

The APHA Newsletter

NUMBER 129 • SUMMER 1997

Twentieth-Century American Book Designers to be the theme of the Annual Conference in Austin on October 17–19, 1997

THE AMERICAN PRINTING HISTORY ASSOCIATION'S annual conference moves on to Texas and the Third Coast after last year's success on the West Coast. Texas has sustained a lively book community despite its great expanses and widely scattered population centers. The renowned Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center of the University of Texas at Austin has amassed one of the largest literary research collections ever assembled, with unparalleled strengths in modern archives, including those of publishing houses.

This year's conference will take place at the Ransom Center's Alfred A. and Blanche Knopf Room in the University's Flawn Academic Center. In the adjacent Leeds Gallery, the Center has mounted an exhibition entitled *Modern American Book Arts at the Ransom Center*. A large portion of the show is devoted to the book designs of Bruce Rogers, W.A. Dwiggins, Merle Armitage, and Carl Hertzog and incorporates material from the archives of Knopf Inc. and the Limited Editions Club.

Generous support of the program and events has been provided by the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, the State Library of Texas, Oak Knoll Books, Digital Letterpress, and BookLab, Inc.

Lectures will begin on Friday, October 17 with a talk by Kenneth E. Carpenter, Assistant Director for Research Resources, Harvard University Library. His topic will be "Readers & Libraries: Toward a History of Libraries and Culture in America." After the lecture there will be tours of the Ransom Center's J.H. Wrenn Room and an exhibition entitled "A Writer Who Helped Form Us: California Fine Printers and the Work of Robinson Jeffers."

Saturday morning will begin with coffee and welcoming statements by Thomas F. Staley, Director, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center and Centennial Professor of

the Book, and APHA President, Martin Hutner. Richard W. Oram, Librarian, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center will lead the

day's lectures with "A Printer's Publisher: Alfred A. Knopf and the Book Designers." John B. Thomas III, Chief Rare Books Cataloguer and Curator, Pforzheimer Library of English Literature, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center will then speak on printer Carl Hertzog.

The afternoon session on Saturday will begin with a lecture on "Merle Armitage and the Modern Book" by Dick Higgins, poet, critic, and biographer of Merle Armitage. Will Goodwin, Curator and Cataloguer, University of Texas, will speak on the Limited Editions Club *Ulysses*. "On the Trail of Texas Book Collectors—A Lone Star Roundup" will be the topic of David Farmer, Director, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University, the final speaker of the afternoon.

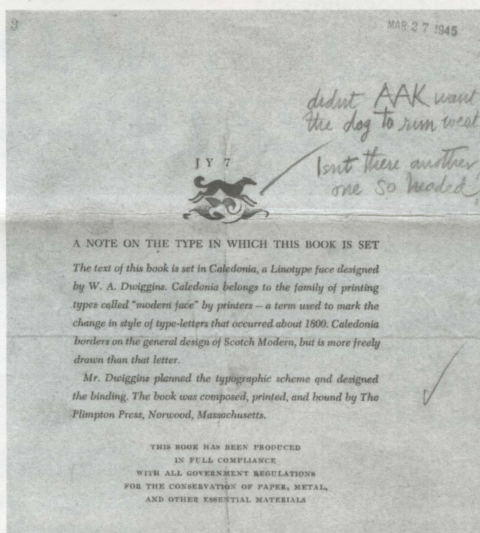
Adventure and sociability fill the remaining hours of Saturday with buses departing for a stop at BookLab, Inc., one of the world's largest private book and paper conservation laboratories, for a tour and a reception. Buses then continue on to Digital Letterpress, currently engaged in printing a new edition of the Bible with illustrations by Barry Moser.

On Sunday, October 19 there will be an optional tour of San Antonio with visits to the McNay Art Museum (medieval art, post-Impressionist paintings, theater history collections), the downtown Alamo historical site and the Riverwalk area.

The schedule of events and registration forms were mailed to all members in early August. If you have not already received the information and registration packet please contact Peter Hanff at (510)

642-3781 for reservation information and a copy of the materials.

—Peter Hanff, Vice President of Programs



Portrait of Alfred A. Knopf by Warren Chappell and proof with Knopf Inc. borzoi logo corrected by W. A. Dwiggins.

(HRHRC COLLECTION)

Chapter Notes

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER

On August 1 APHANE met with Phil Cronenwett, Stanley Brown and Patty Houghton in the Treasure Room of the Baker Library at Dartmouth College. Phil explained the history of the Rare Books Collections at Dartmouth including the fact that the first president of the College, Eleazar Wheelock began the library collection in 1759, ten years before the college was founded. Phil's remarks touched on the generosity of the friends and alumni of Dartmouth and the importance of Ray Nash's classes in printing and printing history. Phil also showed us the architects' plans for the renovation of the domed Daniel Webster building next door to Baker Library, where the rare books collections will be moving later this year.

Stanley Brown gave us a hands-on tour through the special collections. Particularly impressive were the collections of early printing in New Hampshire, and the fine press collections that also included manuscript information such as letters and contracts. A scholar could trace the progress of a Stinehour book or a Barry Moser work through its many phases from pen to press to public. Patty Houghton walked us through some examples of the drawings, watercolors and books by H.M. Brock from the "Edward P. Sine '51 Collection of British Illustrated Books". This collection is also enriched by archival material both useful from a sociocultural point of view and quite wonderful to the eye.

Phil Cronenwett then took us on a tour of the type shop in the library where students may come and print texts. He remarked that the use of the shop seemed to be increased by an interest awakened in students who had experimented with fonts on their computers and now wanted to return to the roots of typography and work with presses. Our tour concluded with a lunch with the charming and intelligent librarian of Dartmouth College, Margaret A. Otto.

APHANE members should mark their calendars for the annual meeting Sunday, September 28 at 11:30 beginning at the Third and Elm Press (on the corner of Third and Elm Streets in Newport, Rhode Island) where we will hear a talk by Alan Levitt "The Ringing Grooves of Change: the Railways as an Agent of Change in the Printing Industries" followed by a Dutch treat lunch on the Newport Dinner Train at 12:30. Those who wish to attend the Dinner Train part of this venture should send a check for \$43.00 per person made out to Dinner Trains of New England to Alice Beckwith; Providence College, Providence, Rhode Island 02918.

Also mark your calendars for Sunday, October 5 for the John Russell Bartlett Small Press Fine Printing Show in Alumni Hall at Brown University. Member letters on both of the above are forthcoming.

Readers are invited to check this column in the next *Newsletter* for a second episode of APHANE's summer adventures. The next installment is "APHANE at the Stinehour Press."

—Alice Beckwith, President

abeckwith@sequent1.providence.edu.

NEW YORK CHAPTER

APHA New York Chapter plans for the coming months include two lectures:

Jonathan Hoefler, type designer and proprietor of the Hoefler Type Foundry, New York, will discuss and illustrate his approach to both Historical Revivals and "Technological Resurrections" of typefaces. In the former category are his HTF Didot and the seven fonts that comprise The Proteus Project; in the latter are the six fonts in his Historical Allsorts series. Monday, October 27th at 6:00 pm.

Alastair Johnston, type historian and proprietor of the Poltroon Press in Oakland, California, will present *Musings on the Vernacular*—a survey of letterforms sublime and wretched, in public and private signage in the first and third worlds. This event will be held jointly with the Type Directors Club, Monday, January 26, 1998 at 6:00 pm.

Both lectures will be held at The Grolier Club, 47 East 60th Street, New York. For further information call Lowell Bodger at (212) 777-0841.

—Lowell Bodger, President

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER

On Saturday, October 4th, the Philadelphia Chapter will organize a caravan to Oak Knoll Fest in New Castle, Delaware. For more information, call Connie King, who is arranging transportation from Philadelphia: (215) 686-5416.

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

*For news of Chapter events in other areas of the country
please contact:*

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CHESAPEAKE CHAPTER:

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Book Review

The Liberty Bell on the Kelmscott-Goudy Press

by J. Ben Lieberman, with an Introduction by Jack Walsdorf and an Afterword by Jethro K. Lieberman, and the story of the John De Pol wood engraving of this famous press, The Yellow Barn Press, Council Bluffs Iowa [N.D.]

THE REPRINTING OF AN ARTICLE by Ben Lieberman originally printed in *The Black Art*, Summer 1962, with a new Introduction and Afterword, is resonant with interest for APHA and for lovers of fine printing alike. The history of the peregrinations of the highly symbolic Kelmscott-Goudy Press makes fascinating reading. As Jack Walsdorf in his introduction states: "These travels took the press from [Kelmscott to]...C.R. Ashbee at his Essex House Press and finally on to two other English private presses...Then a trip across the Atlantic delivered the press into the hands of...Frederic W. Goudy...The press passed in turn from Goudy to...the Aries Press, then to Melbert B. Cary, Jr. of the Press of the Woolly Whale and finally to George W. Van Vechten, Jr. who sold it [to Lieberman] in 1961. This most wonderful tale covers 100 years, eight owners, two continents and countless books and broadsides."

Lieberman in his article vividly discusses his acquisition of the press and its history of continued use. He goes on to describe how and why the press eventually was crowned by a bell. "...Elizabeth and I had felt almost from the beginning that the press lacked one conscious expression of symbolism which we believed most important to the whole private press movement—the conscious sense of the freedom of the press, the liberty to use one's press as one wishes—as epitomized in the private press even more than in

the commercial....And one day, as I wondered about the naked bolt and nut atop the press (holding the main spring)...I got an inspiration, the crown that properly belonged there was a miniature Liberty Bell!"

Ben Lieberman carried over this passion for freedom of the press when he founded the American Printing History Association. In the early years another replica of the Liberty Bell was rung at the beginning of the APHA meetings. The practice fell into disuse, and the bell temporarily was in the care of Terry Belanger. He returned the bell to the APHA archives where it languished on a shelf before this writer resumed the practice of ringing the bell at the annual APHA meeting.

Neil Shaver has appropriately printed the tale of the bell and the press beautifully on Rives mold-made paper. The resulting 31 page book of 7½ x 9¾ inches is handsomely bound in a De Pol bell-patterned paper over boards, with a cloth spine and printed paper spine label. Printed in an edition of 215 copies, at \$80.00 each plus \$3.00 shipping. To order, contact: The Yellow Barn Press, 710 First Avenue, Council Bluff, IA 51501. Neil Shaver, Printer & Publisher (712) 322-2292. In all, this is a spirited telling of an interesting moment of printing history which Shaver and company are to be congratulated for making into a fine book.

—Martin Hutner

OAKLANDER

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American Type Foundry Specimen Books

THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL AMERICAN TYPE FOUNDRY was started in Philadelphia in 1796 by Archibald Binny, a printer and James Ronaldson, a baker. In 1809 they issued a specimen book of metal ornaments, which showed no typefaces, except as caption lines. The first American foundry specimen of type was issued by Binny and Ronaldson in 1812. This first specimen, like those that followed it in the early years from other founders, was a booklet with paper wrappers, side-sewn by hand. These early books were fragile, issued in small editions, and are understandably rare and expensive today.

By the 1830s there were several foundries competing, and the number of typefaces they offered was so large that hardbound books were issued, usually in octavo size. My copy of the 1832 specimen of the Boston Type and Stereotype Foundry has been published in a facsimile edition by Dover Publications. The facsimile is more complete than copies at Columbia and Harvard or my own, since we were able to photograph pages from each of these three copies.

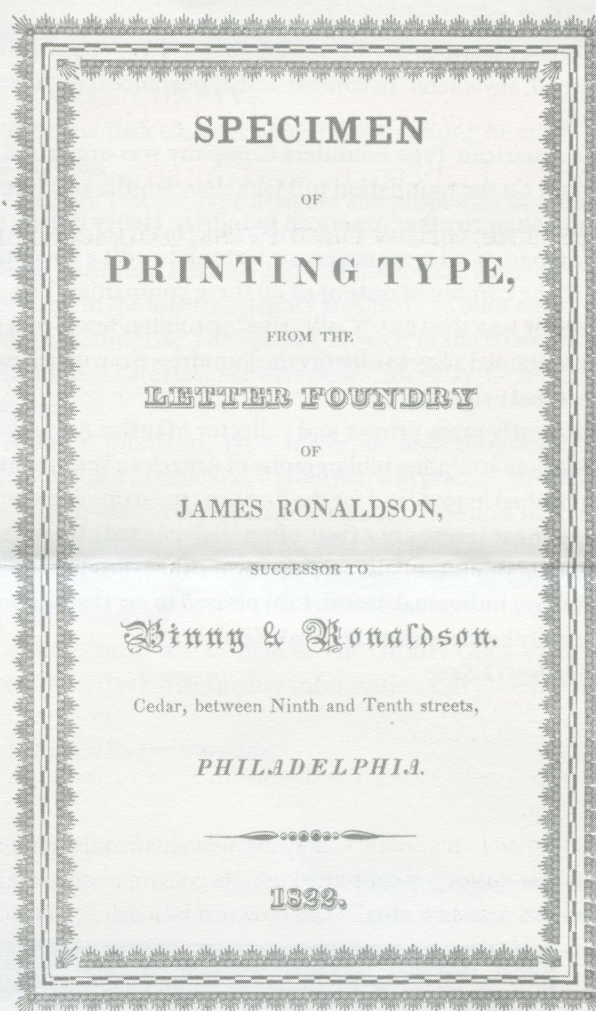
In the 1840s and 1850s the larger foundries began issuing specimens in a folio format, which was better for displaying the elegance of their type, and to allow ample room for the larger sizes of type.

The first specimen book of MacKellar, Smiths and Jordan of Philadelphia (the successor to Binny and Ronaldson) was an enormous folio volume bound in half-leather, which weighs over thirteen pounds. The MacKellar specimens were handset by partner Thomas MacKellar, a whimsical man with a delightful spritely style. The text of his specimen books is distinct from all others – and unlike almost all the others, it is a pleasure to actually read the specimen lines.

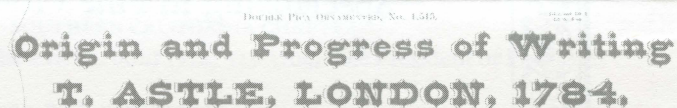
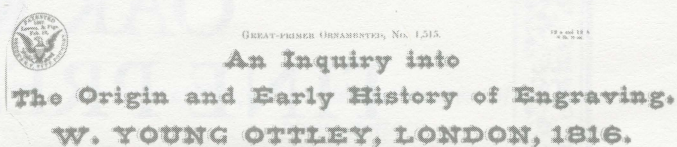
MacKellar, Smiths and Ronaldson's specimen books were issued in three sizes: the folio described above; the "Handy" size, a quarto 12 inches high; and the "Compact", a small quarto 9½ inches high. All of these specimens contain MacKellar's whimsical prose, which was written by him directly in the composing stick. Thomas MacKellar was also the author of a printers' manual, *The American Printer*, and of many poems about the typographic art.

The most remarkable of all the American foundry specimen books, however, was the 1882 specimen of the Bruce Type Foundry of New York. Founded in 1813 by Binny and Ronaldson's fellow Scots, David and George Bruce, it was a major competitor of the Philadelphia foundry. As early as the 1860s the foundry's specimens were printed by New York's finest printer, Francis Hart, and the text was written by a friend of the Bruce family, a foreman at Hart named Theodore DeVinne. A scholar of the history of printing, DeVinne's specimen texts were devoted exclusively to facts about the history of the book arts. These efforts culminated in the 1882 specimen book, which Henry Lewis

(continued on next page)



Title page of James Ronaldson (successor to Binny and Ronaldson), Philadelphia, 1822.



Portion of a page of the Bruce specimen book of 1882, edited by Theodore DeVinne.

(Foundry types continued from page 4)

Bullen once described as "the most notable type specimen book ever issued, anywhere." In content and appearance it is truly remarkable.

The American Type Founders Company was organized in 1892, built on the foundation of MacKellar, Smiths and Jordan and more than 20 other American foundries. Henry Bullen, the new company's sales manager, undertook to edit a specimen book of the combined output of all these companies. The superb result was the 1896 "Collective" specimen book of ATE, which contained a key to identify the foundries from which each typeface had originated.

In the early 1970s printer and collector Maurice Annenberg set to work to compile a bibliography of American specimens. It was published in 1976, and for the first time the scope and details of these most interesting (but often disregarded) books was made available. For his achievement Annenberg received APHA's 1979 Individual Award. I am pleased to say that the book has recently been reprinted by Oak Knoll Books.

—Stephen O. Saxe

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Advertising in the Newsletter is available at \$100 for a half-page, and \$50 for a quarter page.

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Calendar

EXHIBITIONS

8 SEPT. - NOV. 3, 1997

The California Gold Rush: A Descriptive Bibliography. An exhibition of materials from the collection of Daniel G. Volkman at the Book Club of California, 312 Sutter Street, Suite 510 San Francisco.

17 SEPT. 1997 - JAN. 4, 1998

Medieval Bestseller: The Book of Hours. This exhibition at The Pierpont Morgan Library will feature 100 manuscripts and printed examples drawn from one of the world's finest collections of nearly 400 Books of Hours. Presenting the Library's most beautiful illuminations and finest examples of printing, the exhibition will allow visitors to "walk through" a typical Book of Hours. The first section will focus on Calendars, the first part of any Book of Hours; the second section will be devoted to the four Gospel Lessons; the third to the Hours of the Virgin, and so forth, ending with the Office of the Dead. 29 East 36th Street, New York, (212) 685-0008, ext. 347.

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.

Please see the listing of Chapter events on page 2 of this issue for APHA activities in your local area.

Announcements

Oak Knoll's Fourth Fine Press Fair—This year's fair will be held on Saturday, October 4 and Sunday, October 5 in New Castle, Delaware. For the past three years, fine book lovers and private press enthusiasts have been gathering in the colonial, historic district of New Castle, Delaware to attend this fair held to showcase the private press community. Over twenty fine presses from the United States, United Kingdom and Canada will attend this year's event, bringing their books to show and sell to visitors to the Fair. Two speakers, Simon Lawrence of The Fleece Press in England, and Gabriel Rummonds, author of the soon-to-be published work, *Printing on the Iron Handpress*, an important work for those interested in handpress printing, will give presentations on Saturday and Sunday. There will also be a selection of book arts demonstrations.

This year's exhibitors include The Alembic Press, The Arion Press, The Bieler Press, Bowne & Co., Caliban Press, The Fleece Press, Goodenough Art, The Hill Press, Incline Press, Larkspur Press, Midnight Paper Sales, The Ninja Press, The Old School Press, Old Stile Press, Pentagram Press, Peter & Donna Thomas, Press of Appletree Alley, Robin Price, Primrose Academy, Rowan Tree Press, The Tern Press, Whittington Press and demonstrations by wood engraver, Miriam MacGregor, fine binder Gregg Campbell and Theo Rehak from the The Dale Guild Type Foundry.

Book lovers and collectors will be able to see these lovely books and meet the people who produce them. To receive more details, please contact Esther Fan at Oak Knoll Books, 414 Delaware Street, New Castle DE 19720, phone (302) 328-7232, fax (302) 328-7274, email at oakknoll@oakknoll.com or via the Web at <http://www.oakknoll.com>.



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