The APHA Newsletter

NO. 132 SPRING, 1998

The Archaeology of Printing Types

The vaults of the venerable firm of Joh. Enschede en Zonen of Haarlem contain sets of matrices dating from the earliest days of printing in the 15th century, including some cut by Hendrik Lettersnyder about 1490. These ancient matrices have been used to cast very handsome fonts of type; but though the mats are old, the type is new. To see actual 15th century type we must go elsewhere.

I am aware of very little actual type that has survived from the 15th century. In 1878 a number of old types were found in the bed of the river Saône near the city of Lyons, opposite the site of one of the city's ancient printing houses. These types came into the hands of A. Claudin, the author of *Histoire de l'imprimerie en France* (Paris, 1900-14). Outline drawings of some of these types were shown in Talbot Baines Reed's *A History of the Old English Type Foundries*, from which I reproduce it. The material of the types, all cast in moulds, is lead, slightly alloyed with a harder substance, probably iron. The beneficial properties of antimony for type alloys was not discovered until near the end of the 15th century.

As can be seen (illustration on page 6), the types range widely in height-to-paper; indeed, heights still vary from country to country in the modern world. In 15th century Lyons, however, there were probably as many heights-to-paper as there were printers. The types have square bases, indicating that they were planed

down to the correct height, and some have the corner of the base cut away. These chamfers probably acted like the nicks on modern type, to help the compositor place the type in the stick correctly. Worn types in this group were cut down to be used as spaces. A few types have perforations, but whether these holes were used for a thread or wire to hold the types in place during printing, or for some other purpose, is unknown.

It would be considerably more satisfactory to see sharp photographs of these types, as well as a modern chemical analysis, but I have never run across either. However, we have another source of information about old types. In inking a form, occasionally the inking ball covered with sticky ink will pull a type from a loosely locked-up form. This errant type will then fall on the form and, if it escapes the printer's notice, will be printed with the rest of the form. We can see a clear example of this in the illustration from Arnold's *Chronicle* (Antwerp, ca. 1503). My rather imprecise measurement of this image indicates the type to be about .980 inches (24.89 mm). Modern American type is .918 inches high (23.31 mm) and Didot types are 23.56 mm. Numerous other examples of early type that has been imprinted in profile have been noted and studied. These range in height from 22 mm to 27 mm.

The earliest type in America was discovered in 1979 excavations in Harvard Square, and identified as being from the first press in

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Loose type printed lying over text in Arnold's Chronicle, Antwerp, 1503 (enlarged).

Chapter Notes

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER

The Chapter met on March 1 at the Dodd Research Center at the University of Connecticut to hear Robin Price's lecture, "*The Journey of Making Books by Hand*," and to view an exhibition of her work. Robin relocated to Middletown, Connecticut, in 1995 after eleven years in Los Angeles. Her work is at The Getty Center, The New York Public Library, the Library of Congress, Harvard, Yale, and the Albrecht Durer Haus in Nuremberg, among other places. Robin recently addressed the Typophiles on her collaborative work, *The Book of Revelation*, created with Barbara Benish, Gerald Lange, and David Brock in 1995.

The New England Chapter will next meet in New Haven on Friday, June 12 at 11 a.m. at the High Street entrance to Yale's Sterling Memorial Library, for a tour of the Arts of the Book Room with Curator Bridget Burke, followed by lunch. And on August 1 the Chapter will tour the Golgonooza Letter Foundry in Ashuelot, New Hampshire. Members wishing to attend the New Hampshire meeting should call Alice Beckwith at (401) 865-2354 or e-mail her at: abeckwth@sequentl.providence.edu

— Brian Rogers, Secretary APHA/NE bdrog@conncoll.edu

SOUTHEASTERN CHAPTER

Heritage of Printing, Heritage of Writing

The Southeastern Chapter of APHA took a trip back in time on Saturday, March 14, with a full day of activities in the Charlotte, North Carolina, area. During the morning, the group of about 20 chapter members and guests from three states visited Heritage Printers/Loftin & Company in Charlotte. Loftin & Company, now headed by William Loftin, Sr., will celebrate its 100th anniversary this year; Heritage Printers, founded in 1956, specializes in hot metal composition and letterpress printing.

Bill Loftin was ably assisted in his tour and demonstrations by members of his printshop crew. E. H. "Pat" Taylor, a past president of APHA and current resident of the Charlotte area, showed the group some of the intricacies of Monotype composition. Pat cast monotype characters and sorts for guests to take home, along with the printed keepsake that Heritage had prepared.

Heritage Printers undertakes three categories of composition and printing: (1) fine book manufacture, such as Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men* for the Limited Editions Club and limited, slip-cased editions of Gabriel Garcia Marquez' *The General in His Labyrinth* and John Updike's *Rabbit at Rest.* (2) Reproduction proofs for reissue of entire books as well as patches for revisions and additions for older titles originally printed from hot type. (3) Literary journals, such as the *Sewanee Review*. For more information, call Heritage Printers at (704) 372-5784.

Following lunch at a nearby restaurant, the group traveled out to the small town of Waxhaw, North Carolina, home of the *Museum of the Alphabet*. The 4,900-square-foot museum, opened in 1990, was the brainchild of missionary-linguist Cameron Townsend, founder of the Wycliffe Bible Translators, the Summer Institute of Linguistics, and JAARS (formerly Jungle Avianto and Radio Service). Full of fascinating detail and well-executed exhibits, the museum "tells the story of alphabet makers from ancient history to modern times." The two hours that the APHA group spent in the museum were hardly sufficient for an overview of the wealth of information the museum encompasses. For more information, call JAARS at (704) 843-6000.

APHA/SE member Frank Anderson also brought copies of his latest miniature-book edition to share with the group.

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

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

For our meeting of May 9, 1998 we met at the historical San Fernando Mission in Mission Hills, California. Msgr. Francis J. Weber, Director of the San Fernando Mission and Archivist of the Los Angeles Archdiocese Archival Center hosted our event and spoke on his efforts in writing and publishing over one hundred miniature books. There were 15 members in attendance. As has become this chapter's tradition, most members and guests gathered at a local restaurant after the meeting to enjoy continued discussions over dinner.

Our next scheduled meeting and program is June 20, 1998 at 4 o'clock. The Lumis Home (headquarters for the Historical Society of Southern California) will host this meeting and our speaker will be Mr. Stan Nelson, Specialist, Graphic Arts Division, The Smithsonian, who will present "Fine Printing in the Late 20th Century."

On October 19, 1998 at 2 o'clock the chapter will meet again at The Huntington Library in San Marino. We will be addressed by Mr. Tom Lange, Associate Curator of Rare Books at The Huntington. He will discuss the wood block collection held by the library.

- Regis Graden, President APHA/SCA

New Members

Marcia Allentuck Penny Jones New York, NY New York, NY William P. Barlow, Jr. Katherine McCanless Oakland, CA Boston, MA Thomas Beckman Suzanne McMillan Wilmington, DE Berkeley, CA Gloria "Kate" Neckerman Robert Biggert Rockaway Park, NY Iowa City, IA Tracy Bridgeford Bruce Ramer Hancock, MI New York, NY Joan Campbell Schoyer's Books Watertown, MA Berkeley, CA John Crichton Barry Schrader San Francisco, CA Livermore, CA **Bur Davis** Michael Thompson Berkeley, CA Evanston, IL Debra Dick Jane Timken Hazleton, PA New York, NY Instituto di Milano

Milan, ITALY

APHA Drafts Goals for Oral History Project and Launches First Projects

The American Printing History Association has inaugurated an Oral History Project to record the voices, knowledge, and insights of printers, illustrators, designers and members of allied trades. We are particularly eager to interview senior members of these trades as soon as possible, so that their experiences and skills will not be lost.

We will question and record well-known individuals as well as those less likely to write their own stories; including, but not limited to, job printers, dot etchers, typographers, linotype operators, and others whose skills became obsolete during the computer revolution.

In addition to collecting historical material, we would like to register current developments in the printing trade by documenting the careers of digital type designers, computer typesetters, contemporary graphic artists, managers, and owners of printing businesses. We also want our project to extend to members of all the book production professions.

We follow the guidelines and standards enumerated by the Oral History Association in preparing our questions, selecting our interviewees and interviewers, and deciding about access policies and editorial style (http://www.baylor.edu/~OHA/evaluation Guidelines.html).

In order to begin promptly, and to refine our goals, objectives, and procedures, we believe we should create a pilot project where we will see one interview through the entire process from the initial research through to the distribution of the final transcript. We propose to use the services of Tapescribe, an oral history transcription service, based at the University of Connecticut.

—Preliminary Committee: Alice HRH Beckwith, John Bidwell, Jean Hayter, Mike Kaylor

Survey of Places of Interest in Printing and the Book Arts

The purpose of this survey is to gather information, on book arts resources of interest to members of APHA. The results of this survey may be used by members in planning personal trips by the APHA program committee, and by local chapters.

We would like to compile as comprehensive a list of resources as possible, so we are seeking not only the names of presses and organizations dedicated solely to printing, but also college and university book arts programs, museums, archives, and the names of individuals involved in any aspect of printing and the book arts (type designers, bookbinders, papermakers, calligraphers, and so on). In addition, we are seeking leads for APHA'S oral history program, a series of interviews with workers in the book arts.

It is assumed that some places (museums, galleries, displays) would be open to the public, with regular hours of admission, and that other private sites (private presses, businesses, workshops and studios) would be open to groups or individuals only by prior arrangement. Our eventual aim is to publish the list for distribution, though not all sites would be suitable for such a list.

Please send any available brochure or printed literature about the site. For multiple submissions please photocopy this form and submit one completed form with each.

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City/State/Zip	
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e-mail	Website
Site open to the public?	☐ Private
Permissible to include in a directory for APHA use?	☐ Yes, please include in published list ☐ No, do not include
Possible candidate for APHA oral history project?	☐ Yes, please contact with further information
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Update on APHA's Special Publications

A reminder that APHA's second special publication, *D.B.U. and R.R.: Selected extracts from correspondence that passed between Daniel Berkeley Updike and Rudolph Ruzicka from 1908 to 1941* is now available for sale to APHA members at the special pre-publication price of \$40. The edition is limited to 500 copies, 188 pages in length, printed in octavo format on Mohawk Superfne paper, illustrated in color, and case-bound in imported cloth, with dust jacket. This offer has been extended to APHA members only for a limited time. Please send orders (with shipping address and check for \$40 payable to the American Printing History Association) to APHA, P.O. Box 4922, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163-4922, att: DBU/RR.

Our long-awaited third special publication, *American Proprietary Typefaces*, is now at the printers and should be completed in the coming months. Watch these pages for further information on this substantial contribution to the literature on several important typefaces.

—Jerry Kelly, Vice-President, Publications

Call for entries for Printing History

David Pankow, editor of our journal, *Printing History*, is always looking for high quality articles relating to APHA's areas of interest. Please contact him at the Cary Graphic Arts Collection, Rochester Institute of Technology, 90 Lomb Memorial Drive, Rochester, NY 14623-5604 with any materials which might be appropriate for publication, or for further details on editorial policy.

AIGA Exhibition Postponed

The exhibition of material relating to APHA's upcoming publication, *American Proprietary Typefaces*, which was announced in the last issue of this newsletter to be exhibited at the AIGA on Fifth Avenue in New York, has been postponed. Work on this exhibition was moving ahead under the watchful eye of APHA's editor, David Pankow, and the AIGA executive director, Rick Graffé, when it had to be postponed due to logistical difficulties. The postponement will not affect the publication of the book. We will keep our members informed of any new developments or rescheduling of this event on the pages of the APHA Newsletter.

APHA's New President

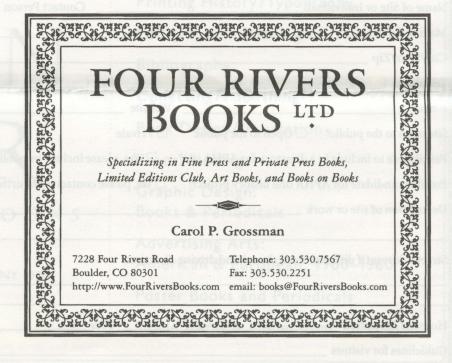
I find it very gratifying — and very encouraging for APHA — to be succeeded as President by Anne Anninger, the Hofer Curator of Printing and the Graphic Arts at the Houghton Library at Harvard. I first worked with Anne in a professional capacity when I was guest curator for an exhibition to mark the centennial of the Merrymount Press. Working with her was such a joy that I was moved to write in the acknowledgements to the catalogue: "Her assiduous and informed preparations, her knowledge, energy, practicality, and skill made my task a total pleasure. For me she is the consummate curator."

Anne was subsequently elected to APHA's board and served as Vice-President for Programs, and later, as Vice-President for Membership. This was lucky for me, and fortunate for APHA. Without a hard-working board and executive committee, an organization cannot move forward. Besides her talent and quiet drive, Anne is an enabler, and she gets things done — and done well.

Anne has had a very distinguished career. Having received her B.A. from Brandeis, where she was graduated summa cum laude, she went on to Simmons Graduate Library School, finally receiving her M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard. Along the way Anne has garnered several distinguished awards in her field, and she has written extensively on matters bibliographic and bibliophilic, as well as lecturing widely from Marseille to Washington.

In addition to all this professional activity, Anne manages to be a wife and mother, and to those who know her, both muse and friend. I remember one summer riding in a bus with her, filled with typographic conference people. She was riding on the right, and it was soon clear that the entire left side was in love with her. So will APHA!

-Martin Hutner



1998 APHA Conference: Chicago Printing History

The 1998 Annual Conference of the American Printing History Association will be held in Chicago, October 9–11. Reconstructing itself following the great fire of 1871, Chicago rapidly evolved into an industrial and cultural center of international renown. Of particular importance was the phenomenal development of a major printing and publishing industry. Although New York remained the center of American publishing, from the end of the nineteenth century publishing, printing arts, and printing technology flourished in Chicago as possibly nowhere else.

APHA members and friends will come together in Chicago this fall to consider some of the significant contributions of Chicago to American Printing History. Paul Gehl of the Newberry Library and Alice Schreyer of the University of Chicago are working closely with APHA Vice President for Programs, Peter Hanff, to develop an outstanding program. Events will take place at the Newberry Library, club rooms in the Loop, and at the R. R. Donnelley tower and the old Donnelley building in Printers Row. Sunday morning will include an optional conducted walking tour through the loop to Printers Row and Columbia College.

Speakers and topics will include: Greer Allen, retired Director of the Printing Department of the University of Chicago, on the history of the University of Chicago Press; Claire Badaracco, Professor of History at Marquette University, on the history of America's largest printing house, R. R. Donnelley; Michele Cloonan, Professor and Chair of the Department of Library & Information Science, University of California, Los Angeles, on book arts and book production in Chicago; Paul Gehl, Newberry Library, on the career of major Chicago type designer, R. Hunter Middleton; Peter Hanff, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, on the Chicago publishing career of Way & Williams, 1895 – 1898.

Watch for the program announcement during the summer.

—Peter Hanff, Vice-President of Programs

Timothy Hawley Books

Write for free catalogues of books about Printing and the Book Arts, Private and Fine Press Books

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What's New—Tradition and Innovation in the Book Arts

The symposium What's New—Tradition and Innovation in the Book Arts was held November 7, 1997 at the John Cotton Dana Library at the Rutgers University Newark Campus. The event was organized by Lynn S. Mullins, Director of the Library; Michael Joseph, Rare Book Librarian at Rutgers, New Brunswick; and Sheena Calvert, Professor of Visual Design at the Mason Gross School of Design, Rutgers.

In an afternoon panel discussion, separate aspects of the day's theme were represented by three practitioners. Lowell Bodger, President of the APHA New York Chapter, spoke on the subject of Tradition. His opening remarks are reprinted here as the first in the APHA Newsletter's series of testimonials by fine press printers on their work and the reasons for being involved in letterpress printing as the millennium draws to a close.

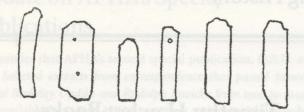
So vague and far-ranging are the definitions of both Tradition and Innovation that, I must admit, when Michael Joseph invited me to participate in this discussion I had the audacity to assume that he wanted me to speak on Innovation. But I must represent Tradition, or that more than anything else, from Michael's point of view.

Which of the traditions that enter into printing or typography is it?

Maybe it's that of handsetting foundry type and printing by letterpress. Maybe it's the typefaces I use and the way I compose pages.

There are the aesthetic and stylistic and technological traditions, but there are also the traditions of delay, error, revision, expediency, and incompetence. And there is the tradition of Innova-

continued from page 1



Profile tracings of 15th century type dredged from the Saône River, Lyons

America, at Harvard College. The type was no later than 1674, and some were found to have been used in John Eliot's *The Indian Grammar* in 1666. The heights of this type ranged from .920 inches (almost identical with modern American type) to .980 inches. Other 17th century type has been excavated from the site of William Nuthead's shop established in Old St. Mary's City, Maryland, in 1689.

I find it pleasantly reassuring, for some reason, to know that the type I handle in my own shop is so close in most respects to that used by the earliest printers. I am, as H. L. Mencken facetiously phrased it, following "in the steps of Gutenberg."

—Stephen O. Saxe © 1998

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tion. Printers and publishers have usually done things in the newest manner possible, stylistically and technically.

It might be ironic that I should be representing Tradition, because some of my colleagues would say that I have chosen to celebrate the *wrong* traditions, or some of the *worst*. I have a preference for a period in English typography which has been dismissed and disparaged to the heavens (rather insightfully by Robert Bringhurst, and ignorantly or narrow-mindedly by some others). Throughout this century other typographic traditions have been considered more worthy of note or emulation — particularly those of the Renaissance, for reasons I have never quite understood. Perhaps it is, as with other concerns more thoroughly rooted in the present, a choosing of affinity groups — with whom, among those alive *today*, one wishes to be associated.

I fell in love with certain appearances of type and page composition when I was a child. Although I never bought or handled type until many years later, I selected almost all the types I use today when I was about 12 years old and first began to send for specimen books from printing supply houses.

A case of arrested development?

In my maturity I can acknowledge a predilection for being *out-of-business*. And for the self-referential: Printing for its own sake.

I prefer the self-referential over the practical or the applied. The phenomena of language and typography are as important and interesting to me as any representational or informative purpose to which they are applied — if not more so.

I like the fact that type specimens are sometimes the best use that has ever been made of a given typeface, and sometimes the *only* use.

In my maturity I can claim the advantage of a particular position in time. When everyone and everything else is speeding up, it might be one's responsibility to move even more slowly than before. If the only possible change of speed is to slow down, so the only available change of direction is backward.

And there is the value of being in the wrong place at the wrong time — which might include my being *here*, *now* — which I enjoy immensely.

I do not imitate nor try to surpass nor even compete with work done in any period. I have on several occasions reset 19th- and 17th-century printed matter as exactly as I could, not to produce a facsimile but in the spirit of *experimental archaeology* — where one goes through the arcane process to gain insights into how things got to look the way they do. Along the way one is having certain sensations in-common with his predecessors, being forced to make the same decisions or becoming aware of the alternatives. But of course I am working under very different circumstances and serving imperatives different from the ones that gave rise to anything of the past that I enjoy seeing. I work slowly, and with no likelihood of financial reward; no client and usually no audience is waiting. I use the typefaces I use because I like them, and do handsetting of type because I enjoy it.

There is no deeper purpose; no better reason.

—Lowell Bodger



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CATALOGUES ISSUED



An illustration from DBU & RR (see page 4)

Calendar

EXHIBITIONS

3 APRIL - 20 JUNE 1998

The Deconstruction of Biblio Borders: Books Across the Hudson. From the Special Collections of The Newark Public Library

Appealing visual materials all relating to the glories of book and book arts from the 110 years since the library was founded in 1888. Center for Book Arts, 626 Broadway, 5th floor, New York, NY. Gallery hours are Mon-Sat, 10-6.

5 MAY - 28 JUNE 1998

Twenty Years of Books from the Press of Peter and Donna Thomas

A retrospective exhibit of books and broadsides made during the past twenty years by Peter and Donna Thomas will be on display in the rare book room of the Book Arts and Special Collections Center at the San Francisco Public Library, Civic Center. Peter and Donna Thomas are active in leadership of the Miniature Book Society and the International Association of Hand Papermakers and Paper Artists. Their research into the history of modern and ancient papermaking is internationally recognized, and their miniature book, Forty, an innovative "stick structure" binding, was chosen as one of the three Distinguished Books in the 1997 Miniature Book Exhibition. They have been self-employed in the book arts since 1977, making books, teaching workshops, giving lectures, and training apprentices. They currently reside in Santa Cruz, California. For more information, please contact the Book Arts and Special Collections Center of the San Francisco Public Library at (415) 557-4560.

5 MAY - 30 JULY 1998

The Private Press of Ariel Wardi
The Donnell Library Center of The New York
Public Library is pleased to honor the distinguished Jerusalem typographer Ariel Wardi with
an exhibition of his recent work. Born in Italy
in 1929 and living in Israel since 1930, Wardi has
worked in Jerusalem as a book designer, was a
partner in a commercial printing business, was
head of the Printing Department of Hadassah
Community College, and later founded his Private Press. The library hours are Mon, Wed, Fri
10-6; Tues, Thur 10-8; Sat 10-5:30; closed Sunday.
The Donnell Library Center is located at 20 West
53rd Street, New York, NY. For additional information please call: (212) 930-0971.

22 MAY - 30 AUGUST 1998

a.k.a. Lewis Carroll

Marking the centenary of the death of the Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, who wrote the delightfully complex and fantastical children's stories under the name Lewis Carroll. The exhibition will include important early editions of Carroll's books, selected photographs, rare pamphlets on mathematics and logic, along with a

selection of personal items including a ring belonging to Alice Liddell for whom the story, *Through the Looking-glass*, was written. The Pierpont Morgan Library, 29 East 36th Street, New York, NY, tel. (212) 685-0008.

16 SEPTEMBER - 14 NOVEMBER 1998 The Art of Publishers' Bookbindings: 1815-1915 An exhibition of nineteenth-century publishers' bookbindings. The nineteenth century brought on enormous social and economic changes, which were directly reflected in a vastly changed market for books. 290 diverse American and European examples, highlight the period during which books became varied and elaborate vehicles for the graphic arts and for all types of industrial techniques. Seen as a body of 'artifacts' of the nineteenth century, this exhibition is an assemblage of objects of a highly-specialized art form which, nonetheless, embodies many of the most characteristic and important aspects of nineteenth-century artistic and technical achievement. This exhibition will be on view at the Grolier Club, 47 East 60th Street, New York, New York. It is open to the public without charge Mon - Sat 10-5 (Club is also closed 12 October). For more information contact Nancy Houghton at tel (212) 838-6690 or by e-mail at nsh@grolierKnoll will also host the first convention of the Fine Press Book Association, a new organization promoting interest in fine printing. This convention features talks by two of the best-known fine press printers, Claire van Vliet of the Janus Press in Vermont and Sebastian Carter of The Rampant Lions Press in Cambridge, England. These speakers will be followed by mini-talks by rare book librarians and book collectors on fine press collecting. For more details, please contact Oak Knoll Books, 414 Delaware Street, New Castle, DE 19720, tel (302) 328-7232, fax (302) 328-7274, e-mail at oakknoll@oakknoll.com or via the Web at http://www.oakknoll.com.

LECTURES

The 1998 *J. Ben Lieberman Memorial Lecture* is scheduled to take place on the evening of October 15 at the Boston Public Library. Kenneth Carpenter, Assistant Director for Research Resources in the Harvard University Library, will make a presentation on printing culture and library revolutions. More information will follow in the next Newsletter.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Theodore Low De Vinne and 19th-Century American Printing" is the theme of this year's Book Arts Summer Workshop at Dartmouth College. Founded by the eminent printer and printing historian Roderick Stinehour, the workshop will be held on August 19-22. Using De Vinne (1828-1914) as a focus, participants in the workshop have the opportunity to study the work of De Vinne as a printer and historian as well as to learn or perfect skills in design, layout, hand type setting, and hand printing. Among the faculty of the workshop are Irene Tichenor, John Kristensen, David Wolfe, Susan Lee, and Wynne Patterson. Tuition for the four-day program is \$35 and is limited to 20 participants. Further information and an application may be obtained from: Book Arts Summer Workshop, Dartmouth College Library, 115 Baker Library, Hanover, New Hampshire 03755-3525; tel: (603) 646-2236; fax: (603) 646-3702; e-mail: phil.cronenwett@dartmouth.edu.

A Weekend for the Book Arts: Oak Knoll Fest V — For the fifth year, Oak Knoll Fest is offering a special venue for fine book lovers and collectors to meet those continuing the fine press book tradition. This year's fair will be held on September 26 & 27. Set in New Castle, Delaware, an old historic town by the Delaware River, this event brings fine presses and their books vital exposure to collectors, librarians and booksellers. Oak

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