This newsletter, a publication of The American Printing History Association is sent without charge to all members. See back page for mailing address information. Edited by Prof. Catherine Tyler Brody. Assistant Editor, Philip Sperling.

A REMINDER. The Eighth Annual APHA Conference will be held on Saturday, September 24, 1983 with the theme of "Twentieth Century American Typography and Typographers." Members will receive in the mail the registration form for this day-long event, which will take place at Columbia University.

THE PERMANENCE OF EPHEMERA: In 1980 at the Fifth Annual Conference of the American Printing History Association, a packet of keepsakes was distributed to all the registrants. Now again for the Eighth Annual Conference, registrants will receive a collection of keepsakes that we feel will be treasured. Morris A. Gelfand, our APHA President and also the proprietor printer/publisher of The Stone House Press, has arranged with many of the best printers in these United States for a series of broadsides especially designed and printed for the conference. The registrants to this Eighth Conference are in for a tremendous, delightful presentation.

APHA Publications: Members should say "bravo" to John B. Hench, Vice President-Publications and to the editors Susan O. Thompson and Catherine Tyler Brody (and their assistants) of Printing History and The APHA Letter respectively. With Issue No. 9 of the journal and No. 54 of the newsletter now out to all members, APHA publication schedules are right on target. For the remainder of 1983 members will receive newsletters Numbers 55 and 56 (properly spaced) and Printing History Issue No. 10 by the end of year.

TYPEFACE SPECIMENS WANTED. APHA member Mac McGrew, retired printer/typographer/type director and author of numerous articles on type and typography, is deep into compiling a comprehensive book on twentieth century American metal typefaces. It will cover virtually all types of the period and much more, with specimens, designers, manufacturers, dates and other details as available, for foundry, slug and single types. With nearly 1300 specimens now on hand, Mac is issuing a last call for help in filling in the missing pieces. Most valuable to his cause are the specimen books of typographers, printers, and founders, as well as the fonts of typographers or hobbyists willing to assist. Mac has a "want list" of faces still needed, as well as reprints of some of his typographic articles, which he will be glad to send to interested persons. His address is 181 Mt. Lebanon Boulevard, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15228.

THE BOOK ARTS RESURGENT. The overwhelming power of the electronic age notwithstanding, the art of letter press will not die! This September 28th through October 3rd, the Fourth Annual Book Arts Festival will be celebrated at the Museum of New Mexico's Palace of the Governors. Pamela Smith, Palace printer and coordinator of the event says that such projects in the book arts lead to collaboration. Working together during this Festival will be printers, typesetters, lithographers, binders, calligraphers and many other book artists. For further information about this Book Arts Fair, write: Museum of New Mexico Public Information Office, Box 2087 Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87503.
GLAD HAND PRESS WOOD ENGRAVINGS. Through the Chiswick Book Shop Inc. (98 Walnut Tree Hill Road, Sandy Hook, CT, 06482) collectors have been given the opportunity to obtain a unique collection of the wood engravings in the possession of Robert M. Jones' Glad Hand Press. For over 50 years Bob Jones has been printing posters, designs and varied art work. This volume, his only book, consists of impressions from the original blocks -- some 254 of them, dating from the late 17th century to 1940 (including 30 by Thomas Bewick and his pupils). The printer has contributed a charming preface and a running commentary. One hundred copies were printed by hand, with 55 reserved for special friends. The work was printed a page at a time. With the exception of the preface it was "written at the case" after space for the block had been accommodated, and each page was "designed on the stone." Bob Jones believes that this is the first book on the subject to have been printed entirely from the original blocks since 1882. Except for a few specially bound copies, the edition was issued in sheets (83 pages in seven signatures, 11" x 7"), hand-set in 18 pt. Farmer's Old Style Italic, with 28 pt. Weimar and 10 and 18 pt Bulmer, printed on 80 lbs. Carress white paper, and is protected by a dark blue paper box with sheath. The price is $45.00 (Connecticut sales tax is $3.38.)

PRIVATE PRESSES WITH PROPRIETARY TYPES: The focus of a new exhibit in the Rare Book and Special Collections Division Reading Room (Library of Congress) is on type faces that were designed, cast and used exclusively for individual presses. This exhibit ranges from the Golden type used by William Morris in 1891 to the Robin type designed, cut and cast in 1982 by Stan Nelson for his Atelier Press in Columbia, Maryland. The exhibit continues through the month of August and a free brochure which reproduces a few lines of each type shown is available free upon request. Write: Rare Book and Special Collection Division, Jefferson Building, Room 256, Washington, D.C. 20540.


Trinity-Westside Antiquarian Book Fair, 101 West 91st Street, New York City, October 21-23, 1983.

UCLA Antiquarian Book Fair, sponsored by the Friends of the UCLA Library, October 22-23, 1983 at the Ackerman Student Union, UCLA.

NEW OR NEARLY SO, AND FOR YOUR ATTENTION. The Press at Colorado under James Trissel, proprietor, announces two new publications: Dentelle/Indented, a bilingual edition with face-en-face translations of four major poets from Quebec, edited by E.R. Peterson and Ronald Sutherland. And Tattoo Parlor and Other Fraxioms, A Verse Invention by Ernest Kroll. For information write the Press at Colorado College, Colorado Spring, CO 80903.


From David R. Godine, Publisher: A Constructed Roman Alphabet, A Geometric Analysis of the Greek and Roman Capitals and of the Arabic Numerals by David Lance Goines. This is another excellent book in the long series of books about printing, typography and graphic design issued by Godine. For detailed information write: 306 Dartmouth Street, Boston, MA 02116.

And finally from Van Nostrand Reinhold Company - A History of Graphic Design by Philip B. Meggs. This is a history of communication from the invention of writing and the origin of printing through to today's electronic age.
MY TWO LIVES IN RARE BOOKS
BY: LEONA ROSTENBERG

An address delivered at the Ninth Annual Meeting of the American Printing History Association, January 29, 1983, in acceptance of APHA's Annual Award, presented in recognition of her services advancing understanding of the history of printing and its allied arts.

It is quite ironical that I stand here today, the recipient of this distinguished APHA Award for whatever contributions I have made to the influence of printing and publishing on society. Over four decades ago, as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of History, Columbia University, I proposed to my adviser the subject of my doctoral dissertation: "The Influence of the Early Sixteenth Century Printer and Publisher on the Spread of Humanism and the Reformation." My sponsor believed the subject devoid of historical significance. I disagreed. Three years later my thesis was rejected by him on the grounds of invalidity.

Long before I entered Columbia for graduate studies I had displayed some interest in printing history. At college I wrote a lengthy paper on Caxton embellishing the title-page with a reproduction of his device. I owned a small hand press and attempted some binding which resulted in a morass of glue. Nonetheless, I had been touched by the mystique of the graphic arts!

Registering at Columbia as a graduate for the Ph.D. degree, I decided to major in medieval history and minor in modern. Naturally, I enrolled in one of the most prestigious courses offered by the pride of the department, Lynn Thorndike: "Studies on the Intellectual History of the Closing Medieval and Early Modern Centuries." I believed I was to be afforded an amazing panorama of intellectual phenomena, the astounding development of man's spiritual emancipation and the unfolding enlightenment of these many centuries.

Of my professor - who never wished to be addressed as Dr. - little did I know of his abiding passion, his violent predilection for magic and conjuration, the seers and necromancers of the Middle Ages.

Clad in his customary dark green suit, scarcely addressing his students, Mr. Thorndike rambled about a dim, remote world of the past. His seminar students, ten in number, were not to become ten little Indians, but ten little seers floating about in a sea of medieval darkness and mysticism.

Completely disinterested in my professor's faith in the revelation of horoscope and prognostication, I was assigned the subject of my seminar paper: "There is a growing need to comprehend the vast influence of the translations of the writings of the twelfth-century Arabic astrologers on western society. I wish you to pursue this subject."

At the time it would have been preferable that I had been the first missile projected into space never to return! I remained aghast. I had never shown any interest in astronomy. I associated astrology with second floor gypsy tea rooms. As far as these Arab cognoscenti were concerned I knew not a single name. As I scanned the somewhat dim outline of the Big Dipper on a clear evening of 20th century New York, I could scarcely follow its configuration.

Yet I was a student of one of the most influential Columbia professors whose bidding was not to be questioned. So now I plunged into the Latin translations of the 12th-century Arabic astrological writers: reading their messages of gloom and disaster, their omniscience observing the conjunctions of the planets, the clashes of Mars and Jupiter, the dread portents of disease, famine, war and death!

After an intimacy of over three months with
the Muslim crowd I arrived at two conclusions. Certainly the Twelfth Century Arab Brotherhood of Portent and Prediction was bound by one mystical link - all of their names began with "AL:" Albohazen Haly, Alubather, Alchabitius, Alfragamus, Albusar. I also realized that, although I had little liking for these forbears of OPEC, I had, nonetheless, become utterly enamored of the 15th-and 16th-century book which housed their tenets: the format, the type, the paper, the woodcut borders, the musk of ancient ink, the colophons, the printers' names. I had fallen in love - not with Albohazen Haly - but with early printed books! (1)

Mr. Thorndike appeared to be quite pleased with my findings and a few days after my Orals he summoned me to his office high in Fayerweather Hall to discuss my doctoral thesis:

"I would like you to continue the subject of your seminar paper as your dissertation. Naturally you can continue your findings into the 13th-century..."

The joy of accomplishing my own research vanished. I was stifled by the familiar approach of turban and scimitar. I had no desire whatsoever to continue any relationship with the Arab fraternity, the conjunctions of the planets, the hocus-pocus of astrology. I had, however, as a result of studying the texts of the Renaissance, arrived at the subject of my thesis. I wished to investigate the role of the early printer-publisher, his place in society and his influence on the spread of humanism and the development of the Reformation." Mr. Thorndike had turned glacial. "The printer of this period was a mere dolt, an artisan, uneducated. He had no point of view and furthermore I doubt he could possibly have exercised any influence. It is a foolish venture. I suggest you continue with your original project."

But I was young; I was confident; I was brash. I was intoxicated with the idea of my project. Surely Lynn Thorndike was wrong and with convincing proof I could easily persuade him of the validity and significance of my subject. Doubtless, I was the first woman in the annals of Columbia University to have defied the seer of Fayerweather Hall!

I gathered together reams of paper; a box of index cards, two new Parker pens; bought a ticket - tourist class - for France and once landed, headed directly for Strasbourg which although German in sentiment, was still a province of la belle France. Here I availed myself of the marvelous reserve division of the Bibliotheque Nationale et Universitaire and the Archives of St. Guillaume. Here I met the Curator of Rare Books who was deeply interested in the project and brought to my attention little known early 16th-century books. The prefaces of my publishers and the numerous fulminations of reformer and defender of the faith, the handsomely embellished texts, the fine woodcut initials, the occasional borders of Holbein, Urs Graf and Hans Weiditz all convinced me that I had embarked on a venture of the greatest substance and significance. I became so imbued with the past that I practically sauntered arm-in-arm with Erasmus along the banks of the green river Ill where my publishers had ambled over 400 years ago.

When I returned home and eventually presented a rough draft of the first part of my thesis to Mr. Thorndike, he rather coolly inquired whether I had studied the workings of the great clock of Conrad Dasypodius in the Cathedral and whether I had taken the time to read his new monograph, One Thousand Medieval Incipits. (2) Once the final draft of my completed dissertation was submitted I was summoned to Fayerweather Hall. I was succinctly informed by my adviser that my thesis was unacceptable. My arguments lacked authority and my printer-publishers - as he had predicted - were hacks devoid of any education (despite the fact that two enjoyed university degrees). My thesis offered nothing original to scholarship. Mr. Thorndike rose; nodded curtly and closed the door. I was an outsider - a pariah!

I had through research at the New York Public Library met the charming Victor Hugo Paltsits who, at the time, was President of the Bibliographical Society of America. (2a) I discussed my desperate plight with him. He patted my shoulder. "You know kid, there's some Austrian fellow who has recently come over. He wants to set up in rare books. He hardly speaks English. Maybe he can use you."

And so I travelled to 34 East 62nd Street to be greeted at the door, second floor rear, by a short, thick-set, swarthy man,
with a bulbous nose and lanky black hair. Our palms were mutually damp as we greeted.

"I speak English nicht so gut, Fraulein." "Ich spreche Deutsch nicht so gut, mein Herr."

And so I began my apprenticeship to a volatile, hysterical, moody, pathologically orderly, hypochondriacal, impassioned bookman whose zest for his profession to some extent overcame his many failings. It is certain that Herbert Reichner would never win a popularity contest, but his tremendous knowledge and familiarity with the great range of the printed book places him in the pantheon of outstanding antiquarian booksellers.

Although I was, of course, familiar with the names of the 12th-century astrological brotherhood - a fact which constantly bewildered him - and Strasbourg imprints from 1501 to 1550, I was now utterly bedazzled by a far different array of books which were carefully and tenderly arranged on the handsome shelves owned by the rotund Herbert.

My eyes widened as I beheld books magnificent in typography: Jensons and Kelmscotts; folios with illustrations by Durer and Rubens; bindings executed for Grolier and Payne or crafted by Padeloup and Derome; type specimen books of Fournier and Bodoni; emblematica of Petit Salomon and Romein de Hooghe, first editions of Newton, Lavoisier, Rabelais, Galileo, Fichte, Freud, Marx and a music score of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy.

Although I almost daily bemoaned my employer's erratic moods and violent temper, I knew that my future had been sealed and that one day, when I escaped the bars of 34 East 62nd Street, I would with my dearest friend Madeleine Stern, find my spot in the sun.

When I bade farewell to Herbert after an arduous apprenticeship of five long years, he waggled his thick pudgy forefinger at me:

"Ach, my dear young lady, you are making a big mistake. You will regret this decision. Do you think it is easy to sell rare books? And besides you will certainly not have the time to sit in your stupid Schraffts and eat all those horrible hot fudge sundaies - so vos schrecklicklites!"

In Herbert's dossier of Schrecklickliten several headed the list: the stupidity of the American customer who could not recognize the literary and philosophical superiority of Goethe to Shakespeare; the imbecility of the United States Postal Service and the inanities of the United States Customs Bureau (the last two still valid grievances).

Yet during the five years that I toiled under Reichner's wrathful eye he never discussed the real responsibility of the antiquarian book dealer. It is true that he is a merchant who offers wares, but unlike other members of trade, he has been for the most part metamorphosed into a scholar. His is a unique position since he is the recipient of a precious bounty, the book, its legatee and it becomes his obligation to bestow this trust upon his successor - enriched by his knowledge, his devotion. No rare book dealer - if he calls himself such - can master all facets of the trade. He must be a specialist and bring to his specialty an accretion of knowledge - the dues and tithes of his profession.

In his accumulation or selection of stock a dealer may become a specialist in the Civil War, herbs, sports, jeweled bindings, press books, the Renaissance, the English romantics, the baroque, modern firsts, communism, angling and silver fish, medicine, archaeology or technology.

It is quite possible for the specialist-dealer - even 'midst the abundance of dissertations and monographs - to find in his subject area a new aspect, a hidden quality. Each book is a separate entity to be analyzed. Can there not be an innovation in type, a different ink, an uncommon headpiece, a variant binding? How fortunate is the antiquarian dealer surrounded by his books, his reference library, his flat-topped desk only partially covered with bills - a ream of paper and a dictionary. Jog him a bit and he will produce - perhaps an article - perhaps a bibliography or even a book - most certainly a valid contribution to the rich storehouse of book history.

Perhaps a psychiatrist would conclude that the hurt inflicted upon me by Lynn Thorndike has never really healed since upon the acquisition of a new work I always look for the name of the printer or publisher. Some years ago we had been commissioned by a customer to purchase a copy of Edward Winslow, Good Nevves from New England.
London: John Bellamy, 1624. This, indeed, was an extremely rare Americanum. I began to wonder about Bellamy who, I discovered, had also published the writings of several other Pilgrim fathers, Cushman, Mourt, Morrell, Robinson and others. Was he motivated by economic reasons alone to publish texts associated with the sojourners in the remote American wilderness? Research produced a few answers. Although John Bellamy of the Two Greyhounds, London, had never traveled to Plymouth, Massachusetts, in spirit he had joined with his Pilgrim brethren. Like some before their departure for America, he was a member of the first Separatist Church at Southwark, London and in true Separatist spirit he described it "as a true church of Christ, the Ministry thereof as received by the people, a true Ministry." Although Bellamy never joined his co-religionists in their overseas venture, he dedicated his press to the propagation of their writings. His convictions abetted the Separatist movement at home and abroad. (4)

Having purchased a small collection of English Commonwealth tracts we began their arrangement. An edict entitled Scriptum Parlamenti Reipublicae Angliae, London: Dugard, 1652 caught my eye. The work was actually a Latin declaration of war by the Commonwealth against the States of Holland. I had begun some research on its printer Dugard and knew that he was a friend of Milton. Suddenly the Scriptum assumed a new grandeur, a loftier stature. What was the great poet doing at the time? Was not John Milton Latin Secretary to the Commonwealth's Council of State? Did he not translate all official communiques and supervise government papers for the press? In this case two and two made much more than four - it totalled 100 percent. The Scriptum was a Milton item and bears for all time the stamp of his style and the seal of his office. But what else about Dugard? He had been headmaster of the Merchant Taylor's School and during the late 1640's had been admitted a freeman of the School's school books. A close friend of Harrington, he was extremely interested in political theory. He published Milton's First Defense and Selden, Mare Clausum. Mr. Dugard, as a young scholar had received his bachelor's degree from Sydney Sussed College, Cambridge, four years later earning his master's degree.

I do not believe it is the wont of Cambridge University to bestow undergraduate or graduate degrees on "dolts!" (5)

In the early sixties the firm acquired a marvelous run of the Philosophical Transactions from the inception of the journal in March 1665 through 1712. We drooled over its contents: experiments on the transfusion of blood, papers of Newton, Boyle, Hooke, Wren, Evelyn, Huygens, Leeuwenhoek. As I began to collate the many issues my eye caught the name of the printer: "John Martyn Printer to the Royal Society." A printer with so lofty an appellation certainly demanded investigation. And so I roamed the happy hunting grounds of research and discovered that Martyn and his partner James Allestry had been appointed "Printers to the Royal Society" - recently established. They were responsible for the monthly publication of the Transactions. John Martyn's bookshop, the Bell in St. Paul's Churchyard, was the rendez-vous for many of the Society's members, most notably of the Restoration virtuoso, the brilliant Robert Hooke, an impassioned book collector who purchased 'on approval,' exchanged and returned books, there tarried to read relations of colonial Virginia or Nova Zembla. (6) And so my various articles on the 17th-century English printer-publishers appeared in the Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America and The Library and gathered together became a 2-volume work, Literary, Political, Scientific, Religious Publishing, Printing & Bookselling in England 1551-1700: Twelve Studies. (Note, the title was not of my choosing!!)

The time had arrived for me to return to the 16th-century - not to Strasbourg - not to the publications of the Arab boys - but rather to London at the time of religious faction, political manifesto and opposition, a time of struggle between the defenders of the old religion and the crusaders of the new. Once again the printer-publisher took up the cudgels for his faith. William Carter, the Catholic printer of Hart Street, had issued "naughty papyisticaull bookes." He was hounded by her Majesty's searchers; arrested; given a farcial trial and hanged. A printer-publisher hanged in Elizabethan England for his moral convictions! Such loyal Catholic pressmen, John Heigham and Lawrence Kellam, departed the realm for Flanders to carry on through the media of their presses missionary work, publishing a host of Catholic books, exported surreptitiously to the homeland. The governments of Elizabeth and James I not merely satisfied with the persecution of Catholics
pursued authors and printers critical of the government. The lampoonists and printers of the Marprelate tracts were hounded by the state and despite the efforts of the Stationer's Company searchers, the press continued its relentless pamphlet war assailing luxury and episcopacy. My book, The Minority Press and the English Crown, A Study in Repression, 1558-1625 celebrates the triumph of the Catholic printer-publisher and his Puritan counterpart against the repressive policy of the Crown. (7)

When in March 1973, members of the History Department, Columbia University, after the defense of two of my books, reversed their decision and unanimously agreed to grant me my long dormant degree, Doctor of Philosophy, I turned their attention to a yellowing document on a table. It was my original application for my degree.

"Gentlemen, in my profession this is a valuable, venerable document," I commented. We all laughed and shook hands - all pleased - all happy. Had not another faculty overtaken Fayerweather Hall sensitive to the sovereignty of the student, his formulation of ideas, his right to investigate, to discuss? (8) I have occasionally reflected on the future I might have lived, had I obeyed Lynn Thorndike's injunctions and pursued the influence of the 13th-century Arab-Astro League. I seriously believe that I would have spent many years in Creedmore or ridden the tail of a comet straight to eternity. One thing is definite. I should never have known all these wonderful books of the past centuries and the many congenial, highly informed associates of my profession. And it is more that certain I would not be here today the recipient of this coveted APHA Award.

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Notes


2a At the winter meeting, December 1939 Dr. Paltsits invited Leona Rostenberg to speak on any part of her rejected dissertation before the members of the Bibliographical Society. Her paper "The Printers of Strassburg and Humanism, From 1501 Until the Advent of the Reformation" appeared in the Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America (New York 1940) XXXIV, 1st quarter.

3. The firm of Leona Rostenberg Rare Books was officially opened Sept. 15, 1944; Madeleine B. Stern became a partner on April 12, 1945. The firm is now entitled Leona Rostenberg & Madeleine B. Stern Rare Books.


8. The author has just completed a study entitled The Library of Robert Hooke: The Scientific Book World of Restoration England. The work reproduces the Bibliotheca Hookiana, the library of the scientist Hooke which was sold at public auction 28 April 1703.

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The speech of Madeleine B. Stern, who also received the APHA Award in January, 1983, will be published in a forthcoming issue of the APHA Letter.
MORE GOLD FROM AN ABANDONED LODE. Back in newsletter No. 48 we printed verses from UNJUSTIFIED LINES, Rhymes about Printers and Their Ancestors, written by Beatrice Warde who then used the pseudonym of Paul Beaujon. For those of you who have lost or misplaced Letter No. 48, may we repeat that this collection first appeared in PHILOBIBLON, a magazine published in the 1930's in Vienna by Herbert Reichner as an insert printed at the Chiswick Polytechnic School of Art. Our selections were chosen at random, but now we start at the beginning - The Prologue:

Who shall win free of Time, if not the Craftsmen
Who shaped the Visible Word
With chisel, pen or type in former ages?
Do they not share, who wrought enduring pages,
The freedom they conferred?

Perhaps the jealous vigil was not ended
When the wise hands were still;
Who knows what curious ghosts observe the wonders
Of strange machines, and gently guide from blunders
Young hands that lack their skill?

Let it be so in fancy: let the Craftsmen
(Set free from space and time)
Return to watch the task that has no ending:
We've shown them all that's new; and we're pretending
They answer us in rhyme...

QUERIES. The response to our recent query concerning printers' hats has been phenomenal. We have received a number of replies, including sketches, diagrams and actual samples. The material will appear in our next issue, but we are still seeking information as to their origin and history.

"ANTIQUARIAN GRAPHICS." Aaron's Archives (5185 Windfall Road, Medina, Ohio 44256) has for sale a broad assortment of lithographs and engravings, priced from $6.00 to $850.00. For more information you may write to the above address. Included are illuminated manuscripts, incumabula leaves, woodcuts, steel engravings, chromolithographs, cigar box labels, etc.

Mailing Addresses for APHA

NEWSLETTER ONLY: Send news items, announcements, comments & other materials for inclusion in The APHA Letter directly to the Editor: Prof. Catherine T. Brody, New York City Technical College, 300 Jay Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201.

DUES, Contributions, Change of Address Notices, & All Other Correspondence:
Send to APHA, P.O.Box 4922, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

MEMBERSHIPS are for the Calendar Year & include all APHA publications for that year. Annual personal membership for 1983 is $15.00 and $20.00 for organizations (in the U.S.A.).

Copies of available back issues of The APHA Letter are for sale to members at $2.50 each; numbers 1 through 20 are out of print. Back issues of Printing History are all available at $7.50 each except Issue 7 8 at $15.00. Send orders to the APHA Box Number.