

# The APHA Newsletter

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Stephen O. Saxe, Editor

## A Look at Job Printing

Job printing – a 19th century term that is rarely used today – is traditionally defined as printing that uses display type and no more than a sheet or two of paper. Short as that definition is, it encompasses a world of paper items – tickets, letterheads, notices, invoices, vouchers, coupons, cards, labels, posters, receipts, and timetables, to name only a very few. A printer's rhyming advertisement from the middle of the last century puts it this way:

Printing by hand,  
Printing by steam.  
Printing from type,  
Or from blocks – by the ream.  
Printing in black,  
Printing in white  
Printing in colors,  
Of sombre or bright.  
Printing for merchants,  
And land-agents too,  
Printing for any  
Who've printing to do.

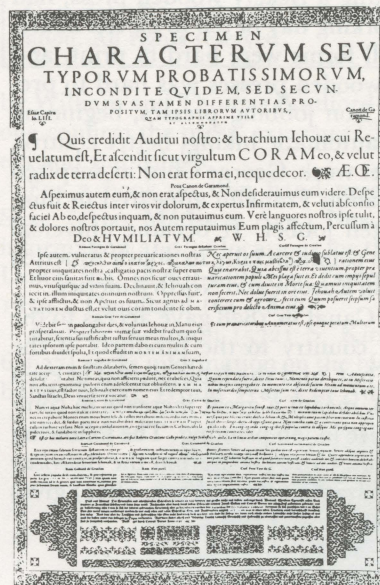
Job printing is often neglected in studies of printing history, yet it is of vital importance to historians in other fields, and especially those who seek information about the daily life of ordinary citizens. Books may be biased and newspaper stories inaccurate, but ticket stubs and railway timetables seldom lie.

Job printing is as old as typography itself. (It might even be said to be *older* than typography, in the sense that wood-block images of the saints and playing cards were forms of job printing.) Job printing often antedated book printing as the art of typography spread. The earliest piece of printing to bear a date set in type is the single-sheet Papal Indulgence of 1454, a year before the presumed completion of Gutenberg's 42-line Bible. An indulgence printed by Caxton in 1476 is the earliest surviving piece of English printing. The first printing in what is now the United States (as *Newsletter*

*If it plete ony man spiritual or temporel to hve ony  
pyes of two and thre comemoracions of salisbury de  
enprynted after the forme of this prelet lettre whiche  
ben wel and trulpy correct, late hym come to welthynoz  
nelter in to the almonesche at the reed pale and he shal  
haue them good chepe . . .*

*Supplicio fiet cedula*

Caxton's advertisement for the *Ordinale Sarum* (ca. 1477). The first printed advertisement (and poster) in English.



Type specimen by Conrad Berner, Frankfurt am Main, 1592. Printed area 18¾ x 12. The original is now lost.

readers scarcely need be reminded) was *The Oath of a Freeman*, the broadside printed in Cambridge in late 1638 or early 1639. The purported copy of the Oath that came to light recently is now highly suspect.

From a printing historian's point of view, some of the most interesting early examples of job printing were the lists of books for sale by the first printers. Among the best-known are Peter Schoeffer's publisher's list of 1469, which is both the earliest printed catalogue and the earliest type specimen. The text reads, in part, *hec est littera psalterii*, "this is the type of the Psalter." Caxton's similar notice of 1479, the first printed advertisement in the English language, was intended to be tacked to a door in some public place near his press in Westminster. He advertised that his "commemorations of Salisbury use" were "enpryntid after the forme of this present lettre," and they were available "good chepe." It ends with the plea, in Latin, not to tear down the notice. The innovative master printer Erhard Ratdolt printed his trade-list in two colors in Venice in 1484. It was not until he returned to Augsburg in 1486 that he printed a full type specimen sheet, showing roman, Greek, and Rotunda types. It survives in a single copy only.

Another of the best-known type specimen sheets is that of typesetter Conrad Berner, whose 1592 broadside shows types of Sabon, Garamond, and Granjon. This sheet was probably intended to be posted in booksellers' stalls at the Frankfurt book fairs, according to Harry Carter. It, too, survived in a single copy until 1939 when it disappeared. As Carter notes, "it is a splendid array of typefaces." Part of the effect is produced by the attractive piece border, the units of which are shown at the bottom of the specimen.



Later specimen sheets are more familiar. One such is Caslon's famous 1734 broadside, later reprinted in *Chamber's Cyclopaedia*, and similar broadsides by Fry (1785) and Wilson (1783).

Until the 19th century, job printing remained an adjunct of book and news printing shops. But the rise of trade following the Industrial Revolution called for a much larger volume of commercial printing. The job printer in the early part of the century, operating a rickety wooden press, had a tedious and laborious working day of ten to eleven hours, six days a week. The small forms were hard to print, and the slurring of ink on the wooden presses was hard to prevent. The development of iron jobbing presses, beginning in the late 1830s, brought automatic inking, better control, and much faster and cheaper work. George Gordon, inspired by a dream in which Benjamin Franklin appeared to him, perfected the familiar platen jobber. It became universal after 1858 and is still in use commercially in South America and Asia, and by amateurs in Europe and North America.

The opening of the Erie Canal in 1828 gave access to the developing interior of the country to the products of the seaboard and of Europe. That, and the later arrival of even cheaper rail transportation, meant a great increase in commerce and concomitant rise in job printing. The following table of printers in New York City, taken from the *American Dictionary of Printing and Bookmaking* (New York, 1894) gives an indication of the dramatic rise:

YEAR	NUMBER OF PRINTERS
1800	75
1810	125
1820	200
1830	500
1840	1,200
1850	2,000
1860	3,000
1870	4,500
1880	6,000
1890	8,000

In the early part of the century, job printing existed only as a part of the work of every book and news printing establishment. But as commerce increased, job printing developed as a separate kind of business. Later in the century, and especially in the larger cities, there was enough work to allow even greater specialization, so that eventually there were shops doing only railway timetables, or posters, or handbills, and so forth.

With increasing specialization, and as tastes changed, new type forms were developed. At the start of the century a few fonts of Caslon in various sizes sufficed, but by mid-century the ornate style we now call Victorian was flourishing, and printers had to stay abreast of fashion. The type foundry's specimen books of 1815 had shown the bare beginnings of "job letter;" by 1834 about 34 different styles were available, and by 1870 well over 1,000 separate type designs were on the market. The increase was made possible by technical advances in type founding, especially the invention of the automatic type casting machine of David Bruce Jr. in 1838 and the electrotyping of matrices for the machine a few years later. Wood type also became available in a

profusion of styles, with the mechanical router by Darius Wells of New York in 1827 making it possible.

Lithography, which was introduced into the United States in Boston in 1828, increasingly competed with and influenced letterpress printing, especially in job work. By mid-century it was an important factor. The freedom of the lithographic technique, in which designs were drawn by hand in pen or crayon on a lithographic stone, freed the printed image from the restricted, linear form of traditional typography. As this unconfined style became possible, and then fashionable, job printers who worked with metal types sought new ways to compete. With the help of type founders and makers of printing equipment, job printers devised ways to set type in diagonal and curved lines. They used wood-engraved and electrotyped illustrations, added curved and other decorative flourishes around their type. This effort at unrestrained arrangement using ornamentation and the great variety of type styles available, resulted in characteristically ornate job printing associated with the middle of the century.

The first American sample book for job printers that I am aware of was Oscar Harpel's *Typograph, or Book of Specimens*, published in Cincinnati in 1870. It was a collection of job work he had produced for all kinds of businesses. The book was printed with great care and precision, and designed with imagination and sensitivity. Although ornate, the results are very attractive today. The book had a strong influence on job printing all over the United States for at least a decade after its appearance. Many of Harpel's design tenets sound modern enough – grace, equilibrium, focus, harmony and contrast – but the results are unmistakably nineteenth century.

The job printing shops of the last century poured forth a steady stream of paper: stock certificates for western gold mines and midwestern beef packers; advertising cards for the mills of New England; bills of lading for clipper ships and steamships; and every other kind of printed scrap now found in attics and flea markets, as well as in the collections of great institutions. Some of the best known of these are the Bagford Collection at the British Museum, the Bella Landauer Collection at the New-York Historical Society, and those at the American Antiquarian Society, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the University of Michigan, Houghton Library at Harvard, and the New York Public Library.

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Adapted from the author's "Job Printing in Lower Manhattan," an essay in *Billheads and Broadsides: Job Printing in the 19th Century Seaport*, published in 1985. Copies of the 63-page illustrated paper-bound booklet are available for \$6 postpaid from

South Street Seaport Museum attn. Kate Gordon  
207 Front Street  
New York, NY 10038

New York residents please add sales tax.

#### Further Reading

- Carter, Harry. *A View of Early Typography*. Oxford, 1969.  
Lewis, John. *Printed Ephemerata*. Ipswich, 1962.  
Painter, George D. *William Caxton: A Biography*. London, 1976.  
Ringwalt, J. Luther. *American Encyclopaedia of Printing*. Philadelphia, 1871 ("Job Printing," pp. 257-9.)  
Steinberg, S.H. *Five Hundred Years of Printing*. London, 1959.



# APHA NEWS

APHA's eleventh annual conference was held September 27th at Columbia University, New York. Over 120 members attended, and the speakers were universally applauded. They were Roderick Stinehour, Clifford Harvey, Edward A. Egerton-Williams, Philip J. Weimerskirch, and David Pankow. Their presentations covered printing from wood engravings, copperplates, lithographic stones, and photoengravings. The program was arranged by Bryan R. Johnson in conjunction with Barbara Paulson, APHA Program Vice-president.

**Nominees** The following have been nominated for the APHA Board of Trustees: John Lancaster, Editor, *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* and Head of Special Collections, Amherst College Library; Frances O. Mattson, Curator of Books and Manuscripts, The New York Public Library; Stan Nelson, Graphic Arts Division, The Smithsonian Institution. Additional nominations may be made in writing, signed by five personal members of APHA, and delivered to the Secretary of APHA at least 40 days before our Annual Meeting. That meeting will take place January 24, 1987, in the Trustees Room of the New York Public Library. (All nominations must include the written agreement of the nominee.)

**Printing History** APHA's journal is once again accepting advertisements. The rates are given below; for further information, contact APHA's Publications Vice-president, Frederic C. Beil III, 321 E. 43rd St., New York, NY 10017.

	Single Ad	Two Consecutive ads (10% discount)
Quarter page	\$ 85	\$153
Half page	\$150	\$270
Full page	\$250	\$450
Inside Front Cover	\$300	\$540
Inside Back Cover	\$300	\$540
Back Cover	\$400	\$720

## NOTES & QUERIES

Robert McCabe (7031 Pembroke Road, Pembroke Pines, FL 33020) is researching a book on the history of steel intaglio banknote printing in America. He would like to hear from craftsmen who have worked in the field, or from those having photographs, literature, or specialized knowledge.

Members with an interest in the Multigraph process are urged to contact Fred Woodworth, Editor and Publisher of *The Mystery & Adventure Series Review* (P.O. Box 3488, Tucson, AZ 85722). He would welcome correspondence on the history and technology of the Multigraph process.

The New England Chapter of the Guild of Book Workers will hold their third Exhibition of members' work at Bromer Booksellers, 607 Boylston St., Boston, from November 3 through 28 (9:30-5:30 M-F, 10-4 Sat.)

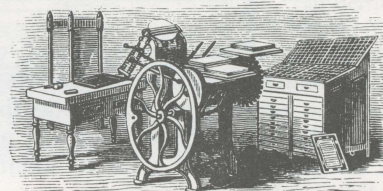
Prof. Fredric Brewer (4043 Morningside Drive, Bloomington, IN 47401) seeks any information about "The New Universal Printing Press" supposed to be sold ca. 1772

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by William and Thomas Bradford of Philadelphia. Can anyone confirm the press' existence? The Bradfords were printers and publishers.

For a book on iron hand presses in America, Stephen Saxe (1100 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10028) seeks information and/or locations for the following hand presses: Union (ca. 1826); Ruthven; Foster (ca. 1853); Ruggles (ca. 1859); Couillard (ca. 1830.)

Andrea Swanson (5721 S. Kimbark Ave., Chicago, IL 60637) seeks information on the history and printing of cigar bands before World War I in America.



## TYPE & PRESSES

**Equipment for sale** Jeff Craemer (Mt. Tam Press, 35 Mill St., San Rafael, CA 94901; 415-454-9763/9591) has for sale a 10 x 15 C&P with 48 cases of type; another 10 x 15 New Series; and a 8 x 12 Gordon Lightning Jobber (1889).

Brenda Woodward (34-42 28th St., Long Island City, NY 11106; 718-937-9384) is selling a complete printing outfit consisting of 5 x 8 Kelsey press, 20-case oak Hamilton 2/3 cabinet, unused fonts of Garamond, and accessories.

A new catalogue of supplies and equipment for the bookbinder, conservator and archivist is now available from Talas, 213 West 35th St., New York, NY 10001-1996. The catalogue, probably the most complete in the field, is \$5 postpaid in the U.S. and territories, and \$6 for international mailing.

A company still actively buying and selling Linotypes and Intertypes is SOS Linotype Service, 2920 Sidco Drive, Nashville, TN 37204, tel. 615-244-2920. David Seat, the owner, has in stock about 35 Linotype machines and 10 Intertypes, plus proof presses and parts. The company also services these machines all over the country. SOS is the counterpart to Marlboro Mats, which was mentioned in issue 72.

The Smithsonian put on display recently an original Model 914 Xerox, on the 25th anniversary of the first customer delivery of the machine. A market research report prepared by Arthur D. Little at the time said that the nation's total demand for copiers, then and in the future, could be satisfied by a maximum of 5,000 machines.



## BRIEFLY NOTED

**Domesday** Nine hundred years is a long time to wait for publication of a manuscript, but that's how long it took the Domesday Book. Compiled in 1086 at the order of William the Conqueror, it was a survey meant to determine the estates and villages owned by the nobles, in order to establish legal ownership and tax liability. Its million statistics give an unequalled picture of a mediaeval kingdom, and make it the most valuable historical document in the English national archives.

The present facsimile was produced by Aleto Historical Editions of London (whose work was discussed at the APHA Conference in September by Edward Egerton-Williams.) Same-size negatives were transferred directly to printing plates, and printed with an unusual continuous-tone process which retained clarity better than halftones would have. The book has been printed in the original quires or gatherings. The original county maps have been printed with an overlay of modern topography in pale background tones, to relate Domesday to the present. The maps also contain features generated at the Computer Center of the University of California at Santa Barbara, where experts had compiled a "Domesday database."

Two thousand copies have been printed, of which 250 copies have been bound in antique oak boards from a house built ca. 1500, the assumption being that the trees were planted at about the time of Domesday. The academic edition will sell for an estimated price of about \$3000. The oak-bound edition will be about \$9,000.

The Grolier Club in New York recently mounted an exhibition on the Domesday Book, and exhibits in England have included one at the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane (where the original is kept) and the Great Hall, Winchester.

**Paste paper** A demonstration and workshop on the making of paste paper will be held at The Watkinson Library, Trinity College, Hartford, Conn. on November 10. The demonstration will be given by the well-known printer Carol Blinn of the Warwick Press.

**Oldest metal-type book?** The Korean Ministry of Culture and Information is preparing a facsimile of the "Chikjismgyong," which it says is a book printed from metal type in 1377, 78 years before the 42-line Bible of Gutenberg. The Buddhist sutra is now in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Growing interest in the book among scholars has prompted the facsimile edition now in progress.

**Goudy Award** The Frederic W. Goudy Award for 1986 has been presented to Matthew Carter, noted type designer. Mr. Carter spent a year in the type foundry of the Enschede printing house, learning to cut punches. He went on to become staff type designer for Mergenthaler Linotype Co., typographic advisor to Her Majesty's Stationery Office and senior critic at Yale's Graphic Design School. He has designed numerous faces, both romans and exotics, mainly for digital typesetting systems. The award was made at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, NY on October 10.

**Hokusai blocks found** In late August the Boston Museum of Fine Arts announced that it had found in storage

what it believes is the only complete and original set of wood printing blocks cut by Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849), one of Japan's leading artists. The 500 blocks comprised four books of views of Edo, as Tokyo was called before 1868. They were donated to the museum in 1889 by Dr. William Sturgis Bigelow. Although it is possible that the blocks may be copies, they are undoubtedly old and important. New prints made from the blocks will be exhibited next year in Japan and at the Boston Museum. The discovery is similar to the finding of Tenniel's original wood blocks for *Alice in Wonderland*, as reported in *Newsletter* 69, in a vault of the Westminster Bank in London.

## BOOKS

Herbert F. Mann (7929 Green Lake Dr. N, Seattle, WA 98103; home tel. 206-522-3095, office 206-525-6571), has for sale a personal collection of about 50 books about printing, publishing, and the book arts. Included is Morison's *John Fell: The University Press and the 'Fell' Types*.

The following books of interest are available direct from their authors or publishers, as indicated:

*A History and Bibliography of the Roycroft Printing Shop* by Paul McKenna. 8 1/2 x 5 1/2, 200 pages including 16 pages of illustration. Sewn, case bound. \$30 postpaid if check accompanies order; NY res. add tax. Order from Tona Graphics, P.O. Box 306, North Tonawanda, NY 14120.

*Aldus Manutius and the Development of Greek Script & Type in the Fifteenth Century* by Nicholas Barker. 200 copies, printed by Meriden-Stinehour, 140 pages, 50 illustrations, designed by Stephen Harvard. Case bound, 9 x 13. With four original leaves from Aldine editions, 1497-1518. \$500, available from the publisher, the Chiswick Book Shop, Inc., 98 Walnut Tree Hill Road, Sandy Hook, Conn. 06482.

*18th Century Williamsburg Imprints*, Susan Stromei Berg, ed. 300 entries, 150 pages, 41 illustrations, library binding. \$70 postpaid (when check accompanies order.) Order from Clearwater Publishing Co., Inc., 1995 Broadway, New York, NY 10023.

*The Printer's Composition Matrix: its History and Development* by Richard E. Huss. Vol. II in the Oak Knoll series on The History of the Book. Sewn, 80 pages, limited to 400 copies, printed letterpress. \$40 + \$2 postage from Oak Knoll Books, 214 Delaware St, New Castle, DE 19720. Subscribers may order direct from the author, Richard E. Huss, Graphic Arts Crafts, Inc., 300 Beaver Valley Pike, Willow Street, PA 17584.

A series of books titled "The Spread of Printing through Britain" in the first two centuries after Caxton by William K. Sessions is available from the author at The Ebor Press, York YO3 9HS, England. There are now seven books in the series, at varying prices; write the author/publisher for details.

*Machine Writing and Typesetting* by Frank Romano, a history of the Linotype, has been published to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the invention. 146 pages, illustrated. \$24.95 from National Composition Association, 730 North Lynn St., Arlington, VA 22209. (NCA member's price: \$14.95.)