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Report: Curran Fellowship, 2014

I received the Curran Fellowship to help fund the indexing of Victorian periodical fiction for inclusion in my bio-bibliography *At the Circulating Library: A Database of Victorian Fiction, 1837–1901* (ATCL). In brief, the Curran Fellowship led to the addition of information from nearly fifty new periodicals accounting for over 1,300 new serialization items during the 2014 calendar year, with a handful of periodicals left to process and add. At this writing, ATCL has entries for 2,724 authors, 331 publishers, 11,225 titles, 205 periodicals, and 3,795 serializations, a substantial increase over the calendar year.

First, I used a portion of the funds to subscribe to the *British Newspaper Archive* (BNA), a new public-private initiative with the British Library to make scanned nineteenth-century newspapers available to the public. Initially, I planned to index a dozen newspapers; however, I examined thirty-seven titles. That total includes a handful which overlapped with my earlier work with *Nineteenth-Century British Library Newspapers*—BNA has expanded beyond the initial British Library efforts both in quantity and quality of images. The most prolific newspapers were *The Lancashire Evening Post* (72 items), *The Daily Gazette for Middlesbrough* (68 items), *The Nottinghamshire Guardian* (57 items), *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (56 items), *Sheffield Independent* (55 items), and *Leicester Chronicle* (50 items) (all the newspapers are listed on the current update of ATCL). In total, my work with the BNA added 941 serialization items to the database, including novels and short stories.

Second, I used a bulk of the funds to visit the Cambridge University Library and the British Library for two weeks in March 2014. Numerous Victorian periodicals have yet to be scanned or indexed but several libraries in the U.K. have significant holdings. At Cambridge, I indexed *Black and White* (partially processed), *The British Weekly* (53 items), *Sylvia's Home Journal* (19 items), and *Victoria Magazine* (2 items). The latter three periodicals mainly consisted of unbound parts with *The British Weekly* having unopened pages. At the British Library, I was hampered by the delay in opening the new Newspaper Reading Room: scheduled to be open in mid-February after the closing of Colindale, it was still unavailable by the end of March when I was visiting and eventually opened in April after I left. Thus, unfortunately, many of the newspaper I wished to examine were not available. I compensated by examining additional monthly magazine, including: *The Christian World Magazine* (in process), *The Methodist Family* (in process), *The Methodist Monthly* (in process), *The Minster* (11 items), *The Newbery House Magazine* (10 items), *Pearson's Magazine* (148 items), *The Royal Magazine* (in process), *The Sunday Magazine* (20 items), *The Woman at Home* (in process), and *The Young Man* (in process). In addition to these ten periodicals, I was also able examine two series of annuals, *The Gentleman's Annual* and *Beeton's Annual*. In particular, two magazines—*Pearson's Magazine* and *The Woman at Home*—are important fiction-carrying late-century monthlies which carried the leading authors of the day. The other magazines represent magazines aimed at dissenting sects (e.g., Methodists), a group not

usually supportive of fiction reading. However these magazines show that fiction was a key genre in these religious-themed family periodicals. All in all, a very productive trip that is still paying dividends.

In addition to supporting the growth of the database, the Curran Fellowship also contributed to a few other projects. As I worked with the BNA, I came across a set of serialized novels in the *Morpeth Herald* attributed to Hannah Burdon. Following this lead, I was able to clear up a long standing literary mystery which led to the attribution of Burdon's novels to Frederick Richard Chichester, the Earl of Belfast. My article, "Posthumous Reputations: The Erroneous Attributions to Frederick Richard Chichester, the Earl of Belfast (1827–1853)," is currently under submission at *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*. Last September, I presented my serialization research at the 2014 RSVP conference at the University of Delaware. This coming year, I will be writing a review of the *British Newspaper Archive* for *The SHARP Newsletter* and I will completing my book manuscript on the rise and fall of Victorian multi-volume fiction, including a discussion of serialization practices.

Finally, I would like to thank RSVP and its members for all their support of my work over the past years.