2011 APHA Conference Update

The 2011 annual APHA conference, Printing from the Edge, will be held in La Jolla at the University of California, San Diego, on October 14–15, 2011. San Diego sits at the southwest corner of the United States: at the edge of the United States, at the edge of the international border with Mexico, and at the edge of the Pacific Ocean. Reflecting this location, the program will highlight transformative moments in printing history that have changed the direction of printing, typography, papermaking, bookbinding, or book design.

While the deadline for the Call for Proposals has passed, we are happy to report that we received a healthy number of proposals and look forward to an exciting and informative conference. The proposal committee, headed by Richenda Brim, is currently reading the proposals and will be contacting potential presenters around April 15, with acceptances from the presenters due by May 1st. The tentative program will be published on the website by May 15th. The finalized program will be mailed to APHA members around July 1st and will include registration details and more information about hotels.

Lynda Claassen is the site host for the conference and has arranged for three hotels to be available to conferees. The main part of the program will be held at the Faculty Club on the University campus, just a short walk away from the Giesel Library, where Lynda is planning an exhibition for APHA. Two of the hotels are in La Jolla, and one is down the street from the Faculty Club. Parking will be at the Faculty Club parking lot.

Full details will be available at the APHA website, www.printinghistory.org as they become available.

Kitty Maryatt

Conference Reporters Needed

APHA members attending the 2011 conference are encouraged to write summaries and to photograph the panels and events. To volunteer,
email: newsletter@printinghistory.org
An Example of Civil War Scrip

During the American Civil War there was a serious shortage of national government-issued paper currency and metal coins in both the North and South. In order to provide some continuity in commerce, many state governments, local governments, banks, railways, manufacturers, and businesses found it necessary to print and issue their own paper currency (denominations of one dollar or more) and change bills (denominations of less than one dollar). These were redeemable, depending upon the issuer, in payment for dues, taxes, merchandise, transportation, and the like. Some redemptions were in minimal amounts. Other issues, again depending upon the issuer, were discounted when exchanged for “real money.”

Currency and due bills were intaglio-printed, lithographed, or letterpress-printed. Printers ranged from a local newspaper’s job shop to the American Bank Note Company. Graphics and designs spanned the plainest or barest text (sometimes with a stock image type or block) to elaborate, beautiful designs incorporating the best of the engraver’s art. Signatures, dates, and progressive numbering were often in manuscript.

In the early 1860s, Washington County, Texas, under the authority of the County Treasurer, issued notes in 50¢, $1, $2, and $3 denominations. These were receivable for all county taxes and dues.

The two dollar note is the most interesting of this series. The title is “Washington County Script” Scrip is spelled with a “t” on all denominations. The “6” in the date line is actually an inverted “9,” and, unusually for the 1860s, a long s [ſ] appears in the text.

The image choice of a print shop interior as the vignette is very unusual. Images on other denominations are: a wood-engraved printers’ train block (50¢); a standing male figure, probably a statesman or soldier ($1); and a slave picking cotton ($3). Unfortunately, the name of the printer is unknown.

Alan M. Levitt

Approximate size is 6.5 x 2.5 inches. Courtesy of the author.
In December 2011 the Grolier Club of New York will host an exhibition on the history of the French national printing establishment, the Imprimerie Nationale, arguably the most important printing house in Europe. Drawn from the vast and comprehensive archives of the Imprimerie Nationale, the exhibition, “The Heritage of Printing: Treasures from the Archives of the Imprimerie Nationale” will document the significant influence of the press, not only on printing and the book arts, but on French—and therefore European—literary culture from the mid-sixteenth century to the present day. The exhibition is being organized by the Grolier Club, the Groupe Imprimerie Nationale, S.A., and the Institut Mémoires de l’Édition Contemporaine (IMEC), France’s largest archive of authorial and publishing materials, which will be the new home of the historical collections of the Imprimerie Nationale.

The exhibition, curated by H. George Fletcher (the retired Brooke Russell Astor Director at The New York Public Library, and the organizer in New York of IMEC’s 2009 exhibition “Between Collaboration and Resistance: French Literary Life under Nazi Occupation”), will tell the story of the Imprimerie Nationale, from a group of royal printers established by François I in 1538, to the Imprimerie Royale created by Cardinal Richelieu in 1640, through many generations of development, marked often by artistic innovation and wide cultural influence, but sometimes by distress and neglect, to triumphant survival in the present day. Some 200 exhibits comprising many hundreds of objects will be on view at the Grolier Club from early December 2011 through early February 2012, encompassing artifacts of various printing processes, such as punches, matrices, and typefonts from the days of François I to the present, as well as engraved plates and lithographic stones used to produce illustrations (including at least one stone from the famous Description de l’Egypt commissioned by Napoleon, with its proofs and published state). It will also show archival copies of the books produced at the Imprimerie Nationale, from the scholarly products of the Renaissance in France through the royal folios of the Sun King to culture-changing works of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and thus to the work of postwar and present-day generations of French book artists. In many cases, original manuscripts, documents, and artwork will allow the visitor to follow the art, craft, and business of bookmaking from conception to realization. Video installations are planned to provide visitors with an overview of the history of the Imprimerie Nationale, as well as demonstrations of all aspects of book production.

A major publication will be created and produced by the Imprimerie Nationale’s Atelier du Livre d’Art et l’Estampe (ALAE), and a day-long colloquium on the themes of the exhibition is planned for late January 2012.

Those interested in more details should contact curator H. George Fletcher at h.georgefletcher@yahoo.com, or Grolier Club Director Eric Holzenberg at ejh@grolierclub.org.

H. George Fletcher
News from Elsewhere

Rare book school is accepting applications for “Type, Lettering, & Calligraphy, 1450–1830”. Taught June 13–17 by James Mosley, internationally renowned teacher of typographical history, former Librarian of St. Bride Library; rarebookschool.org.

Richard-gabriel rummonds, author of Printing on the Iron Hand Press, will close his website dedicated to the subject on May 1. To fill the void Ludwig Mohr has launched handpresse.com.

New Titles


Earl & gloria emelson. Valenti Angelo. The Man and the Artist (Heron House). heronpub@aol.com.


Two Hundred Years Ago

Charles whittingham establishes the Chiswick Press. Binney & Ronaldson make improvements to the typecaster’s hand mould. Bryan Donkin invents composition rollers made of glue and treacle.