Proposal for Inclusion of Union Label Description In Bibliographic and Archival Cataloging Guidelines

> "Step by step the longest march can be won, can be won
> Many stones can form an arch, singly none, singly none
> And by Union what we will
> Can be accomplished still
> Drops of water turn a mill, singly none, singly none."
>
> -Preamble to the Constitution of the United Mine Workers Union, 1890

I. Invisibility

Data are like drops of water. Individually, they are usually quite meaningless. Only once they are organized, with purpose, do they take on significance. This proposal seeks to rectify the oversight by catalogers to include information about a small but important item of published data - the union label, or "bug "[1].

II. A Brief History of Union Printing

The dawn of modern printing occurred during the 1880's, when photoengraving and rotary presses made their debut. By the 1890's the production improvements included linotype machines, electric drives, and automatic paper feeders. Mechanization began to transform a small-scale industry into a trade with craft specialization.

In January 1850, New York journeymen organized the New York Printers' Union, whose president was Horace Greeley, apprenticed printer and founder of the daily New York Tribune. Greeley was an outspoken advocate for social justice -"…the first if not the most important movement to be made in advance of our present social position is the organization of Labor.[2]" The National Typographical Union was organized soon afterwards on May 3, 1852 (in 1869 it upgraded its name to International Typographical Union, or I.T.U.). Originally the I.T.U. was a comprehensive industrial union with a membership drawn from all phases of the printing process. Technological developments at the end of the 1800's resulted in increased job specialization, which in turn led to segregation of union jurisdiction. Pressure formed within the I.T.U. for a separate pressmen's union[3]. The International Brotherhood of Bookbinders (I.B.B.) was founded in 1892. The International Printing Pressmen Union of North America (I.P.P.U.) was founded in 1889, and by 1897 added the Assistants to form the I.P.P.A.U. The International Stereotypers' and Electroplater's Union (I.S.&E.U.) was formed in 1902. By the time the International Photoengraver's Union (I.P.E.U) was formed in 1904 four separate unions represented the portion of the printing trade outside the composing room. However, of these the I.T.U. remained the strongest and most stable printing union in the United States until the mid 1900's.[4,5]

The Amalgamated Lithographers of America (A.L.A.), representing the lithographic industry, was founded in 1915[6]. By the late 1900's a series of mergers consolidated many of the unions. In 1973 the I.P.P.A.U. merged with the I.S.&E.U., creating the International Printing and Graphic Communications Union (I.P.G.C.U.). Ten years later the I.P.G.C.U. merged with the Graphic Arts International Union to form the Graphic Communications International Union (G.C.I.U.)[7], and in 1987 the I.T.U., suffering from declining membership in the face of dramatic technological changes, joined forces with the Communication Workers of America (C.W.A.)[8].

The impact of union membership on document production varies depending on geographical region, type of document, printing client, and date. As with most industrial unions, membership is highest in regions where laborers are most concentrated. Also, some parts of the country

(Northeast, Midwest) have a history and culture that is supportive of trade union activities. Estimates of the portion of the lithographic workforce represented by the A.L.A. in 1958 is illustrative of the major regions of representation[9]:
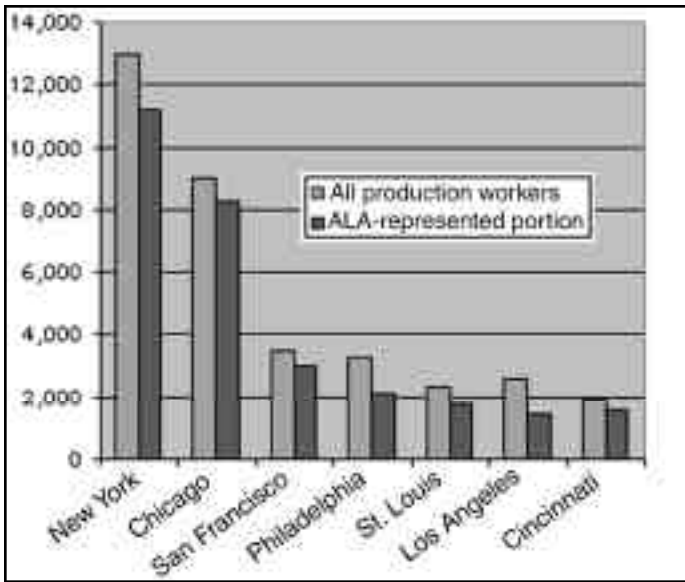
Union representation in the printing workforce, as most industries, has generally declined in the last half of the 20th century. In 1899 an estimated 26% of wage earners in printing and publishing as a whole were unionized, the percentage by 63% in 1935[10]. The current figure is approximately 5-10%. Another factor is industry segment; workers in the newspaper and magazine sectors have always been more organized than those in the book and job printing sectors. The San Francisco Chronicle is one of many newspapers produced with union labor, and the Allied bug appears on the front page of every edition.

III. Use of the Union Bug

Printers have been know to use a bug to designate union labor as early as October 15, 1891, when it appeared at the head of the editorial column of the Compositors (I.T.U.) Typographical Journal. The first known use of a bug in commercially-produced documents was by the I.P.P.A.U. in May 1893 . The union label has at least five purposes[12]:

1. It is a protection against anti- or non-union shops that might otherwise profess union working conditions.
2. It can be part of a public-relations campaign to induce customers to buy union-made products[13].
3. It is a sign of good workmanship and quality standards.
4. It is badge of union prestige to attract new members.
5. It is warning against trespass by competitive unions.

In 1897, under the pact with Pressmen and Bookbinders, the Compositors agreed to a design for a new Allied

Printing Trades Council label (see Appendix 1). In 1911 all five unions in the trade (I.T.U., I.B.B., I.E.&S.U., I.P.P., and I.P.E.U.) formed the International Allied Printing Trades Council (I.A.P.T.C.) as an inter-union agency to control and promote the use of the union label. By 1939 the Allied label was in general use throughout the printing trade and took precedence over the individual labels of the five internationals. Of course, this was not seen as an entirely positive activity by the management side of the industry. The United Typothetae of America (U.T.A) was founded to represent the interests of printshop owners in response to the demand by the I.T.U. for a nine-hour day in the late 1880's. In 1899 the U.T.A. passed a resolution deprecating the use of the union label by its members and encouraged them to stop putting the label on work produced in their shops[14].

There are two exceptions to the use of the Allied label. One is when printshops use their own printing union's bug in communities where there is no regional Allied council. Two examples are the Graphic Communications International Union and the Amalgamated Lithographers:


The other comes from shops that are in-house duplication services of unions in trades representing workers in sectors other than printing, such as those below. In these instances, the shops use the label of their parent union. The union label has been, and remains, a highly symbolic representation of organized labor.

 United Electrical Workers Union
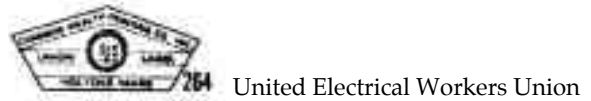
California State Employees Association (Representing the Office of State Publishing, California)

 United Farmworkers Union
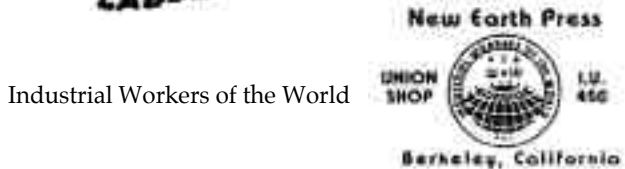
Industrial Workers of the World

 International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Title page from Printers and Technology, by Elizabeth Faulkner Baker
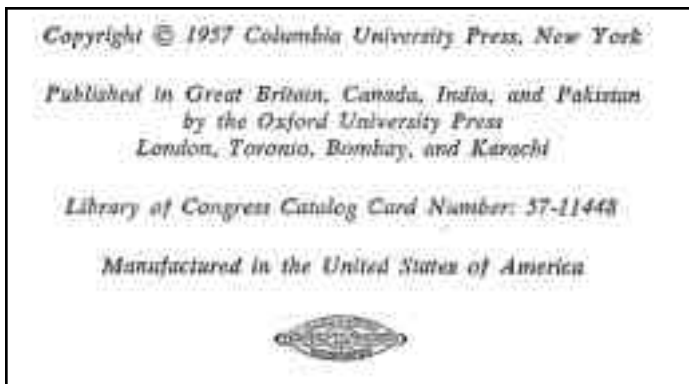
IV. Bug metadata

Bugs usually appear indiscreetly at the corner of a back page or at the bottom of a title page. The example above displays the most common union bug, that of the Allied Printing Trades Council. It signifies that all aspects of the work, from typesetting to finishing, were performed by union labor. This bug contains several important pieces of information. The lower arc contains the geographic region, which may be a city ("New York") or a broader area ("Northern California"). Coupled with that location is a shop name or number. The number is permanently assigned when the shop is organized. A regional list of union shops, indexed by shop name and number, is available from the local Printing Trades Council. A national database is also now available on-line[15].

It should be noted that the union bug is a copyrighted symbol, and is occasionally accompanied by a © symbol. This adds a legal dimension to archival material duplication, because any reproduction of the document, commercial or otherwise, cannot bear the bug unless it is reproduced by union labor. The bug is protected by state laws and printing trade customs, with penalties for misuse including fines and imprisonment.

V. Union bug recognition and oversight

Some catalogers recognize the importance of the union bug in describing materials. One example is a commercial website specializing in political campaign ephemera, including buttons and badges - note the specific mention of union bugs[16]:

209. "REPUBLICAN INTEGRITY: 41st PRES. BUSH"
        (w/Lincoln, TR, etc.).$8.00
210. "MIKE DUKAKIS FOR PRESIDENT '88" w/union
        bug. r/w/b. cell. $6.00
211. "BUSH - QUAYLE '88" r/w/b. litho. $4.00
212. "DUKAKIS-BENTSEN '88" r/w/b. cell. mint. $8.00
213. "ATU - DUKAKIS - BENTSEN '88" with union bug.
        litho. bright. $6.00

Most catalogers, however, have no idea what to do with them. Full cataloging of bug-bearing documents either omits mention of them at all or indicates only that which is recognizable. The following document is from the Library of Congress's " An American Time Capsule: Three Centuries of Broadsides and Other Printed Ephemera" on-line gallery[17]. Because it provides excellent images of the artifacts, it is easy to identify items that have bugs and view the catalog documentation. A good example is the poster "Woman suffrage co-equal with man suffrage. (Quoted from the platform of principles of the American Federation of Labor), New York [1910]." The Allied bug is clearly evident in the image. (Detail below)

The catalog text (below), however, reveals that the bug was an unknown cipher. It is a text element that could only be identified by three question marks in brackets.

"WOMAN SUFFRAGE CO-EQUAL
WITH MAN SUFFRAGE."

(Quoted from the Platform of Principles of the American Federation of Labor.)

[???]11

State Federations that have endorsed
Woman Suffrage:
California, …
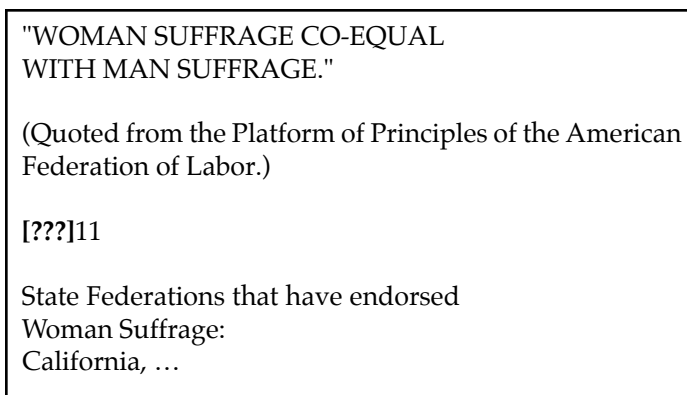
The shop number "11", however, is diligently indicated. Direct inquiry confirmed that "The Library of Congress has not sought to describe (this) level of detail … when encoding historical documents with the American Memory DTD.[18]"

VI. Sources for guidelines for cataloging bugs

The authoritative source on cataloging guidelines is the Anglo American Cataloging Rules (AACR2r). According to Michael Gorman, Dean of Libraries at C.S.U. Fresno and editor of the AACR, "I can safely say that the Union Bug is not mentioned in any English-language cataloguing code." A review of the 1988 edition provides several potential loci for specifying union bug information:

1. General Rules
1.4G1 Place of manufacture, name of manufacturer, date of manufacture
"If the name of the publisher is unknown and the place and name of the manufacturer are found in the item, give the place and name of the manufacturer"

2.4G1 Place of Printing, name of printer, date of printing
"If the name of the publisher is unknown and the place and name of the printer are found in the item, give that place and name as instructed in 1.4G"

2. Early Printed Monographs
2.16D
"Give the rest of the details relating to the publisher, etc. as they are given in the tem. Separate the parts of a complex publisher, etc. statement only if they are presented separately in the item. If the publisher, etc. statement includes the name of a printer, give it here. Omit words in the publisher, etc. statement that do not aid in the identification of the item and do not indicate the role of the publisher, etc. Indicate omissions by the mark of omission."

2.16H
"If the printer is named separately in the item and the printer can clearly be distinguished from the publisher or bookseller, give the place of printing and the name of the printer as instructed in 1.4G"

3. Graphic Materials
8.4G1
"If the name of the publisher is unknown and the place and name of the manufacturer are found in the item, give that place and name as instructed in 1.4G"

8.4G2 Optional addition.
Give the place, name of manufacturer, and/or date of manufacture if they are found on the item and differ from the place, name of publisher, etc. and date of publication, etc., and are considered important by the cataloguing agency."

VI. Suggested Revisions for Cataloging Rules

Given that the union bug is a valuable piece of cataloging data, I would like to propose that it be formally included in AACR2, MARC, EAD, and other archival cataloging protocols. The default option should be that absence of information means that there is no bug. If a bug is present, however, the relevant information should have a designated place to record it.

The logical MARC location for this information would be in the "Physical Description, etc. fields" (3XX); the current subfield codes are:

$a - Extent (R)
$b - Other physical details (NR)
$c - Dimensions (R)
$e- Accompanying material (NR)
$f - Type of unit (R)
$g - Size of unit (R)
$3 - Materials specified (NR)
...

An example of a MARC record accomodation for bug metadata might look like this:

```
<Fld300##$h="Bug"><a><Union label></a>
<Fld300##$i="Union"><a><Allied Printing TradesCouncil></a>
<Fld300##$j="Number"><a><147></a>
<Fld300##$k="Region"><a>Northern California></a>
<Fld300##$m="Name"><a><Inkworks></a>
```

One practical problem with bugs is that they are often quite small and hard to read, with some data, especially the Geographic region, even being illegible. Even simple union identification can be problematic; a central database of these labels would go a long way towards helping catalogers properly describe bugs from the many other trade unions.

VII. Conclusion

It is my belief that the inclusion of these data will be of value to future researchers and archivists. The trade union movement has a long and honorable role in the preparation and production of documents, just as the library and archival community has done so for documentation and dissemination. Catalog inclusion of the union bug as evidence of this contribution is a small but significant step towards erasing the historic invisibility of those that labored before us.

Author's note: As of June, 2001 this proposal has been submitted to the cataloging rules committees of the American Library Association and the Library of Congress and is pending review.

Lincoln Cushing, MIMS U.C. Berkeley
Member of the GCIU since 1983
http://www.sims.berkeley.edu/~lcush

Endnotes

1. "Item 2040; bug, U.S. slang - Printed matter produced by a union shop", in Elsevier's Dictionary of the Printing and Allied Industries, by F.J.M. and E.F.P.H. Wijnekus, 1983. Although the term is used interchangeably in this document, I believe the term bug is more specific than union label, because it is in common usage in the trade and distinguishes it from the labels commonly associated with garments, cigars, and other products. Many different trades have their own form of public identification (such the union labor work marks cast in some concrete sidewalks).

Present emblem of the IPP&AU. First emblem designed and adopted for the IPPU convention of 1892. Altered in 1898 to include assistants; again redesigned in the 1920s.

Original label of the IPPU. Adopted 1893, but rarely used after introduction in 1896 of the Allied Printing Trades Council label of the Tripartite Alliance.

Printing Pressmen and Assistants label, IPP&AU. Adopted 1940. Issued to union plants where there is no Allied Printing Trades Council.

Printing Specialties and Paper Products label, IPP&AU. Adopted 1940. Issued to union specialty plants in the absence of the Allied Printing Trades Council label.

Printing Inks and Roller Products label, IPP&AU. Adopted 1940. Issued to union plants.

Offset Printing label, IPP&AU. Adopted 1955. Issued in the absence of the Allied Printing Trades Council label for offset work performed exclusively by members of the IPP&AU.

Label of the International Allied Printing Trades Association as redesigned and adopted in 1897 by the Tripartite Alliance. Issued by the Allied Printing Trades Council of the city or town in which the printing is done.

2. Printers and Technology; A History of the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union, by Elizabeth Faulkner Baker, Columbia University Press, NY 1957, page 50.

3. Yes, pressmen… the trade has remained overwhelmingly male (and white) since its creation. The estimated current representation of women in the trade has been around 10%, with a maximum of 20% in 1910. See "Women in Printing History", Tradeswomen, Spring 1998.

4. The Printing Trades, by Jacob Loft (Labor in the Twentieth Century Series), Farrar & Rinehart, 1944, page 187.

5. The I.T.U. portion of I.A.P.T.A. membership in 1900 was 71%,

and drifted downward; 61% in 1914, 52% in 1929, and 50% in 1939.

6. Labor Relations in the Lithographic Industry, by Fred C. Munson, Harvard University Press, 1963, page 25.

7. Graphic Communicator, newspaper of the Graphic Communications Union, October 1989.

8. Personal communication with Pete Rockwell, I.T.U. shop steward, Spring 2000.

9. Labor Relations in the Lithographic Industry, page 243; figures are approximations based on 1958 Census data and estimation by the author.

10. The Printing Trades, by Jacob Loft (Labor in the Twentieth Century Series), Farrar & Rinehart, 1944, page 203.

11. Printers and Technology; A History of the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union, by Elizabeth Faulkner Baker, Columbia University Press, NY 1957, page 113.

12. Printers and Technology; A History of the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union, page 113.

13. "Indirect emphasis upon buying habits of general public in Chicago can be supported by the List of Firms Whose Advertising Matter Does Not Bear the Chicago Allied Printing Trades Council Label, June, 1941", The Printing Trades, by Jacob Loft, footnote #20, page 221.

14. The Printing Trades, by Jacob Loft (Labor in the Twentieth Century Series), Farrar & Rinehart, 1944, page 218.

15. http://www.gciu.org/shop.shtml

16. Ameribilia – Books and Collectibles, http://www.ameribilia.com/butcat.htm

17. Example found at URL http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=rbpe&fileName=rbpe13/rbpe132/13200200/rbpe13200200page.db&recNum=0&itemLink=D?rbpebib:5:./temp/~ammem_u0CS::@@@mdb=ncpm,rbpebib,suffrg&linkText=0

18. e-mail from LeeEllen Friedland, Library of Congress, 4/24/00

Historic union labels displayed on this page are from Printers and Technology, A History of the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union, by Elizabeth Faulkner Baker, Columbia University Press, 1957, Appendix VII.