

The APHA Newsletter

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Stephen O. Saxe, Editor

"We Have a Printery Here"

These words of Hugh Peter, written on December 10, 1638, attest to the beginning of printing in what is now the United States. It is elaborated in the first diary entry for 1639 by Governor John Winthrop (under the old reckoning, the new year began in March):

25 March 1639

A printing house was begun at Cambridge by one Daye, at the charge of Mr. Glover who died on sea hitherward. The first thing that was printed was the freeman's oath, the next was an almanack made for New England by Mr. William Peirce, mariner; the next was the Psalms newly turned into metre.

The exact date of the establishment of the press is not given. The first two imprints have not survived, in spite of the false hopes raised for the *Oath of a Freeman* when Mark Hofmann's fake appeared on the scene three years ago. The single-sheet oath was an easy target for the forger; no one has attempted the "almanack made for New England." The third imprint mentioned by Governor Winthrop, the Bay Psalm Book, was published in 1640 (the reference to it was interpolated into his diary entry afterward.) We assume therefore, that the first printing began in Cambridge in late 1638 or early 1639, warranting the celebration taking place on October 6th and 7th at Harvard, very close to the spot where it all began.

The surviving physical evidence of the earliest printing in Cambridge is slim. Although for years an old press at the Vermont Historical Society was claimed to be Stephen Daye's, it now seems more likely that it dates to the early 18th century. The Daye press has probably long since gone the way of its pressman.

Then there is a matter of printing types. Twelve pieces of type alone are the survivors of this first printing establishment in America. In the course of excavations in 1979 for an extension of the Harvard Square subway station, diggers came upon these types. The inventory below is as given in Gray Graffam's "A Discovery of Seventeenth-Century Printing Types in Harvard Yard" from *Harvard Library Bulletin*, vol. xxx, no. 2 (April 1982).

Modern American type is .918" high. It should be kept in mind that type that has been in the earth for over 300 years might well be corroded; corrosion could cause a growth of oxides that would increase the height of the type. I do not know whether there was corrosion on the excavated types.

Face	Height-to-Paper	Font size
italic l	0.94	double pica (24 pt.)
italic i	0.98	pica (12 pt.)
uppercase O	0.90	pica
space	0.75	pica
figure 1	0.98	pica
comma	0.92	small pica (11 pt.)
[damaged]	0.92	long primer (10 pt.)
italic t	[incomplete]	brevier (8 pt.)
[design]	0.98	brevier
[damaged]	0.98	brevier
long s	0.98	brevier
[design]	0.98	brevier

The types were dated by association with other finds to no later than 1674. Elements of five different type faces were included, as indicated by the sizes. Then a search was made to find Cambridge imprints with impressions from these types. W.H. Bond of the Houghton Library discovered that the double pica italic l was the same size and design as those used in John Eliot's *The Indian Grammar*, 1666. It is possible that this piece of type found in the excavation was used to print that work. All are certainly the oldest surviving types used in America.

The origins of the Cambridge press are carefully recounted in the books listed at the end, but a brief recapitulation may be useful here. Lawrence Wroth has written that the Reverend Jose Glover's decision to bring a printing press to the New World was only partly for the benefit of Harvard College (founded 1636) and for the propagation of the Faith. He writes, "...the project nevertheless seems to have been in the nature of a private venture not entirely disassociated from the idea of gain, whether in money or esteem." Glover had purchased the press with his own money and that of several other contributors. On June 7, 1638 he made a contract with Stephen Daye of Cambridge, England, a locksmith.

The death of Rev. Glover on the Ship *John* of London "hitherward" left the press in the possession of his widow as part of his personal estate. She settled in Cambridge and in 1643 married Rev. Henry Dunster, the president of Harvard. Much of the press's output was related to the College, and also to the work of the Corporation for Propagating the Gospel in New England (founded 1649, the oldest missionary society in the English-speaking world). The headquarters of the Corporation was in London, as was the source of its operating capital. Consequently, examples of the press's production were often sent to the home office, which leads to the hope that perhaps a true copy of the first edition of the Freeman's Oath will turn up there.

The press is gone, the type is gone (but for 12 pieces), and the first two productions of the press are gone. What remains are the imprints starting with the *The Whole Book of Psalms*. This book has been much written about, and is the subject of a talk at the Harvard APHA Conference. In passing, a few facts should be noted. It is a book of 294 unnumbered pages, 5 x 7½ inches in size, printed in an edition of about 1700 copies. There are only eleven copies of this precious book extant, of which eight have never left New England. Its importance was known to some early on; Thomas Prince of Boston had collected five of the copies as early as the 18th century. Prince, a friend and disciple of Cotton Mather, was the first great American book collector. For many years ten copies were known; in 1931 an eleventh was found in Dublin.

The next imprint *may* be (but probably is not) a book label bearing the date 1642 and Stephen Daye's name. It is in the collection of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester. Since no other Cambridge imprint made use of the type ornaments making up the border, considerable doubt has been voiced about this item. It has been suggested that it might be the later work of Harvard students, amusing themselves at the typeset. In any case, Stephen Daye does not seem to have been literate enough to require a book label; it is generally agreed that Stephen's son Matthew did most, if not all, of the actual work of printing from the start.

The second, and undisputed surviving production of the press is a list of theses at the commencement of Harvard College, with a 1643 date. Two copies have survived, one in the University, Glasgow, and the other at the Massachusetts Historical Society. Although the press had no official designation as the "Harvard University Press," in fact it functioned as such. Through the years it produced lists of theses, including those of 1643, 1646, 1647, and 1653.

Although Stephen Daye is usually credited with being the first printer, he was assisted by his son Matthew from the start and it is quite possible that Matthew was the first printer in Cambridge. The productions of the Cambridge press show steady improvement. The first imprint bearing Matthew's name is an almanac for 1647; he died in 1649. At the time of his death there was no other trained printer in the colony. Samuel Green, who was probably chosen by Henry Dunster and the Board of Overseers of Harvard, succeeded the Dayes. He remained the printer of the College for 43 years. His first imprint, *A Platform of Church Discipline*, 1649, shows faulty composition and poor presswork, but these were soon improved. In 1659 a new printing press was sent from England to augment the original one, and with it came "printing letters for the bible."

The most important work from the Cambridge press after the Bay Psalm Book is John Eliot's Indian Bible. Eliot came from England in 1631, and became the minister of the church at Roxbury near Boston. As part of his mission to the native Algonquian Indians, he began in 1649, at the age of 45, the task of translating the Bible into their language. His work is a remarkable feat; there existed no Algonquian written language. Over the years he mastered the process of rendering the spoken language into written form. Published in 1661-1663, it is the first American Bible, as well as the first Bible printed in a non-European language. It is certainly the greatest intellectual achievement of the colonial period. A copy of this book was sold in December,

1986 by Christie's for \$220,000, the highest price ever paid for a book printed in North America. (Before this sale, the record was held by the Bay Psalm Book, which sold in 1947 for \$151,000.) The same copy of the Indian Bible sold by Christie's had sold in 1864 for \$825. In 1985 I received an English bookseller's catalogue in the mail and was astonished to find John Evelyn's inscribed copy of the first edition of Eliot's New Testament, presented to him by Robert Boyle, one of the London commissioners of the Corporation for the Propagation of the Gospel. In its original binding, it was offered for sale at £30,000.

The printing of this great work was begun in 1660 by Samuel Green and Marmaduke Johnson. Johnson, a trained printer, had been hired in England expressly for this work. His contract stipulated that he "shall work twelve hours in every day at the least. . . (Sabbath days excepted)." During part of work on the Bible Johnson languished in prison; he had proposed marriage to Samuel Green's daughter Elizabeth in spite of the fact that he had a wife in England.

The New Testament was published in 1661, in an edition of (probably) 1500 copies; this was followed in 1663 by the Old Testament, which is generally known as the "Indian Bible", in an edition of 1000. The body type sent from England was brevier (8 point) in size. What a daunting task it must have been to set hundreds of pages of small type, in an unknown language, by daylight and candlelight, through all the seasons of the year! A typical page has two columns of 62 lines of type; a portion of a page is reproduced here in actual size. Each line of type had about 35-40

o kēsukqut. nushaog I Kings. Jezabel wūssemoābean Elijahoh

& wame misinninnung uppa- 1 onchteau wut-altarum Jeho- mpilakibonkup. ijan nemunum nabonenash qut- neidtalihik wutchippancuog- onuh Jakob, neh wutinnocwa- paeonukup ncuwop, a pish fract. ulukquanash nashpe ayau altar-	naut wāapemw wutch ketahbannit maktoh- quitem onatuh woiketomp wunnutcheq, kah ncuwau, kuhkuquith us Ahab, quaquahwih kah woimih, onk woh iokanon matta kuh- kuphukoo. 45 Kah nnih, ne alit, kēsukquash kuppog- kiyeualh nakpe mattoqqs kah waban, kah muttaānen, kah Ahab nayeumau, kah au Jez- reel,
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Author's collection

characters, and that meant about 4,500 types per page, exclusive of quads and spaces. The composition of the Bible required about 75,000 pieces of type to be in use at one time, and we may surmise a font of about 150,000 characters in the cases. From this great number of brevier letters the recent excavations at Harvard Square have found exactly two—a long s and a damaged italic t.

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Further Reading

- Haraszti, Zoltan. *The Enigma of the Bay Psalm Book*. Chicago, 1956.
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- Oswald, John Clyde. *Printing in the Americas*. New York, 1937.
- Winship, George Parker. *The Cambridge Press, 1638 - 1692*. Philadelphia, 1942.
- Winslow, Ola Elizabeth. *John Eliot, "Apostle to the Indians"*. Boston, 1968.
- Wroth, Lawrence C. *The Colonial Printer*. 2nd edition, Portland, 1938.

APHA NEWS

APHA invites members and others in the printing history community to submit nominations for the APHA Individual and Institutional Awards. These awards, given for "distinguished contributions to the study, recording, preservation, or dissemination of printing history, in any specific area or in general terms," will be presented at the annual meeting January 27, 1990.

Nominations should be sent to the APHA Awards Committee chair, Katherine Pantzer, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138. The deadline is October 5, 1989. Nominations should be accompanied by detailed, factual information that will aid the selection committee. Awards are open to anyone or any institution in the world; institutions may submit nominations on their own behalf or be nominated by others.

Lieberman Lecture This is a final reminder of the Lieberman Lecture, sponsored by APHA. Clive Griffin of Trinity College, Oxford, will speak on the beginning of printing and publishing in the New World, ca. 1539. The lecture will be given at the John Carter Brown Library, Providence, Rhode Island, on Friday November 3 at 6:00 p.m. It will be followed by a reception and an optional dinner. For additional information, telephone the Library at 401/863-2725.

Van Vliet awarded Fellowship APHA member Claire Van Vliet has been awarded a MacArthur Fellowship. She is a graphic artist, papermaker and printer, and since 1955, the proprietor of the Janus Press in West Burke, Vermont. She has produced scores of brilliant books. The fellowships, often referred to as the "genius" awards, are designed to give recipients the freedom to work in their fields on any projects they wish to pursue. The five-year awards pay from \$30,000 to \$75,000 annually. APHA warmly congratulates Ms. Van Vliet.

Notes From the Past

William Bradford, the first printer in Pennsylvania (and later in New York) is also remembered as the man who turned down Benjamin Franklin for a job when the latter left Boston to seek work. However he did send Franklin to see his son in Philadelphia, thus introducing Franklin to his adopted home.

In 1692-93 Bradford, then printing in Philadelphia, was brought to trial, accused of printing a pamphlet considered seditious by the Quaker authorities. After a spirited defense, "...the types themselves were at last 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 court, Bradford was released."

—Ringwalt, *American Encyclopaedia of Printing* (1871)

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EDITOR'S NOTES

About two years ago, in my series on unusual presses, I described the press at the top of Mt. Washington in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Before the turn of the century *The Voice of the Mountains* was published and sold there to hikers. I have recently come across the following item, reprinted in its entirety from *Youth's Companion*, December 29, 1898:

Editing on Pike's Peak.

Unique among the newspaper offices of the United States, and probably highest in the world, is that on Pike's Peak. The paper is published twice a day. The publisher is Mr. T. B. Wilson, and the following account of the enterprise is taken from the Boston *Transcript*:

For several years Mr. Wilson has been publishing newspapers in the mountains. When he started the *Pike's Peak News*, it was with some misgivings. He located his office on the very peak, but found it better to move down a little. However, he is yet twelve thousand feet above sea-level, and with his wife and daughter, spends a very pleasant summer.

They all work at the paper, when the train on the cog road comes puffing up from Manitou, the passengers are induced to give their names. Then, while they go to the top, the paper is printed, and in it are all the names of those who have been to the peak that day. Of course there is a large sale among them, as they desire the paper as souvenirs of the visit. The editor's wife is able to set type and print the paper as well as her husband.

With the coming of the early winter storms the paper is suspended, for the visitors are not there to patronize it. The press and type are moved to the town below, and there continues in service as an aid to the local paper until there is a resumption of the summer travel up the peak.

The one annoyance of the printer is the relic-hunter. When the newspaper man's back is turned, there is a rush of laughing girls for the type case, to gather type for souvenirs of the trip. One day he published a notice, saying:

"Iph there are seen a phew mistakes in this paper, and we phail to spell all names right, do not blame us, phor it is the best we can do. Some phlighty girls phrom Boston philched all our ephs."

Some of our readers may know that variations of the last paragraph have been printed for many years, and perhaps even Gutenberg may have tried his hand at it.

NOTES & QUERIES

To the Editor:

Let me add my wild guess to the scores, nay hundreds, of responses you will indubitably get to the mystery of the unidentified "Y-shaped" tool shown in the May/June *Newsletter*, viz., that it is a pincer or pliers-like object; a miniature version, if you will, or a tool that must have been common to all contemporary metalworkers.

For an even wilder guess, I refer you to the cover illustration of *Printing History*, XI, 1. In the upper left corner are shown a number of drafting tools (dividers, pens, etc.) and what looks like a pincer (a crab's claw, in fact) opened and closed with a threaded (?) knob. You will observe that it is --ta--DA-- Y-shaped.

Wilbur Doctor
Kingston, RI

Perhaps. However, the tools on the Printing History cover are lithographer's tools; the Y-shaped tool is actually an holder for a lithographer's crayon, which is inserted and secured by tightening the threaded ring.

BRIEFLY NOTED

The Typophiles At the June meeting of The Typophiles in New York, former APHA President Dr. Morris A. Gelfand was named the new president of the organization. The announcement was made by the current president, Abe Lerner, who announced that he was stepping down from the post he has held since 1986.

The Typophiles was the creation of Paul Bennett. On his death Robert L. Leslie took over the group. Through the years The Typophiles has published a great many distinguished chapbooks, monographs, and other pieces, many of which deal with the history of printing.

Forged Document Conference A conference will be sponsored by the University of Houston, November 2-4, to examine the growing national problem of forged historical documents. The keynote address will be delivered by Pulitzer prize-winning author Larry McMurtry, who is also the owner of a bookstore in Houston and a board member of the Book Club of Texas. The topic of his address is historical integrity as it relates to printed and manuscript documents.

As described in a recent issue of the *Newsletter*, many forged historical documents relating to Texas were uncovered by APHA member W. Thomas Taylor of Austin. Mr. Taylor will be one of the participants in the conference along with Nicholas Barker of the British Museum; Anthony Rota, bookseller of London; Dr. Anthony Cantu of the U.S. Secret Service; William Joyce of Princeton; and George Miles, curator of Western Americana at Yale.

For conference reservation information, contact Pat Bozeman, head of UH Special Collections, at 713/749-2726.

Jenkins Death One of the Texas book dealers who sold several copies of the forged Texas documents was John Jenkins, publisher and former president of the Antiquarian

Booksellers Association of America, and a member of its board. On April 16 he was found dead in the Colorado River in Bastrop, Texas, a single gunshot wound in his head.

Bastrop County police are unable (at last report) to determine whether the death was a suicide or homicide. Jenkins was facing a host of problems. His sale of faked documents (which he maintained had been obtained through legitimate channels.) was one; the ABAA was about to release a report on the fakes that was critical of Jenkins. In addition, there was a fire at Jenkins Publishing in 1985 that was determined to be arson; an indictment naming Jenkins was in the works, according to published reports. There were probably several faked documents destroyed in the fire, for which Jenkins had collected insurance. Finally, Sheriff Con Keirseay said that several of Jenkins' associates (whom he did not identify) had said that Jenkins had "frequently" talked about how easy it would be to fake a suicide in order to collect on an insurance policy.

•SURVIVALS•

Civil War Portable Type Chest



© Smithsonian Institution

Newsletter 90 described American Civil War army field printing, and illustrated the presses used. A recently-discovered chest has now been acquired by the National Park Service. The chest is two feet wide, 18 inches deep, and 14 inches high. It contains six type cases, so constructed that their type cannot pi. It is virtually the same as the only other Civil War type chest known, which is in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution. The lettering on the top of this chest, however, is in much better condition. It reads, "HEAD QUARTERS ARMY of POTOMAC. PRINTING DEPARTMENT. No. 5"

The chest was probably manufactured in 1863. It is stamped with the names of two companies, "S. Mather, Phila." and "L. Johnson & Co. Phila." Mather was a manufacturer of printers' equipment; L. Johnson was the leading American type foundry, the successors of Binny and Ronaldson and the antecedents of MacKellar Smiths & Jordan and, eventually, the American Type Founders Company.