the first British publisher to open an office in the United States, James West states that it was the first that "was truly successful in transplanting itself across the ocean."¹

This thesis will look at how Macmillan & Co. successfully transferred itself onto American soil and began operating in a market that was unfriendly to the appearance of foreign publishers. The history of Macmillan & Co.'s office in New York, the Agency, broadens our current understanding of the development of modern international publishing. Historians of publishing and book history can learn much from the story of how and why a British publisher expanded into the American market for itself, rather than working with a local business partner. While many academics have looked at how the nineteenth century transatlantic book trade functioned from both the British and American perspective, they have yet to research how British publishers crossed the Atlantic and opened offices on American soil.² Without such knowledge, we will never truly understand the development of domestic, international, and global publishing.

¹ James West, "Book-Publishing 1835-1900: The Anglo-American Connection," *The Papers of the Bibliographic Society of America*, Vol. 84 (December 1990): 357-373.

² For further discussion of transatlantic trade, see: Aileen Fyfe, *Steam-Powered Knowledge*; Leslie Howsam, and James Raven, *Books between Europe and the Americas*; James Raven, *London Booksellers and American Customers*; and Michael Winship, *American Literary Publishing in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*.

Macmillan & Co. and Transatlantic Publishing in the 19th Century

Macmillan & Co. was founded in 1843 by two Scottish brothers from the Isle of Arran. Daniel Macmillan (1813-1857) brought his younger brother Alexander (1818-1896) into the book business.³ They opened a bookstore in Cambridge and began publishing under contract with the University of Cambridge to produce educational material.⁴ The Macmillans broadened their list of titles by adding various genres including education, science, and religion written by friends, acquaintances, and local academics. With the brothers' eye for a good book, the business grew. After Daniel's death in 1857, Alexander Macmillan combined their families, moved to London, and turned his full attention to running the business. In 1865, Macmillan would bring his employee George Lillie Craik into partnership to help run the firm.⁵

Alexander Macmillan cultivated personal and business relationships that created a network of publishers and wholesalers across the Northeastern United States. Macmillan & Co. worked with American firms known for working with foreigners, such as J.B. Lippincott's in Philadelphia, Scribner & Co. and the English Book Depot in New York, and Ticknor & Fields in Boston. Macmillan also worked with smaller, now lesser-known firms such as D. Van Nostrand, and Pott & Amery, both in New York. From the late 1840s onwards, Macmillan & Co.'s transatlantic trade expanded as the company sought to get its publications to the American market. Macmillan & Co. used the network to send its books to the American market in three physical forms: advance proofs, printed sheets, or completely manufactured books. Following standard trade practice, Macmillan & Co. mainly arranged with American publishers who paid to reprint authorized versions of Macmillan books from

³ Charles Morgan wrote the authorized version of Macmillan & Co.'s history for their centennial birthday, *The House of Macmillan (1843-1943)* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1943).

⁴ Simon Eliot, "'to You in Your Vast Business' Some Features of the Quantitative History of Macmillan," in *Macmillan: A Publishing Tradition*, edited by Elizabeth James (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2002): 11-51.

⁵ George Lillie Craik was the husband of author Dinah Mulock. Mulock was friends with Alexander Macmillan.

advanced proof sheets. Sometimes Americans also imported printed sheets for binding and completely manufactured books to sell.

Macmillan & Co. sought out the American market because it represented a potential readership of nearly fifteen million people in 1840, nearly three-times that of Great Britain. Despite an influx of uneducated immigrants throughout the century, literacy rates across the Northern population remained at 90% – a level that Great Britain would only reach near the beginning of the twentieth-century.⁶ At the same time, the expansion of canal systems and the advent of steam power created a national transportation network that carried goods across the geographically growing nation.⁷ The US book trade used the transportation systems to set up wholesale, production, and publication networks that allowed readers in Cincinnati, and later San Francisco, to buy a book published that week in New York. Macmillan & Co. saw the potentially business-changing profits it could find in the American market.

Despite the possibly lucrative potential the American market represented, foreign publishers and authors faced two obstacles: protectionist import tariffs, and a lack of international copyright until 1891. Firstly, since 1789, American Congress viewed foreign-imports to be a threat to overall domestic trade.⁸ Therefore, a general 5% duty on books was imposed. Catherine Seville argues that the government truly began enacting protectionist tariffs after the War of 1812 to shelter the emerging book trade.⁹ Tariffs continued to rise

⁶ Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957): 6; Catherine Seville, *The Internationalisation of Copyright Law: Books, Buccaneers and the Black Flag in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 147. See also, Ronald Zboray, *A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); and Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Class* (London: Yale University Press, 2001).

⁷ See Michael Winship, "Getting the Books Out: Trade Sales, Parcel Sales, and Book Fairs in the Nineteenth-Century United States," in *Getting the Books Out: Papers of the Chicago Conference on the Book in 19th-Century America*, edited by Michael Hackenberg (Washington: The Center for the Book, Library of Congress, 1987); and Ronald Zboray, "The Transportation Revolution and Antebellum Book Distribution Reconsidered," *American Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (Spring, 1986).

⁸ See Donald Dozer, "The Tariff on Books," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 36, no. 1 (June 1949); F.W. Taussig, *The Tariff History of the United States*, 6th ed, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1914; Taussig, "The McKinley Tariff Act," *The Economic Journal* 1, no. 2 (June 1891).

⁹ Seville, *Internationalisation of Copyright*, 192.

thereafter. Following an economic panic in 1837 and the resulting depression, bound English-language books received a tax of 30¢ per pound, or 20¢ if in sheets or boards. The 1842 changes clearly targeted in-demand and recently published titles because books “published abroad over a year previously and not republished in America, or, [those that] had been printed and published abroad over five years previously,” received a reduced duty.¹⁰ Four years later, the Walker Tariff established the base rate for printed books at 10% *ad valorem*. The next changes occurred when the government needed money during the Civil War. The Morrill Tariff of 1861 increased duties to 15% *ad valorem*, followed by a rise to 20% in 1862, before finally settling at 25% in 1864.¹¹ The 25% rate would remain the same until the end of the century. Although production costs tended to be lower in Great Britain than in America in the middle of the nineteenth century, high tariffs posed an alarming extra expense that impeded British publishers’ ability to compete with American-made books.

Secondly, international copyright treaties with European countries and laws providing protection throughout the British Empire were not recognized by the American government.¹² The quest for international copyright began on 11 July 1837 when King Frederick of Prussia passed an act granting domestic copyrights to a foreign author if that author’s own country reciprocated the rights.¹³ Queen Victoria of Great Britain followed on 31 July 1838, and a flurry of agreements then followed between Great Britain, Austria, Sardinia, Holland, France, and many other German states. In 1846, Britain and Prussia held their first international copyright convention. The following decades saw copyright agreements and treaties spread across Europe and even as far as Haiti. By 1887, the Berne Convention was signed among Britain, Germany, France, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Tunis, and many more. The

¹⁰ Seville, 192.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² See Simon Nowell-Smith, *International Copyright Law and the publisher in the Reign of Queen Victoria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

¹³ Nowell-Smith, *International Copyright Law*, 41.

Berne Convention granted international copyright without requiring formal registration of a title other than in the country of original publication. To be protected across the Berne Union, an author simply had to publish a book and copyright it in his or her country. To date in 2017, 170 UN member states, the Holy See, and the small island of Niue follow the Convention's guidelines.¹⁴

Unfortunately, the United States did not sign the Berne convention in 1887 and would not do so for 102 years. However, the US offered some sort of international copyright protection from 1891. Congress's refusal to enact such protection until then was mainly due to what Meredith McGill brands a "culture of reprinting."¹⁵ Reprinting stemmed from the first American copyright act in 1790 which contained the following line:

Nothing in this act shall be construed to extend to prohibit the importation or vending, reprinting, or publishing within the United States, of any map, chart, book or books, written printed, or published by any person not a citizen of the United States, in foreign parts or places without the jurisdiction of the United States.¹⁶

Unless an American citizen, no foreigner's works were protected on American soil.

Overnight, every British work that American colonists had previously had to pay to reproduce in the US became free. McGill describes the act as "a ringing endorsement of international literary piracy."¹⁷ Since American literary identity remained so tightly tied to British literature, reprinters quickly turned to completely free British source material to satisfy reader's demands for quality literature of a cheap price. With free source material from foreigners, American reprinters, such as Harper & Brothers, built a nationwide book trade on reprinted material.

¹⁴ See, Sam Ricketson, *The Berne Convention for the Protection of literary and Artistic Works: 1886-1986* (London: Centre for Commercial Law Studies, Queen Mary College, 1987).

¹⁵ See McGill, *American Literature*.

¹⁶ As quoted by McGill, *American Literature*, 80.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 80.

By the 1840s, roughly 90% of the Northern population in America could read, creating a prospective market of fifteen-million people. Richard Altick estimated there were roughly five million readers in the whole of Great Britain around the same time.¹⁸ Consequentially, British authors and publishers missed out on profits from a market with a readership potential three times the size as its own. Unsurprisingly by the 1840s, the British trade began pushing strongly for an international copyright act with the US. Several failed attempts were made at legislation or a treaty, with the most significant attempts in the 1840s and 1850s.¹⁹ The British trade, especially its authors, was generally in favor of international copyright. One of copyright's staunchest advocates was Charles Dickens, who partially antagonized the American public towards the subject during a trip to the United States in 1842.²⁰

Various pro and anti-copyright arguments are explored by the likes of Meredith McGill and James J. Barnes.²¹ One of the strongest pro-arguments coming from both American and British sides was that the introduction of American copyright would help establish an American literary identity.²² The use of free foreign material meant that American authors were less likely to be published because they had to be paid. The argument based on the plight of the American author was advocated in *Macmillan's Magazine* in June of 1869 and was still being argued in the British *Publishers' Circular* in August of 1890.²³ Henry Cabot Lodge wrote in the *American Atlantic Monthly* in August of 1890 that under

¹⁸ Altick, "English Publishing and the Mass Audience," *Studies in Bibliography* 6 (1954): 6.

¹⁹ See James J. Barnes, *Authors, Publishers and Politicians: The Quest for an Anglo-American Copyright Agreement, 1815-1854* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974).

²⁰ See Barnes, *Authors, Publishers and Politicians*, as well as the third chapter in McGill, *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting*.

²¹ See also Richard Brown, *The Strength of a People: The Idea of Informed Citizenry in America, 1650-1870* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

²² David Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance: the subversive imagination in the age of Emerson and Melville* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

²³ *Macmillan's Magazine* (June 1869): 89, "International Copyright between Great Britain and America"; *Publisher's Circular* (1 August 1890): 916, article, "An American View of International Copyright" which originated in the *Atlantic Monthly* at the same time.

international copyright, “there would no longer be a temptation to discriminate against the American author.”²⁴

Throughout the middle of the nineteenth century the American Congress remained unmoved by the idea of imposing international copyright. A main reason for inaction was that Americans already received protection in Great Britain. Since *Jeffreys vs. Boosey* in 1854, foreign authors were guaranteed British copyright if they were resident in Britain or its dominions during publication. Therefore, by taking a trip to Canada on the day of British publication, Americans received lawful protection. The British trade was legally, yet begrudgingly, forced to pay American authors copyright dues while they were neglected the same rights in the US. Paying for such material meant that the British trade could not cheaply reprint American authors after 1854.

The unregulated ability for everyone to print any foreign work had a severely damaging and unintended consequence for the American trade: price cutting wars. Several publishers reprinted the same book and competed for sales by slashing prices to the point where money was only lost. By the 1830s, publishers were going in and out of business on a weekly basis and readers became accustomed to cheap 50¢ book prices. To prevent further failures, American publishers banded together and abided by a set of extra-legal rules, something akin to a gentleman’s honor-code, called trade courtesy. Trade courtesy regulated the market until the introduction of the Chace Act in 1891. Robert Spoo explains that trade courtesy developed from a need to control the number of reprints of a foreign title. Trade courtesy created “synthetic rights” for a foreign work in the US market.²⁵ Following the rules was voluntary, but the participation of the largest publishing firms in the nation such as Lippincott’s, Osgood & Co., Appleton & Co., Putnam’s Sons, Harper & Brothers, and Henry

²⁴ *Publisher’s Circular* (1 August 1890): 916.

²⁵ Robert Spoo, *Without Copyrights: Piracy, Publishing and the Public Domain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 16.

Holt & Co. ensured trade courtesy's survival. Trade courtesy succeeded mainly due to the larger firms' participation and their "first-mover" status.²⁶ Spoo describes first-movers as firms with the resources and money to obtain advance sheets before anyone else, providing a head start on unauthorized editions that would have to wait to be reprinted until after foreign publication.

Trade courtesy's rules were as follows: Firstly, the reprinter had to obtain advance proofs of the book in question which normally required negotiating with the foreign publisher or author for authorization. The American reprinter then had to announce its intention to print the book via a trade magazine so the whole trade would know the title was spoken for. As a result, the authorized reprinter was then guaranteed that no one else in the US would publish the same book. Due to trade courtesy's voluntary nature, there were American reprinters who chose to not to follow the extra-legal rules thereby violating them. According to Spoo, the sanctions for breaking trade courtesy progressed as such: a mild remonstrance, angry protest, public shaming, refusal to deal, predatory pricing, and outright retaliation.²⁷ When negotiations between two American firms broke down over a foreign work, it could lead to price wars – the very thing trade courtesy was meant to prevent.

A rule of association was also guaranteed alongside the book; from thereon, the foreign title and author became tied to each other. If the author published further works, the American publisher who had authorized reprints of previous works had first opportunity to claim the new title.²⁸ Trade courtesy's most essential requirement for success was a reliance on precise timing. The timely delivery of advance proofs allowed Americans time to produce a book and place it on the market before any competing reprints appeared. American reprinters started paying British firms for advance proofs of books. The standard arrangement

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid, 43.

²⁸ Ibid, 38.

was for a one-off payment, also known as an honorarium.²⁹ The lump-sum bought the advance proofs which the reprinter could use to produce as many copies of the book as it wanted, either immediately, or in the future. Suddenly, the British trade had a way of gaining income from the American market. With trade courtesy ruling the American reprint scene, British publishers began engaging with the American market in earnest during the 1830s and 1840s. Alexis Weedon shows that the declared value of books manufactured in Great Britain and then exported to the USA averaged around £126,000 during the 1850s.³⁰ That number plummeted to £63,000 during the Civil War, then rebounded to £176,000 in 1866 and continued to grow afterwards.

Michael Winship's work on Ticknor & Fields in the mid-nineteenth century provides a detailed look at how American wholesalers and publishers imported, reprinted, and circulated British works across the expanding country during the mid-nineteenth century.³¹ Winship's study of Ticknor & Fields revolutionized scholarship on the transatlantic trade from the perspective of demand, not supply.³² Wholesalers formed the backbone of American book distribution. They bought books in large quantities at trade sales in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, and then dispersed them across the country via their distribution networks. The Boston-based firm, Ticknor & Fields, was both a wholesaler and publisher with a network that dispersed books across the country. Winship used the firm's publication ledgers to analyze how pervasive British texts were in America. While he reveals the quantity and genres of books crossing the ocean, Winship never investigates the business decisions

²⁹ Honorariums differed in amount due to the author and the type of work published. For example, Dickens received £360 for *Bleak House* and as he became more popular earned £1000 for *A Tale of Two Cities*, and then £2000 for *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*; see Spoo, 39.

³⁰ Alexis Weedon, *Victorian Publishing: the economics of book production for a mass market, 1836-1916* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009): Table A3.4 in index.

³¹ Winship, *American Literary Publishing in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

³² For studies prior to the 1840s focusing on the aspect of supply to America, see Howsam and Raven (2011), and Raven (2002).

taken, or the relationships that allowed Ticknor & Fields to get those books to Boston. As a result, Winship generates as many questions as he answers.

Aileen Fyfe's research on the Edinburgh firm W&R Chambers shows the British perspective of a firm entering the transatlantic trade.³³ Overall, Fyfe shows that a transatlantic trade could work successfully via wholesalers. Chambers profited from its transatlantic sales without opening a foreign branch office. However, we will never know what would have happened to their book sales if they had chosen to open a branch office. The question then remains, why did W&R Chambers use wholesalers instead of opening their own branch office in America? Chambers used steam-power to mass-produce cheap material that was favored by American readers. Had they transferred their production to the US, they may have been able to directly tap into the large readership.

While in New York in 1853, a fellow visitor suggested that William Chambers should emigrate and open an office in the United States.³⁴ Aileen Fyfe argues that although education, literacy, railways, and the extensive newspaper culture in America enticed Chambers, he turned down the suggestion due to strong personal ties in Scotland.³⁵ However, William Chambers was a smart businessman, who could have operated a branch office effectively enough without living in America himself. W&R Chambers operated strongly as a family firm run by brothers, and long-distance business required a great amount of trust that was mainly ensured through kinship.³⁶ The only branch office the firm operated was in London, and run by David Chambers, brother to William and Robert.

³³ See Fyfe, *Steam-Powered Knowledge*.

³⁴ Fyfe, 198.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Peter Mathias, "Risk, credit and kinship in early modern enterprise," in *The Early Modern Atlantic Economy*, edited by John J. McCusker and Kenneth Morgan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Margaret Meredith, "Friendship and Knowledge: Correspondence and Communication in Norther Trans-Atlantic Natural History, 1780-1815," in *The Brokered World: Go-Betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770-1820*, edited by Simon Schaffer et al. (Massachusetts: Science History Publications, 2009); Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); and Sarah Easterby-Smith, "Reputation in a box. Objects, communication and trust in late 18th-century botanical network," *History of Science* 53(2) (2015).

William Chambers used third-party wholesalers as the firm's representatives in America. On his trip in the US, Chambers met with some of his existing and potential wholesalers, which created a better sense of trust between partners. Fyfe's research demonstrates that international business successfully occurred between two unrelated parties when a level of trust had been established in person or through personal connections. The example of W&R Chambers illustrates a successful publisher-wholesaler relationship.

However, there is an overwhelming need to understand the alternative ways British publishers sought to reach American readers. One alternative was the establishment of branch offices. More popular with Americans than Britons, Wiley, Appleton, and Putnam among others, opened offices in Britain from the 1830s onwards.³⁷

While a handful of British publishers such as Saunders & Otley, Cassell's, Thomas Nelson, and Routledge opened offices in the US in the mid nineteenth century, little is known about their day-to-day operations and transatlantic trade.³⁸ The information available concerning British publishers acting on American soil sketches the outline of a very understudied section of transatlantic publishing in the nineteenth century. A wide range of factors go into the experiences, successes, and most oftentimes failures of the businesses to successfully transplant themselves to the US. James West argues that the British trade viewed the American market as a risky market due to its difficulties, unstable economy, and lack of international copyright.³⁹ This would explain why only a few British publishers felt it wise to directly interact with the American market rather than using an intermediary.

Saunders & Otley of London opened the first British branch office in New York in 1836. It was run by Saunders' son, Frederick with the express purpose of challenging

³⁷ See West, "Book-Publishing 1835-1916."

³⁸ Ibid; Elizabeth James, "Letters from America"; John Tebbell, *The History of Book Publishing in the United States, Vol. 2*; and Simon Nowell-Smith, *The House of Cassell, 1848-1958* (London: Cassell & Company Ltd., 1958).

³⁹ West, 375.

American reprinters over unauthorized reprints. On June 6, the *New York Evening Post* announced the firm's arrival:

The arrangements which have been made by Messrs. Saunders & Otley, the Publishers of London, for opening a House in New York.... Hitherto the Publick [sic] in America have been compelled to wait a considerable time after the publication of new works in London before they could obtain copies, – by committing them to the Press in New York and London at the same time, which as original publishers they only could do, Messrs. Saunders & Otley's publications, including the productions of the first writers, will in future be delivered in New York and London at the same time, thus annihilating the effects of distance.⁴⁰

The hope was to annihilate reprinters' ability to corner the American market by exerting the firm's rights over publications based on being the original publisher. It appears that the firm was both importing books as well as reprinting in New York. Simultaneous publication allowed Saunders & Otley to meet demand with their own books before reprinters could produce cheap editions. In theory, publication in both American and Britain at the same time meant the firm's book was the sole edition on the US market. Unauthorized editions would be roughly two weeks behind Saunders & Otley due to the time it took to reprint books, allowing the British firm to corner the market during that time. Therefore, theoretically, simultaneous publication eliminated the need for copyright. Practically, everything turned into a nightmare.

It took less than four months for Harpers⁴¹ to challenge Saunders & Otley's right to publish a book based upon trade courtesy. Harpers argued they had rights to the *Memoirs of Prince Lucien Bonaparte* (1836) by Bonaparte, based upon an announcement declaring their intention to print despite not yet having the early sheets from Saunders. Saunders

⁴⁰ *New York Evening Post*, 6 Jun 1838, quoted in Arno Bader, "Frederick Saunders and the Early History of the International Copyright Movement in America," *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* 8, no. 1 (1938): 27.

⁴¹ Harpers began as a reprinter and grew to a size where it could afford honorariums. See Eugene Exman, *The House of Harper: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Publishing* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967).

immediately protested in a series of very seriously toned advertisements in the *New York Evening Post* that his office was the only one publishing the book and never has the intention to sell early sheets to Harpers. Harpers replied with its own advertisements in an entertaining and sarcastic manner.⁴² The spat played out across the pages of the *Evening Post*, *Morning Courier*, and *New York Enquirer*. Both firms published the book, meaning that Saunders lost his appeal and American trade courtesy overlooked the new British publisher.

In January 1837, Saunders found himself battling against Theodore Foster over *The Great Metropolis* (1836) by James Grant. Saunders published the book in New York only for Foster to immediately produce a cheap version with explanatory notes. Foster claimed to have reprinted the book from a British edition that had reached him before Saunders received his official American edition plates from London. Here, the issue of precise timing and publication on both sides of the Atlantic becomes a clear issue – one that would go on to affect Macmillan & Co.

Once again, the argument played out across newspapers. Saunders wrote:

What moral right, therefore, has Mr. Foster, or any other publisher, to the results of our [enterprise]? In the present disorganized state of the law, we are aware that no appeal can be successful in putting down such a course of conduct, but at least the community should be apprised of it, when such a dishonourable competition is pursued against those who take from none, but who only seek to retain undisturbed the property they have honourably acquired.⁴³

Publishers and readers alike were unmoved by Saunders's appeal to morality. Instead, they were moved by Foster's cheap price of 50¢ compared to Saunders's \$1.50 edition. In the angry aftermath, Saunders wrote a petition endorsed by fifty-six British authors such as Edward Bulwer-Lytton and Thomas Carlyle. The petition presented to Congress by Senator Henry Clay in February 1837 called for an international copyright treaty. The bill failed due to overwhelming protests from printers, typographers, publishers, and booksellers across

⁴² Bader, "Frederick Saunders," 29-30.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 32.

America.⁴⁴ By 1838, the effects of the economic depression in 1837 coupled with the protests and quest for copyright had bankrupted Saunders's office. Within two years of opening, the first American-based British branch office closed. Saunders failed because instead of interacting *with* trade courtesy, he actively fought *against* it by appealing along moralistic lines for British publishers' rights to their works on an international scale.

A more successful American venture was made by George Routledge in 1854. Routledge's business was founded on cheap reprints of many American texts. In 1852, he reprinted *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe and sold more than 600,000 copies that year. Routledge often found himself in court during the 1850s, either challenging or being challenged on copyright issues involving domestic and foreign authors.⁴⁵ According to James West, the office was able to establish relationships with important American authors such as W.H. Prescott, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.⁴⁶

Routledge's survival in the America market was most likely due to the main purpose of the office: to procure American books ineligible for British copyright to the UK market after the 1854 decision of *Jeffreys vs. Boosey* – the opposite of Saunders & Otley. The office was known to bribe workers in American publishing firms for advance proofs. *Queechy*, by Elizabeth Wetherill suffered such a fate, being sent to Britain in 1852 where 20,000 copies were reprinted, bound, and sold within a week.⁴⁷ As a result, Routledge did not pose a challenge to American reprints of foreign books. He was in fact reversing the situation. Routledge survived in the American market as a British branch office until it was sold in the early twentieth-century to David McKay of Philadelphia. More research into Routledge's

⁴⁴ See James J. Barnes *Authors, Publishers and Politicians*.

⁴⁵ F.A. Mumby, *The House of Routledge*, (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1934), 66-67.

⁴⁶ West, 368.

⁴⁷ Norman Franklin. *Routledge & Kegan Paul: 150 years of great publishing* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 6.

American office is nearly impossible as there is minimal material left within the Routledge archives relating to the subject.

Thomas Nelson also opened a branch office in 1854, under control of his son Thomas Nelson Jr. Little is known about the firm except that during the Civil War it invested in American securities and heavily profited when gold tripled in value.⁴⁸ Another office was started by John Cassell, who originally visited America pre-Civil War.⁴⁹ Sensing turmoil, he hired John Robbins as his American agent. Robbins's job was to dispatch whole or part-issue copies of Cassell's *Family Bible* to subscribers.⁵⁰ The American Civil War disrupted business and the relationship ended in 1863. In 1865, Cassell tried again and sent Walter Low (son of Sampson Low), to head an agency in New York. By 1868, the office needed new leadership and Robert Turner became manager. A decade of "sound but unimaginative business" followed where the office sold *Family Bibles*, and acted as the agent for a few British stationery manufacturers. The office sold stationery, playing cards, colored lithographs, and a few bound books from the Belle Sauvage educational and juvenile lists.⁵¹ The office was both acting as agent for Cassell's and for other British and French publishers. Cassell's was also authorizing editions of its works reprinted by American publishers. E.P. Dutton & Company produced Ferrar's *Life of Christ* (1874), and Plumtre's *Bible Educator* (c. 1873) among other religious titles.⁵²

By 1875, John Cassell had been bought out of his firm and American Oscar M. Dunham took over the American business. Dunham started publishing books for Cassell's in the US and advertised that in 1888, when the international copyright bill was being debated in

⁴⁸ John Dempster, "Thomas Nelson and Songs in the Late Nineteenth Century: A Study in Motivation, Part one," *Publishing History* 13 (1993): 46; "Publishers of Today, Thomas Nelson and Sons," *Publishers' Circular* (15 December 1900): 619-620.

⁴⁹ What little is known about John Cassell's business in America comes from John Tebbel, *History of Book Publishing in the United States*; Nowell-Smith, *The House of Cassell*; James West merely reiterates what Nowell-Smith has written.

⁵⁰ Nowell-Smith, *The House of Cassell*, 261.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*, 261-262.

Congress, that Cassell's in New York had already copyrighted American authors and therefore knew what it was doing when it came to obtaining US protection. In 1890, the branch was organized into a small stock company that Dunham bought outright from Cassell's. As will be seen, similarities exist between what little is known about Cassell's business and the Macmillan Agency. Unfortunately, only a few conclusions can be drawn since Nowell-Smith's description of Cassell's New York office is but four pages long.⁵³ However, there were publishers who gambled and entered the American market for themselves and these are the publishers who would make a difference in the development of truly international publishing houses in the modern world.

Methodology

This thesis seeks to understand how Macmillan & Co. operated its transatlantic business by opening an international branch office in New York in 1869. The history of the book and publishing is a burgeoning field that has seen the rise of nationalistic book projects as the focus of its studies.⁵⁴ Marjorie Plant, James Raven, Richard Altick, John Feather, Simon Eliot, and Alexis Weedon among others have detailed the British market from the perspective of readership, production, manufacturing, economics, transportation, and much more.⁵⁵ What emerges from these scholars is a picture of the British book trade that had developed a book market dominated by London publishers. As the British Empire expanded, so too did the potential of its publishing market. However, research on British international

⁵³ Nowell-Smith was working directly with the Cassell archives.

⁵⁴ See: *A History of the Book in America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000-2010); *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1999-2011); *History of the Book in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004-2007).

⁵⁵ Marjorie Plant, *The English Book Trade, An Economic History of the Making and Sale of Books* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1974); James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade, 1450-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader*; John Feather, *A History of British Publishing 1800-1919*. (London: Bibliographic Society, 1994); John Feather, *A History of British Publishing* (London: Routledge, 2006); Simon Eliot, "Patterns and Trends and the NSTC: some initial Observations. Part II," *Publishing History* XLII (Spring 1998); Weedon, *Victorian Publishing*.

publishing in the nineteenth century has mainly been restricted to the Empire, specifically India, Australia, and New Zealand.⁵⁶ Information on the transatlantic trade between Britain and the North American Colonies, later the United States, also exists. The first volume of the *History of the Book in America*, outlines the colonial era and the print culture that developed domestically as well as transatlantically.⁵⁷ Leslie Howsam and James Raven edited a book detailing the thriving transatlantic literary communities from 1620-1860, and Raven examined the relationship between London booksellers and the Charleston Library Society from 1748-1811.⁵⁸ While these studies show a flourishing transatlantic trade existed, they stop well before the American Civil War in the 1860s, leaving a gap in our understanding of the trade from the Civil War until the twentieth-century. And while much has been made of the lack and then development of international copyright by James J. Barnes, Meredith McGill, Catherine Seville, James West, and Isabella Alexander, very few scholars have looked at the British publishers who actively fought for their rights on America soil.⁵⁹

Few British publishers broke from the established standard of using American partners to operate in America and interacted with a market hostile to foreigners. Studying such publishers gives historians a wider understanding of how British publishers operated in foreign markets outside of the Empire as the modern global market began establishing itself in the later nineteenth century. Alison Rukavina argues that book historians must look beyond

⁵⁶ Bernadette Lear, "Libraries and Reading Culture at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, 1879-1918," *The Book* 18 (2015); Alison Rukavina, "A Victorian Amazon.com: Edward Petherick and His Colonial Booksellers' Agency," *Book History* 13 (2010); David Finkelstein, "Jack's as Good as His Master: Scots and Print Culture in New Zealand, 1860-1900," *Book History* 6 (2003); Katherine Bode, "'Sidelines' and Trade Lines: Publishing the Australian novel, 1860-1899," *The Book* 15 (2012); Anindita Ghosh, "An Uncertain 'Coming of the Book': Early print Cultures in Colonial India," *Book History* 6 (2003); Priya Joshi, "Culture and Consumption: Fiction, the Reading Public, and the British novel in Colonial India," *Book History* 1 (1998); Robert Darnton, "Book Production in British India, 1850-1900," *Book History* 5 (2002); Sharon Murphy, "Imperial Reading? The East India Company's Lending Libraries for Soldiers, c. 1819-1834," *Book History* 12 (2009).

⁵⁷ *A History of the Book in America*, Vol 1 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

⁵⁸ See Howsam and Raven, *Books Between Europe and the Americas*; and Raven, *London Booksellers and American Customers*.

⁵⁹ See Barnes, McGill, Seville, West; and Isabella Alexander, *Copyright Law and the Public Interest in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Hart, 2010).

national-history-of-the-book narratives and turn towards transnational book histories to create a complete picture of both domestic and international book trades. Rukavina argues that, despite the increased flow of people, books and ideas in the late nineteenth century, the development of the book trade was not inevitable.⁶⁰ Rather, she emphasizes that connections were key to expansion. Social networks and connections therefore allowed the intersection of international book markets and the growth of global publishers. The Macmillan & Co. archives create a chance to study such an international publisher.

The Macmillan archive survived the Second World War bombings and holds over half a million letters alone, as well as documents such as ledgers, financial records, and manuscripts.⁶¹ It is mainly housed at the British Library in London, with further holdings at Reading University, and The New York Public Library. The surviving material constructs a two-way conversation between London and New York – something rarely possible in other publishing archives. After organizing the company’s archive for its original sale to the British Library, Simon Nowell-Smith wrote *Letters to Macmillan* (1967).⁶² Nowell-Smith presented relationships between publisher and author, setting up the archive as a place for historians to explore writers, rather than the firm itself. However, the archive represents a treasure trove for historians studying the evolution of the transatlantic trade. The archivist at Reading University during the 1960s, commented that, “even if all the literary items had been removed, the collection would still possess interest for students of publishing history, copyright, and the book trade.”⁶³

⁶⁰ Alison Rukavina, *The Development of the International Book Trade, 1870-1895: Tangled Networks* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 15-16.

⁶¹ William E. Fredeman, “The Bibliographical Significance of a Publisher’s Archive: The Macmillan Papers,” *Studies in Bibliography* 23 (1970): 186; See also, Philip Blake-Hill, “The Macmillan Archive,” *The British Museum Quarterly* 36, no. 3/4 (Autumn 1972).

⁶² Simon Nowell-Smith, *Letters to Macmillan: Selected and Edited by Simon Nowell-Smith* (London: Macmillan, 1967).

⁶³ Fredeman, “The Bibliographical Significance of a Publisher’s Archive,” 188.

The archives have subsequently been used by academics and writers researching various Macmillan related subjects.⁶⁴ James West used it to write a brief historical outline of Americans in London, and Britons in the US.⁶⁵ Elizabeth James's extensive time cataloguing the Macmillan archive at the British Library resulted in a chapter that is the only one which analyses how the firm operated transatlantically.⁶⁶ James focuses on the broad time line of 1869-1951 and generally details the Agency's operations. This thesis goes beyond James's work by presenting further material in the context of the broader transatlantic and American trade. A focus on tight time frames from 1869-71 and 1890-91 allows a detailed scrutiny of the business decisions, relationships, and networks required to successfully transplant Macmillan & Co. across the Atlantic.

At its core, this thesis is a work of book history, yet it borrows themes from transnational and managerial business histories to illuminate the networks of relationships central to Macmillan & Co.'s transatlantic trade. The network was originally structured with Alexander Macmillan at the top while he used relationships with Americans to access their domestic networks which led directly to readers. Domestic partners were the medium for accessing the American trade. Sarah Easterby-Smith's look at transatlantic botanical networks in the eighteenth-century best articulates the themes central to Macmillan & Co.'s network: consumption, communication, confidence and risk.⁶⁷ Despite the book trade differing from that of botany, the two share the same mercantile considerations when it comes to the transatlantic trade. Easterby-Smith writes, "The relationships between participants were primarily determined about consumption, communication, confidence and

⁶⁴ See Rimi B. Chatterjee, "A history of the trade to South Asia of Macmillan & Co. and the Oxford University Press, 1875-1900," Doctoral thesis, Oxford University (1997); Ruth Panofsky, *The Literary legacy of the Macmillan Company of Canada: Making Books and Mapping Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012); Bruce Whiteman, *The Early History of the Macmillan Company of Canada, 1905-1921*, "Papers of the Bibliographic Society of Canada" 23, no. 1 (1984); Alison Rukavina, *The Development of the International Book Trade*.

⁶⁵ West, "Book-Publishing."

⁶⁶ James, "Letters from America."

⁶⁷ Easterby-Smith, 182.

risk, concerns that made botanical networks analogous to mercantile ones.”⁶⁸ Macmillan had to assess which of its genres were best suited for transatlantic consumption, how to communicate its reputation to readers as well as how cultivate business relationships through letters and conversations in person, assess the amount of risk involved in working with different partners, and ultimately trust how its agents acted on its behalf. Business historians Alfred Chandler and JoAnne Yates emphasize the communication and business structures essential for any business to function at a distance and the case of Macmillan & Co. looks at this structure on an international level.⁶⁹ Margaret Meredith reflects the need for trust and reputation in her work on communication networks between European and American natural historians from 1780-1815; and Peter Mathias emphasizes the centrality of confidence, or trust, in international business.⁷⁰

At the center of all these studies are the relationships between actors in a network which revolves around trust. As Stephen Shapin has argued, a gentleman’s word was his bond of trust within the world.⁷¹ Alexander Macmillan trusted his partners to act in his interest as he trusted their reputations. Indeed, the Americans Macmillan worked with informed readers about his reputation and that of his company. As Macmillan’s network began to shift after the Civil War, he found it best to take direct control over his American prospects by entering into the market directly. Bruno Latour’s writings on the Actor-Network-Theory help explain Macmillan’s decision.⁷² Macmillan’s books were a direct representation of the firm. When an American mediator reprinted, sold, or otherwise interacted with a Macmillan book, the reputation of the firm was altered. Reprinted editions,

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Alfred Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977); JoAnne Yates, *Control Through Communication: The Rise of System in American Management* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

⁷⁰ Meredith, “Friendship and Knowledge.”; Mathias, “Risk, Credit and Kinship.”; See also Shaffer et al., *The Brokered World.*”

⁷¹ Shapin, *A Social History of Truth.*

⁷² Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

whether authorized or not, altered the perception of the firm in ways that Macmillan began to find disagreeable. Consequentially, Macmillan added another layer to his network: a direct agent in New York that supplied the firm with trade information that its American partners filtered out. Alexander Macmillan's decision to open a New York office allowed him to regain control over his reputation and expand his network on a transnational level.

Sections

This study looks at the relationship between the London office of Macmillan & Co. and the New York Agency that opened in 1869. Particularly, this study seeks to understand how Macmillan & Co. operated its New York business at a distance in a foreign market, and how doing so changed the firm's transatlantic business. To assess how business changed, the first chapter establishes how Macmillan's transatlantic networks functioned before the Agency, focusing on the years 1857-1869. These years follow the rise of Macmillan's transatlantic trade and set the basis for how the trade occurred, how books crossed the ocean, in what forms, and outline the working relationships and partnerships with American tradesmen. The relationship between Alexander Macmillan and J.T. Fields, from Ticknor & Fields in Boston, provides an example of how such a partnership functioned. This is followed by outlines of further relationships and highlights the various ways that authorized editions of Macmillan texts reached the American market. Despite successful trade relationships, the Civil War damaged the whole transatlantic trade. Alexander Macmillan visited the United States in 1867 to assess the economic state of the country and to decide how to best access the market. Based upon economic, political, and personal reasons, Macmillan decided that opening a branch office in New York was the best way to further open the market to his texts.

The second chapter focuses on the years 1869-1871, the foundational years for Macmillan's Agency. Letters, ledgers, and further archival research reconstruct the Agency's

first years of operation. The Agency faced a series of hardships, mainly, how to interact with American trade courtesy set up for Americans, as a British publisher. Furthermore, George Brett, the manager, had to deal with increasingly protectionist policies against foreign publishers during the aftermath of the Civil War. The chapter looks at the themes of timing, pricing, distribution, and how Macmillan's established network was affected by the appearance of a direct representative. The Agency's appearance altered established relationships and generated new ones to broaden and create business. Overall, this chapter focuses on how the Agency operated on an economic level and overcame obstacles placed in its way by the American trade.

Lastly, the final chapter looks at the generational change in managers as well as the introduction of international copyright in the 1890s. I look at how the second generation of Macmillans and Bretts interacted on an international level and examine how this affected the operation of business networks. The Agency and the London house were restructured to become separate incorporated and limited companies. While this restructure created two economically independent companies, they both resided under the Macmillan & Co. umbrella. I look at how the new generation approached the restructuring and how it affected overall trade. Secondly, I focus on the change in international copyright law. In 1891, American Congress enacted the Chace Act which allowed foreign authors copyright within the United States. This enabled Macmillan & Co. to begin protecting their rights and gaining more money from sales and for authors. I analyze what books they chose to immediately protect and which they decided to continue to not copyright. Overall, this chapter focuses on the changing dynamic between the Macmillans and Bretts, the Agency and the London house, at a time of great change in the international book trade.

Overall, this thesis explores how and why Macmillan & Co. decided to break from the normal form of British interaction with the American market, and the obstacles and

challenges faced in altering existing and constructing new networks of transatlantic trade. This study shows that ultimately, the choice of Alexander Macmillan to regain complete control over his publications in America by opening an office in New York in 1869 transformed his company's transatlantic trade and altered the relationships required for the business to function at a distance. The example of Macmillan & Co. in New York alters the way book historians understand transnational publishers in the modern age by demonstrating the role of risk, timing, friendship, and communication in the building of the first transatlantic networks that successfully transplanted a British publisher onto American soil.

1. Macmillan & Co. in the USA to 1869

...[O]ur name & publications should stand clear before the American public so that what is ours should be at all times clear.¹

-Alexander Macmillan

Alexander Macmillan sought to project his firm's reputation for quality educational and literary material on a global scale. As the company expanded beyond the British Isles, Macmillan & Co. books made their way to Europe, Asia, and North America. In the United States, Alexander Macmillan broadened his transatlantic network by forging relationships with wholesalers and publishers. This chapter describes how the trade functioned and what a transatlantic partnership looked like. I will argue that Alexander Macmillan's desire to control the firm's reputation brought about the decision to directly access the American market after a visit to the United States in 1867.

Starting in the 1850s and continuing until the end of the century, Macmillan's relationship with J.T. Fields, of Ticknor & Fields in Boston, provides a detailed understanding of how such Anglo-American partnerships functioned personally and professionally. The relationship exhibits the trust required to secure business during times of hardship and bounty; particularly during the American Civil War, which tested the trade from 1861-1865. The Macmillan-Fields correspondence adds to our historical understanding of transatlantic publishing by illustrating how business functioned at a distance, as set out by Peter Mathias, Steven Shapin, and Sarah Easterby-Smith.²

While Macmillan & Co. had a long-standing relationship with Ticknor & Fields, the firm's texts also reached the American market via other publishers and wholesalers. Among those in New York, Macmillan worked with Van Nostrand, Scribner & Co. and The English

¹ Add.MS 55842, f. 161, from Alexander Macmillan to Amery, 9 June 1869.

² Mathias, "Risk, Credit and Kindship"; Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*; Easterby-Smith, "Reputation in a Box."

Book Depot, Pott & Amery, Harper & Brothers, R.H. Johnstone, and D. Appleton & Co. They also worked with Gould & Lincoln in Boston, as well as J.B. Lippincott & Co. in Philadelphia. These businesses represented a mixture of wholesalers, booksellers, and publishers. Macmillan sought to work with a variety of tradesmen to spread its books as far as possible.

Larger firms such as Lippincott's and Ticknor & Fields both reprinted authorized editions and sold completed English editions, acting as publisher and wholesaler. Consequentially, Macmillan texts mainly reached America in three main forms: completely manufactured books, printed sheets for binding, and advanced proofs for reprinting in the US. First, completely manufactured and ready-to-retail books incurred a larger importation duty and cost more to ship due to their weight. As a result, books tended to be sold in bulk to wholesalers at a reduced rate referred to as a trade discount. These books were the same as those being sold in the British market. The imprint on the title page informed readers that they were reading an imported Macmillan book.

Second, unbound printed sheets incurred a smaller duty and shipping cost than completed books because they weighed less. For tax purposes, they were not classified as finished items. The sheets were then bound in America and sold to the market. While the text was the same as that on the British market, the binding and perhaps an additional cover page bearing the imprint of the importer changed the appearance of the text. Already, Macmillan lost complete control over the appearance and perception of its text.

Lastly, the common option was to sell advance proofs to American publishers who sought to reprint authorized editions of Macmillan books. These early sheets incurred the smallest duty as they were sent as a single set of sheets. The proofs allowed a publisher to reset the typesetting and print the book completely anew. Resetting type allowed for alterations in spelling, font, and grammar. Even a new title page bearing the name of the

American publisher could be inserted, removing Macmillan & Co. Therefore, authorized reprints could result in a product with completely different aesthetics compared to its British counterpart. Macmillan & Co. normally received a one-off payment for all texts but they were also known to negotiate an additional 10% author royalty based upon copies sold as early as the 1850s. The one-off payment was a lump-sum rather than a cumulative per-copy-printed charge.

Unfortunately, Macmillan & Co. texts also faced unauthorized reprints, also referred to as pirated editions. Macmillan received no money from any unauthorized edition, only losing possible customers. Unauthorized reprints could also change type, text, binding, as well as completely drop the Macmillan name. However, including the Macmillan name created a misrepresentation. Association with disreputable reprinters could tarnish the firm's reputation, spread misinformation, and reduce profits. Rimi B. Chaterjee has shown that concern for reputation increased as time went on. For example, as business in India grew during the 1880s, Macmillan & Co. set up a network of solicitors and informants who informed the company if there was even a rumor of piracy.³

Macmillan's network functioned satisfactorily until the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861. War disrupted business, tested relationships, and the post-war protectionist tariffs continued to challenge international trade. Alongside trade issues, Macmillan began to question the perception of his firm's name within the international publishing community. In 1867, Macmillan travelled to the US to see "what [could] be done in the future" to improve business and control of the firm's American reputation.⁴ In short, Alexander Macmillan became dissatisfied with the level of business he was doing, and became increasingly concerned about his firm's reputation and perception in foreign markets.

³ Rimi B. Chaterjee, "A history of the trade to South Asia of Macmillan & Co. and the Oxford University Press," 23.

⁴ Charles L. Graves, *Life and Letters of Alexander Macmillan* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1910), 230, letter from Alexander Macmillan to Rev. James Fraser.

As a result, the decision was taken to open a New York branch office in 1869. This chapter outlines how Macmillan's transatlantic network functioned prior to 1869 by establishing its publishing reputation within Britain and questioning whether that identity was successfully translated across the Atlantic.

Firstly, to establish Macmillan & Co.'s domestic reputation, Simon Eliot's shows that the firm's first publications were within the realm of education. Particularly, Macmillan produced material useful for secondary and higher schooling in 1843.⁵ The theme of education would become central to Macmillan's international business arrangements. Using Dewey Decimal classification methods, Eliot charts book genres from 1843-1889 by the decade.⁶ Eliot's main source is *A Bibliographic Catalogue of Macmillan & Co.'s Publications 1843-1889*, written by company employee James Foster.⁷ Eliot analyzes titles, authors, imprint, pagination, format, price, print run size, and month of publication, ultimately revealing a clear Macmillan identity: a firm dedicated to producing material with an educational slant.⁸ Literature came second as the firm increased its output starting in the 1850s.

In 1846 the firm's first sixteen titles focused on religious (200s), scientific (500s), and literary themes (800s). Attempting to diversify, Macmillan continued to add titles until it covered all ten Dewey Decimal classes. Authors included Francis Turner Palgrave, Christina Rossetti, Matthew Arnold, Lewis Carroll, Alfred Tennyson, Thomas Hardy, and Rudyard Kipling. However, most new titles were educational texts spread across the 200s, 500s, and 800s, such as James Bryce's *The American Commonwealth* (1888). Education markets provided greater stability than others due to the built-in readership of students who required

⁵ Simon Eliot, "'to You in Your Vast Business'."

⁶ Dewey Decimal classifications: 000s Generalities, 100s Philosophy, 200s Religion, 300s Social Sciences, 400s Language, 500s Pure Sciences, 600s Technology, 700s the Arts, 800s Literature, 900s Geography and History.

⁷ Macmillan & Co., *A Bibliographical Catalogue of Macmillan and Co.'s Publications from 1843 to 1889* (London and New York: Macmillan & Co., 1891).

⁸ Eliot consulted sources within the British Library, Reading University, and publication advertisements.

textbooks on a yearly basis. Tapping into this guaranteed market by publishing for the University of Cambridge, Macmillan was guaranteed steady income in the 1840s.

Furthermore, when Macmillan started publishing for Oxford in 1863, it opened itself up to an even larger audience.

The nineteenth century educational craze tended to produce cheap tracts for self-improvement, however Eliot shows that Macmillan differed from this trend.⁹ Eliot breaks prices into three categories: low, at 3s.6d or under; medium, 4d-10d; and high, 11d or over. In 1866, 45% of Macmillan titles were classed as low, 36% medium, and 17% were high. As the century continued, Macmillan's price percentages veered sharply from the national average. Nationally in 1885, roughly 60-70% of titles were classified as low, around 25% medium, and 5-15% high.¹⁰ However, Macmillan produced 27% low, 41% medium, and 31% high.¹¹ The shift over the century towards more mid and high-tiered book prices slightly alters the identity of Macmillan as an educational publisher. Rather than focusing mainly on cheap tracts for elementary introduction, Macmillan produced material for use in the advanced stages of education, whether secondary or university level. Macmillan & Co. quickly gained a reputation for quality educational material and the image remains the same today.

However, Alexander Macmillan grew concerned that the Macmillan & Co. reputation was not properly translated to the American public. Alexander Macmillan became worried about two specific themes that informed the firm's reputation abroad: perception by readers and control over publications. Firstly, perception and reputation of the Macmillan & Co. name, company, and titles varied depending on how books made their way to the US market. Readers might have been totally unaware that what they read was originally a Macmillan

⁹ For further information on publishing trends of the nineteenth century, see Simon Eliot, *Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing 1800-1919* (London: Bibliographic Society, 1994); Alexis Weedon, *Victorian Publishing*.

¹⁰ Eliot, "to You in Your Vast Business'," 71.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 42, Table 1.7.

production. In a trade where reputation held significant sway, Macmillan needed its name to be known amongst wholesalers, publishers, and customers to generate new business. A poor reputation or scandal could damage established relationships.¹² Alexander Macmillan began to question the perception of his books and firm on a global scale. In 1860, he wrote to a friend in India saying, “It will always be useful to us to learn what is thought of us in distant parts of her majesty’s dominions.”¹³ Control over perception and publications became a driving factor in the choice to open foreign branch offices across the world. These themes shaped the publisher Macmillan & Co. would become.

Secondly, control represented a major driving factor in Alexander Macmillan’s decision to open a branch office. Once a book left Britain and depending on the form in which it left, Macmillan & Co. faced the possibility of losing complete control over the material and immaterial nature of the book. One way to better understand the issue is to look at it through the lens of Bruno Latour’s Actor-Network-Theory.¹⁴ For Alexander Macmillan, books counted as actors representing him, his network, and Macmillan & Co. His books directly represent him and therefore inform his overall reputation. While the book-actor resided within Macmillan’s direct social network, let us call it the British Network, Macmillan retained complete control over the object, thus presenting himself in a way he desired. However, the network shifted when books crossed the Atlantic. American publishers interacted as mediators, altering who the books represented within the new market and thereby changing the function of the book in the eyes of the reader. Alexander Macmillan sought full control over how his books were presented in both the British and American Networks. As a result, he was forced to create his very own Transatlantic Network that

¹² In 1870, the New York Agency would be dismayed that the Macmillan name was associated with the publishing firm Wiley’s through an unauthorized edition of work. According to George Brett, it was “very mortifying” that “such a third rate firm” had beaten them to publishing a Macmillan book in America. Add.MS 54797, f. 80, from George Brett to George Lillie Craik, 12 August 1870.

¹³ Add.MS 55838, f. 228, from Alexander Macmillan to Reverend J. Skelton, 31 July 1860.

¹⁴ Latour, *Reassembling the Social*.

encompassed both Britain and the US. Thereby, Alexander Macmillan could choose for himself how his books represented the firm. In 1867, Alexander Macmillan would explicitly state that his decision to open a branch office was directly informed by the need to cut out other publishers' influence on his works, so that they "should stand clear before the American public."¹⁵ Reputation, and more importantly, control over that reputation via control over texts, remained on Alexander Macmillan's mind.

The decision to open a branch office was not without peril. The first British branch office opened in 1836 by Saunders & Otley failed within two years. American tradesmen did not look kindly on foreigners coming to challenge their monopoly on reprinted texts. Therefore, Macmillan & Co. had to take care not to injure business partners' feelings. Alienating any trade member could make an already hard transition even harder. However, for Alexander Macmillan, the potential control over his sales in America outweighed any possible issues. Macmillan & Co. became responsible only to itself regarding what its books looked like, what books appeared in the market, and the firm's success.

Profile of a transatlantic partnership: Ticknor & Fields

One of the most well documented international relationships for Macmillan & Co. was with Ticknor & Fields from Boston. The relationship between Alexander Macmillan and James T. (J.T.) Fields furthers our understanding of transatlantic publishing relationships as set out by Aileen Fyfe, Leslie Howsam and James Raven, Raven on his own, and other non-publishing relationships.¹⁶ It is not known exactly when the firms' partnership began, nor when Alexander Macmillan and J.T. Fields first met. However, the first surviving evidence of business between the companies is in the Ticknor & Field's archive. On 6 October 1857, Ticknor & Fields expressed interest in reprinting anything written by the author of *Tom*

¹⁵ Add.MS 55842, f. 161, from Alexander Macmillan to Amery, 9 June 1869.

¹⁶ See Fyfe, *Steam-Powered Knowledge*; Leslie Howsam and James Raven, *Books between Europe and the Americas*; James Raven, *London Booksellers and American Customers*.

Brown's School Days, while remonstrating with Macmillan for failing to deliver early sheets for a book by Alexander Smith on time.¹⁷

Evidence suggests the two men had not merely already been doing business, but had met in person before 1857. Fields first went to England in July 1847 when Macmillan & Co. was based in Cambridge and had just started producing its own books. Fields's journals note that he visited the offices of Moxon, Bohn, Pickering, and Murray where he gazed at original portraits of Byron, Scott, Campbell, Moore, and Irving.¹⁸ Fields later spent the spring season in England in 1852 before travelling across Europe. It is most likely that Fields met the Macmillan brothers and formed a friendship during that 1852 trip. Two years later, Fields and his new bride, Annie Adams, whom Macmillan would later call, "my excellent friend," visited the Macmillans in Cambridge.¹⁹ A later letter from Fields to Macmillan during the Civil War reminisced about the time he and Annie spent with the publisher in Cambridge, "That row on the river! How pleasant it was."²⁰ Only a year apart in age, with Fields being older, the men shared much in common. Both had started out working for publishers. Macmillan went into business with his brother while Fields had started as a clerk for Allen & Ticknor in 1832 and worked his way to become full partner in 1843.²¹

The Fields and Macmillan families quickly became good friends which is reflected in how their letters often ended with warm regards from one household to another. Macmillan included sincerities on behalf of himself, his wife, sister, children, and nieces and nephews, "I

¹⁷ Provided by Michael Winship, from Houghton Library archives, General Ledger D, fMS Am2030.2 (32), 310.

¹⁸ Annie Adams Fields, *James T. Fields: Biographical Notes and Sketches*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1882), 24.

¹⁹ Add.MS 55837, f. 26, to JT fields from Alexander Macmillan, 30 August 1859; Annie Adams Fields became JT Fields' trusted advisor on female literary matters. She encouraged the literary elite in Boston, and was friends with literary giants such as Henry James, Rudyard Kipling, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mark Twain, and Nathaniel Hawthorne. After JT Fields' death in 1881, she wrote *James T. Fields: biographical notes and sketches*. Her life and deeds can be found in Rita K. Gollin, *Annie Adams Fields: Women of Letters*; See also Whittier, John Greenleaf and James Thomas Fields, *Biographical notes and personal sketches and unpublished fragments and tributes from men and women of letters* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1881).

²⁰ Add.MS 54891, f. 4, from JT Fields to Alexander Macmillan, 7 May 1862.

²¹ Winship, 17.

know how heartily they would join me in kindest regards to Mrs. Fields and yourself.”²² The publishers even visited each other when circumstances allowed. For the most part, Fields went to England, but Macmillan made sure to arrange his trip to Boston in 1867 at a convenient time for the Fields and his wife.²³

When Fields and Macmillan first met in the 1850s, Macmillan & Co. needed a relationship with an American publisher or wholesaler with a distribution network that reached across the United States. Michael Winship shows that while Ticknor & Fields historically have a reputation as a literary publisher of both fiction and non-fiction, they started as book sellers and maintained the Old Corner Bookstore in Boston until 1865.²⁴ Their extensive national distribution network sold thousands of dollars in merchandise annually. In 1856, a year before the first evidence of Macmillan & Co. working with Ticknor & Fields, the firm did \$37,000 worth of business in the Mid-Atlantic States; followed by New England with \$28,000; the Midwest, \$21,000; while the South accounted for \$6,000; all other exports to California, Canada, and England made \$1,300.²⁵ Overall, Ticknor & Fields sold 71% of their total business outside the Boston area.²⁶ The geographical spread and the amount of sales conducted by the firm enabled Ticknor & Fields to circulate books across the entirety of the United States, with most business in the Northern states.

While Ticknor & Fields’s production and distribution networks fit Macmillan’s needs, Macmillan fit their literary tastes as well. Although Ticknor & Fields exported few books to Great Britain, they heavily imported or reprinted British works. J.T. Fields was a known Anglophile who counted Charles Dickens, Mary Mitford, and countless other British writers

²² Ibid; Add.MS 55837, f. 26, from Alexander Macmillan to JT Fields, 30 August 1859.

²³ Add.MS 55387, f. 320, from Alexander Macmillan to JT Fields, 4 July 1867.

²⁴ Michael Winship, *American Literary Publishing in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*.

²⁵ Winship, *American Literary Publishing*, 200-201, Appendix A.

²⁶ Ibid, the Boston area accounted for \$21,094 of the New England regional sales.

as personal friends.²⁷ In a letter to Mitford, Fields once admitted, “The truth is my English fever is most strong upon me.”²⁸ Fields’s fondness for all things British helped authors break onto Ticknor & Field’s list which mainly promoted American authors. Of their twenty-five most popular authors by 1859, eleven were of British origin.²⁹

Before Fields’s second trip to England in 1852, the firm’s only payment to a foreign author had been for Tennyson’s *Poems*. Winship shows that Fields’s growing personal relationship with British publishers and authors resulted in a changed business strategy. Payments to foreign authors greatly increased as Fields’s ties to the English publishing trade grew throughout the 1850s.³⁰ The firm made some sort of payment for over half of the British works it published.³¹ Of that half, 44.2% of foreign authors received a 10% royalty. Ticknor & Fields benefited from reprinting in-demand literature in accordance with trade courtesy, and foreigners gained money they otherwise would never have seen from American sales. Overall, the firm’s extensive distribution network, respect for authors, and love of English literature made for a promising partnership with Macmillan & Co.

The transatlantic partnership developed based upon mutual regard and exchange. There is no evidence that a formal, contracted partnership existed between the two firms. However, American trade courtesy bound the authorized reprints and Macmillan’s foreign authors to Ticknor & Fields within the US market. As a result, Macmillan profited, its authors generally received a 10% royalty, and Ticknor & Fields could challenge unauthorized editions within the realms of trade courtesy. This guaranteed that high-quality publications remained within the best houses and out of the hands of unauthorized reprinters for as long as possible. The men consulted each other on matters of print runs, costs, and whether colored

²⁷ Winship, 20; James T. Fields, *Yesterdays with Authors*, (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Low, and Searle, 1872).

²⁸ Fields, *Biographical sketches*, 49, letter from JT Fields to Mary Mitford, 8 March 1853.

²⁹ Winship, 56, Table 3.4.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 136.

³¹ *Ibid*, 136-137, and Table 5.1.

plates were adequate or simple illustrations. There was talk about Americanization or Anglicization of texts – “There is some difficulty I suppose here in assimilating it [*Jack in the Green* by Dinah Mulock] for American use. Can you suggest how this should be arranged?”;³² author payments – “Therefore please pay to Mr. Henry Kingsley (if he is to receive the money) £60 being for ‘Ravenshoe’ and ‘Austin Elbos’”;³³ and they always offered frank opinions about literature – especially Tennyson.³⁴ Macmillan helped Fields approach Matthew Arnold about potential reprinting, while Fields warned Macmillan not to encroach on Longfellow, who received money from Routledge for advance sheets.³⁵

Ticknor & Fields used advance proofs to reprint Macmillan texts. Imprints often changed from Macmillan & Co. to Ticknor & Fields, altering the origin of the book in the eye of the reader. Stereos were sometimes sent for reprinting as well.³⁶ Bulk orders of 2000 printed sheets such as *Crabbe Robinson*³⁷ and sometimes finished editions were known to have been sent. Size depended on the success of the book in England and the likelihood of American sales. For example, on 30 August 1859, Macmillan proposed that Fields reprint the *Memoir of Edward Forbes* (1861) before it was published, because its author, naturalist Professor George Wilson, had a previous book which “has had a large sale here [in Britain] and in America I am told.”³⁸ In 1867, the men agreed to co-publish the *Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson*. Macmillan suggested a three-volume edition,

³² Add.MS 55837, f. 270, from Alexander Macmillan to JT Fields, 13 February 1860.

³³ Add.MS 54891, f. 12, from JT Fields to Alexander Macmillan, 26 December 1863.

³⁴ Add.MS 55837, f. 270, from Alexander Macmillan to JT Fields, 13 February 1860: Alexander wrote, “The new arrival of the Tennyson poem is a sad misfortune...It certainly is fine, and it improves on acquaintance.”; Add MS.54891, f. 49, from JT Fields to Alexander Macmillan, 4 May 1868: Regarding Tennyson’s *Lucretius*, Fields wrote, “You ask me what I think of the poem. It is very grand and Tennysonian piece, but I do not agree with those of your friends who say, ‘it is quite the grandest thing he has written.’ Parts of it are in his loftiest vein but I still hold by ‘Ulysses,’ ‘The Death of Arthur,’ and ‘In Memoriam.’ With kindest regards from Mrs. Fields to your wife and yourself.”

³⁵ Ibid, f. 22, from JT Fields to Alexander Macmillan, 17 March, 1864; Add.MS 55387, f. 216, from Alexander Macmillan to JT Fields, 25 May 1867.

³⁶ Ibid, f. 310, to E.L. Youmans care of D. Appleton, from Alexander Macmillan. 28 June 1867. The plates in question were for a book called *Bible Teachings in Nature* (1867) by Hugh Macmillan.

³⁷ Add.MS 55389, f. 825, from Macmillan & Co. to Fields, Osgood & Co., 7 July 1869.

³⁸ Add.MS 55837, f. 26, from Alexander Macmillan to JT Fields, 30 August 1859.

500 pages each, “To sell at £2.2, or £1.16 accordingly to our discretion.”³⁹ The price dictated how many copies Macmillan would print in Britain. The higher price would create 1250 copies, while the lower 1500. The book ultimately launched in 1869 on both sides of the Atlantic to moderate success.

One of the longest lasting reprinting arrangements originated during Fields’s 1859 trip to Europe. Fields visited Macmillan in London where he advised on *Macmillan’s Magazine* during its development. The monthly magazine would go on to become one of the most successful periodicals on the British market during its time, running from 1859 until 1907.⁴⁰ Macmillan felt strongly enough about Fields’s relationship to offer him the first chance to reprint the *Magazine* in America before it had even launched in Britain that November. On 24 October, Macmillan informed the Boston firm’s staff that while Fields was visiting in London they had arranged to send early sheets of the *Magazine*.⁴¹

A letter on 31 October to Fields followed the publisher to Switzerland where he and Annie had moved their vacation. Macmillan reiterated terms and requested that Fields write to his office and instruct them to take the deal.⁴² The terms stated that for £25 a month, early sheets of the *Magazine* would be sent via steamer on Wednesday, followed by a duplicate on Friday, all before publication on Sunday in the UK. The offer allowed reprinting of either individual articles or the whole *Magazine*. Macmillan strategically left the decision to Ticknor & Fields as he anticipated a conflict of interest due to the firm’s impending purchase of the *Atlantic Monthly*, a similar American monthly journal of literature, art, and politics.⁴³ Issuing both publications would bring the firm into direct competition with itself. However,

³⁹ Ibid, from Alexander Macmillan to JT Fields, 15 May 1867.

⁴⁰ See George J. Worth, “Alexander Macmillan and His Magazine,” *Victorian Periodicals Review* 26, no. 2 (Summer, 1993); Worth, *Macmillan’s Magazine: 1859-1907: No Flippancy or Abuse Allowed* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2003).

⁴¹ Add.MS 55837, f. 112, from Alexander Macmillan to Ticknor & Fields, 24 October 1859.

⁴² Ibid, f. 115, from Alexander Macmillan to JT Fields, 31 October 1859.

⁴³ Cullen Murphey, “A History of *the Atlantic Monthly*,” 2001.

Macmillan's offer to reprint selected articles would still generate money and allow Fields to print the *Atlantic* without competition from the *Magazine*. Trying to entice Ticknor & Fields, Macmillan added, "I have other important elements in view in our Magazine which I am not just yet at liberty to speak but which I think will give it very high claim, and public attention."⁴⁴ An important element might possibly have been the sequels to *Tom Brown's School Days*, a title reprinted by Ticknor & Fields that sold well. Whatever these special extras were, they proved attractive enough for Ticknor & Fields to negotiate terms.

In February of 1860, Ticknor & Fields countered with £15 per month, or £180 a year to reprint articles. These prices roughly equated to \$75 per month, or \$900 a year, but Macmillan flatly stated, "this did not seem to me enough."⁴⁵ Although in comparison, American Leonard Scott paid a mere \$500 a year in 1853 to reprint *Blackwood's Magazine* in its entirety.⁴⁶ Macmillan had to consider the drawbacks of exchanging articles rather than reprinting the whole *Magazine*, which included a loss of reputation to readers. Readers might not know that the original article came from the *Magazine* and therefore Macmillan was already losing control over the firm's reputation. Compromises were already being made to reach American readers. Unfortunately, there is no trace of the final terms but the *Magazine* and the *Atlantic* shared articles monthly throughout the 1860s and 1870s.

One of the most scandalous and best-selling articles to appear was by Harriet Beecher Stowe, first appearing in the US. "The True Story of Lady Byron's Life" ran in both periodicals. It detailed the plight of Lady Byron and the shocking nature of Lord Byron's love affairs.⁴⁷ While the knowledge was more common in England, it was completely new to

⁴⁴ Add.MS 55837, f. 112, from Alexander Macmillan to Messrs. Ticknor & Fields, 24 October 1859.

⁴⁵ Ibid, f. 270, from Alexander Macmillan to JT Fields, 13 February 1860; Conversion calculated at £1 : \$5.

⁴⁶ Barnes, 45.

⁴⁷ The article details the plight of Lady Byron as she dealt with Lord Byron's love affairs, one of which was possibly with his half-sister. Stowe, "The True Story of Lady Byron's Life," *Atlantic Monthly* (September 1869); Stowe, "The True Story of Lady Byron's Life," *Macmillan's Magazine* (September 1869); see also, Caroline Franklin, "Harriet Beecher Stowe's Romantic Racism and Her Pathology of Byronic Masculinity," in *The Female Romantics: Nineteenth-century Women Novelists and Byronism* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

Americans. The *American Literary Gazette and Publishers' Circular* commented twice on the article and featured a four-page reactionary letter from a reader.⁴⁸ Despite the scandal, both firms benefited. From Boston, Fields wrote, “the article attracted more attention than any magazine article ever published in this country.”⁴⁹

However, not all advice was heeded, nor were all offers taken. Seven years after acquiring the rights to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* from John P. Jewett & Co. in 1860, Ticknor & Fields wrote to Macmillan & Co. to suggest a simultaneous serialization of the text in both the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Macmillan's Magazine*.⁵⁰ There was renewed interest in the book after the end of the Civil War in 1865 and Fields believed demand was strong enough to warrant a new printing. Unfortunately, a deal for serialization fell through in October 1867; George Lillie Craik was forced to counter offer with an English single volume edition.⁵¹ No record can be found in the firm's bibliographic catalogue from 1843-1889, suggesting that this deal also failed. The book was so widely reprinted in Britain that it may not have been financially viable for Macmillan to pay to reprint it.⁵²

Despite social, political, and economic strains, the relationship between Alexander Macmillan, J.T. Fields, and their publications remained strong during the Civil War.⁵³ Based in Boston, Fields was a supporter of the North. British reaction to the war mainly split along social lines. The working and industrial classes tended to side with the Northern Union while the social elites favored the Southern Confederation; Macmillan defied his social boundaries. For the first eighteen months of the war, Britain debated intervening with France. However, British dependence on Southern cotton and Northern grain kept it in a formally neutral

⁴⁸ *ALGPC* (1 October 1869): 333 and 334; *Ibid*, October 15, 1869, 370-374, a reactionary letter written by Francis Blandford.

⁴⁹ Add.MS 54891, f. 67, from JT Fields to George Lillie Craik, 25 August 1869.

⁵⁰ Michael Winship. “Uncle Tom's Cabin: History of the Book in the 19th-Century United States.”; Add.MS 55387 vol. 2, f. 625, from George Lillie Craik to JT Fields, 19 October 1867.

⁵¹ Add.MS 55387, f. 625, from George Lillie Craik to JT Fields, 19 October 1867.

⁵² See Claire Parfait, *The Publishing History of Uncle Tom's Cabin, 1852-2002* (London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016).

⁵³ Little is known about how the war affected the publishing industry and more research is urgently needed.

position throughout the war.⁵⁴ Macmillan tried to calm the fears of his American partner by refuting the idea that Britain supported anyone but the North. On 18 June 1861, he wrote to Fields, “I don’t quite understand the furious speeches that are being made by your statesmen against England. They should know us better than this ere now.”⁵⁵ Two months later, he would again write, “You may be sure that the great body of the English people are heart and soul with the North,” despite American’s anti-British sentiments circulating in the *Times* and *Saturday Review*.⁵⁶

Macmillan detested slavery and promoted articles that supported the Northern cause. The *Magazine* soon featured pro-Northern articles after the start of the War. On August 9, 1861, the *Magazine* ran an article Macmillan labelled, “the strongest and ablest vindication of the Northern policy that has appeared in any English print whatsoever.”⁵⁷ The article appeared in solidarity with one that ran in the July *Atlantic* titled, “The Ordeal of Battle,” which was lauded as a “clear, out-spoken enunciation of an anti-slavery policy” that the North represented.⁵⁸

George J. Worth has conducted a brief study of the *Magazine*’s treatment of the Civil War and found that while Alexander Macmillan sided with the North, he refused to impose those beliefs upon his contributors. Macmillan and his editor of the *Magazine*, David Masson, “resisted the notion that [the *Magazine*] should speak in an “aggregate” voice.”⁵⁹

Nevertheless, starting in February of 1860 with an article by William Edward Forster which lamented the hanging of John Brown, the leader of the raid on the Federal arsenal at Harper’s

⁵⁴ Kinley J. Brauer, “British Mediation and the American Civil War: A Reconsideration,” *The Journal of Southern History* 38, No. 1 (February, 1972); Eli Ginzberg, “The Economics of British Neutrality during the American Civil War,” *Agricultural History* 10, No. 4 (October, 1936); Ephraim Douglass Adams, *Great Britain and the American Civil War* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1957).

⁵⁵ George A Macmillan, *Letters of Alexander Macmillan* (Printed for private circulation, 1908), 87, letter to J.T. Fields, 18 June 1861.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 89.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*; J.M. Ludlow, “Glance beyond the “Trent” Difficulty: The International Law of the Sea,” *Macmillan’s Magazine* (January 1862).

⁵⁸ *Ibid*; “The Ordeal by Battle,” *The Atlantic Monthly* (July 1861).

⁵⁹ Worth, *Macmillan’s Magazine*, 193.

Ferry, the *Magazine* began its support the Northern cause.⁶⁰ Worth points out that further articles by Frederick Denison Maurice (“in many ways the spiritual father-figure for Alexander Macmillan”), and John Malcolm Ludlow, set the overall tone for the *Magazine*’s reporting of the Civil War.⁶¹ Worth argues that every month in 1862 and 1863 that Alexander Macmillan personally “saw to it” that most articles concerning the Civil War expressed pro-Union Sentiments.⁶² After Lincoln’s assassination in April of 1865, the *Magazine* ran not one, but two eulogies on 12 June. “The Death of President Lincoln,” and “Lincolniana,” both lauded the President and placed him on the highest pedestal of political leaders.⁶³

Unfortunately, the Civil War and anti-English sentiments affected Macmillan’s transatlantic trade. Writing just a year and a half into the war, Macmillan admitted, “this wretched American war is doing much harm to business of all kinds.”⁶⁴ Economic uncertainty and naval blockades delayed delivery of early sheets and payments. The dour national mood even affected Fields’ publishing decisions. On 7 May 1862, Fields regrettably rejected a poem because, “War matters make us frown on poetry in these sad days.”⁶⁵ He was also uncertain whether he could sell six-hundred copies of a book on Blake’s life and poems, which he would normally have accepted without hesitation. Fields tried to reassure Macmillan of their arrangements by complimenting him, “you are publishing capital work” while simultaneously blaming the War for his low orders, “if times here were not a powder, you would hear from us for quantities.”⁶⁶ As the tide of the war changed in favor of the North in 1863, sales improved yet difficulties remained. Although Fields reprinted more Macmillan & Co. material he was unable to transfer money to England. Therefore, he requested, “Let the

⁶⁰ W.E. Forster, “Harper’s Ferry and ‘Old Captain Brown’,” *Macmillan’s Magazine* (February 1860).

⁶¹ Worth, *Macmillan’s Magazine*, 193.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 194; *Macmillan’s Magazine* (June 1865).

⁶⁴ Macmillan, *Letters of Alexander Macmillan*, 115, letter to Miss Muir Mackenzie, 12 June 1862.

⁶⁵ Add.MS 54891, f. 4, from JT Fields to Alexander Macmillan, 7 May 1862.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

account between us stand open till exchange comes.”⁶⁷ Unfortunately, it is impossible to understand the total effect the War had on the American or transatlantic book trade as there are little to no studies on the subject.

The men’s friendship reassured business arrangements through war and peace. The *Magazine* article arrangements allowed Macmillan & Co. texts to be reprinted in the US. However, the reprinted material was never fully credited to Macmillan & Co., meaning that readers accessed the titles through a third-party. The Macmillan name was known in certain circles, but more could be done to access the market on a grander scale. Selling the *Magazine* directly to subscribers or in bulk to importers would have brought in more money than a monthly recurring payment to reprint articles; and Ticknor & Fields’s success in selling the *Atlantic* and authorized reprints proved that there was a market for Macmillan & Co. books in the American market. Unfortunately, Macmillan was unable to reassess how business was conducted until after the Civil War ended.

As the war raged on around Christmas 1863, Fields sent Macmillan a letter with a photograph enclosed. Fields sentimentally commented, “the photograph I send you represents the lady who always goes with me when I visit the Macmillans. Perhaps – who knows – she may see England again after the War is over. Heaven grant it.”⁶⁸ The War came to an end in 1865 and the men finally saw each other two years later in Boston. The Civil War had shaken transatlantic trade and Alexander Macmillan sought to reevaluate his business network within the US.

The State of the Trade: Transatlantic Issues

Despite continual efforts to ensure the smooth operation of trade in and out of wartime, Macmillan & Co.’s network often faced issues. Three main concerns appear in the

⁶⁷ Ibid, f. 12, from JT Fields to Alexander Macmillan, 26 December 1863.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

firm's interaction with all its American partners across the Northeast: timing of deliveries, terms of trade, and trust and reputation. These interwoven problems, sometimes self-imposed, created a sense that Macmillan & Co. lacked control over its texts and public persona in America. Ultimately, these issues pushed Alexander Macmillan to open a branch office in New York City.

Before and after the Civil War, Macmillan & Co.'s partners repeatedly found issue with timely delivery of advance proofs. While trade courtesy dominated American reprints, it was not always respected, as Gould & Lincoln hinted at to Macmillan when negotiating for early sheets in 1858:

We could afford to pay a liberal price for "Early Sheets" of works adapted to republication in this country, if, by doing so we could really secure thereby any legal claim to the book whatever, or make sure of the market unmolested by other members of the trade; but this, the past teaches us, we cannot do.⁶⁹

Consequentially, proper timing became essential to securing the market. Advance proofs needed to arrive early enough to reset the type, print, and bind sheets before unauthorized editions appeared on the market. Thus, early sheets needed to be sent prior to a book's publication in Britain, allowing for the time needed for reproduction. If the book was published in Britain before early sheets were sent, a competitor could have the book sent by mail and then reprinted before the official edition appeared, thus stealing the market. Delay in early sheets meant possible financial reprisals such as the loss of transatlantic agreements. Therefore, guaranteeing the timely arrival of advance proofs was a crucial aspect of any reprinting arrangement.

Regrettably, claims of late early sheets continually dogged Macmillan's transatlantic business, even after the New York branch opened. Nearly all of Macmillan's surviving American agreements stipulated when sheets had to be sent by steamer. For example,

⁶⁹ Add MS54891, f.2, from Gould & Lincoln to Macmillan & Co., 21 September 1858.

Lippincott's required the early sheets for a novel by Anthony Trollope "be sent to us by post on the 25th of the second month prior to the date of publication in England."⁷⁰ If there was the "loss of said steamer or other mishap," which inevitably delayed the shipment, extra copies must be sent "by each succeeding mail."⁷¹ Despite strict schedules, evidence across the century suggests that the issue tended to lay within Macmillan & Co. itself. The very first mention of Macmillan & Co. in Ticknor & Fields' ledgers is from a complaint in 1857 that early sheets were late for a book by Alexander Smith. Later in 1891, the manager of the Agency, George P. Brett would have to explain exact timing of sheets to Frederick Macmillan.⁷² Poor weather caused trouble and Aileen Fyfe has detailed a shipwreck that wreaked havoc for W. & R. Chambers in 1854.⁷³

By the end of the Civil War, Macmillan had become accustomed to Americans using excuses to delay or refuse payment. Despite internal timing issues, Alexander Macmillan stated that he was "by no means sure of it," when Americans complained about lateness, saying about the claims, "there is a great deal of 'fudge' about it."⁷⁴ There was a great deal of fudge when Hurd & Houghton in New York refused to repay in full for early sheets in 1869, claiming that unauthorized prints appeared on the market before they had their own edition set in type. Macmillan doubted the claims, writing that Hurd & Houghton certainly had the type set, had the market to themselves, and therefore, "suffered no loss and I can see no grounds they had for substantiating their complaint."⁷⁵ However, he accepted a lesser sum to recover any payment from the original arrangement.

⁷⁰ Add.MS 54797, f. 28, letter copied by George Brett and sent to Alexander Macmillan from JB Lippincott & Co., 10 December 1869.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid, f. 5, from George Brett to Macmillan & Co., 10 August 1869; Add.MS 54800 f. 16, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 15 February 1890.

⁷³ Fyfe, *Steam-Powered Knowledge*, see chapter 19.

⁷⁴ Add.MS 55389, f. 949, from Alexander Macmillan to George Brett, 24 August 1869.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Apart from timing issues, Alexander Macmillan also faced challenges from other publishers and wholesalers. Macmillan wrote directly to J.B. Lippincott himself in Philadelphia after his firm charged Macmillan with breaking the faith between the two companies. The issue stemmed from Lippincott's learning that the London firm also supplied Roberts, a publisher from New York, on the same terms of trade for titles they had also ordered. This scenario would have split the market on the titles, thereby creating competition for Lippincott's stock. Macmillan wrote to J.B. Lippincott, "will you kindly tell them [Lippincott's staff] that this was done with your full knowledge and consent."⁷⁶ He then responded to the staff's charge that, "In sending books indiscriminately to this market you not only violate good faith in many cases, but destroy all confidence in the publications of Great Britain."⁷⁷ Macmillan assured J.B. Lippincott that he did not send out books unless specifically ordered. If Macmillan had done so, he would have undermined the terms of trade which gave advance proofs and market dominance to Lippincott. Macmillan's response stated that he did business with few American firms but when he did, it was on similar terms. Macmillan tried to do as much business in America without offending anyone. He thought this meant equal terms across the board, but in implementing this, he managed to offend Lippincott's staff.

Issues with terms of trade and refusal of repayment broke down the most essential part of long-distance business arrangements: trust. Whether in books or botany, no business can function internationally without an innate trust that ensures the trade relationship. Alexander Macmillan had to be comfortable enough with his partners to sell his books in America and pay the firm. Once the books, sheets, or plates left Britain they were out of Macmillan's control. As a result, the quality of the books, the name, and the reputation of the

⁷⁶ Add.MS 55842, f. 60, from Alexander Macmillan to JB Lippincott, 7 December 1866.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

firm were placed within the hands of American publishers. To ensure a proper reflection of its own reputation, Macmillan considered the reputation of its American partner. Macmillan had to trust these men enough to be his representation in another part of the world. These relationships reflected upon Macmillan & Co. itself and directly informed the trade's and readers' perception of the firm. Likewise, W&R Chambers of Edinburgh took reputation into account when they fired their London agent.⁷⁸ Similarly, Chambers fired William Orr for subcontracting the printing of Chambers's *Edinburgh Journal*. Another brother, David Chambers, was placed in charge of the London Branch office. David's kinship ensured he would act in the best interests of the Chambers firm. Clearly, trust was the basis for business at a distance.

Despite books reaching the American market via respectable partners, Macmillan began to question the perception of his firm on a global scale in the 1860s. Control over perception and publications became a driving factor in the choice to open foreign branch offices across the world. The Civil War had shaken business. Delays with early sheets, reduced or non-payment and refuted terms of trade underlined American deals. In 1867, once the Civil War had settled and Macmillan & Co. could be left behind in the charge of George Lillie Craik, Alexander Macmillan decided to visit America and assess the country, his business there, and decide, "what [could] be done" to improve matters.⁷⁹

Reassessing the future: Alexander Macmillan in America, 1867

In 1867, Alexander Macmillan laid plans to visit his business partners across the United States. A visit had been contemplated for 1866 to evaluate of the state of commerce after the Civil War, but the plan was abandoned.⁸⁰ At the time, Alexander Macmillan was the

⁷⁸ Fyfe, 97.

⁷⁹ Macmillan, 230, from Alexander Macmillan to Rev. James Fraser, 29 July 1867.

⁸⁰ Graves, 246.

sole head of his company without any partners after the death of his brother, Daniel in 1857. In 1865, Alexander added a new partner. George Lillie Craik was the husband of novelist Dinah Maria Mulock – a close friend of the Macmillan family.⁸¹ Two years later, the now forty-nine-year-old Macmillan felt confident enough in Craik to leave him in charge of the business while he traveled to America for three months.

On 6 August 1867, Macmillan set sail on the *Scotia* by himself. Before leaving, Macmillan set up meetings with publishers and authors including Edward L. Youmans, J.T. Fields, and Macmillan's last surviving sister, Margaret, among others. In a letter to friend and author, the Reverend James Fraser, Macmillan explained that he was on a fact-finding mission rather than a business trip:

I hardly anticipate doing much actual business, but only to gain a more accurate idea of what can be done in the future. It will be much to get the good-will of gentlemen engaged in educational work and to let them know what books we already have published, and also what we propose publishing in future.⁸²

The themes of education and perception continued throughout Macmillan's travels as he met with tradesmen, as well as booksellers, educators, students and further readers. Although he already exported educational and literary texts, Macmillan was aware that his name was not particularly well known across the market. Had the trade been fully aware of the titles, Macmillan would not have had to "let them know" the backlist, front-list, and future works of the firm. This also demonstrates Macmillan's belief in the educational sector being a driving and solid force behind the success of his international trade. It was educational titles that would provide a steady source of revenue if adopted to university and secondary school syllabi.

Macmillan believed his texts were better than American authored books or unauthorized reprinted material. Unfortunately, the commercial operations of his trade were

⁸¹ Rosemary T. Vanarsdel, "Macmillan's Magazine and the Fair Sex: 1859-1874 (Part One)," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 33 No 4. (Winter 2000): 377.

⁸² Macmillan, 230, from Alexander Macmillan to Rev. James Fraser, 29 July 1867.

dampened by the absence of international copyright and a high importation duty. These two factors meant that the price of a British edition was higher than a cheaply reprinted unauthorized version. Macmillan maintained his ability to compete price wise due to lower production costs in Britain during the 1860s.⁸³ However, once wages equalized then:

...there would be no chance of our doing anything unless we had manufacturing and distributive power on the spot, and even then the absence of international copyright would tell much against us. There are some influential men in America who would gladly see the present state of matters in this respect changed, but I fear the narrow selfish view of commercial arrangements will prove too strong for wider and wiser views to obtain. I hope to learn more what can be hoped for in this and other respects...⁸⁴

Even before his trip, Macmillan was already considering some sort of distribution office such as an agency. Since he considered his production costs to be lower in Great Britain, an office would suffice even with taxes and duties imposed on the imported object, allowing the book to remain competitive on the market. However, once production turned in favor of American manufacturing, any branch office would need to expand to incorporate these elements. The presence of international copyright would only be an incentive to produce in America if manufacturing standards and costs did not already meet Macmillan's expectations. As we will see later, this scenario partially came true. However, for the time being, Macmillan left Britain with a preconceived notion that an agency might best fit the firm's needs.

Arriving in New York on 20 August, he went to Chicago before staying with his sister Margaret Bowes, who had immigrated with her husband to farm in Illinois. She and Alexander were the last living children out of the twelve born to the family.⁸⁵ Macmillan then journeyed to Toronto and Niagara, before sailing across Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River to Montreal, then down to Philadelphia where he stayed with the Lippincotts. He

⁸³ Macmillan, 230, from Alexander Macmillan to the Reverend James Fraser, 29 July 1867; See "Chapter 3: Trends in Book Production Costs," in Alexis Weedon, *Victorian Publishing*.

⁸⁴ Macmillan, 230, from Alexander Macmillan to the Reverend James Fraser, 29 July 1867

⁸⁵ In later years, Margaret moved back to England where her son Robert, had worked with Alexander since 1846 as a bookbinder within the Cambridge based firm. In 1863, Robert Bowes detached the Cambridge branch from Macmillan & Co. The new business would eventually become Bowes and Bowes.

traversed back to New York, Long Island, and then to Washington for a night where he met President Johnson and the Head of the Smithsonian. He then stayed with the Fields family in Boston. Throughout all the travels, Macmillan stayed with publishers and met authors. In his own words he gushed, “I saw Longfellow, Emerson, Lowell, Holmes, and heaps of the same class, shook hands with the President, had a talk with General Grant, lived among Prairie farmers and New York Senators.”⁸⁶ He also dined with authors and the editor of the *New York Tribune*. His travels ingrained him and the Macmillan name within the world of publishing.

Towards the end of his trip, Macmillan wrote to his friend and Glaswegian publisher, James MacLehose. He professed his disbelief at how ignorant England was of America’s “power, resources, and the enormous amount of great and good human work that is going on here.”⁸⁷ Greatly impressed by the American education system, he wrote, “I met farmers in the prairies who had read and understood Carlyle, Mill, Buckle, Ruskin, Lecky, and authors of that class.”⁸⁸ The education and literacy of the general population represented a massive readership that Macmillan wanted to reach more of, and on his own terms. Similarly, William Chambers from W.&R. Chambers visited the US in 1853 where he too was enthralled by the nation’s education and literacy rates. He used some of the same wholesalers and publishers Macmillan would go on to use. For example, Lippincott’s partnered with many British firms. In 1865, the American *Publishers’ Circular* advertised that Lippincott’s had “extensive arrangements” for the importation of texts from both Macmillan & Co. and W&R Chambers.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Macmillan, 232, from Alexander Macmillan to W.E. Mullins, 30 October 1867.

⁸⁷ Graves, 274, from Alexander Macmillan to James MacLehose, written from 14 to 26 October 1867.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ *ALGPC* (15 November 1865): 58.

Having considered the options of finding more wholesalers and authorizing more reprints, Macmillan settled on the idea of setting up an Agency. As he departed for England, Macmillan wrote:

The true idea would be to have a printing office either of one's own or connected with one you could depend on, so as to be prepared to publish there and here at the same time. A great international publishing house is possible, and could be a grand idea to be realized...I see clearly that if we are to do much we must be represented by a direct agent there.⁹⁰

The direct agent would be a Macmillan & Co. employee acting exclusively for the firm – rather than a US publisher acting for several firms at a given time. When Alexander Macmillan left the United States on October 26, 1867, he had witnessed the American public's knowledge, education, and demand for books. He had visited publishers, wholesalers, and authors. With all considerations and examples of previous British offices presented before Alexander Macmillan, he decided to open an import office in New York. The office added printing and manufacturing as it became more established in the market, as will be discussed later in the thesis.

Having taken nearly two years to consider the office and set the decision in motion, Macmillan wrote to a longstanding-partner, William Amery, of Pott & Amery in New York on 9 June 1869. Pott & Amery had offered to act as Macmillan's official agent in America, but Macmillan's mind was set. He began to explain his decision to open his own office rather than use an American agent:

Our motives in coming to the decision have been two-fold. First, as regards the houses that have been acting as our agents: it might have given offense that if we were adopting such a course, we did not arrange with them. I daresay we shall have a little feeling in any case. But we would rather not incur it.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Graves, 275-276, from Alexander Macmillan to James MacLehose, written from 14 to 26 October 1867.

⁹¹ Add.MS 55842, f. 161, from Alexander Macmillan to William Amery, 9 June 1869.

Here, Macmillan reflects defends his decision of choosing to open an office by implying that had he elevated one of his existing partners to be the official American agent, it would have risked alienating all others. As seen through the fury of the staff at Lippincott's when they believed another firm received a better deal, Macmillan's apprehension at elevating one single American agent over all others was warranted. However, Macmillan also anticipated some sort of push back from Americans because he had chosen none of them to act as his official agent. Macmillan understood that the appearance of a British firm on America soil would ruffle feathers. However, he perceived the lesser of the affronts to be opening a branch office.

The letter continued:

Secondly: in regards the future: Our desire that our name & publications should stand clear before the American public so that what is ours should be at all times clear, would however might be interfered with, if another name were attached to it. And then when we sought hereafter to stand alone there might be difficulty in arranging matters so as to prevent in the public mind some idea of alienation as the course of separation. We have been much tempted by the very kind offer you make to calm us of so much anxiety & assurance at starting. But it seems to me that if we are to go into it at all we had better face it fully. If we fail – tho I have no fear – we cannot lose a great deal, and we can blame no one but ourselves.⁹²

Alexander Macmillan clearly outlines his need to control his image and network in the US.

The use of American partners “interfered with” publications by attaching different names and changing the physical text itself, therefore altering reader's perception of Macmillan & Co.

However, separation from established partners associated with Macmillan potentially suggested a falling-out, or “alienation,” as the cause for the new office. Once again,

Alexander Macmillan shows his awareness of the unique decision he was taking. Branch offices were rare and could cause rifts with established partners. William Amery offered to act as the agent for Macmillan & Co., helping to ease its transition into the American market.

⁹² Ibid.

However, Macmillan respectfully rejected the idea, once again based on his desire to have his own employee, working solely for the firm. By the end of the letter, Macmillan made it clear that while he had fears about hurting existing partnerships, he had nothing to lose as business and the Macmillan & Co. reputation could only improve with a direct office and agent in America. His choice would change the course of the company by transforming it into one of the first truly internationally based publishing firms in the world.

Conclusion

By 1869, Alexander Macmillan had crafted the British identity of Macmillan & Co. and wished to project it to American readers. As Eliot has shown, the company mainly produced educational and literary material. The American market offered a large readership that Macmillan clearly admired before and after his trip in 1867. His expansion into the market followed the standard practice of the day. Macmillan's transatlantic business consisted of an American network overseen by local publishers and wholesalers who placed distance between Macmillan & Co. and American readers.

The relationship between Alexander Macmillan and J.T. Fields demonstrates the innerworkings of a transatlantic publishing partnership. The trust between the men bound them in friendship and aided their working relationship. Clearly, trust was essential to the business arrangements the two companies made over the years and saw them through the economically damaging Civil War. Further issues after the War began affecting the trust Macmillan had with other partners although he still wanted to access the American market in bigger and better ways. With the idea of an office already in mind, Macmillan's 1867 trip to the US confirmed his belief that the American market offered great potential. Pushed by a growing concern over reputation, Macmillan sought to control his products in a foreign market by direct representation.

The decision to open a branch office altered Macmillan & Co.'s transatlantic network by offering direct access to readers who otherwise were blocked by American intermediaries. Yet to reach these readers, the office would have to engage in trade courtesy, a system set to create synthetic foreign rights for the use of Americans. As a British firm entering into that system made by Americans for Americans, the firm would be forced to adjust its practices towards domestic standards. The need for control would force the company to alter its identity and grow its networks.

2. The Foundation: 1869-1871

Agents and agencies were not uncommon in the nineteenth century transatlantic and domestic book trades. They found new domestic and foreign titles, raise awareness of a publisher, and generate business in foreign markets. The idea of an agent existed in Britain by 1800. Ross Alloway argues that while the specific details varied, an agent's main duty was to expand a publisher's network by acting as a wholesale and retail arm in a regional area.¹ The agent tended to be native to a region, allowing for insider knowledge of the local markets and tradesmen. Alongside agents, two prevalent forms of agency existed by the 1860s: those relying on other publishers, and those involving the employment of a dedicated agent. Trade partners with their own publishing or wholesaling businesses acted as agents for foreign or distant publishers by imported, reprinting, and retailing books. This was how Lippincott's and Ticknor & Fields acted for Macmillan & Co. While these partnerships were successful, they also limited Macmillan & Co.'s control over its publications by operating as a middle-man between the London firm and the American readers. The interests of the agent's own books were likely to be held above that of Macmillan's, therefore potentially limiting the success of Macmillan in the American market.

Some publishers shifted away from using trade partners and hired official employees to act as dedicated agents for their firms in distant spaces. Starting in 1837, Scottish firms opened London agencies, such as Blackie in 1837, Blackwood in 1840, Nelson in 1844, Chambers in 1860, and W. & A.K. Johnston in 1869.² Chambers employed their younger brother, David, to open a branch office in London after they found continual issue with their

¹ Ross Alloway, "Greater Britain and Ireland: Agencies and Joint Ventures," in *The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland*, Vol. 3 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 386.

² John Barnes et al. "A Place in the World," in *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, Vol. 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2010), 597.

agent, William Orr.³ William and Robert Chambers actively sought to reach the London market on their own terms and through an agent dedicated solely to their firm. Alexander Macmillan's motives for sending his own agent to New York mirrored those of W. & R. Chambers. Further examples of domestic and foreign agencies also existed in the British trade. Americans such as Wiley & Putnam, and Appleton had agents in London by the 1840s. However, very little research has been conducted on any of these offices, limiting our understanding as to how they functioned.⁴ This chapter offers one of the first in-depth views on how a British agency functioned on American soil.

To understand the reception of the Agency by the American trade, and the inner workings of the office itself, this chapter will explore the initial two-year period of the Agency's operation. This chapter will show that Alexander Macmillan's decision to open an Agency was met with various receptions ranging from confusion and possible hostility, to acceptance and aid. Internal and external conflict affected the Agency and it was ultimately George Brett, the new manager, who adapted Macmillan & Co. to the American market, transforming its identity from foreign and British, to an essential part of the American trade.

First, I will evaluate how Macmillan & Co. went about opening the Agency. This section explores the agent, the premises, and the stock used to open the office. Once again, the theme of educational material presents itself strongly as Macmillan sought to access the American market. The educational sector would become a mainstay of the business, but first Brett had to find more professors and universities willing to add Macmillan texts to the syllabi. Then I will move onto the general reaction of trade partners to the appearance of the Agency. J.B. Lippincott was surprised that Macmillan & Co. would open an office and not

³ Fyfe, 115.

⁴ Elizabeth James gives the greatest account of how the Macmillan & Co. office operated in "Letters from America: The Bretts and the Macmillan Company of New York," a chapter of *Macmillan: A Publishing Tradition*, which she edited. This type of agent and agency is different from a literary agent that operated on behalf of authors. For information on literary agents, see James Hepburn's *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of the Literary Agent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

use an American with more knowledge about the local trade; Van Nostrand complained about unfair competition. Alexander Macmillan's fear of offending established relationships came true and the Agency had to control the damage that resulted. However, Macmillan's choice of a British employee over an American partner emphasized loyalty over local knowledge.

Lastly, I will examine how George Brett adapted to the American market by changing terms of trade, delivery schedules, and attempting to hire a traveler. While anyone could open a branch office, only a few could make them successful. Routledge had succeeded where Saunders & Otley had failed. In 1869, the success of the Macmillan & Co. Agency in New York came down to the decisions made and actions taken by George Brett. He quickly learned that while America could be beautiful, it could also be quite treacherous. At a time when the US economy was still recovering from the Civil War, anything that challenged the book trade was perceived as a threat. The US historically favored protectionist policies when it came to tariffs and imports.⁵ I argue that the appearance of British agencies after the Civil War, a time when economic reconstruction for the trade relied upon continued cheap texts, created a protectionist backlash from the American trade. George Brett had to face challenges to the Agency that sought to undermine its reputation and deprive it of stock. Brett also had to contend with disrupting trade courtesy and adjust pricing strategies and terms of trade to compete with reprinted texts.

The Agent and the Agency

There is no evidence suggesting that Alexander Macmillan ever seriously considered hiring an American as his agent, which goes against the fact that agents were normally locals with regional knowledge. However, from Macmillan's perspective, his choice of the Englishman, George Brett, falls perfectly into line with his emphasis on loyalty. While

⁵ See Chapter 5, "The Independence of America," in Seville, *The Internationalization of Copyright Law*, for discussion on protectionist tariffs.

knowledge of a market could be learned, loyalty and trust were something Macmillan could only find in his own employee. No matter the man, the agent required experience in wholesaling, financial accounting, both the British and American trades, and he needed to like books. The agent also needed to be willing to move from England to New York to start a new venture. While the job offered excellent prospects, it was also potentially disastrous if the Agency failed under the agent's control.

It is natural to find a loyal employee among family, but unfortunately there were no males within the Macmillan family old enough or available to take on the momentous task of uprooting to New York. Robert Bowes, Alexander's nephew by his sister Margaret, was old enough but busy running his own bookselling and binding business in Cambridge. Of Alexander's sons and nephews, the eldest, Frederick Orridge Macmillan, was just eighteen years old and lacked experience. Therefore, Alexander Macmillan sought to promote from within the company.

In 1869, Macmillan chose George Edward Brett, a man eleven-years his junior, for the job. Brett had been hired from Simpkin Marshall & Co. just the year before but it is unclear whether this was in anticipation of the Agency post.⁶ However, over the year, Alexander Macmillan found him to be the "right man" to head the Agency.⁷ Brett was an Englishman, born in Rochester, Kent in 1829. By 1868, Brett had worked his way through Simpkin Marshall to a higher position in the counting-house.⁸ Brett's experience with financial matters at a wholesaling house provided part of the knowledge that Macmillan needed in an Agent.

⁶ James, "Letters from America," 171.

⁷ Add.MS 55842, f. 164.

⁸ Ibid.

From the beginning, Alexander Macmillan trusted Brett's judgements. Macmillan's trust left a mark on Brett forever. Before Brett's death in 1890, he wrote to Frederick Macmillan about Alexander:

You will remember, Mr. Frederick that it was he [Alexander] who found me – wandering in the wilderness as we may say – put me in the way of using my trade in his service, and above all put it in my powers to cultivate my intellect. The very highest earthly good; and beyond all this which indeed, alone rendered all that possible exercised such kind generous forbearance towards me in the early days of the Agency which I feel I could not have deserved but for which my gratitude will be endless. What do I not owe him...⁹

In 1869, aged of forty, married with young children, and looking to make a name for himself, Brett was offered the chance to improve his prospects by heading the New York Agency. Brett continuously expressed his gratitude and loyalty to the firm over the first few years in New York, ending letters, “with much respect and thanks for your honored communication.”¹⁰ Brett's letters reveal a man who experienced “very great and endless anxiety” at the loss of money, and whose “sole desire...is that this agency should become a profitable one to the English firm.”¹¹ Brett's loyalty to the firm and his job was so absolute that, “I broke up my home, severed lifelong [sic] connections with relations and friends, and gave up everything in fact with the object of presenting the interests of the Firm in [America].”¹²

Brett moved to New York in July 1869 with Power of Attorney for Macmillan & Co. in the United States.¹³ This allowed him to settle, open, and close accounts on behalf of the British firm. Alexander Macmillan secured the help of William Amery, of Pott & Amery, to mentor Brett upon his arrival. Booksellers James Pott and William Amery specialized in religious texts until their partnership dissolved towards the end of 1871.¹⁴ They had

⁹ Add.MS 54800, f. 38 from George Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 26 March 1890.

¹⁰ Add.MS 54797, f. f 52, from George Brett to Macmillan & Co., 17 May 1870.

¹¹ Ibid, f. 64, from George Brett to Macmillan & Co., 17 June 1870; Ibid, f. 38, 22 March 1870.

¹² Ibid, f. 84, from George Brett to Macmillan & Co., 20 August 1870.

¹³ Add.MS 55389, f. 865, from Alexander Macmillan to George E. Brett, 20 July 1869.

¹⁴ Tebbel, *Vol. II*, 386.

previously acted as agents for Macmillan & Co., the Cambridge University Press, and their largest client, the London Bible Warehouse. Ticknor & Fields also helped with another important step: finding premises for the new Agency. The firm signed over the lease of their New York premises to Brett on 4 August 1869, as they moved to new premises. The ground floors of 63 Bleecker Street became Macmillan & Co. New York.¹⁵

With premises secured, the next step was to procure stock. On 8 August, a total £1243 worth of Macmillan stock was transferred from Scribner, Welford & Co. at the English Book Depot to the Agency. A further shipment of books then arrived from London five days later.¹⁶ Comparing the initial stock list from Scribner's to Simon Eliot's study reveals what Macmillan & Co. chose to sell in America versus what the house produced overall. While the Scribner's list is not a complete representation of Macmillan & Co.'s American trade, Alexander Macmillan and George Lillie Craik found the stock sufficient enough to use it as the foundations for the Agency, lending legitimacy to the books on the list. They then supplied more titles with further shipments. Although the Scribner titles were books that the English Book Depot had yet to sell, the books reflect Macmillan and Craik's business tactics for targeting the American market.

Table 1¹⁷ Percentage of titles by Dewey Decimal subject classification

Stock	000s	100s	200s	300s	400s	500s	600s	700s	800s	900s
London	1.0	6.5	25.0	8.7	3.2	17.3	6.5	2.1	23.9	5.4
New York	1.3	3.5	28.7	10.0	4.2	19.1	1.6	2.2	15.0	15.4

A comparison of Eliot's 1866 genres (see Chapter 1) with the 1869 Scribner list shows that Macmillan & Co. sent a fair representation of what the London firm printed over to America (Table 1). Most classifications vary by only a few points, with major differences seen within the technology (600s), literature (800s), and geography and history (900s).

¹⁵ Add.MS 54797, f. 3, from George E. Brett to Macmillan & Co., 4 August 1869.

¹⁶ Add.MS 54891, f. 66; Add MS 54797, f. 7, from George E. Brett to Macmillan & Co., 13 August 1869.

¹⁷ See Table 1.3, Eliot, "to You in Your Vast Business," 28.

Literature is underrepresented in the Scribner stock in comparison to Macmillan's overall production. Eliot notes that Macmillan & Co.'s literary production grew exponentially as a category starting in the 1860s when it introduced its cheaply priced series, such as the *Golden Treasury* in 1861.¹⁸ Macmillan & Co.'s arrangements with Ticknor & Fields and Lippincott's might also explain literature's underrepresentation on the Scribner list. The literature and serializations produced in *Macmillan's Magazine* and reprinted in Ticknor & Fields' *Atlantic Monthly* tied those books solely to the firm, allowing for authorized single-volume editions thereafter. Likewise, the *Sunday Library*, *Globe Library*, and *Golden Treasury* series as well as some scientific and technological works were solely provided in America by Lippincott's. This may partially account for the four-fold gap in technology. Macmillan & Co. also exported finished technology books to Van Nostrand in New York, who specialized in selling those and scientific works.

The nearly three-fold increase between the geography and history category points to Macmillan targeting US schools and universities by supplying more educational history and geography texts. Overall, the genres indicate that Macmillan & Co. sent over more texts that could be used as educational material for secondary schools. Eliot also noted the rise of educational texts in Macmillan's total output across the 1850s and 60s. He points out that "phrases such as 'for national and elementary schools', or 'for the use of Parochial Schools and libraries'" became more common as Macmillan targeted the educational market.¹⁹ The prominent genre categories indicate that a majority of Macmillan's business in the US was aimed at supplying secondary educational books. Titles such as H.W. Fisher's *Considerations of the origin of the American War* (1865), and T.H. Huxley's *Lessons in Elementary*

¹⁸ Ibid; See Martin Spevack. *The Golden Treasury: 150 Years On*, Article 2 (Electronic British Library Journal, 2012).

¹⁹ Eliot, 24-25.

Physiology (1866), and James Bryce's *The Holy Roman Empire* (1864) set the Agency up to target the American educational market.

The differences in prices between Eliot's work and Scribner's list reinforces the suggestion that Macmillan & Co. sought to target secondary school and university students. Eliot separates titles into three pricing categories: low, at 3s.6d or under; medium, 4s-10s; and high, 11s or over.²⁰

Table 2²¹ Percentage of titles in each price category

Stock	Low	Medium	High
London	45.88	36.47	17.65
New York	21.48	60.33	18.18

The Agency started with an overwhelming majority of medium priced books and fewer cheap books than one might expect for a market founded on reprints and cheap prices. The higher percentage makes sense when the types of books sold are taken into consideration. The genre split showed more texts that could be used by students in high schools and universities. One such text was S. Parkinson's *An Elementary Treatise on Mechanics*, originally published in 1855 and continually advertised as being "For the use of the Junior Classes at the University and of Higher Classes in Schools" at 9s.6d.²² Another set of books adding to the medium list were a significant number of *Golden Treasury*, *Globe Library*, and *Sunday Library Series*. Despite Macmillan & Co.'s attempt to break into the cheap materials market with these series, many of their prices were set at 4s or 4s.6d per book. This pricing strategy would eventually cause headaches for Alexander Macmillan and the head of the Agency, George Brett.

While the American educational market held a large readership, by choosing not to target the general US readership with cheap literature, Macmillan potentially avoided an

²⁰ Ibid, 26.

²¹ Compare with Eliot's Table 1.7.

²² *ALGPC* (1 February 1870): 197.

already competitive field yet may have limited its own success. In this regard, there was significant room for improvement in Macmillan's business strategy. When the Agency opened, changes were made to pricing structure to place the *Globe*, *Sunday Library*, and *Golden Treasury Series* within a cheaper price range. Set originally at \$2.00, the price would be lowered during 1870 to \$1.50 and then \$1.25 for the series.²³ However, Americans were used to finding cheap books at prices as low as 50¢. The identity of Macmillan & Co. in America reflected its British genres although its prices emphasized an attempt to sell more medium and high-level books. At the same time, its cheap literature and periodical market proved fruitful for Macmillan via Ticknor & Fields and Lippincott's. Overall, Macmillan portrayed itself to the American trade as an education based firm that also produced quality literature.

TO THE TRADE.

MESSRS. MACMILLAN & CO., of London, beg to inform the trade that they have opened an Agency in New York under the management of Mr. GEO. E. BRETT, by whom all their Publications, and those of the Oxford University Press, including the well-known Clarendon Press Series of Educational Works, will in future be supplied.

Catalogues (to be ready in a few days) will be mailed free on application.

MACMILLAN & CO.,

63 BLEECKER STREET, NEW YORK.

American Literary Gazette and Publishers' Circular, 16 August 1869, 238.

The last step to open the office was an announcement to the trade. The 16 August edition of the *American Literary Gazette and Publishers' Circular* carried two separate announcements of the Agency's opening and a half page advertisement for Macmillan & Co.'s books. The *Gazette* noted in a short article that George E. Brett was "a gentleman who

²³ James, 172.

for many years occupied a position of trust in the firm Messrs. Simpkin, Marshall & Co.”, allowing the American trade to get a sense of Brett’s credentials.²⁴ The Agency also became the sole supplier for Oxford University’s Clarendon Press in America.²⁵ The advertisement also noted that all Macmillan publications would in the future be supplied by the Agency, and as Alexander Macmillan told Brett, “we must now do all of our business in American through you.”²⁶ Previously, wholesalers and publishers seeking authorized editions or reprints of such books wrote to the London house to make arrangements. The Agency was supposed to take over such arrangements and become the first point of contact for whole books, printed sheets, and advance proofs. Established partners and arrangements would shift their dealings from London to Brett. Brett in turn, could find more publishers, wholesalers, and markets across the country to do business with.

The same day the advertisements ran President Martin Brewer Anderson of the University of Rochester in Rochester, New York, visited the Agency as he passed through the city. Brett reported the visit to Alexander Macmillan and George Craik. Anderson spent “a long time looking more especially at our later publications and talking of our prospects here.”²⁷ Anderson had received a set of textbooks as a gift from Alexander Macmillan after Macmillan had met him during his 1867 travels. In return, Anderson promised he would advertise them to his peers in hopes that “it might have a foreseeable effect...on the sale of [Macmillan] books in this country.”²⁸ Securing Anderson as a patron would earn Macmillan credentials in the higher education market. The University of Rochester was established as a Baptist-sponsored institution, but its establishment coincided with many of the other Land

²⁴ALGPC (16 August 1869): 219.

²⁵ Thomas Nelson sold the Oxford Bible via its American office, see John Dempster, “Thomas Nelson and Sons in the Late Nineteenth Century: A Study in Motivation, Part One”, in *Publishing History* 13, (1983): 46; Macmillan & Co. was appointed the publisher to Oxford 1863.

²⁶ Add.MS 55389, f. 949, from Alexander Macmillan to George Brett, 24 August 1869.

²⁷ Add.MS 54797, f. 10, from George Brett to Macmillan & Co., 16 August, 1869.

²⁸ Ibid.

Grant Universities.²⁹ The explosion of new universities offered opportunities for Macmillan & Co. books to appear on school syllabi.

Despite Anderson's endorsement, he also offered a word of caution. Brett wrote:

He said that the English Publishers have not quite understood the American Market. As in England there are a considerable number of people who will only have the best editions of books published but the great mass of the people are quite satisfied with what you call your popular editions and this second class offers you a far greater field than the lower class in England.³⁰

Anderson's evaluation of British publishers in America was eerily accurate of the Agency's early mindset. As was seen with the Scribner & Co. list, genre and pricing strategy were aimed to attract readers who could afford to spend more money on publications that mainly had an educational aspect. While Anderson appreciated Macmillan & Co.'s texts, he foresaw an issue that affected the Agency's prospects in America: pricing. Brett would soon understand the reality of Anderson's warning.

Brett showed Anderson a cheap edition of John Bright's *Speeches on Questions of Public Policy* (1868) which he sold for \$1.50. Anderson was "pleased with the book – the printing, typography, binding, and general appearance and the price."³¹ Brett reassured his employers, "The general prospect here is all encouraging."³² However, within the next year, Brett's own optimism would be tested by the American trade.

Response from the Trade

When outlining his reasons for opening an agency to William Amery, Alexander Macmillan made note that he was worried about offending established trade relationships.

²⁹ Caroline North, "The Land Grant Universities: The First Centennial," *Marriage and Family Living* 24, no. 2 (May, 1962); Scott Key, "Economics or Education: The Establishment of American Land-Grant Universities," *The Journal of Higher Education* 67, no. 2 (March-April 1996).

³⁰ Add.MS 54797, f. 10, from George E. Brett to Macmillan & Co., 16 August, 1869.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.* Emphasis not original.

Upon Brett's arrival in New York, Macmillan's fears were soon realized. Not all business partners appreciated the logic of opening a branch office. When George Brett went to meet J.B. Lippincott in Philadelphia, the publisher was surprised that Macmillan had opted to take "the lastly straightforward course" to obtaining more business in the US.³³ Brett remarked that he thought his own appearance threatened Lippincott's hold on certain Macmillan texts in the market by creating a new source for buyers.³⁴

D. Van Nostrand found cause to complain when the Agency sold the same book he had ordered from them a year before. Van Nostrand was an American publisher and wholesaler who specialized in scientific, military, and technological works made popular by the Civil War's need for knowledge. He imported books from Europe and published Americans as well. By 1870 he had \$100,000 worth of stock and filled orders from China, Japan, Australia, and South America.³⁵ The earliest surviving evidence of Van Nostrand trading with Macmillan & Co. is from 2 January 1868. Macmillan & Co. accepted the New Yorker's order for copies of a book by Henry Roscoe's *Lessons in Elementary Chemistry* (1866) and Van Nostrand agreed to pay the author a 10% royalty on the retail price of copies sold.³⁶ In March, 250 copies were sent. Then in August, a letter informed Van Nostrand of the Agency and that Brett would visit him and from thereon oversee any transactions.³⁷ Upon meeting Brett, Van Nostrand complained that the Agency also stocked Roscoe's book, creating unfair competition. Alexander Macmillan insisted that when the Roscoe order was placed the Agency was not yet created. The Agency did stock Roscoe's *Chemistry* and other

³³ Add.MS 54797, f. 52, from George E. Brett to Macmillan & Co., 17 May 1870.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Tebbel, *Vol I*, 320.

³⁶ Add.MS 55389, f. 118, from Macmillan & Co. to Van Nostrand, 2 January 1868.

³⁷ Ibid, f. 462, from Macmillan & Co. to Van Nostrand, 19 March 1869; Ibid, f. 936, from Macmillan & Co. to Van Nostrand, 18 August 1869.

such scientific works that Macmillan insisted that he was “urged by very influential American Literary & Scientific men to place” on the market.³⁸

Four months later, Lippincott’s also used the risk of delayed sheets to negotiate more advantageous terms. Lippincott’s agreed to pay £100 to be the authorized reprinter of an unspecified Anthony Trollope novel in December 1869. As an experienced transatlantic businessman, Lippincott’s terms stipulated the exact dates that sheets needed to leave England via steamship to be received on time. If any delay occurred, the sheets must then be immediately sent thereafter.³⁹ Further shipments of the same material increased expenses, shrinking profit margins for Macmillan. Sensing that Americans were placing most of the expenses on British firms, Brett expressed his disapproval. He wrote that American partners would always blame their British counterpart for delays. This tactic easily allowed them “to lay all the blame on the house in England and to refuse accordingly to pay the account when it becomes due.”⁴⁰ Brett felt this to be dishonest and hoped that the presence of the Agency would change this practice. By importing printed sheets, advance proofs and completed books to the Agency, Brett could confirm the date of receipt and verify if shipments were late. Brett hoped that the “special arrangements” for non-repayment would “become fewer and fewer” as the Agency remained.⁴¹ Brett also hoped that the Agency’s presence would prevent unauthorized reprints from making it to the market. The overall goal was to continually beat unauthorized reprinters to the market and at a competitive price, making it financially pointless to reprint Macmillan texts.

Macmillan pressed Brett to continue his work and get the Agency running. However, the Agency became swept up in a protectionist clamp down on imported British editions.

³⁸ Ibid, f. 949, from Alexander Macmillan to George E. Brett, 24 August 1869.

³⁹ Add.MS 54797, f. 28, letter copied by George Brett, from J.B. Lippincott & Co. to Macmillan & Co., 10 December 1869.

⁴⁰ Ibid, f. 5, from George Brett to George Craik, 10 August 1869.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Elizabeth James points out that at the time of Brett's arrival that Americans viewed imported books "as a serious threat to [the] trade."⁴² James points to evidence from the *Literary Gazette*, supported by the United States Bureau of Statistics, that shows the value of imported books being nearly four times as high as exported American editions.⁴³ George Brett entered the American scene at a time when protectionist tariffs were at an all-time high of 25% *ad valorem* and the economy was still recovering. A post-Civil War protectionist clamp-down on imported editions was meant to further help the reprint trade. However, both British exporters and American importers suffered from this action.

Starting on 10 September 1869, George Brett experienced difficulties with the Customs House in New York that threatened to ruin the Agency. Two cases of *Macmillan's Magazine* were taken by Customs House agents on suspicion of being undervalued. Every shipment required a stock list written by the exporting London house, reporting the retail values of the contents. The higher the retail cost, the higher the duty. Undervalued stock incurred less importation duty, therefore defrauding the United States government. Brett explained to the London house that if found guilty, "the Custom House [sic] authorities have the power of compelling the return of the entire shipment and such a course at the very outset of this enterprise would be an irreparable injury."⁴⁴ If true, the allegations threatened to tarnish Macmillan & Co.'s reputation as a law-abiding business partner. Even if untrue, the delay allowed unauthorized reprints to make it to the market before Macmillan.

Brett originally believed that the charges would be dropped as they were false. Regrettably, the situation escalated and the cases were still impounded six months later. It took until 22 March 1870, for the presiding judge, Judge Hoyboom, to assess the shipment.

⁴² James, 172.

⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 188, see footnote 8. The reported value of imports was \$1,607,201 while exports were valued at \$385,850. These numbers are from the *Annual Report of the Deputy Special Commissioner of the Revenue in Charge of the Bureau of Statistics*. (Washington: G.P.O., 1870).

⁴⁴ Add.MS 54797, f. 16, from George E. Brett to Macmillan & Co., 10 September 1869.

Hoyboom lectured Brett on the ramifications of the London house fraudulently undervaluing imported books from Britain. It appears that Macmillan shipped its books at a discounted rate to the purchaser, therefore lowering the price below British retail prices. The declared values therefore lowered importation duties, saving Macmillan money. While Brett argued his case that the declared prices were the retail rates that specific client purchased at, Hoyboom was unmoved, telling Brett, "If...any Bookseller here were to buy his books at those prices he would certainly not be allowed to import them at the same prices but would be compelled to add to them," therefore bringing them up to standard market value.⁴⁵

Hoyboom ultimately ruled that the books were purposefully undervalued and the Agency would be reprimanded. The whole situation provoked Brett to blame the entire American trade. He claimed that the Americans were reacting to the Agency's appearance by going after it, other British agencies, and anyone importing British editions:

The American Publishers and Booksellers who are no doubt the [sic] prime movers in this sudden action of the government wish these English Agencies were all at the bottom of the Sea. Recently I learned that Van Nostrand had had a case in the Custom House a month before he could get it through...Cassell's [sic] agent here is in a similar difficulty.⁴⁶

While Cassell was a British publisher with an agency, Van Nostrand was American. Van Nostrand imported British texts, including books and sheets from Macmillan. Richard Worthington was a wholesaler in Montreal, Canada that started trading importing Macmillan & Co. books. In 1867, he ordered 1400 copies of the *Globe Shakespeare*.⁴⁷ Worthington also experienced difficulties exporting books to the US.

The *Literary Gazette* featured a letter from Worthington on 28 January 1870, detailing his experience as a victim "owing to a conspiracy on the part of certain American publishers and booksellers."⁴⁸ In September of 1869, Worthington sent three cases of British books from

⁴⁵ Add.MS 54797, f. 58, from George Brett to George Craik, 22 March 1870.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Add.MS 54387, f. 299, from Macmillan & Co. to Richard Worthington, 25 June 1867.

⁴⁸ *ALGPC* (28 January 1870): 215-216.

Montreal to Chicago, and a further three to Detroit. Despite Worthington's claims that he overcharged himself on duties, the shipments were seized by the US Customs House in Port Huron for devaluation. The authorities never informed Worthington about the seizure and he only learned of it after customers complained about the missing books. After learning the stock's location, Worthington appeared in person to refute the Customs charges. He was then subjected to a long proceeding where every item was individually checked against the original invoice. The Collector then stated Worthington had done nothing wrong.⁴⁹

After inquiring as to why his goods were held in the first place, Worthington discovered a letter sent by a solicitor of the US Treasury to the Collector of Customs:

Information has been furnished to this office that a Montreal bookseller has been over to England this summer, and made purchases of large quantities of English books, with a view of bringing them over into the United States in fraud of the revenue altogether, or at a fraudulent undervaluation. The party engaged in this is named Worthington, and you are requested to seize any books coming from him.⁵⁰

Whoever provided the information to the Treasury had a clear vendetta against anyone importing British books for the American market. It is also unique that Worthington is specifically mentioned because many foreign publishers tended to visit Britain every summer, as has been seen by J.T. Fields' constant trips. The Treasury letter was dated 11 September 1869 – just one day after Brett reported Macmillan & Co.'s shipments had been seized. The situation becomes concerning because Macmillan, its trade partners in Canada and New York, as well as Cassell's experienced difficulties importing texts. These experiences, alongside Elizabeth James's evidence suggests that the post-Civil War publishing trade instituted a protectionist backlash against imported British books.

Unfortunately for Brett, this coincided with the opening of the Agency. Brett became frustrated:

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

...there is barely a doubt but all of the English agencies are very closely watched indeed. It is abundantly clear that the American Publishers look upon this market as solely their own and if an English Publisher closes in, chooses or dares to come and sell his own books every impediment must be placed in his way – every effort made to crush him.⁵¹

Brett only confirmed that Alexander Macmillan's fear of alienating American business partners and the trade had come true. Hurd & Houghton, Lippincott, and Van Nostrand were either slighted or directly offended in some way by the appearance of Macmillan & Co. books in America, while protectionist tariffs and American economic recovery efforts hampered imports.

Having weathered the storm, the Customs House issue was finally resolved ten months later, on 17 July 1870 with a fine of \$284. After the long battle, Brett felt ever more resolved to make the Agency a success.⁵² The struggles with the American trade shaped Brett's policy and course of action for the Agency. Brett focused on three key aspects of the trade that would thwart the unauthorized reprinting American trade and enable the Agency to control Macmillan texts in the market: timing, pricing, and travelling.

How do you make a branch office successful?

Now that Macmillan & Co. had the opportunity to sell directly to American readers as well as find more publishers and wholesalers, it could exert more control over its titles. English editions could be fed more directly into the market while authorized reprints and printed sheets continued to flow into the United States via trade agreements coordinated by the Agency. While Brett wished to expand these official routes of texts into the country, he also wished to stamp out unauthorized ones. That task was easier said than done. To stem the unauthorized reprints, Brett had to convince the American trade that the Agency should be

⁵¹ Add.MS 54797, f. 58, from George Brett to George Craik, 22 March 1870. At this point in time there were a handful of British agencies in the US, such as Thomas Nelson of Edinburgh, Cassell's, Routledge.

⁵² Ibid, f. 64, from George E. Brett to Macmillan & Co., 17 June 1870.

protected under trade courtesy. Proper delivery timing of whole books, printed sheets, and advance proofs enabled the Agency to get to readers before unauthorized reprints could appear. British retail prices also needed to be reduced to compete with the competition. Lastly, Brett pushed the London office to hire its own traveler. Travelers were men who traversed the country to generate and maintain business in new regions. Macmillan & Co. had its own dedicated traveler in Britain where it was already well known. Brett would argue that a traveler was needed to push the Macmillan brand across a country significantly larger and more spread out.

Both advance proofs and an advertisement were required to secure trade courtesy claims. Brett was at the unique advantage of knowing what the London house was going to produce well in advance of any other American. This should have allowed him to get to the market first, but this was not always the case. Delivery delays could give unauthorized reprinters enough time to obtain copies of texts already released in Britain and reproduce them. Poor timing greatly affected the magazines that Macmillan produced. Despite advertising for trade courtesy, Brett found it hard to continually maintain perfect delivery timing for *Macmillan's Magazine*, *The Practitioner*, and *Nature*.⁵³ Whereas the timing for a book had to be done perfectly once, magazines had to be perfect every week or month. It became "mortifying to find that an intruder can get our Mags sooner than your own Agent and causes surprise and annoyance to our American subscribers."⁵⁴

The firm used the Cunard line, which by the 1860s provided fast and reliable services. Brett examined Macmillan's shipping methods and found that fault lay within how magazines were shipped rather than by whom. Brett decided to copy how his competitors William & Rogers (Rochester, NY) efficiently imported and resold unauthorized Macmillan magazines.

⁵³ *ALGPC* (1 December 1869): 607.

⁵⁴ Add.MS 54797, f. 88, from George E. Brett to Macmillan & Co., 24 September 1870.

According to Brett, William & Rogers' British agent had copies "dispatched immediately on publication in London," taken off the ship in New York and sent to subscribers.⁵⁵ The magazines were packaged and classified as samples, allowing them to bypass the Customs House. Copying the plan, Brett instructed that all magazines be sent two days before British publication.⁵⁶ Packages containing nothing but magazines and valued at no more than \$20 gold could obtain a sample receipt.⁵⁷ The receipt allowed the package to bypass further Customs' inspections upon arrival and go directly to the Agency. With the retail price of *Nature* at 12¢, a total of 165 copies could be sent in a single parcel. Brett estimated that William & Rogers sold 150 copies per issue of the *Magazine* and argued that the Agency could sell this many and more while growing subscription rates. All of this would enable the firm to benefit, whereas if they continued to let William & Rogers sell the *Magazine* unchallenged, they would receive no profits. Slowly, Brett convinced the London house to follow his plan and they challenged the unauthorized imports.

While Brett pushed against unauthorized magazines, he lost when trying to get a book by Ruskin to the market before reprinters. Printed sheets had arrived on 1 July 1870 and were immediately sent to be bound but July 4th celebrations enabled Wiley's, which Brett described as "such a third rate firm," to work through the holiday and beat Macmillan's binder in getting books to the market.⁵⁸ Brett took the opportunity to remind the London house that when competing with Americans, "not a moment must be suffered to be lost" or the Agency would fail in challenging unauthorized books.⁵⁹

Until international copyright appeared, Brett continued to try to beat reprinters and gain trade courtesy. Brett took out advertisements in the *Literary Gazette* for new books and

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid, f. 90, letter from George Brett to George Lillie Craik, 11 October 1870.

⁵⁸ Ibid, f. 80, letter from George Brett to George Lillie Craik, 12 August 1870.

⁵⁹ Ibid, Brett's emphasis.

editions of Macmillan texts. Not only was Macmillan advertising books such as *Juventis Mundi* (1869) and *The Poems and Prose Remains of Arthur Hugh Clough* (1869) for sale to customers, the firm was laying claim to the exclusive right to supply them. Further advertisements added new titles from the *Sunday Library* and *Golden Treasury Series*, as well as a new popular edition of *Tom Brown's School Days* (1858).⁶⁰ These series had originally been sold through Lippincott's and Ticknor & Fields, but the Agency began advertising new titles widely to encourage further wholesalers and publishers to distribute them. If the firms wanted to sell the new titles, they had to be ordered from the Agency.

By 1871, an interesting shift had occurred in the *Literary Gazette*. Rather than placing Macmillan titles within the section of books from Great Britain, they appeared in the section "List of Books Recently Published in the United States."⁶¹ While all the books were manufactured in Britain, they were announced as American titles to the trade and the imprint of London and New York: Macmillan & Co. began appearing in advertisements.

LIST OF BOOKS RECENTLY PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>Abbott. Light. Science for the Young. By Jacob Abbott. 12mo. pp. 313. Illus. N. Y.: <i>Harper & Bros.</i> Cl. \$1 50.</p> <p>Alcott. Little Men: Life at Plumfield with Jo's Boys. By Louisa M. Alcott. 16mo. pp. 376. Illus. Boston: <i>Roberts Bros.</i> Cl. \$1 50.</p> <p>American Annual Cyclopaedia (The), and Register of Important Events of the Year 1870. Vol. 10. Roy. 8vo. pp. iv., 789. N. Y.: <i>D. Appleton & Co.</i> Cl. \$5; shp. \$6.</p> <p>Anderson. The Poet's Bazaar. Pictures of Travel in Germany, Italy, Greece, and the Orient. By Hans Christian Andersen. 12mo. pp. v., 343. N. Y.: <i>Hurd & Houghton.</i> Cl. \$1 75.</p> <p>Annals of Our Time (The): A Diurnal of Events, Social and Political, Home and Foreign, from the Accession of Queen Victoria, June 20, 1837. By Joseph Irving. A New Edition, carefully revised, and brought down to the Peace of Versailles, February 28, 1871. 8vo. pp. xi., 1031. Lond. and N. Y.: <i>Macmillan & Co.</i> Cl. \$6.</p> | <p>Appleton's Hand-Book of American Travel. Northern and Eastern Tour. Including New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and the British Provinces. With Maps, and various Skeleton Tours. 12mo. pp. viii., 282. N. Y.: <i>D. Appleton & Co.</i> Cl. \$2.</p> <p>Apron Strings, and Which Way they Pulled. By Archie Fell. 16mo. pp. 270. N. Y.: <i>Broughton & Wyman.</i> Cl. \$1 25.</p> <p>Barker. Spring Comedies. By Lady Barker. 12mo. pp. viii., 340. Lond. and N. Y.: <i>Macmillan & Co.</i> Cl. \$1 50.</p> <p>Barnard. Gardening for Money. How it was done in Flowers, Strawberries, Vegetables. By Charles Barnard. Cr. 8vo. pp. 345. Boston: <i>Loring.</i> Cl. \$1 50.</p> <p>Belle Level. By T. R. Y., author of "Emily Douglas; or, A Year with the Camerons." 16mo. pp. 342. N. Y.: <i>A. D. F. Randolph.</i> Cl. \$1 25.</p> <p>Benning. Grace Courtney; or, Seeking the Shepherd. By Howe Benning. 16mo. pp. 225. N. Y.: <i>Broughton & Wyman.</i> Cl. \$1 15.</p> |
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American Literary Gazette and Publishers' Circular, 15 June, 1871, 100.

⁶⁰ *ALGPC* (1 October 1869): 360.

⁶¹ The first instance I have found of this shift occurred in *ALGPC* (1 June 1871): 69, entry under "Berkley. The Works of George Berkley."

Announcements for Macmillan texts prior to 1871 had either been made under the British publications page or in conjunction with an American publishing partner. If the decision to place new publications under the American section was Brett's idea, it showed a smart attempt to change the identity of the Agency from foreign to domestic tradesman. If this was a decision on part of the editorial team of the *Literary Gazette*, it was an acceptance of the Agency's existence as an American entity. Either way, perception of the Agency by the trade was changing.

Brett's own perception of the Agency shifted as he negotiated with the London house to change pricing strategies. London set the prices for Brett to follow. As Brett passed more time in the American trade, he realized that the firm could no longer hold onto its British mindset. He had to conform to American business practices or face failure. Retail prices needed to be lowered to compete with unauthorized reprints and terms of trade for wholesalers buying in bulk required steeper discounts. However, without the correct price/discount balance, the Agency would narrow its profit margin until it only lost money.

The issue of retail pricing and terms of trade becomes apparent in the case of the *Globe*, *Golden Treasury*, and *Sunday Library* series, as well as educational texts. Brett pointed out disparities between the British and American prices for the *Globe Series* to the London House. The British price was 3s.6d, and with import duties the exchange rate price would be roughly \$1.10, but the American retail price was set by Macmillan at \$2, or 8s. Brett was confused as to why the American price was so much higher. Higher prices pushed American readers away from the Macmillan edition and towards reprints. Brett argued that the additional cost "seems to be a considerable addition to make to the price to American readers." Brett never openly stated that the price should be lowered, only asking, "Is it not then a little out of the way to make the American public pay 2\$ or 8/- for the same book?"⁶²

⁶² Add.MS 54797, f. 14, from George Brett to Macmillan & Co., 31 August 1869.

Both Lippincott and Scribner's sold *Globe* titles at \$1.75. Relying on American desire for the British original, Brett pushed for a lower price to match the American, drawing consumers away to the Macmillan name. Brett was hoping that British editions and low prices would gain loyal consumers. Over the course of 1869 and 1870, the price of the *Globe* went from \$2 to \$1.50 before settling at \$1.25.⁶³ Lower profit margins were accepted as a way of competing with other editions.

Cuts to educational material prices were also proposed. Brett proclaimed that the "ultimate success of this business" relied upon their texts appearing on university syllabi.⁶⁴ Brett stated that reprinted Macmillan texts were "already introduced in Harvard and other places," including Cornell University.⁶⁵ But British imports were more expensive than the reprints – something President Anderson warned about. Brett mentioned that Roscoe's *Chemistry* faced up against an unauthorized reprint.⁶⁶ Readers looked to alternative books and reprints that offered the same educational information but at a lower price, such as the Roscoe *Chemistry* put out by William Wood & Co., New York, offered at \$1.50.⁶⁷

In anticipation of Craik's and Macmillan's poor reception of proposed cuts, Brett argued, "I am by no means an advocate as you know for making out books too cheap. Seeing as I do, perhaps, more vastly than you can at present realize in England the considerable expense as which this agency is likely to be worked." Although Craik and Macmillan had the final say, Brett was the only one in America who fully understood the whole situation: lower prices attracted more readers and challenged reprinters. To bolster the financial hit of reduced prices, Brett proposed the Agency also sell "other English books besides those which we issue ourselves."⁶⁸ Although the Agency already sold for the Clarendon Press, it could also

⁶³ James, 172.

⁶⁴ Add.MS 54797, f. 42, from George Brett to George Craik and Alexander Macmillan, 13 April 1870.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Add.MS 54797, f. 14, from George Brett to Macmillan & Co., 31 August 1869.

⁶⁷ *ALGPC* (2 August 1869): 205.

⁶⁸ Ibid, f. 42, from George Brett to George Craik and Alexander Macmillan, 13 April 1870.

create business for further British publishers as well. Literature and education works from Williams & Norgate, Watton's, Longman's, and Bell & Daldy were not "properly looked after," opening the Agency to new business representing other firms.⁶⁹ Representing other publishers was common in American where no publisher "confines himself to the sale of his own books alone."⁷⁰ Having an exclusive Agency allowed Macmillan to directly sell its books, but it also offered the ability to make extra money by representing others. For the time being, the London house told Brett to stick to the firm's books before agenting for others.

The Agency also sold books to wholesalers, who were the main vein of distribution in the United States. Publishers and agencies offered reductions to wholesalers to sell more stock. British wholesale discounts differed from American ones.⁷¹ Attempting to use British terms in the American market limited the number of wholesalers willing to work with Brett. The Agency was left with unmovable stock and finances in 1870 were disappointing. Brett proposed a change:

It may be that I am too hasty and look for the harvest before I have barely sown the seed, but however this may be I must admit that the results so far have hardly come up to my expectations. With our *Globe* books which ought by this time have got into large circulation we have done almost nothing and solely, I believe on account of our limiting ourselves to 30 percent [sic] discount a price no one here thinks of paying for similar books.⁷²

Wholesalers turned elsewhere, particularly to Lippincott who offered 36% off retail prices for the *Globe* titles he still had in stock.⁷³ The only wholesalers continuously buying from the agency were Pott & Amery, who got an extra 10% discount for their friendship, giving them in total 40% off. Brett's determination for better terms and conditions for wholesalers was met with some resistance from Craik and Macmillan.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ British wholesalers such as Simpkin, Marshall, where Brett originally worked, were known to buy in bulk at terms of 13 copies for the price of 12, or roughly an 8% discount. See Stephen Colclough, "Distribution," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, Vol. 6, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2010): 243.

⁷² Ibid, f. 44, from George Brett to George Craik, 14 April 1870.

⁷³ Ibid.

While Craik pressed for better terms, he must also have expressed some reservation about shrinking profit margins and possible failure. Brett reassured Craik that he was aware that in Britain steep discounts were often “the chief cause of ruin” for legitimate publishers.⁷⁴ Brett understood concerns over discounts; both British and American publishers had closed after misuse. Lowering trade terms was not taken lightly but it was the only way to match unauthorized reprints or competitive titles when they appeared after the Macmillan & Co. edition. Brett insisted that the new trade terms would both maintain a decent profit margin and increase wholesales. Decreased prices and increased discounts represented a necessary financial strain that Brett took to regain control of Macmillan books within the market.

In May 1870, Brett wrote that the Agency had to “make some movement in the direction of relaxing our terms” for the cheap series if they were to face competition from similar titles. By July 1870, Brett wrote to convince Craik and Alexander Macmillan to approve changes. He argued that everyday there was:

[T]he necessity for our offering some extra discount to the Wholesale Trade.... All the Publishers without a single exception I believe do this and although this is itself no reason why we should adopt the same practice yet now we are established here we must to a considerable extent follow American customs and in doing so it is well to bear in mind that we give our books a chance of being sold in quarters where at present they are all but unknown and unprotected as we are by any Copyright Law[.]⁷⁵

The agency was vulnerable to unauthorized reprinters, in need of better circulation, and was not making the sales needed for economic stability. Macmillan’s policy gave smaller retailers, who did not buy in bulk, the same discount as wholesalers, who did. Offering the same discounts to purchases of 25 books as they did to purchases of 500 was not going to entice wholesalers to buy more. Brett rightly argued that the Agency could not continue to

⁷⁴ Ibid, f. 53, George Brett to George Craik, 17 May 1870.

⁷⁵ Ibid, f. 70, George Brett to George Craik, 13 July 1870.

treat the two equally.⁷⁶ The London house had to let the Agency adopt American terms or it would close.

Brett proposed that standard terms for purchases change for smaller orders to 5% off on 10 copies, and 10% on 25. In Britain, 13 copies were often sold as 12 (8%) or 25 as 24 (4%). Larger orders gained an extra 5% off order of \$250 or more, and 10% on over \$500 on top of the standard 30% discount. Brett followed this proposal six days later with a copied advertisement from the *American Bookseller's Guide*. In it, Harper & Brothers ran special trade sale offers at 25% discount on \$100, 30% on \$500, 33.3% on \$1000, 35% on \$2000, and an extra 5% if paid in cash.⁷⁷ According to Brett, minimal variation existed between Harper's and other publishers' special sales terms. The Agency needed to copy American annual fall sales to clear out extra stock. As for the rest of the year, Brett suggested that the *Globe*, *Golden Treasury*, and *Sunday Library* series, be discounted at 33.3% for 50 copies and 35% for 100 copies when purchased at in bulk.⁷⁸ Brett noted, that day, "Gregg's of Chicago – a first class house – ordered 25 Ruskins" at a price and discount that would protect sales in the case of a reprint being cheaper in the area.⁷⁹ The sale proved that discounts could work in both the Agency's and retailer's favor.

Changes in discount terms for individual and wholesale buyers placed Macmillan on an even field with Americans offering their books. The reductions allowed wholesalers to choose the British original over the American reprint. Spreading the Macmillan name was essential to making sure there was a loyal customer base that would continue to buy the English editions over the cheaper reprints. Brett's suggestions enabled the circulation of Macmillan books at a competitive price. For example, Roscoe's 400-page *Lessons in*

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid, f. 74, George Brett to George Craik, 19 July 1870.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

Elementary Chemistry was advertised for \$1.50 and boasted “numerous illustrations.”⁸⁰ On the same page as the Roscoe advertisement in the *Literary Gazette*, Theodore Bliss & Co. from Philadelphia advertised a 500 page *First Principles of Chemistry*, by Benjamin Sillman, at \$2.00.

Just as Brett was finally getting a hold in the American market, the London house created another problem. The Agency was meant to be the first point of contact for the American market to order Macmillan texts. Brett would then pass along the orders so that he was aware of all authorized arrangements. Nevertheless, throughout the establishment of the Agency, the London house had continued to sell books to wholesalers in numbers that Brett did not agree with.

On 11 October 1870, Brett wrote again to Macmillan disapproving of the company’s decision to sell “Roscoe’s Spectrum Analysis” to Appleton direct from London. Brett wrote:

[P]ermit me to suggest that in selling them Editions such editions should consist of a given number of copies at least 500 – for any smaller number would be more profitable to us if sold through the Agency – and in such a case we should only give them the market for a stated time.⁸¹

By directly selling from London, Macmillan undermined its own Agency’s authority, and weakened Alexander’s reasons for creating the Agency at all. The London office’s actions challenged its own Agency’s authority, creating confusion for the US trade and showing poor business sense. Brett challenged this position, resulting in greater communication about future orders. The confusion was cleared by allowing the London firm to send large orders directly to customers, bypassing the Agency. This was done so that shipping costs were incurred only once, and discounted rates were not further divided by the both the Agency and London.

⁸⁰ *ALGPC* (1 February 1870): 197.

⁸¹ Add.MS 54797, f. 90, George Brett to George Craik, 11 October 1870.

The last large step Brett took to grow Macmillan & Co.'s network in the US and make the Agency successful, was to push for a commercial traveler:

[W]e should, I think, let slip no opportunity of strengthening our position as the more extensive our business the more sharply it can be considered and the greater therefore the chance of success. Our most ardent need is our own Traveler without whose help it is utterly impossible to push our books as they deserve[.]⁸²

Travelers were men paid to take samples of books across the country and take orders from booksellers, universities, and other larger retailers. A traveler gave the Macmillan & Co. network the flexibility to expand across the country via a single person. While the Agency remained fixed in New York, a traveler could cross the country, raising awareness of Macmillan & Co. texts and collecting new clients. Alongside wholesalers, travelers were a key aspect of selling and circulating books in the US.⁸³ Brett saw a traveler as being the next step in advancing the Agency's business.

As part of Pott & Amery's guidance into the American market, their own traveler carried Macmillan books. Starting in 1869, Pott & Amery received an extra 10% discount on any Macmillan orders for this service. Brett pointed out the obvious that the primary goal of Pott & Amery's traveler was to place his company's books first, and Macmillan & Co.'s second.⁸⁴ Brett did not trust that the Agency's interests were truly at heart. He argued that if a traveler was "essential in England where our publishing is comparatively well known," it was "ten times more so" in a country where it was "almost unknown."⁸⁵ Regrettably, Agency finances were too weak to hire anyone in 1870. To support the salary of the proposed traveler, Brett suggested that the Agency sell other British texts. The other British publishing

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ See Rosalind Remer, "Preachers, Peddlers, and Publishers: Philadelphia's Backcountry Book Trade, 1800-1830," *Journal of the Early Republic* 14, no. 4 (Winter 1994); Michael Winship, "Getting the Books Out: Trade Sales, Parcel Sales, and Book Fairs in the Nineteenth-Century United States," in *Getting the Books Out: Papers of the Chicago Conference on the Book in 19th-Century America*, edited by Michael Hackenberg (Washington: The Center for the Book, Library of Congress, 1987), 127.

⁸⁴ Add.MS 54797, f. 39, George Brett to George Craik, 22 March 1870.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

houses would supplement the traveler's salary as he circulated their texts, making it affordable for Macmillan to hire someone.⁸⁶ Brett framed this potential optimistically, hoping that Craik and Alexander would not let the "fears of awakening jealousy of the American trade prevent you taking such a step whenever the opportunity presents itself."⁸⁷ Brett believed so strongly in hiring a traveler that he was willing to challenge his bosses' fear of the American system. However, Macmillan & Co. did not want to sell other British publisher's works until the Agency was more solidly grounded.

Although hiring a Macmillan traveler was out of Brett's control, he tried to make sure that Pott & Amery's traveler had "encouragement" when it came to promoting Macmillan & Co. books.⁸⁸ Despite the coaching, Brett remained unimpressed with Pott & Amery's traveler and was caught poaching a client from him, which he excused somewhat apologetically:

I confess that I never let slip an opportunity of opening an account direct with a customer whenever it has presented itself. Still this has never been done with the knowledge that I was taking away one of their customers...to which they could have said to have the slightest right.⁸⁹

Brett took matters into his own hands and grew the business by whatever means necessary, even if it meant overstepping Pott & Amery. Brett appealed to the logic that the customer was always right, which might mean the customer ordering directly from the Agency, bypassing the traveler. Brett's reservations about Pott & Amery's traveler echoed Alexander Macmillan's motivations for opening the Agency. The Agency was created so that Macmillan & Co. could exercise more control over the state of its books, its business, and its name. By using another publisher's traveler, Macmillan & Co. halted its progression into the market and neglected its mission. Unfortunately, the money still unavailable for a dedicated traveler.

⁸⁶ Ibid, f. 44, George Brett to George Craik, 14 April 1870.

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ Ibid, f. 66, George Brett to George Craik, 2 July 1870.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Eventually, Brett found a solution to the traveler problem. By the summer of 1871, Alexander Macmillan's faith in the Agency and Brett had grown so much that he sent his nephew, Frederick, to New York to train in the American trade. Brett then proposed that the arrangement with Pott & Amery's traveler be terminated. While there was still not enough money to hire a traveler for the entirety of the US, it was possible to find someone to travel to cities in the Midwest and West Coast. The East coast would be handled by those close to home: "Mr. Frederick and I between us take those which be close at hand such as Philadelphia, Boston, New Haven, Rochester, Buffalo, etc."⁹⁰ Brett spied an opportunity to simultaneously show Frederick nearby parts of the US while using him as a traveler, free of charge. Who else could sell a Macmillan book than a Macmillan himself? Brett minimized the cost of hiring a traveler by absorbing the job into two established ones, and hiring a new man for less.

Frederick Macmillan moved to the United States and learned from Brett for five years. He traveled for the company and in doing so, broadened his understanding of how the American book trade functioned. Upon returning to Britain, he would become the main Macmillan of the second generation to interact with the Agency. As for Brett, by 1874 the Agency finally had enough money to hire a full-time traveler.⁹¹ Brett hired his son, George Platt Brett, who would eventually take over the Agency after his father's death, starting the second generation of Bretts in America.

Conclusion

Academics known that British firms did indeed cross the Atlantic and open branch offices in the nineteenth century, but the example of the Agency is the first that shows us how it was done; particularly the business practices and personal relationships involved in doing

⁹⁰ Ibid, f. 110, George Brett to Alexander Macmillan, 26 May 1871.

⁹¹ John Tebbel, *Vol. II*, 354.

so. The Agency is an example of a British firm that successfully transplanted itself, but more research into other offices is needed to show whether Macmillan & Co. was unique in its practices, or shared commonalities with other firms.

Alexander Macmillan's motivations shed light on an alternative way that British publishers started reaching the American market via their own employees instead of American middleman. The choice of George Brett, an English, a Macmillan employee, as head of the Agency reflects the desire to stand clear before readers and tradesmen. Looming behind this decision is Macmillan's emphasis on trust and loyalty to the firm above any other. The need for trust is also reflected in further British houses that sought to open branch offices not only in the US, but throughout Britain as well. Frederick Saunders, Thomas Nelson Jr., and Robert Chambers were direct relatives of their firm's owners, while Walter Low, the son of from Sampson Low, and George Brett were connected to their firms through years of experience in the trade.

Brett's experience highlights what Macmillan anticipated an agent should know: wholesaling, accounting, and general knowledge from a British publishing firm. Therefore, the Agency began its life as a British transplant in American soil. However, conducting the Agency on British business standards was never going to work. Brett quickly found that to succeed in America, the Macmillan & Co. network needed to become American. Brett's actions allow insight into the business methods taken to transition a British firm onto American soil and the transatlantic relationship required to maintain the Agency. Consequentially, the first few years of the Agency saw the adoption of American business standards which included interacting with trade courtesy.

However, trade courtesy was made by Americans for Americans, and the incursion of a British publisher into the system, although tolerated by some publishers, was still challenged by others. As a result, Brett consistently pushed for perfect timing on Macmillan

books to America, allowing him to beat reprinters to the market. Unfortunately, perfect timing was near impossible to achieve with complete accuracy, meaning that unauthorized books beat the Agency to the market, and many times, they even followed the release of Macmillan books when the Agency succeeded. As a result, Brett pushed for lower retail prices that challenged those reprints as well as competed with other titles.

As Brett made headway with trade courtesy, timing, and pricing, he found himself caught up in a post-Civil War economic backlash against imported foreign books. A 25% tariff weighed heavily on imported titles to protect the American trade. Furthermore, Customs Houses seized foreign imports they believed to be undervalued, therefore reducing duties paid to the US government. Brett, Worthington, and both British and American importers and exporters of foreign works were caught up in the clamp-down. As a result, Brett and London became meticulous about the valuations of imports and found ways to avoid the Customs House when possible.

Overall, the Agency completely altered Macmillan & Co.'s transatlantic network. It offered direct contact with American readers, as well as created new branches of wholesalers and authorized reprinters while trying to maintain pre-existing relationships. The addition of a traveler in the form of Frederick Macmillan, and later Brett's own son in 1874, pushed the Macmillan & Co. name and publications across the US, broadening the firm's name and reputation. From a purely fiscal point of view, the Agency was a success. The £1243 worth of stock from the English Book Depot helped get the business moving. The balance sheet for the 1869-1870 year showed £4288 in money received from sales and a further £1262 owed from further accounts. By the end of the 1871 fiscal year, this had grown to £15062.⁹² Over the next two decades profits would only continue to grow as the Macmillan & Co. name become a staple amongst the American trade.

⁹² Add.MS 54878, ff. 1-2. Financial records.

3. Coming of Age: 1890-1891

In 1869, the Agency was an import office of Macmillan & Co. that looked to London for guidance. This identity transformed over the 1870s and 1880s as George Brett and later his son, George Platt (G.P.) Brett, helped Macmillan & Co. forge a new American identity. Steady growth into the educational market brought maintainable prosperity, and the Agency's interaction with trade courtesy and use of low prices helped its fight against unauthorized reprints. Despite this growth, unauthorized reprints still dampened the Agency's economic capability. Luckily, two major changes in 1890 and 1891 transformed the Agency's ability to conduct itself as an economically independent company: American implementation of international copyright, and a generational change in management.

Firstly, the approval of the Chace Act in March 1891 and its enactment on 1 July guaranteed American copyright protection to foreign authors under certain constraints. Previously, no protection at all existed, allowing for the widespread circulation of cheap reprints. However, this protection came at a price. Protection was granted only if a strict timetable for publication in the US and foreign countries was followed. Furthermore, conditions within the Act required the manufacture of books occur in America. As a result, manufacturing and production of books seeking copyright shifted away from Britain. With twenty years of experience and connections with the local market, the Agency found itself in a unique position not only to help Macmillan & Co., but also provide its services to British authors and publishers seeking protection in the US market. The Agency had generated a network strong enough to begin agenting for new British partners, growing the office to an unprecedented size. In short, copyright significantly affected how the Agency did business, who it traded with, and how Macmillan & Co. books reached the American market.

Secondly, a generational shift occurred within the Macmillan and Brett families. Despite knowing each other better, a more formal relationship developed between the younger generation, compared to the more personal one between Alexander Macmillan and George Brett. Alexander's oldest nephew, Frederick Macmillan had been sent to New York at age twenty in 1871 to train under George Brett. Macmillan would have met G.P. Brett, then aged thirteen. Three years later, G.P. Brett would begin working as the traveler for the Agency while Macmillan was still in New York. After Macmillan returned to London with an American bride by his side, G.P. Brett took annual trips to London and Frederick visited New York. Over the years, the two men would have seen each other more often than the previous generation, suggesting that they should have an even friendlier relationship than their elders. However, this was not the case. As G.P. Brett slowly took over the operation of the Agency as his father's health began to fail in the late 1880s, Brett's strong personality and business acumen pushed the Agency to even greater success. Brett used copyright in 1891 to protect those books most vulnerable to unauthorized reprinting. As a result, profits soared and as contemporaries would argue, so did his ego.¹

Likewise, in London, Alexander Macmillan began to hand power over the operation of Macmillan & Co. to his sons and nephews. Frederick Macmillan emerged as the main force behind the transatlantic aspects of the business. Then, the death of the elder Brett in 1890 marked the beginning of a shift in the relation between the London and New York offices.² The maintained connection between the houses had been of the central house and its branch office. All major decisions were made in London with actions carried out by the Bretts in New York. As the success of the Agency grew, it became an economic powerhouse that became "increasingly buoyant" and self-sustainable.³ Alongside this development, G.P.

¹ Harold S. Latham, *My Life in Publishing* (New York: Dutton, 1965), 77-9; G.P. Brett Jr. to Daniel Macmillan, 14 February 1940 (BL Macmillan archive, second part).

² Brett would die June 11, 1890, and Alexander Macmillan would follow 6 years later, 26 June 1896.

³ James, 176.

Brett also emerged as a dominant personality that ran the office as if it were his own company. The financial success of the Agency and Brett's strong personality helped facilitate the development of the New York office into its own independent business in 1891.

The tight time frame of 1890-1891 allows room to deeply analyze the changes that dramatically altered how the New York and London offices did business at a distance. Managerial and corporate structure shifted to accommodate new ideas and new business. The overall Macmillan & Co. network altered as well. The London house continued to use the Agency as its American outpost, but the Agency transformed from an import office into a fully-fledge publisher with a manufacturing network. Furthermore, as generations shifted, Macmillan & Co. reevaluated how it conducted business in the US, continued to develop its American identity, and made changes to how the companies were economically related to one another. Under consideration here is how these two factors altered the way Macmillan & Co. did business on a transatlantic scale. Overall, the realization of Alexander Macmillan's dream of production and international copyright led to the manufacture of Macmillan & Co. books in the US, and increased profits from sales provided by copyright's monopoly.⁴ However, there as the unintended consequence of independence. The force of Brett's leadership and the impending approval of international copyright allowed the Agency to become fully independent in 1891.

The Bretts and the Agency up to 1890

In 1874 George Brett made the New York office a family affair when he hired his son, George Platt Brett, at the age of sixteen as a traveler. The elder Brett may or may not have had it in mind, but sixteen years later, his son would assume the position of manager of the Agency, and a year, later, become the resident controlling partner of an independent

⁴ Macmillan, 230, letter from Alexander Macmillan to Rev. James Fraser, 29 July 1867.

Macmillan & Co. New York.⁵ By 1891, the Bretts' knowledge of the American market alongside their business acumen and drive for success placed the Agency in a position where it could fully exploit the implementation of international copyright. To get to that place, G.P. Brett and his father had transformed the Agency from an importing office to a publisher by expanding its manufacturing network.

G.P. Brett was born in Britain but raised in New York, making him the perfect transatlantic mixture to guide the Agency in its later years. However, sometime after starting as a traveler, he contracted what was probably tuberculosis and left to recover out west.⁶ He bought a ranch with an unknown business partner, and got married. Tragically in 1881, his wife died in childbirth, leaving Brett with an infant daughter, Mary Edith Brett, in California.⁷ Further misfortune struck when Brett's business partner robbed him of all his valuables and was never heard from again.⁸ Soon thereafter, Brett returned to New York resuming his position as traveler as his father's health started failing. He would go on to remarry in 1892 and have more children, of which George Platt Brett Jr. would go on to head the company after his father's death in 1936.

The mixture of fortune and misfortune crafted Brett's personality. Elizabeth James built a profile of Brett's character from sources closest to him.⁹ Harold Latham, an employee, wrote that he was an "autocrat" whose "influence was felt everywhere throughout the building."¹⁰ While Daniel Macmillan remembered him as someone who could be "non-co-operative," "unreasonable," and did not like "to give a reason for his actions."¹¹ However James insists he was shy and austere at heart.¹² In 1885 at age twenty-seven, G.P. Brett

⁵ For sake of consistency in the thesis, the New York office will continue to be called the Agency even after its independence.

⁶ Tebell, *Vol. II*, 354.

⁷ 1900 United States Federal Census, Darien, Fairfield, Connecticut. Roll: 133, 10B.

⁸ Tebell, *Vol. II*, 354.

⁹ James, 176.

¹⁰ Latham, *My Life in Publishing*, 77-9.

¹¹ G.P. Brett Jr. to Daniel Macmillan, 14 February 1940 (BL Macmillan archive, second part).

¹² James, 176.

attended night classes at New York University to improve his business skills.¹³ Brett was clearly a determined man trying to take control of his situation. Particularly, the need for control made him an autocratic figure, but this characteristic reflected Alexander Macmillan's own quest to control his publications in the US. The same desire most likely drove Brett to push for an independent Agency upon his father's death in 1890.

Acting once more as the traveler, G.P. Brett made annual trips between New York and London. Brett's 1886 journey to London created such a favorable impression that Frederick Macmillan requested Brett represent the whole of Macmillan & Co. on a trip to Asia. The firm wanted to expand its overseas markets in Asia and Australia and the Bretts encouraged the Macmillans to use the Agency to do so. George Brett even suggested that the Agency ship books across the US to San Francisco via the newly finished transcontinental railroad. From there, ships left for Australia, New Zealand, and Asia.¹⁴ G.P. Brett told Frederick Macmillan that the firm had to expand into further markets to increase growth and profits.¹⁵

After postponing the trip due to a cholera epidemic in Japan, G.P. Brett left in February of 1887.¹⁶ He spent most of his trip in Australia and New Zealand following up with contacts that Maurice Macmillan had made in 1885. Maurice's trip resulted in creation of the successful Colonial Library series in 1886.¹⁷ Alison Rukavina has investigated the expansion of Macmillan & Co. into the Australian market through the viewpoint of Edward Petherick, who would eventually become an agent-figure. Brett's interactions with the Australian trade, and his knowledge of running an office in a foreign market became valuable to Macmillan & Co. as they expanded. Brett's whole life had circulated around the opening

¹³ Tebell, *Vol. II*, 354.

¹⁴ Alison Rukavina, *The Development of the International Book Trade*, 1, letter on 3 April 1885.

¹⁵ Rukavina, 1.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 2; Add.MS 55843, f. 116.

¹⁷ Rukavina, 97.

of the Agency. He had been uprooted at age eleven to move across the Atlantic, he had watched his father open the office, become assimilated to American life, had entered the Agency as an adolescent, and had turned his life around after misfortunes out West. Brett's skillset involved nearly everything needed to run a foreign branch office. Although an Australian office was not opened until 1904, Brett's opinions were still taken into consideration.¹⁸

After Brett's successful trip to Asia, Frederick Macmillan wanted to remove the possibility of Brett taking his knowledge to another company by increasing his salary of \$2,500 by an extra 5% commission based upon the Agency's yearly sales.¹⁹ Macmillan wrote to the elder Brett, "This is certainly a liberal arrangement to make with a traveler, but we fully appreciate George's enterprise [and] ability and should be sorry to lose him, or to keep him at a lower salary than he would obtain elsewhere."²⁰ G.P. Brett remained at the Agency.

With father and son working together in the late 1880s, the Agency began to shift towards what can be considered a publishing firm rather than an importing office. The exact beginning of this change is difficult to pinpoint because the letters between the Agency and London from 1872-1885 have not survived. When the letters pick back up, the Agency had already begun shifting its business and managerial practices to support itself as an independent company. Previously, the Agency simply filled orders for American customers as well as created new business deals. At some point the Agency began importing stereotype plates and then electrotypes to print its own books. George Brett also continued to authorize American publishers who sought to produce authorized reprints of Macmillan books. However, the Agency started contracting American printers to produce its own sheets from imported plates, rather than selling advance proofs or plates to another publisher, as had been

¹⁸ James, 174; Brett also became a director of the Canadian firm, based in Toronto, upon its foundation in 1905, see Whiteman, *The Early history of the Macmillan Company of Canada*, 69.

¹⁹ Ibid, f. 176, from Frederick Macmillan to G.E. Brett, 25 November 1887.

²⁰ Add.MS 55843, f. 176, from Frederick Macmillan to G.E. Brett, 25 November 1887.

done with Lippincott's and Ticknor & Fields in the 1870s. This action began altering the Agency's position from an importing house, to a publishing firm. The manufacturing shift must have occurred over time as Brett increased his contacts within the trade.

As Brett's knowledge of the local trade expanded, so did the American identity and reputation of Macmillan & Co. By 1890, Macmillan was making a concerted effort to help US sales by altering British books to comply with American tastes. To manufacture the changed books, two sets of electros were cast in London. As Donald Dozer has shown, it was cheaper to cast plates in Britain where the average daily wage for compositors ranged from \$1.36-\$1.40, while in the US it was \$2.64-\$2.81.²¹ Production costs remained low in Britain, making it more cost-efficient for Macmillan to produce two sets and ship one over. One set was made for British audiences, the second was altered for an American edition. The American electro was made for books believed to be best-sellers or steady-sellers, while remaining books were either imported in sheets or reprinted from the British plates. Evidence suggests that the two sets of electros differed mainly in spelling and turns of phrase. James West made the examples of "this country" becoming "England," and "our own" changing to the "English," and the best being "rebels" adjusted to "colonists," referencing the American Revolutionary War.²² In 1891, when speaking about Brett's proof corrections for a book printed in America yet also coming out in Britain, Frederick insisted special attention be paid to language because, "We do not wish to be the means of introducing Websterian monstrosities into English literature."²³ Macmillan was firm that any American manufactured electros destined for the UK adhere to English spelling standards. Each set of electros was then used to print an American or an English edition, marking them as distinct in the eye of

²¹ Dozer, "The Tariff on Books," 86; Board of Trade (Great Britain), *Returns of Wages Published between 1830 and 1886* (London, 1887), 307, 310; Department of Labor *Bulletin*, no. 18 (Washington, 1898), 673, 686.

²² West, 372.

²³ Add.MS 55283, f. 123, from Frederick Macmillan to G.P. Brett, 10 July 1891.

the reader. Macmillan used multiple printers in Britain to produce its works, including Clays, R&R Clark, Clark, and family friends Maclehose.²⁴

However, not all plates were altered. For the 1890 Christmas season, Brett requested electros for *Wild Beasts*, by Samuel W. Baker; *Stories from the Bible*, by Rev. Alfred J. Church; *Edinburgh*, by Margaret Oliphant; and *The Vicar of Wakefield*, illustrated by Hugh Thomson, among others. Two electros of each new book and electros of the Christmas Catalogue were requested immediately. The electros allowed for printing stateside to meet Christmas orders. Even before this, the Agency was already printing in the US from British-made electros. All imprints for these books show that they were printed by R&R Clark in Edinburgh, suggesting that the electros were not altered to reflect the American printing.

Despite casting being cheaper in Britain, manufacturing in the US could reduce some production costs. In 1889, the Agency had *Lectures on Teaching Delivered in the University of Cambridge During the Lent Term, 1880*, by Dr. Joshua Fitch, printed at the press of J.J. Little & Co. in New York.²⁵ There was also the suggestion in 1890 from G.P. Brett that Hales' *Longer English Poems* be printed in New York, which by getting rid of duties and shipping expenses reduced costs of 60¢ down to 27¢ per book, though it is not clear whether this happened.²⁶ Printing locally could reduce some manufacturing costs as well as cut out importation duties that added to the overall production costs of a book. The Agency could save money as well as strengthen ties with local printers and book manufacturers. The Agency would go on to use more printers across the Northeast of the US once copyright came into effect.

The Agency also printed some of the 1890 editions of Lewis Carroll's *The Nursery "Alice,"* with twenty colored illustrations and a colored cover from the English-made

²⁴ Add.MS 55909, New Books and New Editions ledger for 1892 onwards.

²⁵ Add.MS 54800, f. 6, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 24 January 1890.

²⁶ Ibid, f. 18, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 18 February 1890.

stereotype plate, in the US. The aesthetics and quality of the book came under heavy scrutiny. G.P. Brett sent a copy of the American edition to Frederick Macmillan, apologizing that it did not meet his high standards:

I send you by this mail a copy of the American edition of Mr. Carroll's book which I hope will be thought satisfactory, in noting the shortcomings of the manufacture, allowance should, I think, be made for the haste with which the book has been prepared owing to the late arrival of the plates; I trust however that you will kindly point out to me the faults in the manufacture of the book in order that I may bring our work... more nearly equal that of the London house.²⁷

If the Agency was going to print its books in the US, it had to meet the Macmillan & Co. standard of quality to maintain the company's reputation. Alexander Macmillan's original concern about maintaining a high quality of material had been heeded, but consideration had to be made for American tastes. For example, British and American readers had different preferences for page size and binding color. In Britain, the traditional Macmillan & Co. book was bound in light blue cloth with the firm's crest on the cover. Although, American readers disliked how the color faded in their warm, sunny summers, preferring the effect on darker colors such as crimson.²⁸

Concern over aesthetics grew as Brett crafted the American Macmillan identity. Letters ordering finished books began to specifically mention page size, binding color, and even cover design when stipulating order size. For example, in 1890 G.P. Brett believed he could sell 10,000 copies of Kingsley's classic *Westward Ho!* (1855) if the book's cover was "slightly changed" and "edges for this market should trimmed."²⁹ Without such changes he would only order 2,000 copies. Later than year, Brett required exactly 1000 copies trimmed, 100 with uncut edges, and another 500 in quires for a book by Robert Browning;³⁰ and an

²⁷ Ibid, f. 4, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 17 January 1890.

²⁸ James, 175.

²⁹ Add.MS 54800, f. 32, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 14 March 1890.

³⁰ Ibid, f. 124, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 4 November 1890.

edition of Matthew Arnold's poems was requested in claret colored cloth with an extra 100 sheets folded and collated.³¹

The look of the typeset and printed page also became a concern as electros, plates, and proofs crossed the ocean. The London house was unimpressed with the work of John Wilson & Son, at the University Press in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The printer claimed that the English-made plates it had received to print from contained the existence of "supposed imperfections."³² Brett tried to justify that once an American printer fitted the plates and printed a sheet "in a fairly satisfactory manner," all following sheets were done in the same way "without taking into account any possible irregularity of level or thickness that may exist in the plates, which are faults that he does not meet with in plates made on this side."³³ The issue stemmed from American printers claiming their plates were superior and smoother than British ones. This argument was old, as Bostonians Gould, Kendall & Lincoln complained about the same thing to W. & R. Chambers in 1846. The Boston firm informed Chambers that the Edinburgh-made plates for the *Cyclopedia* were "quite difficult to work with" and so large that they had to get them trimmed at a foundry.³⁴ The discrepancy in British versus American-made plates would resolve itself once the Agency started manufacturing electros in the US, however the London house's aesthetic values were considered to maintain the Macmillan image for quality productions.

A result of the Bretts' work was the growth of the Agency's and Macmillan's reputation across North America. Authors sought out the Agency's transatlantic network to sell their books. Dana S. Horton contacted the Agency in 1890 asking if it would sell his small volume, *Silver in Europe*.³⁵ The book was printed in Washington, D.C. by Gibson

³¹ Ibid, f. 4, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 17 January 1890.

³² Ibid, f. 43, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 4 April, 1890.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ In W.&R. Chambers Archive 314 (LL184401847), Gould to Chambers, 31 December 1846.

³⁵ Add.MS 54800, f. 27, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 11 March 1890.

Bros., the Agency's imprint was placed on the title page, and the book was sold on commission without expense to the Agency. From Montreal, Canada, the publisher of Professor John Campbell contacted Brett requesting that Macmillan undertake the US and English sales of his new work.³⁶ The Macmillan reputation had grown to the point where the company was perceived as a transatlantic entity, enabling access to both markets.

By the late 1880s, Macmillan & Co. let the Agency develop its own identity by printing American editions. Printing books stateside demonstrates Macmillan's near complete control over its new titles and the firm's growing roots in the United States. Books changed language as well as aesthetics, just as they had done in the 1850s when Macmillan worked with American partners. This time, Macmillan controlled those changes and had the ability to accept or reject them. In allowing for these differences, Macmillan optimized its appeal to American readers and made itself American. It also enabled the Agency to develop its identity, and the Bretts' confidence in their management of the business.

American Independence 1890: The New Generation

The years 1890 and 1891 also saw changes within the generations of Macmillans and Bretts that ultimately affected how Macmillan & Co. and the Agency related to one another. Two major shifts occurred in 1890: the younger generation came to control the business, and the Agency became an independent partnership. G.P. Brett used his new position as manager in 1890 to help push the Agency to independence, and then maintain that status by using the implementation of international copyright in 1891 to increase economic stability. Brett became more assertive in his letters to Frederick Macmillan, demonstrating the gradual change in relationship between not only the men, but the companies as well.

³⁶ Ibid, f. 32, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 14 March 1890.

Brett began taking on more responsibility in the late 1880s when his father's health started failing. Starting in 1889, nearly all the letters from the Agency to London are written by G.P. Brett and Frederick Macmillan. The decline of the elder generations had begun. The elder Brett travelled to the southern states in hopes of recovering his health while Alexander Macmillan transitioned responsibility of the Agency to his nephew. By May 1890, the elder Brett wrote from North Carolina to Frederick to resign his managerial duties of the Agency, writing, "I fear my case is absolutely beyond help."³⁷ The elder Brett's letters from this time become longer and reminiscent. They reveal an emotional Brett, writing in his old age to someone he used to mentor. In his resignation letter, Brett clearly knew he is dying after having given his life to the Agency. He ended the letter, "However short, or, indeed, however long it may be let me express my heartfelt wishes for your happiness and for the Firm's growing prosperity."³⁸ The last sentence perfectly described George Brett's life. He was a company man, dedicated to the Agency and grateful for the opportunity Alexander Macmillan bestowed upon him. The responding letter from Frederick Macmillan was also filled with warmth and familiarity.³⁹ However, Frederick Macmillan later wrote about the elder Brett, "I fear that he will have to spend the rest of his life as an invalid, but I sincerely hope it may be a longer one than he seems to expect."⁴⁰

As word broke of Brett's retirement, the American *Publishers' Weekly* wrote, "His presence will be missed by all who were permitted to become better acquainted with this genial gentleman."⁴¹ To replace George Brett, the Macmillans immediately chose his son as the new manager of the Agency. In 1890, G.P. Brett was known throughout the American trade as "an intelligent and enterprising bookseller."⁴²

³⁷ Ibid, f. 54, from George Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 1 May 1890.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Add.MS 55843, from Frederick Macmillan to George Brett, 13 May 1890.

⁴⁰ Ibid, f. 269, from Frederick Macmillan to G.P. Brett, 13 May 1890.

⁴¹ *The Publishers' Weekly* (31 May 1890): 727.

⁴² Ibid.

The letters of offer and acceptance of managership between London and New York show the initial changes in the office's relationship. The tone becomes very formal but still holds breaks of familiarity. Plans were also laid for Macmillan to visit New York in autumn of that year to discuss the affairs of the Agency in person. G.P. Brett accepted the offer and wrote:

In accepting your kind offer I may say that my aim will be to act in all matters solely for the best interest of the firm and I trust to merit your continued regard by proving a not unworthy successor to my father in this position.⁴³

In a single sentence, Brett reassured Macmillan that his interests lay solely within the success of the company and that he understood the legacy he assumed.

As for the elder Brett, Macmillan & Co. awarded him a pension that allowed him to live comfortably in his remaining days. Sadly, Brett did not survive long enough to collect it. On 11 June, George Edward Brett died. G.P. Brett wrote Frederick Macmillan:

Although hoping against hope, we have known for some time past that the end must be near, and... nothing was said to my father of his dangerous condition for fear of depressing effect it might have, he realized I think for the past few weeks that his work was done. My father died very quietly after a great deal of suffering lasted over many months, and my mother and sisters feel very deeply the loss to us all.⁴⁴

Brett's passing was marked by obituaries in the *New York Times* on 12 June, and the *Publishers' Weekly* on 14 June. The *Weekly* noted that, "From the first Mr. Brett met with success, which was helped on largely by his sagacity and indefatigable work."⁴⁵ The obituary reflected a great man who lived simply, yet contributed greatly to the history of the transatlantic trade.

G.P. Brett threw himself into the business. He acquired the Power of Attorney to act as the official representative of Macmillan & Co. Then, he turned an eye towards to one

⁴³ Add.MS 54800, f. 69, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 23 May 1890.

⁴⁴ Ibid, f. 76, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 12 June 1890.

⁴⁵ "Obituary Notes: George E. Brett," *The New York Times* (12 June 1890); "Obituary. George Edward Brett," *The Publishers' Weekly* (14 June 1890): 798.

genre: education. Over the late 1870s and 1880s, Macmillan & Co. had built its relationships with American universities, professors, and students, publishing professors from Yale, Harvard, Columbia, and Brown among other institutions. While education had always been a large part of the Agency, Brett began to make it the focus. In March 1890, G.P. Brett wrote to the London office that both he and his father had long believed that “the mainstay of the Agency is its educational connection.”⁴⁶ In Brett’s view, the way forward continued to be the educational sector. Brett pressed for the London house to promptly fill “all orders for text books, as it is to them that I look for the future success of the Agency.”⁴⁷

Text book sales increased on a yearly basis as more titles were picked up in universities. There was still room to place books in high schools across the country, but Brett found it hard to break into the public-school market which relied on influence “and something more,” i.e. bribes, to get books set on curriculums.⁴⁸ Unwilling to pay, Brett focused on placing text books into more universities. By July, he had placed the series of English Classics in Columbia and Vanderbilt. Professor T.T. McLaughlin of Yale wrote a private letter proclaiming the series as “commendable” and lauding the books as “better than the two editions generally used in this country.”⁴⁹ By 1893, the *Literary World* would note that the independent “firm is one of the leading schoolbook houses, carrying a stock of greater scope than many publishers in the United States.”⁵⁰ Education had always been key, but G.P. Brett pushed it beyond the Macmillans’ imaginations.

In the year after George Brett’s death, the letters between New York and London become notably different. One of the last evidences of warmth and familial familiarity between the Macmillans and Bretts is the letter Brett wrote reporting his father’s death.

⁴⁶ Add.MS 54800, f. 40, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 28 March 1890.

⁴⁷ Ibid, f. 8, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 31 January 1890.

⁴⁸ Ibid, f. 29, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 13 March 1890.

⁴⁹ Ibid, f. 88, from T.T. McLaughlin to Messrs. Macmillan & Co., 11 July 1890.

⁵⁰ *The Literary World* 24 (1893): 276.

Brett's letters become more formal and mainly focus on business. Furthermore, the relationship between Brett and the Macmillans begins to read as if co-workers were writing rather than a boss-employee relationship. Brett continually updated the Macmillans on American trends and would "[speak] generally" about his opinions.⁵¹ The Agency had become more successful over time to the point where it could function as its own publishing house.

Frederick Macmillan would tell Brett that "owing to the new American Copyright Bill," it made more business sense to make the Agency financially independent. Copyright would ensure "a prosperous future," especially under Brett's guidance. Macmillan wrote, "I need not say that the steps we are taking is...simple proof of our confidence in your ability [and] discretion."⁵² Finally, on 1 January 1891, after twenty-two years of business together, the Macmillan family finally confirmed its complete faith and competence in G.P. Brett. Two decades of loyalty as a long-distance employee, as the mouthpiece of Macmillan & Co. in New York, had finally resulted in Brett gaining control over business and publishing decisions in the US. Overnight, Brett turned from an employee to a partner.

The official letter notifying Brett of the decision to separate the London and New York houses and "carry them on as distinct businesses" arrived on 1 January 1891.⁵³ Frederick Macmillan wrote to Brett informing him that Macmillan & Co. was offering him an official partnership in the New York House. The houses were to be run as separate financial entities still under the Macmillan & Co. name. The New York company would be divided into forty shares, split among six individuals. Alexander Macmillan, Craik, and Frederick Macmillan held eight shares each, while George A. Macmillan and Maurice Crawford Macmillan held six. Brett purchased the remaining four shares. The London owners held the

⁵¹ Add.MS 54800, f. 8, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 31 January 1890.

⁵² Add.MS 55843, f. 292, from Frederick Macmillan to G.P. Brett, 1 January 1891.

⁵³ Ibid.

majority shares but Brett became managing partner in New York because he was resident there.⁵⁴

Elizabeth James points to evidence that this split might have been at the insistence of Brett.⁵⁵ She points to Brett's obituary in the *Publisher's Circular* in 1936 that suggested he refused to take the role of manager and instead wanted to buy in as a partner to a newly independent American Macmillan office.⁵⁶ I have been unable to find any evidence suggesting this in the surviving letters. However, it is interesting that when the Agency did become independent, the Macmillans proposed the start date for the separate fiscal systems be logged back to June 1890, the month Brett took over management. Although the official decision for independence did not come about until 1 January 1891, Brett had been running his own company since his first day as manager.

Brett finally had the ability to run the business on his own terms so long as the Macmillan shareholders were kept happy by successful revenues. The Macmillans were happy and showed their appreciation by raising Brett's salary to \$3000 per year alongside the 10% stake he held in the company's profits.⁵⁷ The separation created two independent Macmillan & Co.'s that still maintained their transatlantic relationship. Books were published on both sides of the Atlantic. Everything from manuscripts to manufactured imports crossed the ocean. However, the independence allowed by the split enabled Brett to control business decisions without always having to gain Frederick Macmillan's approval. Brett could grow the company in directions the Macmillans might have never intended. The newfound freedom placed Brett on a level field with his partners. Brett's boldness and decisions would propel the company to great success.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ James, 176.

⁵⁶ *Publisher's Weekly* (26 September 1936): 1331-1332.

⁵⁷ James, 176.

Copyright and Manufacturing: The Chace Act of 1891

While the Agency did succeed in gaining the market for most of its books throughout the 1870s and 1880s, it still had to compete with unauthorized reprints for many of its literary titles. As a result, Macmillan & Co. had become accustomed to working with lower profit margins to meet unauthorized reprint prices. Despite the success against reprints, the Agency still lost the market or faced stiff competition mainly on literary works. In August 1890, several of Rudyard Kipling's stories were reprinted by the Lovell Company and misleadingly advertised as "Author's Editions" at 50¢, despite being unauthorized.⁵⁸ Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* was a best-seller that continued to be pirated again and again. The copies of Kingsley mentioned above were in response to "cheap pirated editions" that appeared in 1890. G.P. Brett had to fix the price at 25¢ which was "somewhat higher" than the reprints to remain profitable.⁵⁹ The extra cost was why Brett insisted on an eye-catching aesthetic design to entice readers to pay slightly more for the official Macmillan copy.

Some of the more successful educational works imported by Brett, such as those by the Clarendon Press, were also targeted. Writing in February 1890, G.P. Brett reminded Frederick Macmillan that timing remained essential. Referring to books from the Clarendon Press, Brett wrote:

It is extremely desirable that important books should be brought out in this country simultaneously with their appearance in England, not only for the advantage resulting to the Agency, but also for the increased sale that can be obtained for this book in this way.⁶⁰

Increased sales were obtainable by being the only publisher in the market before unauthorized reprints appeared. By the 1890s, the Agency had been able to set up a delivery schedule that allowed most Macmillan books to reach the markets simultaneously. This

⁵⁸ Add.MS 54800, f. 102, from G.P Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 8 August 1890.

⁵⁹ Ibid, f. 32, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 14 March 1890.

⁶⁰ Ibid, f. 16, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 15 February 1890.

required exact skill as the number of titles increased on a yearly basis. Unfortunately, timing did not always work. Even when Macmillan did make it to the market first, unauthorized reprints still appeared with cheaper prices. For example, the Agency sold 2000 copies of Alfred. R. Wallace's *Darwinism* in 1889 before a half-price reprint appeared on the market, threatening further sales.⁶¹ Despite the challenges, Macmillan & Co. managed to make it to the market first and keep prices low enough to still turn a profit, although "the constant reprints tend to reduce the prices and profits...to a minimum."⁶²

International copyright remained the only guarantee of complete protection from unauthorized reprints. As Macmillan & Co.'s transatlantic business grew, Alexander Macmillan became an even greater supporter of international copyright. *Macmillan's Magazine* ran a long letter two months before the Agency opened in 1869 that supported an Anglo-American agreement.⁶³ The constant theme in the article, and one that Macmillan supported publicly, was that of the plight of the author. Macmillan & Co. tried to support its authors by arranging a 10% royalty on American sales whenever possible. Alexander Macmillan's personal views on copyright are evident in his testimony to the Royal Commission on Copyright in May 1876. Macmillan's answers to questions emphasized that British protection should be extended to every book, no matter where it was published. He stated, "I would protect any man in his possessions, whether he was a foreigner or an Englishman."⁶⁴

The Change for legal support came in 1887, when Senator Jonathan Chace from Rhode Island proposed a new copyright bill that would give foreigners protection in the

⁶¹ Ibid, f. 8, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 31 January 1890.

⁶² Ibid, f. 40, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 28 March 1890.

⁶³ "International Copyright between Great Britain and America: A letter to Charles Eliot Norton, Esq," *Macmillan's Magazine* (June 1869): 89.

⁶⁴ *The Royal Commission for Copyright Law* (12 May 1876): 18.

United States. The *British Publishers' Circular* reported that the bill “created only a slight flutter of excitement” within the British trade:

Only a few persons in this country can have cause to regret its failure, for it confers no benefit whatever upon the majority of English authors, while to those who are engaged in the practical work of book production in this country it is absolutely antagonistic.⁶⁵

The Act ultimately revealed itself as an American protectionist policy for two main reasons: the manufacturing clause, and the strict publication schedule required for copyright deposit. These two clauses written into the bill disenfranchised new British authors and publishers that lacked the proper connections within the United States to meet both requirements. The *Circular* found fault with the legislation because it could harm British book manufacturers and only benefit famous authors whose name recognition secured transatlantic publishing deals. The Chace Act also did nothing to help British publishers seeking to export their books.

To secure copyright in both Britain and the US, a strict publishing time table was necessary. Simon Nowell-Smith best describes the complicated sequence:

(1) deposit of title-page in Washington; (2) publication of book in Britain; (3) American publication, and deposit of copies within ten days; (4) deposit in the British Museum within a month of (2); with (5) optional registration at Stationers' Hall at any time after (2) if the British publisher sought to maintain his rights in the courts. (You could not register in Britain before publication, because copyright was only brought into existence by publication.)⁶⁶

The Chace Act required that the deposit in Washington happen “on or before the day of publication in this or any foreign country.”⁶⁷ The tight schedule required having an existing American trade network agent that could coordinate everything with perfect precision. Many British publishers lacked such a network.

⁶⁵ “Literary Intelligence,” *Publishers' Circular* (16 April 1888): 398.

⁶⁶ Nowell-Smith, *International Copyright Law*, 65.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

The manufacturing clause proved to be another protectionist move by Congress. As seen with the 25% importation duty on books, Congress protected the domestic book industry by discouraging foreign production. If international copyright were approved, American publishers could produce cheaply abroad, killing domestic manufacturing jobs. Proposed legislation in the 1850s stoked these fears, as it would have banned reprinting, allowing British imports to “flood the American market, jeopardizing the employment and security of thousands of native artisans.”⁶⁸ These fears were raised once again, when Senator Chace proposed the new bill. As a compromise, the Act imposed a manufacturing clause that required the production of copyrighted books on US soil. Specifically, the typesetting and printing had to be done by American workers. Meredith McGill, argues that the action of resetting type represented an American re-origination of text.⁶⁹ Changes made by regional publishers to content connected with local tastes. The reprinting of the text rebranded it as American as well as saved domestic jobs.

British reaction to the manufacturing clause was one of concern. A deputy of the Printing and Allied Trades Section of the London Chamber of Commerce argued to the Board of Trade that “the bill would transplant the business of manufacturing books from the United Kingdom to the United States,” possibly damaging the domestic industry.⁷⁰ Frederick Macmillan also saw the potential harm to British manufacturers:

It would put the entire manufacture of books for the English-speaking world in [American] hands. They argue that, as a book could only be copyright in American on condition that it was printed there, while the same rule does not apply in England, it would be easy for them to purchase the entire right of producing an English book – to print it in America so as to obtain American copyright, and to ship over a certain number of copies to England (where there is no import duty) in order to supply the English market.⁷¹

Macmillan also approached the issue from the point of view of the author:

⁶⁸ Barnes, 237.

⁶⁹ McGill, 93-95.

⁷⁰ Seville, 236.

⁷¹ Frederick Macmillan quoted by Simon Nowell-Smith, *International Copyright Law*, 69.

The real objections to the ‘Chace bill’ are (1) that it would lead to a great waste of money, as many authors would be tempted to go to the expense of having their books reprinted in the United States in order to secure an American copyright that might often turn out to be worthless; (2) authors might sometimes be driven to accept inadequate terms from American publishers rather than risk the loss of the American copyright altogether; and (3) in many instances (particularly in the case of first books by unknown writers) the copyright which might afterwards turn out to be valuable would be lost because an author without means of his own had been unable to find an American publisher prepared to risk the money necessary for a reprint.⁷²

Frederick Macmillan and G.P. Brett were skeptical about the Chace Act becoming law until March 1890 when Brett wrote he had “hope” it would pass Congress because it would “change the outlook” regarding Macmillan books in the US.⁷³ Even though the law had drawbacks, the newly independent New York office had twenty years of experience in the market and the network needed to manufacture stateside – something other British firms noticed.

By 1890, the Agency had already been acting as the informal American agent for Bell & Sons, originally Bell & Daldy, a British publisher that produced popular educational material, of which the Bohn Library series was favored among Americans.⁷⁴ With the introduction of international copyright, Bell & Sons entered into a formal, contracted partnership with Macmillan & Co. on 8 September 1891 that made it the sole supplier of the Bohn Libraries and other miscellaneous publications in the United States.⁷⁵ Terms of the agreement stipulated that Macmillan & Co. would pay a 10% royalty to Bell & Sons, and presumably the authors, based upon retail prices. The firms would consult on what books it was advisable for the Agency to take out copyright in the US on behalf of Bell & Sons. The firms would split profits or losses. However, Bell & Sons reserved the right to terminate the five-year partnership after the second year if the overall earnings did not equal or better their

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Add.MS 54800, f. 40, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 28 March 1890.

⁷⁴ Reading University MS 1640/285/69, letter from George P. Brett to Messrs. George Bell House, 26 January 1885.

⁷⁵ Ibid, f. 174, copy of a Memorandum Agreement between George Bell & Sons and Macmillan and Co.

past business in America. Bell's business dealings were estimated at £4,500 a year, while the 1891 Macmillan & Co. total sales were \$423,000, or roughly, £85,000.⁷⁶

Further British firms used the New York office for its American network. By 1895, the letterhead on the Agency's paperwork stated they were the agents for works issued by the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge (England), Columbia University (New York), Messrs. George Bell & Sons, Bohn Libraries, Messrs. A. & C. Black, and Whittaker & Co.⁷⁷ Three university presses tied in nicely with Macmillan's higher education emphasis, while the Bohn Libraries targeted a wide readership with their easily accessible language. Whittaker & Co. also created a set of educational primers but were also known for their Popular Library. Whittaker, as well as A. & C. Black had good lists of literary titles. Whittaker published Sir Walter Scott's last novel before Black bought the rights to the *Waverly* series in 1851. Not only was Macmillan & Co. producing its own quality educational and literary material, but by 1891 it was also become the prime location for American access to the canonical authors its partners published.

The Chace Act went into effect 1 July 1891. Macmillan & Co. immediately listed titles. The question now becomes: what of its own titles did the firm copyright? Due to the strict timing issues and manufacturing clause, Macmillan decided against copyrighting every new title. Instead, the Agency opted to copyright books it believed would be best-sellers and steady-sellers. These books would hopefully bring in the most money for Macmillan over the long-term. Using US Copyright registrations and Macmillan's bibliographic catalogue it is possible to roughly reconstruct how many titles out of the overall number produced in a year by Macmillan, went on to receive American copyright. I argue that the Dewey Decimal

⁷⁶ Ibid; Add.MS 54878, f. 26.

⁷⁷ See any of the letterhead designs from 1895 in Add.MS 54803.

classifications reveal that overall, Macmillan chose to focus on copyrighting educational and literary titles to protect their most profitable books.

Using the *Catalogue of Title-Entries of Books and Other Articles entered in the Office of the Librarian of Congress*, I compiled a list of titles alongside authors and genres that Macmillan & Co. reported for copyright from 1891-1894. No complete list of company titles exists after 1890 when the last known number of titles produced in a year was 169. A rough estimate can be calculated of how many books out of all titles produced were registered for American copyright. 1891 has not been calculated due to copyright being in effect for only half the year. Using 169 as the base number for Macmillan's 1892-1894 publications, we can estimate that roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of titles were registered for US copyright. These percentages represent the number of overall books that Macmillan thought it would gain more profit on over the years from American copyright. These numbers do not represent how many Macmillan titles were going over to the US overall as no complete New York stock list exists. However, the number was probably higher because the firm still used the US as a way of dumping extra British editions. Furthermore, the small markets on some specialized educational books meant that reprinters were not tempted by certain titles. Unfortunately, there is no other data on any other British publisher and their percentage of copyrighted titles to compare this information. Further research would shed significant light on how British publishers used copyright and what books they thought were worth the hassle of the Chace Act's provisions.

Of these copyrighted titles, it is possible to break them down by Dewey Decimal category according to their classification within the Library of Congress. The titles reveal that Macmillan was mainly copyrighting educational and literary pursuits (see Table 3). Although the Agency mainly projected itself into the educational market, it is not surprising that half the copyrighted titles are works of literature. Macmillan & Co.'s literary works faced

“constant reprints” which reduced “the prices and profits on these [books] to a minimum.”⁷⁸

Macmillan & Co. lost money on its famous authors when unauthorized reprints sold thousands to hundreds of thousands of books. Copyright made Macmillan the sole supplier of Kipling, Tennyson, and James among its other literary authors.⁷⁹

Table 3 Macmillan & Co. titles copyrighted from 1891-1894, separated by Dewey Decimal classification⁸⁰

Year	000s	100s	200s	300s	400s	500s	600s	700s	800s	900s	Total
1891	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	8	1	11
1892	0	4	2	1	3	5	2	1	24	3	45
1893	2	4	2	3	5	11	4	0	54	2	87
1894	12	0	2	3	6	12	3	2	27	8	75
Total	14	8	7	7	14	29	9	3	113	14	218

The remaining half of titles is scattered across the genres. However, nearly all other classifications outside of the 800s had the potential to be sold as educational material. Those titles included the *Text Book of Physiology* (1891), by Michael Foster; *The Dialogues of Plato* (1892), translated by Benjamin Jowett; and *The American Commonwealth, 3rd ed.* (1893), by James Bryce. Educational works brought in a steady stream of money and were used widely. The ability to protect books read by a potential readership of tens of millions of readers could significantly boost sales and profits. It made business sense to copyright best- and steady-selling books that were most likely to be illegally reprinted.

The greatest change copyright brought to the New York office was it finalized its transformation from an import office to a publisher with a manufacturing network. New York already printed texts but had to complete the entire manufacturing process in the US. Brett was confident in his ability to produce books, but he stressed that “more attention must be

⁷⁸ Add.MS 54800, f. 40, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 28 March 1890.

⁷⁹ Copyrighted titles include, Kipling’s *Life’s Handicap* (1891), Tennyson’s *The Silent Voices* (1892), and James’s *Lessons of the Master* (1892).

⁸⁰ This information comes from the *Catalogue of Title-Entries of Books and Other Articles entered in the Office of the Librarian of Congress*. The catalogues started July 1, 1891 when the Chace Act went into effect.

paid to book manufacture than ever before.”⁸¹ The first work suggested for copyright was a new edition of Foster’s *Physiology* (1891), a large 12mo book that cost £180 in Britain for composition and casting. Macmillan lamented, “I am [sure] it will be much more costly in America,” and set Brett to look for estimates.⁸² No matter the price, Frederick Macmillan stressed that American production value had to meet the British standards already used:

You must not allow considerations of price to induce you to put up with inferior work – we cannot have any railroading of books through the pen for the sake of cheapness. In this country we have always employed the best printers we could find and have paid the highest price for their work for the sake of getting the best quality. We have found this policy successful [and] we do not wish to follow any other in the US.⁸³

Macmillan & Co. had a reputation for both fine written and physical material. The London house would continue to exert control over its publications so that it could maintain its reputation, especially with the Macmillan name on the title page. Control of the process was key. Brett looked around for paper suppliers, typesetters, and printers on the eastern seaboard. Two printers were mainly used for copyrighted material. Robert Drummond, both electrotyper and printer in New York, produced multiple works such as Rudyard Kipling’s *Life’s Handicap* (1891), and W. Clark Russell’s *A Strange Elopement* (1892). The Agency also relied on Boston’s typesetter J.B. Cushing & Co. and printer Berwick & Smith. Examples of their work include Henry James’s *Lessons of the Master* (1891), and his, *The Real Thing and Other Tales* (1893), as well as *Marcella*, by Mrs. Humphrey Ward (1894).

The history of Bryce’s *The American Commonwealth* 3rd ed. demonstrates the issues of unauthorized reprints and then illegal piracy the Agency faced when seeking copyright in the US. After its publication in 1888, *Commonwealth* was picked up as a textbook in the United States. As Bryce was British, introduction and notes for new editions were authored by Americans which allowed copyright for those sections. However, Bryce’s portion of text

⁸¹ Add.MS 54800, f. 145, from G.P. Brett to Frederick Macmillan, 5 December 1890.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Add.MS 55283, f. 43, from Frederick Macmillan to G.P. Brett, 4 March 1891.

was eligible for reprinting. Brett reported that reprints had gone after the book. On March 25, Macmillan telegraphed back announcing an immediate shipment of 350 books followed by another 5000 at the press to flood the market with their edition. Macmillan also announced that they would fight the reprints and suggested Brett apply for an injunction based on already copyrighted chapters.⁸⁴ The Agency flooded the market with its *Commonwealth*, and Brett gained permission to lower the price of the book to \$2.50, matching reprints. Macmillan wrote back:

It is of course unsatisfactory to lose money by the sale of 10000 of an important book, but we feel very strongly that the right course to pursue is to make it unprofitable to pirate our books in every instance as it occurs.⁸⁵

Here, Macmillan echoes George Brett's sentiments from 1870 as he insisted on cutting prices to dissuade reprinters from going after Macmillan books.⁸⁶ Clearly, reprints remained an issue that complete copyright could fix.

As soon as the Chace Act was approved, Bryce confirmed he would bring out an entirely revised edition with new chapters for the express purpose of obtaining American copyright. John Wilson & Son in Cambridge, Drummond in New York, and another publisher named Cushing were all consulted for estimated costs and sent printed examples of work for aesthetic purposes. Macmillan suggested a \$5 or \$6 retail price, with a college edition around \$3.⁸⁷ Brett and Macmillan negotiated price until they settled upon \$3.50 retail. The book underwent two slow years of revisions. *The American Commonwealth*, 3rd ed. Vol. 1 was registered for copyright and released in March 1893. Volume 2 appeared the following year.

Copyright also brought about unintended consequences. Authors were aware of the increased profits copyright could bring. Frederick Macmillan faced letters from authors

⁸⁴ Ibid, f. 52, from Frederick Macmillan to G.P. Brett, 25 March 1891.

⁸⁵ Ibid, f. 58, from Frederick Macmillan to G.P. Brett, 8 April 1891.

⁸⁶ Add.MS 54797, f. 42, from George Brett to Macmillan & Co., 13 March 1870.

⁸⁷ Add.MS 54283, f. 73, from Frederick Macmillan to G.P. Brett, 1 May 1891.

demanding higher royalty rates. The house offered a standard 10% rate, but Macmillan worried that English authors would “squeeze publishers” into 15% deals.⁸⁸ Famous authors were sometimes allowed up to 15%, but this was reserved for the likes of Tennyson. When Bryce requested a 20% royalty on the new *Commonwealth* edition, Macmillan tried to negotiate the price down, however no official number remains. The Agency maintained the baseline 10% royalty. No matter the percentage, authors received more money from increased copyright sales.

Authors also pressed for new editions to gain copyright. The Clarendon Press reached out to the Agency for printing estimates as Oxford professors were “rather anxious” about securing copyright on past, present, and future books.⁸⁹ The Agency would go on to copyright new titles and new editions of past works to try and protect as many of its works as possible. To celebrate the passage of the Chace Act, Mrs. Humphrey Ward was given £7,000 advance royalty for her new book, *David Grieve*.⁹⁰ While the Agency would later bemoan having to pay the large amount of money, it signaled a new beginning: the independent Agency had the profits and the economic capability to thrive.

Financially, copyright was a success for the Agency. The amount of sales increased by \$92,000 a year after copyright protection was introduced. Royalties to authors, which for 1890 was only \$95, jumped to over \$13,000 by 1897.⁹¹ The extra money pushed the Agency to financial success that rivaled the London office. Copyright protection also enabled the Agency to do so much more business as agents for foreign publishers as well as increase its profits. Copyright pushed the Agency to broaden its manufacturing connections, adding to its already established network among the trade. As a result, the newly independent office transformed into a full-fledged publishing company that had the compete foundation to

⁸⁸ Ibid, f. 15, from Frederick Macmillan to G.P. Brett, 10 December 1890.

⁸⁹ Ibid, f. 51, from Frederick Macmillan to G.P. Brett, 20 March 1891.

⁹⁰ Nowell-Smith, 76; James, 176.

⁹¹ Add.MS 54878, f. 17, 26, 27, 40, 57, 67, 112.

support itself in America. Copyright protection completely transformed the Agency and how it operated. G.P. Brett certainly realized this and would use it to his advantage as he rose to the position of Manager. The Agency had succeeded in its original goal set out by Alexander Macmillan: it had completely protected and controlled Macmillan & Co. books and the company's reputation in America.

Conclusion

The generational handover and enactment of international copyright completely changed how Macmillan & Co. operated its transatlantic trade. The handover of power to G.P. Brett and Frederick Macmillan transitioned the relationship of the Agency and the London house towards an equal footing. Originally, the Agency had followed London's commands, offering on-the-ground advice that was usually heeded. Brett's elevation to managing partner in New York allowed him greater control over what was published so long as he kept the Macmillan share-holders happy. This transition from employee to partner demonstrates alterations to businesses on an international level. The change in power-dynamics between London and New York is certainly reflected in the personal letters between Brett and Macmillan, giving an example of how transatlantic promotions and changes in structure altered professional and personal relationships.

The implementation of the Chace Act only helped the Agency solidify its economic prosperity as an independent office. Robert Spoo suggests that the success of the Chace Act needs to be evaluated against that of trade courtesy to fully understand the changes it made within the book industry.⁹² For the specific case of Macmillan & Co., international copyright made a huge difference to the Agency's network. Although the Agency had connections with printers in the US, the manufacturing clause forced it to broaden its network to include all

⁹² See the closing arguments in Spoo, *Without Copyrights*.

aspects of manufacturing. Consequentially, the office became a full-fledge publisher capable of producing books in the US without assistance from the British trade. The Chace Act also allowed the Agency a monopoly on new books and editions that would have originally drawn unauthorized reprints. The Agency immediately copyrighted British works of literature and education in 1891. So far as Spoo's theory is concerned, the Chace Act was incredibly successful in transforming Macmillan & Co.'s business.

The example of Macmillan & Co.'s interaction with the Chace Act provides a completely unlooked at understanding of how British firms used changes in American law to their advantage. Macmillan & Co. was ahead of so many publishers on both sides of the Atlantic when it comes to being considered a truly international house. The firm had connections with both American and British typesetters, paper suppliers, printers, binders, wholesalers, and booksellers among other members of the trade. Not only does our understanding of Macmillan and the Agency's operations help us understand the evolution of transatlantic publishing as a business, but it also broadens our knowledge of transnational boundaries.

While it has been easy to show that copyright changed Macmillan & Co.'s business, more research is needed to understand the ramifications of the Chace Act as a whole on British publishers operating in America. However, overall, Macmillan & Co.'s transatlantic trade gives a glimpse to an understudied part of the history of the book. The firm's transnational connections enabled it to start in Britain, open an office in New York, and steadily create identities unique to national markets.

Conclusion

The success of the New York office provided Macmillan & Co. with its first international branch. George Brett, George Platt Brett, Alexander Macmillan, and Frederick Macmillan learned from the hardships, hurdles, and eventual triumphs the Agency encountered from 1869 onwards. In a wider context, the history of the Agency demonstrates the relationships, business decisions, and networks required for the successful entry of a business into a foreign market. The Macmillan archives finally allow an example of a British firm's operations on American soil. It offers a detailed example of the reasons behind the move, details of how the transplantation occurred, succeeded, and then how to repeat the process in other markets. As shown here, Macmillan used domestic partners until it became more business savvy to employ a direct agent and open an office.

Within the context of the Macmillan & Co. history alone, the Agency was the precursor to further offices across the empire. The knowledge needed to open a world-wide network of agencies was learned via the New York office. Prosperity in the US proved that Macmillan could succeed in India, Australia, and Canada, where there were varying established legal protection within the empire.

The Agency was a successful experiment that proved Macmillan & Co. could transplant itself into one of the most difficult markets. American trade courtesy and the US itself was outside the laws that governed the British empire. The open hostility and downright piracy of Macmillan books made the US in a way the most financially dangerous market to break into, yet also one that posted the most financial success if approached appropriately. If Macmillan thrived in New York then it could go anywhere in the English-speaking world –

and it did. After the independence of the New York office in 1891, Macmillan & Co. opened further offices or contracted agents in Australia (1895), India (1901) and Canada (1905).¹

Overall, Macmillan & Co. developed a system of introducing branch offices into foreign markets based upon the experience of opening the American network. First, Macmillan & Co. used domestic partners to introduce texts and gain a basic understanding of how the local trade functioned. Then, a Macmillan employee was hired or sent to work specifically for the business in that market. A branch office was opened for importing purposes. The office and agent adapted Macmillan practices to the local trade in order to build its reputation and stability. In doing so, Macmillan maintained its reputation for quality material but became a part of the local culture.

Macmillan & Co. survived in New York because of its process of gradual transition into the market. Macmillan slowly and cautiously waded into the American market by laying foundational roots with locals before setting up its own shop. The Agency began as an import office cautious of importing titles already sold in the United States. However, transgressions did occur with Van Nostrand and others. Despite this, Macmillan & Co. sought to work alongside American partners within the realm of trade courtesy. This calculated process that began in the 1850s and lasted through to 1891 and the Chace Act allowed Macmillan & Co. the time it needed to ingrain itself in American culture and trade. In direct contrast, Saunders & Otley rushed in to defend their books, antagonizing locals as the firm worked against domestic publishers.

This study has sought to understand the relationships involved in conducting business at a distance, in a new market, and within a trade system that frowned upon foreigners. Prior

¹ The first text books for Indian schools were produced in 1875 and shipped over, while the Colonial Library began in 1886, and the Bombay branch opened in 1901. In 1895 the first Australian representative was employed. In 1906 the Macmillan Company of Canada was formed. See, Chatterjee, "A History of the trade to South Asia of Macmillan & Co. and the Oxford University Press, 1875-1900;" Rukavina, *The Development of the International Book Trade*; and Panofsky, *The Literary Legacy of Macmillan Company of Canada*; and Whiteman, "The Early History of the Macmillan Company of Canada."

to 1869, Alexander Macmillan used relationships with various American wholesalers and publishers to establish a network that placed his books in the hands of American readers. These relationships required trust and understanding throughout social and business networks. All examples of transatlantic communities and businesses were based upon a complete faith that a business partner on one side of the Atlantic would act out of the best interests for the other. A basis of trust was inherent in these relationships. To begin with, Alexander Macmillan had this trust with his American counterparts, but the Civil War and the ensuing protectionist economic policies challenged existing relationships. After visiting the United States, Macmillan realized that for his business to flourish in the largest English-speaking readership, he needed direct access.

Driving the way in which Alexander Macmillan opened a US office was the desire to control the reputation and image of his firm. To do so, Macmillan wanted complete control over how his books appeared in the market. This included their prices, aesthetics, presentation, and so much more. Alexander Macmillan's personal and professional relationship with J.T. Fields demonstrates the inner workings of a transatlantic relationship. This warm relationship saw the sharing of articles between the *Atlantic* and *Macmillan's Magazine*, from their inception. Despite these relationships, Macmillan believed it was in the best interest of his company to access the market directly. He seems to have been driven by the desire to stand clearly before the American public without the Macmillan name taking on the reputations of other American publishers. W.&R. Chambers faced a strikingly similar situation in the 1850s when the possibility of a branch office presented itself. Both firms were started by Scottish brothers, both with an educational slant on their publications, and both interested in broadening their American business venture. Overall, Chambers tied his reasoning for not opening an office to strong family ties to Britain and he could not spare any relation in America. In contrast, Macmillan decided to forgo family relationships and opened

the office under an employee. Furthermore, the use of a British employee as the official agent rather than an American partner placed emphasis on loyalty over local knowledge. Loyalty was innate while local knowledge was learned.

The opening of the Agency in 1869 commenced a transformation of Macmillan & Co.'s transatlantic trade network that continued over the second half of the century. Brett's immediate presence created a new route for Macmillan books to reach the market. While maintaining relationships with American publishers for authorized editions and sheets, the Agency became the source for Macmillan & Co. books in the US. Brett had to weather anger from partners and protectionist economic policies as he fought to control the Macmillan name. Brett's letters give a direct perspective as to what British publishers faced on American soil. While Robert Spoo explores the history of trade courtesy during the nineteenth century, he does so from the perspective of the American trade. No one before has conducted an in-depth study on how British publishers interacted with trade courtesy themselves. The Agency originally encountered a reluctance by the American trade to admit Brett into its full ranks. While there was help from business partners such as Ticknor & Fields, Brett faced disagreement from Lippincott's, Hurd & Houghton, and Van Nostrand at the appearance of the Agency. It was not just enough to be operating on American soil to gain access to trade courtesy: Macmillan & Co. had to transform its practices and create its own American identity. With permission from London, Brett altered terms of trade and retail prices to fit American expectation while delivery schedules helped beat unauthorized reprints to the market. Slowly but surely, Brett expanded his network of wholesalers, publishers, booksellers, and customers, spreading the Macmillan & Co. reputation across the United States. The Agency becomes an example of altering business practices to fit into a foreign market, yet still maintaining British standards of production and integrity, and conducting that business at a distance.

Changes in international copyright law, with the implementation of the Chace Act in 1891, saw a gradual shift of the Agency from an importation business to a full-fledged, manufacturing publisher in the US. This transformation was pushed by G.P. Brett during the late 1880s and early 1890s. Brett's work expanding into the educational sector of the market created a sound base of profits for the business. With the implementation of the Chace Act, the Agency used its unique position as a British firm in New York to act as agents for British publishers seeking access to the American market. The Agency also copyrighted educational and literary material most prone to unauthorized reprints. The copyright ledgers from the US government reveal what a British publisher deemed necessary to protect in the American market. The Agency used the Chace Act to economically buffer itself as a newly independent office.

Macmillan succeeded because it played to its strengths of educational and literary material, it tapped markets and fought back with just the right amount of energy against reprinters using trade courtesy to do so. Unlike Saunders & Otley, who waged a moralistic war against Harpers in the trade magazines, Brett used advertisements to alter the perception of the firm. Within a year, Macmillan titles appeared in the American Books section of the *American Literary Gazette*. This transformation worked because Macmillan played by the gentleman's honor code of trade courtesy. Furthermore, once international copyright recognition was in place via the Chace Act, the Agency expanded its manufacturing network to comply with the law thereby transforming itself into a fully operational publisher rather an import office.

With Frederick Macmillan's letter on 1 January 1891, the Agency officially came of age. The transformation into a financially independent office under the Macmillan & Co. name formally separated the houses. The Macmillans remained investors in the company but Brett became acting manager, gaining greater power over the direction of the firm. Just five

years later in 1896, Macmillan Company New York was incorporated with Brett as its first President. The educational sector received significant investments including additional agents to promote works and money to encourage professors to submit material. Brett bought other educational companies that had ties to school systems, such as Messrs. Richardson, Smith and Co. who worked with the New York City School, in 1903.² A separate Education Department was set up within the company and by 1907, branch offices dedicated to educational texts were set up in Chicago, San Francisco, and nine separate branches in New York City. Profits continued to soar. Upon G.P. Brett's death in 1936, his son, George Platt Brett Jr., would write that the company had been worth \$50,000 when he took over management in 1890. By his death, it was worth an estimated \$9,000,000.³ G.P. Brett only added to the legacies of his father and Alexander Macmillan.

In 1951 the London Macmillans sold their majority shares of the Macmillan Company of New York to George Platt Brett Jr. By then the New York company was “considerably larger and more powerful” than its London counterpart.⁴ The Bretts finally owned Macmillan in New York as a separate company. Although an agreement was reached for New York to continue acting as London's agent in the US, all formal connection between the company virtually ended by July 1952.⁵ A series of purchases and mergers over the rest of the twentieth-century resulted in Macmillan US surviving in what is currently McGraw-Hill and parts of Holtzbrinck publications. Macmillan in London also continues under the Holtzbrinck group and has offices all over the world. *Nature* continues as one of the most prestigious and preeminent scientific journals in the world. Today, the name Macmillan maintains the reputation as a producer of world-class educational and academic material.

² James, 178.

³ As quoted by James, 170.

⁴ Ibid, 186.

⁵ Ibid, 187.

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