



Lydia Bailey: A Checklist of Her Imprints (Penn State Series in the History of the Book)

Karen Nipps

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Little known today, Lydia Bailey was a leading printer in Philadelphia for decades. Her career began in 1808—when her husband, Robert, died, leaving her with the family business to manage—and ended in 1861, when she retired at the age of eighty-two. During her career, she operated a shop that at its height had more than forty employees, acted as city printer for over thirty years, and produced almost a thousand imprints bearing her name. Not surprisingly, sources reveal that she was closely associated with many of her now better-known contemporaries both in the book trade and beyond, people like her father-in-law, Francis Bailey; Mathew Carey; Philip Freneau; and Harriet Livermore. Through a detailed examination and analysis of various sources, Karen Nipps portrays Bailey's experience within the context of her social, political, religious, and book environments.

Lydia Bailey is the first monograph on a woman printer during the handpress period. It consists of a historical essay detailing Bailey's life and analyzing her role in the contemporary book trade, followed by a checklist of her known imprints. In addition, appendixes offer further statistical information on the activities of her shop. Together, these provide rich material for other book historians as well as for historians of the early Republic, gender, and technology.

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