MARK TWAIN & THE MYSTERIOUS PRINTER: The 1997 J. Ben Lieberman Memorial Lecture

THE 1997 J. BEN LIEBERMAN LECTURE was presented by Robert H. Hirst, Curator of the Mark Twain Papers and General Editor of the Mark Twain Project at The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. The lecture was given at the World Affairs Council Building in San Francisco on April 24, 1997.

Peter Hanff, APHA Vice President for programs, described Ben Lieberman’s role in founding the American Printing History Association and gave a brief history of APHA. Hanff then prepared the group for Robert Hirst’s presentation by reading a selection from Mark Twain’s uncompleted novel, No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger, in which Mark Twain provided a compelling description of the activities of a printing house. In the novel, the printing house is ostensibly located in fifteenth-century Austria, but the description is really that of typical nineteenth-century printing operations.

Building on the introduction, Hirst acknowledged that the selected text is the only fiction he is aware of that deals extensively with the nineteenth-century printing house. The mysterious stranger, “apparently sixteen or seventeen years old,” whose name is “Number 44, New Series 864,962,” is the last of a long series of transcendental figures in Clemens’s fiction. These individuals are free from the limitations of a moral sense and inherited ideas that Mark Twain thought tended to make human beings nothing more than machines. Hirst went on to say that he believes Clemens identified himself strongly with these transcendental figures. Moreover it is likely that Clemens saw himself as the model for Forty-four. Forty-four is an angel, and therefore, a cousin of Satan. His clearly fantastic mastery of the press-room captivates the reader, while giving Mark Twain an opportunity to comment wryly on the social conventions of apprenticeship, petty social hierarchies, and the hollowness of rank and prestige.

Hirst traced Clemens’s first real education to his apprenticeship in a printing office which had begun in the spring or fall of 1848. Clemens himself recorded in 1886, “I began to set type when I was thirteen years old, and have always had a right respect and reverence for the art.” In 1907 he acknowledged that he began editing and inserting texts into the newspaper fifty-nine years earlier, “Supernaturally & uninvited, I helped to edit the paper when no one was watching; therefore I was a journalist; I have never been wholly disconnected from journalism since; therefore, by my guess, I am dean of the trade in America.”

The earliest known photograph of Clemens, preserved as part of the Mark Twain Papers at The Bancroft Library, is a daguerreotype.

BOOK DESIGN IN THE 20TH CENTURY:

APHA’S 22ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE will be held October 17-19, 1997 at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas in Austin with generous support from the Ransom Center and its staff. The conference will focus on book design in the twentieth century, and will be held in conjunction with a major exhibition based on the rich archival and printed collections of the Ransom Center which Richard Oram, the Center’s librarian, and his colleagues will be mounting.

Despite its great expanses and widely scattered population centers, Texas has sustained a lively and exciting book community throughout most of the twentieth century. No more evidence of this may be needed than the renowned Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center. Founded as the Humanities Research Center in 1957 by Harry Ransom, this library amassed one of the largest and most comprehensive research collections ever assembled, with unparalleled strengths in modern literary archives and related records of publishing, most notably the archives of Alfred A. Knopf Inc. The Ransom Center also has significant holdings in the eighteenth century (Texas is among the largest American contributors to the ESTC), the nineteenth century (the Robert Lee Wolff collection of nineteenth-century fiction), theater arts and film.

Papers assessing the role of significant typographers and designers will be complemented by items in the exhibition, including original book designs and correspondence from the Knopf and Limited Editions Club archives as well as the papers of Merle Armitage and Carl Hertzog. In addition, an account and assessment of the contributions of such major Texas bibliophiles as Robert Tobin, Stanley Marcus, Earl Vandale, E. L. DeGolyer (and his son, Ev), Dorothy Josey, and noted Texas booksellers will round out the program.

The program will be enriched by the famed Texas hospitality, tours of various parts of the Harry Ransom Center and other interesting sites in and around the Texas capital.

—Peter Hanff, Vice-President of Programs
Chapter Notes

Philadelphia Chapter visits Lehigh: Jim Green, Associate Librarian at the Library Company of Philadelphia; Dan Slive, Coordinator of Bibliographic and Reader Services at John Carter Brown Library in Providence, with host Phil Metzger, Head of Special Collections at Lehigh University.

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER
The Philadelphia Chapter of APHA had a field trip to Bethlehem, PA on May 31. Hosted by Phil Metzger the group visited the Department of Special Collections in Lehigh University’s Linderman Library, where they saw highlights from its diverse collection: a proof copy of On the Origin of Species (with “The Origin of Species” on the title page); the Byrne Euclid (1847), a monument of early color printing; and examples from Lehigh’s collection of books on bridges and bridge construction. In addition, the group saw Phil Metzger’s own Lanius Press at his home.

Phil got his type from his father, who collaborated with Hermann Zapf on printing projects in a trans-Atlantic connection between Germany and Kansas. It was also a treat to see Phil’s collection of books on book history. Two APHA members attended (president and treasurer of the local chapter) plus one guest.

—Cornelia King, President
king@library.phila.gov

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER
On Sunday April 13 APHA NEW ENGLAND went to Wellesley College where we joined about 300 other people to hear Nancy Finlay speak on the book arts in Boston. It was a splendid talk.

APHA/NE and the Providence Free Library co-sponsored a talk by Dirk Imhoff, curator of rare books from the Plantin-Moretus Museum in Antwerp on June 25. Imhoff spoke about the history of the museum and its present configuration as one of the truly great museums of the history of books and printing. His talk entitled, “Three Centuries of Printing: The Plantin-Moretus Press of Antwerp” described the museum which houses the world’s finest collection of early printing presses and type.

Christopher Plantin was one of the greatest printers of the Renaissance. His son-in-law, Jan Moretus, and his descendants car-
ried on the firm at the same location until 1876, when the building and its contents were sold to the city of Antwerp and preserved as a museum. The museum holds the archives of the Plantin-Moretus printing firm from the mid-sixteenth century to the late nineteenth century, a great library, an amazing collection of early woodblocks and copperplates, and a superb collection of prints, drawings, paintings and other works of art.

The Providence Free Library mounted a small exhibition relating to the Plantin-Moretus Museum and a larger exhibition of early and modern fine bookbindings from the Special Collections Department.

An informal talk on Early Lithography in the USA is scheduled for Saturday July 19, 1997 at 2:00 in the Updike Collection at the Providence Public library.

A field trip to Dartmouth and Stonehour Press is planned for August 1, 1997. Inquiries about this excursion should be directed to Alice Beckwith at Providence College, Providence, Rhode Island 02918 or e-mail.

—Alice Beckwith, President
abeckwith@sequenti.providence.edu

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER
Welcome to the Northern California Chapter! The charter for an APHA chapter in Northern California was unanimously approved at the June 20, 1997 Executive Board Meeting. The next meeting of the Chapter is scheduled for October 12th at the San Francisco Public Library. Those interested in this chapter should contact Mary Kay Duggan at: (510) 642-1404, or by e-mail: mkduggan@sims.berkeley.edu.

SOUTHEASTERN CHAPTER
An August or September visit to the Ashantilly Press is in the planning stages after a recent Georgia Journal article on Bill Haynes and his press sparked some interest among APHA/SE members. Bill is trying to create a printing/educational center at the Ashantilly Press. The Museum of the Alphabet in Charlotte, North Carolina is also of interest to chapter members as a possible event site. Details of these and other events in the Southeastern region will be announced.

—Barbara Brannon, President
barbara_brannon@post.wesleyan-college.edu

For news of Chapter events in other areas of the country please contact:
New York Chapter: Lowell Bodger (212) 777-0841
Southern California Chapter: Regis Graden (818) 361-4004
Chesapeake Chapter: Michael Kaylor (410) 778-6259
American Proprietary Types moves forward & a new APHA publication is announced

Work on APHA's publication, American Proprietary Types, has been progressing. The book has been set in type (hot-metal Cen-taur) by Michael & Winnifred Bixler, and the proofs have now been thoroughly checked by two editors. We are now at the page Makeup stage and preparing the illustration section.

There are many orders in already for the book. Our customers have been very patient with us while the book has been progressing, and we must ask your patience for a little while longer. Work on all aspects of the book is being done voluntarily, or at very favorable "friend of the family" rates, and must necessarily take a back seat to the occasional paying job! We hope that when the book finally appears everyone will feel the wait well worthwhile. We anticipate that this will be an important publication which will serve as major reference work on a scarcely documented area of fine printing.

Speaking of publications of great interest to the members of APHA, we now have a new book well along in production. In the next few months APHA will publish the correspondence of Rudolf Ruzicka and Daniel Berkeley Updike. To most of our members neither of these titans of American fine printing need introduction: Ruzicka was one of the foremost illustrators and typographehrs of his day. His woodcuts (many printed in several subtle col-

ors, with spectacular results), engravings, and drawings embellished many fine editions. He also designed handsome books, as well as drawing notable types for Linotype. His Fairfield type still enjoys use today.

Updike founded the Merrymount Press in 1893, and went on to consistently produce some of the finest printing this country has ever produced.

Ruzicka and Updike collaborated on many productions, including Newark (The Grolier Club, 1917) with colored woodcuts by Ruzicka, and a lovely series of holiday greeting cards for the Merrymount Press printed from colored woodcuts of buildings around Boston. While their professional collaboration is known, the closeness of their personal relations has scarcely been documented. The current selection from their letters, edited by Edward Connelly Latham, sheds new light on a friendship that spanned decades, and encompassed many matters of great importance to the typographic community, from Ruzicka's critical reading of the manuscript for Updike's seminal Printing Types, through their collaboration on projects for The Grolier Club and other institutions, to the intricacies of printing illustrations in America at the beginning of the century.

The Letters of Daniel Berkeley Updike and Rudolf Ruzicka has been designed by Roderick Stinehour and printed at The Stonehour Press. Works by both men are illustrated, some in color, and some tipped in. Watch the Newsletter and future issues of Printing History for further details about the publication of this new publication and the delivery of American Proprietary Types.

——Jerry Kelly, Vice-President for Publications
type portrait in which he is holding a composing stick with large display letters set to read, "S A M" and, because a daguerreotype is a mirror image, the letters read properly from left to right.

Hirst went on to suggest the pervasive evidence of print-house influence in Mark Twain's writings, both published and unpublished. Throughout his life he struggled to assure that his very precise writing and punctuation should survive intact. Knowing that he was bucking the strictures and house style that typesetters were generally compelled to follow, he nevertheless did not forget that he was a comrade. As late as 1897 he wrote to his London publisher, Chatto & Windus, "I am a printer myself. I wish they would follow my punctuation."

Although not directly germane to Hirst's primary presentation, he also provided a brief account of Clemens's long infatuation with the Paige Typesetter. It is not obvious (except by historic hindsight) that Clemens was somehow mistaken to pursue the Paige prototype. Many people have come away from the usual telling of the story with the impression that Paige never got the machine to work. The Mark Twain Collection at Bancroft contains many galleys of work done on one or another of the Paige machines. What he could not do was to get it to work reliably for long periods of time on a daily newspaper. Clemens recognized that while he was surrounded by technological advances of all kinds in every field, the technology of typesetting had remained virtually unchanged since its invention. It took H. H. Rogers and other shrewd judges of the whole situation to decide that the Paige approach of setting individual pieces of type by machine would never be as economically successful as the use of type-casting machines, such as Mergenthaler's Linotype.

Hirst's final example of the pervasive influence of the print shop on Mark Twain was from an essay by William Dean Howells in "The Country Printer."

"The craft had a repute for insolvency which it merited, and it was at odds with the community at large by reason of something not immediately intelligible in it or at least not classifiable. I remember that when I began to write a certain story of mine ["A Modern Instance," published in 1882] I told Mark Twain, who was once a printer, that I was going to make the hero a printer, and he said, 'Better not. People will not understand him. Printing is something every village has in it, but it is always a sort of mystery, and the reader does not like to be perplexed by something that he thinks he knows about.' This seemed very acute and just, though I made my hero a printer all the same, and I offer it to the public as a light on the anomalous relation the country printer bears to his fellow-citizens."


Hirst concluded by suggesting that part of Clemens's experience as a typesetter has not been clearly identified before: that is the degree to which the initiation into the craft set him apart from his ordinary fellow citizens in Hannibal. Clemens's experience as a printer was the beginning of his discovery that he himself was extraordinary and fundamentally unlike his companions, despite all the camaraderie. Clemens's interest in transcendent figures may have been an acknowledgment of his evolving self-awareness.

—Peter E. Hanff, Vice-President of Programs

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TYPOGRAPHIC ANECDOTES

THE FOLLOWING ANECDOTES TURNED UP SOME YEARS AGO in my reading about type and printing, and have persisted in rattling about in my head since then. Perhaps I can exorcise them by passing them on to the readers of the APHA Newsletter. They are all from J. Luther Ringwalt’s wonderful 1871 book, The American Encyclopaedia of Printing.

WILLIAM BRADFORD GOES HOME: FRIENDLY TYPE

William Bradford (1658 – 1752) was the first printer in the colonies of Pennsylvania and New York. In 1682 Bradford found himself in difficulties with the Quaker residents of Philadelphia. He printed a pamphlet which was declared to be seditious, and was arrested and jailed. Bradford demanded his rights as an Englishman under the Magna Carta to be brought to a speedy trial. The jury was told that their only function was to determine whether or not Bradford had printed the allegedly seditious pamphlet. Accordingly, a form of type was brought into the court from Bradford’s shop so the jury could determine whether it was the form from which the pamphlet was printed. As Ringwalt puts it:

The types themselves were at length brought into the court to witness against the unfortunate printer, and upon one of the examiners prying up the chase for examination, the friendly type fell into pi, and exonerated their owner by destroying the evidence against him. Shortly after this session of the court, Bradford was released.

NAPOLEON GOES TO THE PRINT SHOP: UNFRIENDLY TYPE

Napoleon’s wrath was once fearfully excited against the Imperial Printing-Office because in a bulletin, by a misprint of “voleur” for “valeur”, the Grand Army was described as performing tremendous deeds of theft instead of valor. The terrified officials could only pacify the outraged warrior by conducting him to the printing office and showing him that in the compositor’s case the o’s were placed above the a’s, and that the offending letter could have readily dropped from its legitimate station to the place below.

PROBLEMS IN BIBLE-PRINTING

Pope Sixtus V personally supervised an edition of the Vulgate in 1590 and issued a bull of excommunication against anyone involved in reprinting it who should make any alterations in the text. The edition was extraordinarily imperfect, and scores of scraps of paper had to be pasted over the worst errors. But a succeeding Pope, Clement VIII, revised and amended it, thus subjecting himself to his predecessor’s anathema; but his own edition was also riddled with inaccuracies – and also carried a similar anathema.

Of course, we all know about the Adultery Bible, printed by Barker, the King’s Printer, in 1682; the word “not” was omitted from the Seventh Commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” For this, Barker was arraigned before the Star Chamber and fined £3000.

ABEL BUELL MAKES AN IMPRESSION

Abel Buell (1742 – 1822) was probably the first American to attempt to cast English types. He was an erratic, wild, inventive person who was involved in many and diverse enterprises. He was a silversmith, type founder, die cutter, armorer, auctioneer, ship owner, and mill owner – among many other occupations.

Ringwalt tells us the following, probably apocryphal tale: while attempting to cast printing types he was denounced for treason against the British crown. The lead equestrian statue of King George III, which stood in the center of Bowling Green in New York City, had been pulled down by a rebellious mob. Abel Buell was suspected of being one of the leaders of the mob; this suspicion was furthered by the discovery of the statue’s head and shoulders in his house. (The horse’s tail – all that remains of the statue – can still be seen at the New-York Historical Society.) Buell was attempting to convert the lead of the statue into printing types, and he is reported to have said that “either as bullets or as types, His Majesty should be turned to a useful purpose, and make an impression.”

—Stephen O. Saxe
© 1997 by Stephen O. Saxe

French Typecase diagram, showing the lowercase “o” compartment directly above the “a” compartment. From the specimen book of Fonderie S. Berthier & Durey, Paris, 1891.
Announcements

- The Sixth Annual Carl Hertzog Award – Book designers, printers and publishers throughout the U.S. are encouraged to submit books printed in 1996 or 1997 for the sixth annual competition for the Carl Hertzog Book Design Award. The competition is open to presses and publishers of all types and sizes. The winner and runners-up will receive national publicity and will be exhibited in the University Library of the University of Texas at El Paso for two months after the announcement of the award on February 8, 1998. By creating and sponsoring the Hertzog Award, the Associates of the University Library endeavor to underscore the importance of fine printing as an art, to encourage work by new and established artisans, and to annually recognize outstanding accomplishments in the field. Questions regarding the competition should be directed to: University Librarian, University of Texas-El Paso Library, El Paso, Texas 79968-0582, (915) 747-5683.

- The Alcuin Society seeks like-minded souls who may wish to explore the worlds of fine print, fine bookmaking, calligraphy and all things that stir the human mind. The Society is based in Vancouver, B.C. Its quarterly magazine Anghora has featured articles on: books in China, Russian wood engraving, reading and the teaching of reading and Cyberspace.

In 1997 there will be articles on the Bird & Bull Press and a two-part series on computer-generated musical notation pioneered by an octogenarian nun at Stanbrook Abbey. Membership in the Society is $35.00 (U.S.) Request a free copy of Amphora from: John King, Membership Secretary, 2283 129th Street, Surrey, B.C. Canada V4A 7V7, or fax: 604-538-5223.

- The Printing Historical Society (London), founded in 1964, is the fore-runner and model for APHA. Its scholarly journals publish copiously illustrated, definitive articles on type designs and designers, printing presses, and the technical aspects of printing, wood engraving, lithography, and experimental graphic processes. Some back-stock Bulletins and Journals, as well as occasional publications, are still available. Kindly request a detailed list from the Secretary.

Membership dues for 1997 are due now. Membership in PHS includes 4 issues of the substantial quarterly PHS Bulletin and the distinguished annual PHS Journal. Journal 25 is now ready. Don't miss it! Checks in the amount of $48 (students only $24) should be made payable to PHS, and sent to the North American Secretary, Lynne Veatch, P.O.B. 328, Northampton, MA 01061.

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AMERICAN TYPE DESIGNERS OF THE 19TH CENTURY

THE CARY GRAPHIC ARTS COLLECTION at Rochester Institute of Technology has announced that it will soon be publishing a volume of long-unavailable articles on American type designers of the nineteenth century. Written by William Loy, these articles originally appeared in the printing trade periodical The Inland Printer during the 1890s. The Cary Library Press edition will include essays by Alastair Johnston on William Loy and Stephen Saxe on nineteenth-century type design. In addition, the volume will be amply illustrated with specimens of the typefaces produced by the designers.

A prospectus with ordering details will be available shortly. Contact David Pankow at (716) 475-2408.

Trial sketch by the American type designer Hermann Ihlenberg for his Relievo series, cut for the Mackellar, Smith & Jordan foundry.

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Conference News

TYPOCRAFTERS 1997, this year’s annual conference of the Typocrafters, will be hosted by the University of Iowa Center for the Book on the weekend of October 3 – 5. The festivities will commence on Friday night with dinner and opening remarks by Timothy Barrett, Coordinator of the Center for the Book. Attendees will have an opportunity to show their latest projects and view those of other Typocrafters, students at the UICB and the local book community. Saturday's events, co-sponsored by the Center for the Book and the School of Journalism, include tours of the letterpress and offset printing studios and the papermaking research and production facilities. Michael Peich, printing historian and proprietor of the Aralia Press, will speak on the Iowa City printers and their disciples after the Saturday evening banquet.

The Typocrafters have met on an annual basis since 1937. Anyone interested in books, printing or other related fields is invited to attend the annual conference. For conference reservation materials please contact:

UI Center for the Book
The University of Iowa
154 English-Philosophy Building
Iowa City, IA 52242-1408
(319) 335-0447

THE 6TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF SHARP (the Society of the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing) will take place July 16-20, 1998 at Simon Fraser University’s Harbour Centre Campus in the heart of Vancouver, under the auspices of the Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing. In the SHARP tradition, we will entertain proposals with no limitations on topics. Suggestions for organized sessions are welcome; please include the session title, paper titles and abstracts for consideration by the program committee.

Presenters must be or become members of SHARP. For information about joining SHARP, contact Linda Connors, Drew University Library, Madison, NJ 07940, USA, or by e-mail: lconnors@drew.edu.

Deadline for Submission: Please submit your abstract for consideration by October 31, 1997, by mail or e-mail, to the attention of:

Deborah Kirby, Conference Director
SHARP 98 Conference
c/o Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing
Simon Fraser University at Harbour Centre
515 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 5K3 CANADA
Telephone (604) 291-5093 Fax (604) 291-5098
e-mail: dkirby@sfu.ca
EXHIBITIONS

20 MAY – 31 JULY 1997

4 MAY – 21 SEPTEMBER 1997
Philobiblon: Homage to Books, Reading & Libraries. Princeton University, Milsberg Gallery for the Graphic Arts, Firestone Library, 1 Washington Road, Princeton, NJ.

1 JULY – 30 AUGUST 1997
Kalligraphia. An exhibition by members of the Friends of Calligraphy, SkyLight Gallery, Sixth Floor, Main Library, Civic Center. Calligraphy demonstrations every Saturday, July and August, 2 p.m.; San Francisco Main Library, lower level. For more information please call the Book Arts & Special Collections Center at (415) 557-4560.

7 – 31 JULY 1997
John DePol Printmaker, Illustrator and Teacher on Exhibition at HarperCollins. This diverse exhibition features a photographic essay documenting the making of the wood engraving, "Intersection," a two-color print of the now vanished old market section in lower Manhattan. Lobby of HarperCollins Publishers, 10 East 53rd Street. Monday – Friday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

17 SEPT. – 15 NOV. 1997
The Practice of Letters: An Exhibition of Historical Handwriting Manuals. Seventy rare printed manuals for teaching handwriting and lettering that date from 1514 to 1800 will be on public view. The exhibition will be on public view Monday through Saturday, 10–5, free of charge. The Grolier Club, 47 East 60th Street, New York, NY.

LECTURES

FRIDAY, AUGUST 8, 7 P.M.
Clifford Burke and the Cranium Press. Clifford Burke, author of Printing It and Printing Poetry will discuss his career from San Francisco Bay Area printer during the '60s and '70s to printing in the north- and southwest. The San Francisco Center for the Book, 300 de Haro, San Francisco, CA (415) 565-0545.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 22, 7 P.M.
Text as a Visual Medium. Inge Bruggeman will give an illustrated lecture on the expressive aspects of text and typography. The San Francisco Center for the Book, 300 de Haro, San Francisco, CA (415) 565-0545.

EVENTS

RARE BOOK SCHOOL
Books at Virginia: Rare Book School 1997 is pleased to announce its schedule of courses for the summer of 1997. Twenty-four 5-day non-credit courses of bookish interest held in Charlottesville, VA during the weeks 14 July to 4 August. The brochure and related documents are available at our Web site:
http://poe.acc.virginia.edu/~oldbooks/rbs97/

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