



APA

Journal

AMALGAMATED PRINTERS' ASSOCIATION

December 2008 ■ 5

EDITOR'S NOTE



With this issue I hope to start a regular feature "About our members."

To kick it off, I asked Greg Walters to tell about how he got started with his collection. Greg has a considerable collection of presses and type casting equipment.

Greg agreed to the article and said, "Generally I'm not much of a talker, but I can write and write and write some more." That was okay with me. Who gets tired of reading about type, presses and type casting?

I want to point out that this feature will not only be about those members who have the largest shop, collection of whatever. Those with a Kelsey and a few fonts of type will be featured along with those who have considerable assets.

Hey! Merry Christmas!

NEW MAILER FOR JANUARY BUNDLE!



**Send your 155
pieces to the new
mailer by
January 10, 2009:**

**Don Tucker
4600 N. Cooper Ave.
Oklahoma City, OK 73118**

*A very special thanks to outgoing
Mailer, Michael Langford who did
an excellent job this past year!*

COLLECTING Type, Press and Typecasting

By GREGORY J. WALTERS

Like many APA members, printing was thrust upon me at Christmas. I was given a child's "Superior" tin printing press with rubber type. I was 14 years old at the time, so I certainly wasn't a child prodigy. I had been delivering papers for the local newspaper for several years, and my parents knew I was fascinated by the printing press that printed the paper every day. It was a 1907 Hoe triple-deck straightline press that could run 12 pages straight or 24 pages collect.

Once I had a printing press of my own, it was only natural that I should print my

OUR MEMBERS about

GREGORY J. WALTERS, #777, from Piqua, Ohio, joined APA in 2004. He's a Mac operator for Concept Imaging Group, affiliated with Printing Service Company. The company specializes in large format offset and digital printing—the smallest offset press is 60" and the largest is 54x77."

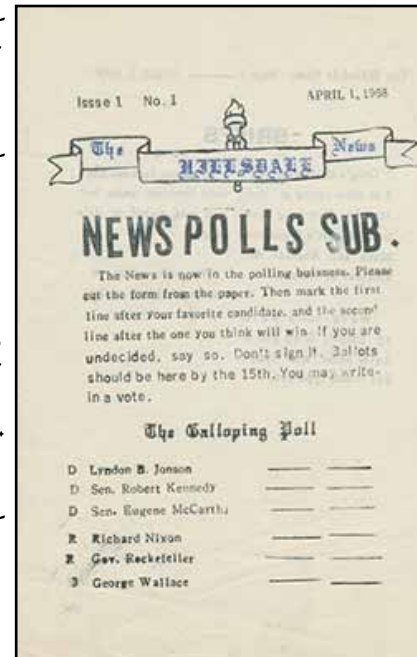
own newspaper. As the picture shows, my typographic skills were non-existent, and I made lots of beginner mistakes, including plenty of Wedding Text, and even in all caps. The newspaper came out monthly, and the third issue announced that another printing press had been acquired—a 9x13 Kelsey with several fonts of type. This was the big time.

The Kelsey didn't come with instructions, so I visited the local library where there were six or eight books about printing. I supposed that was all that had ever been written on the subject. I quickly learned the California job case and then added to my holdings with type from Quaker City—Copperplate Gothic and more Wedding Text. My printing was better than it had been with the rubber type, but it was still dreadful. I printed stationery for neighbors

and tickets for high school choir concerts. I was so happy to do printing that I only charged them for the paper.

When I registered for high school sophomore classes, I was delighted to see a printing class being offered. I signed up and spent the summer fantasizing about it. Imagine my disappointment after Labor Day when I was told the class had been cancelled. They didn't have a teacher, and besides, I was the only one who had signed up. But it worked out for the better. When they found that I was already do-

ing printing, they hired me to be the school printer. This was the big time. There was a 10x15 Kluge Automatic, a Miehle V-36, several cabinets of type, a miter, a slug cutter, and an imposing stone. I had it all, including the instruction manuals. The quality of my pressmanship continued to improve, but my typography was stuck in the 1930's.



The school paid me a whopping \$1.10 an hour (below minimum wage), so I naturally decided to forego doctoring and lawyering in favor of printing. In retrospect, I'm not sure that was the best way to go. I knew my skills weren't where they should be, so I headed for Ferris State College in Big Rapids, Michigan. They had a 2-year program leading to an Associate Degree, and the brochure showed rows of Linotype machines, offset presses, a newspaper press, and best of all, a Miehle Horizontal press. The library was extraordinary. While the local library had only 6 or 8 books on printing, the Ferris library must have had 600-800 books on printing, surely all that had ever been written on the subject. This was really the big time, and I hoped I was up to the challenge.

My dream wasn't crushed until the second quarter when I entered the Letterpress Pressmanship class. The professor said that if we had any spare time, we should strip all the brass and copper oil lines from the Miehle Horizontal. The machine was going to be scrapped, and I would never get a chance to run it. I was given the honor of helping

to move it to the loading dock for the scrapper. That's when it finally sunk in that I was not training to be a letterpress printer. The Linotypes hung on for several years after I took the class, but we all knew that when we got into the workforce, we'd probably be working on computer typesetters.

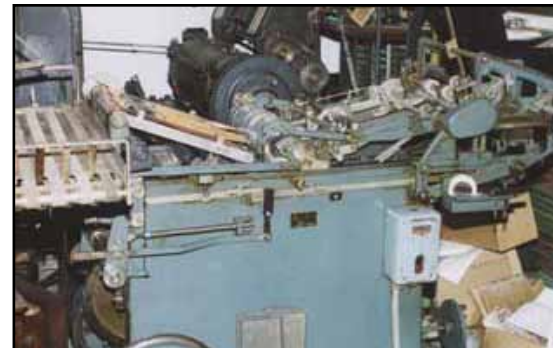
I did learn a lot about letterpress in college. I know the proper way to do makeready, even if I usually take shortcuts. But the greatest learning experience was not in the classroom. I took advantage of the fantastic library and learned all about the Kelmscott and Doves Presses, about W. Caslon, G. Bodoni, and C. Garamond, about Stanley Morison, Fred Goudy, and the Bentons, about so much more than we covered in the classroom. I read Updike's *Printing Types* from cover to cover, perhaps the only Ferris student ever to do so. By the time I graduated, my view had changed. Putting ink on paper was all

well and good, but the real excitement lay in typography.

I graduated from FSC in 1974 with a Bachelor's Degree in Printing Management. They had expanded beyond the 2-year program, and as I went to summer school, I was the first graduate. I've worked in the printing business ever since, but never on the management side and never in letterpress. My 9x13 Kelsey traveled with me to Ohio, New York City, Michigan, and back to Ohio.

Hot metal madness begins

About 20 years ago I got a brand new house with a garage and basement, and that's when I began to think I might possibly like something more than the Kelsey. I bought a dead Kelly Clipper and a 9x12 Multipress from a local printer and had them put in the basement. The Kelly is still dead, but I've printed



I mainly use the Multipress to print envelopes. In the background is the Kelly Clipper. Both presses were lowered into the basement with a crane before the house was put up.



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welcomed. The publication is published as the spirit moves the editor but a monthly schedule is hoped for. [Contact the editor.](#)

APA's web site:

[Amalgamated Printers' Association](#)



An Elrod stripcaster—my first hot metal machine.

more than 100,000 9x12 envelopes on the Multipress. I was happy to have the presses, but still missed the hot metal.

The next purchase was an odd one—an Elrod stripcaster. I took it apart, cleaned it, took it to the basement in pieces, erected it, and it worked. Since then it has been an obsession to collect and preserve typesetting machines. I am not sure how many machines I have, and it's too cold to take inventory. I think I have 23 machines of Monotype manufacture, with Composition Casters being the most numerous. In addition there are 2 Intertypes, 2 Ludlows and 2 Elrods. There are a couple oldies—a Nurnberger-Rettig Universal Pivotal caster and a pivotal caster I imported from India.

There are also a number of typesetting machines from ATF. I attended the auction

in 1993. Machines were at giveaway prices, but moving them is not cheap, and then there is the problem of storage. I saved four Barth Casters, one of which is the 72 pt. machine at the Dale Guild. I also saved two Giant Pivotal casters and a number of smaller pivotal casters (one of which is at the Dale Guild). A semi brought the machines back to Ohio, but a couple Barth Casters had to be left behind because the truck was overweight. If that's not enough, a couple years ago I was given six Barth casters that Howard Bratter had. If you have a typesetting machine, you then become obsessed with finding mats for it. There are all those faces you'd like to cast, and then all the ones you don't like, but someone else might like. Which is all of them. I estimate I have about 9,900 fonts of mats, well over half of which are Monotype display mats. It might sound like a treasure trove, but keep in mind that we're talking about 10 or 15 fonts of every size of Franklin Gothic. If I counted the number of different fonts, it might be 2,000 or 2,500.

Where is this going?

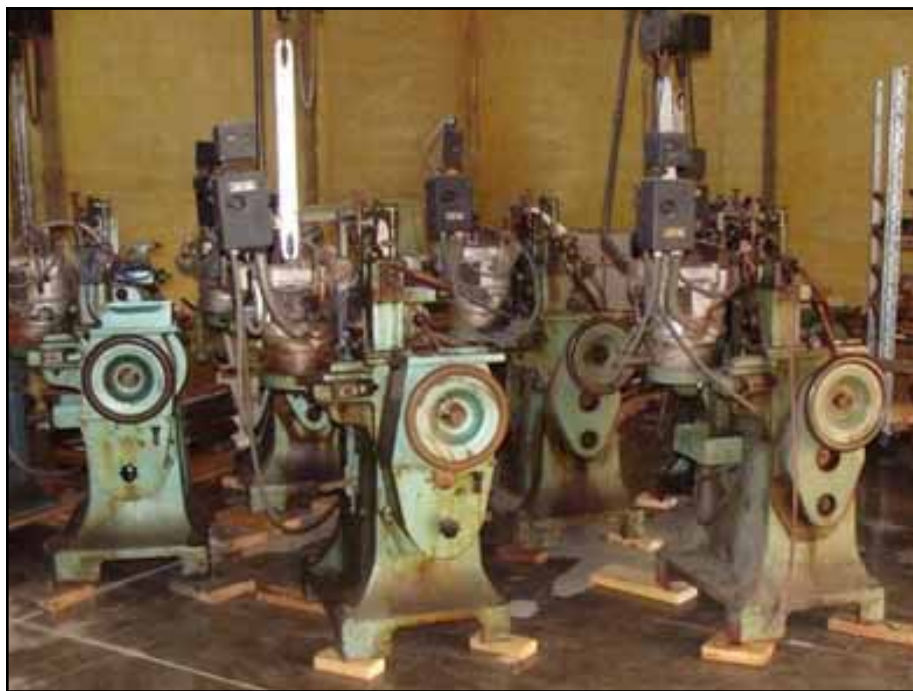
As you might guess, I will never use many of these machines, nor most of the mats. Many of the Composition Casters are saved from the scrap heap in the hope that someday they will at least be useful for parts. As the machines have been acquired, storage space



Here I am with one of the six Barth Casters currently crammed into my garage. These will be moved to the new pole barn addition. Photo by Don Black

became a problem which then resulted in there being no space to use those machines, which were useable. Last year I planned a 60x40' addition to my pole building with the intention to get machines in operation. After many delays, the building is up and equipment is being moved in. But in the meantime

Castcraft in Chicago once had a huge casting operation and was known for copying European faces including Helvetica, Optima, Melior, etc. This past summer I had the opportunity to buy the remainder of their typesetting equipment, which



A battalion of German Küco foundry typesetters awaits orders. All of these machines were built after 1960, making them some of the newest typesetters around. Photo by Don Black

were the foundry machines for casting the European faces. The Monotype equipment and mats had been disposed of long ago, but they still had 10 German foundry casters and the foundry mats. The machines are now in the new addition, ranged like a typesetting army. Some machines will likely serve only as parts sources, but I hope to get several machines online next summer to cast faces like *Libra*, *Libra Light*, *American Uncial*, and *Palatino*. Maybe even *Helvetica*, now that it's a movie star.

Am I done acquiring typesetters? Yes, enough is enough. Unless, of course, I come across a Linotype APL or Nebotype. Or a Linograph. Or a late German Linotype Europa or Delta machine. Or a Koike or a Foucher. Fortunately those are all very remote possibilities.

So what is next with all these typesetters? I'm hosting the American Typesetting Fellowship Conference in 2010, so that means I need to have my pole building whipped into shape with a nice selection of machines ready



All the small wood boxes contain foundry mats from Castcraft in Chicago. Photo by Don Black

to run on a moments notice. That's what I'm working on. Here's my operating caster wish list: two of the German foundry casters from Castcraft; a Thompson; a Monotype Orphan Annie; a Composition Caster; a Supercaster; an ATF pivotal; an ATF Giant Pivotal (casts up to 144 pt.); a Ludlow; and a Barth caster. That's a list of ten; so far I've got two, with eight to go. I'm working on it.

One might ask if I ever make and sell type. I do make type. Not a lot, as it's a spare time activity. I haven't sold any, but I sometimes give away fonts. Most of the casting I've done is kind of experimental in nature, and I don't want to sell it until I'm satisfied with alignment and spacing. For example, I've cast several sizes of *Goudy Mediaeval*, but I don't have any original examples to match. So I will have to go through sev-

eral casting cycles to make sure my type is aligned and spaced like the original. Another face I've cast is Paris Flash, an unusual face from the Fonderie Typographique Français in Paris, France. I found a small

font of Didot-height Didot-body type and grew electroplate mats. The mats are hand finished and are not as uniform in height-to-paper as I would like. So I may give away a font now and then, but I wouldn't care to sell it if it isn't top quality.

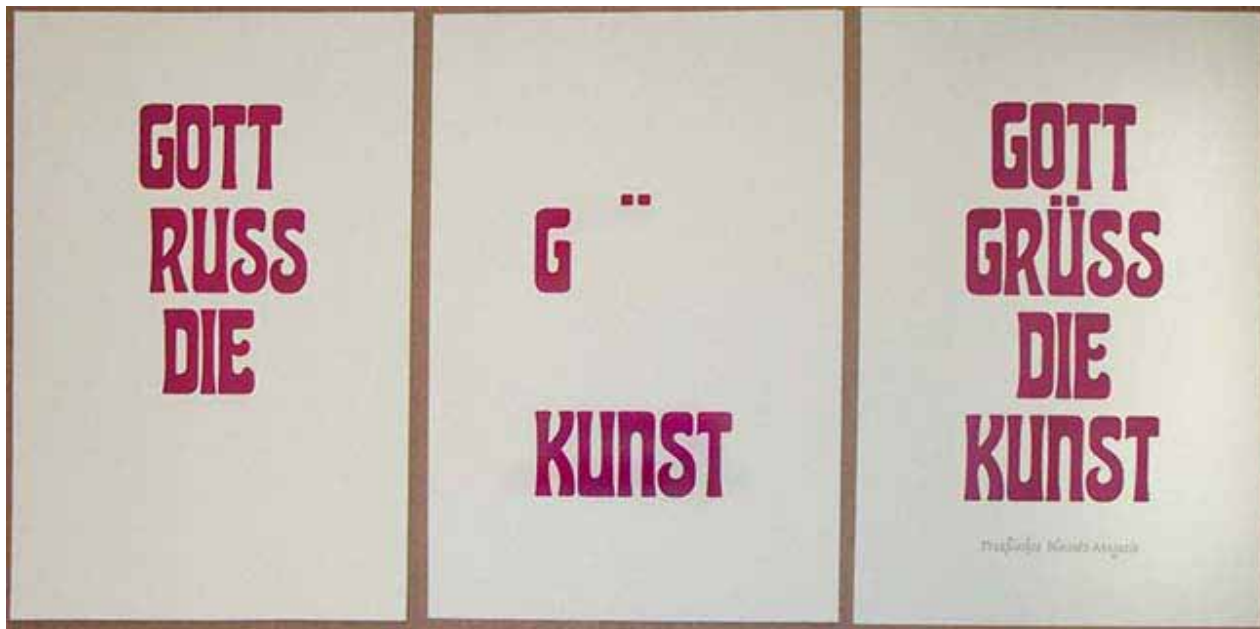
I have spent a small fortune buying type, mostly used, from Germany. The poster bundle had a wood type poster (Gott grüss die Kunst) set in an unknown Art Nouveau wood type from Germany. At the bottom was the name of the shop that sold me the type, and that name was set in a type from the Typoart foundry in East Germany. It's a neat face called Daphne or Typo Skript. I used it once before in a bundle, and I think it was the first time it was used in the US.

Incidentally, the above-mentioned poster used a printing trick that I've used several times. I didn't have enough wood type to print the poster in one pass. So I did two passes on the red and made sure to watch my ink coverage. A better example is the

Where's the beef?

So this brings up another point: if I'm making type, why aren't we seeing it in my contributions to the APA bundle? I think Guy Botterill used the Paris Flash in contributions a couple times. My last two items in the November bundle used Goudy Ornate in the multi-colored oval border. If anything, I'm more tempted to use some of the interesting European types that I've acquired.

PARIS FLASH
 designed by
E. CROUS-VIDAL
 first cast in 1953 by
**FONDERIE
 TYPOGRAPHIQUE
 FRANCAISE**
 now recast from
**ELECTRO-
 DEPOSITED
 MATRICES**
 grown by
**GREGORY
 JACKSON
 WALTERS**
 also introduced in '53.

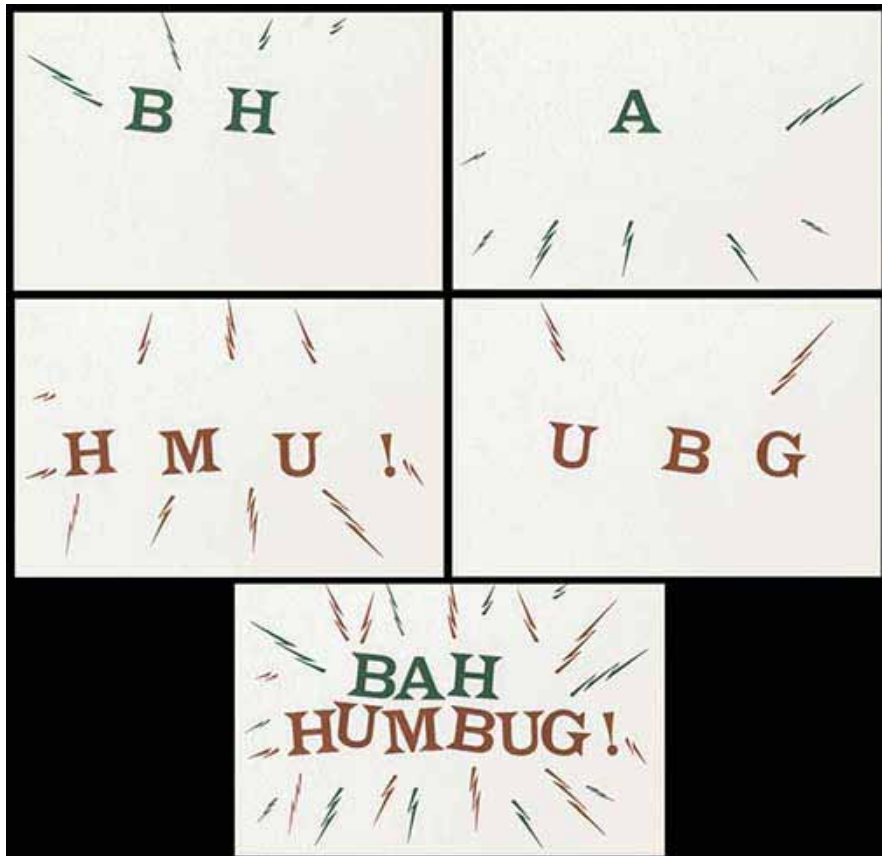


“Bah Humbug” card I did a couple years back. The type looks like it might be wood type, but it’s vintage metal type from Miller & Richard, cast in Scotland. If I tried to print the “HUMBUG” in one pass, I would have to saw the letters in order to get them so close together. The only sane way to do it with type was to make two passes on each color, so it is actually 4 times through the press, even though it is a 2-color job. Also, the extra passes made it much easier to lock up the lightning bolts. I used the same tech-

nique on a wood type poster I printed at the International Printing Museum in Carson, California, for the APA Wayzgoose. We found a font of brand new large lower-case letters in Garamond Bold. Rich Hopkins suggested we make a poster for a keepsake. Because it was lower-case, we had descenders and ascenders, and we wanted them to overlap each other (but not overprint each other). Which is to say, negative leading. Plus some of the characters had too much white space and needed to be kerned together. It was a bit of a puzzle figuring out how to do it in just two passes.

The rest of the shop

Certainly typesetting has been the primary focus of my letterpress obsession, but I like presses, too. All my printing for the bundle has been done on a Vandercook SP-15. In fact, it is the same SP-15 I used to proof my linotype work at Ferris State College. One day the department head phoned me and said they were going to get rid of it, and wanted to know



Four passes through the press to make a 2-color job.



The bottom version of the poster was the second impression underinked. Some people liked the bottom version better than the top one.

if I was interested. I offered \$150 for the press and hauled it away, dismantled, in the back seat and trunk of a Chevy Impala. I gave him a check for \$150, but it was never cashed.

You may have heard rumors about 4-color Vandercook presses. Yes, I do have two of them, model 30-26, 27 feet long and 17,000 lbs. (each). I finally hit the big time! I saw them listed in the auction notice for a de-



Here is one of the 4-color Vandercooks being moved into storage. It's 27 feet long and requires some heavy duty equipment to move it. It has 4 beds in a row,

with 4-sets of ink rollers on the carriage. The cylinder rolls over the 4 beds in quick succession.

them for \$50 each, but the auctioneer refused to accept less than \$100 each. It cost \$2,000 to truck them back to Ohio, then more money to have them put into storage for six months, and more money to move them into the newly-built pole building. Shortly thereafter I met Hal Sterne (then owner of NA Graphics) and mentioned the new acquisition. He surprised me by telling me that there was a prep house in Cincinnati, 90 miles down the road, which had six of them, and still used

function prep house in Philadelphia. The prep house still made copper etchings and flexo plates, which were proofed on the 4-color

Vandys. I figured they must be the last ones left in the world and decided to save them. I was the only one interested and tried to buy

them. If I'd known that, I wouldn't have spent all that money to save these two from Philadelphia. In any case, I haven't tried to use them. Maybe someday.

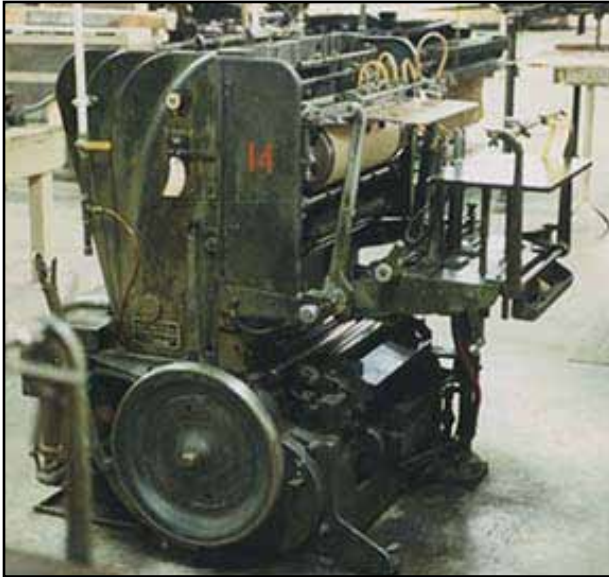


My SP-15 has the ink monitor, but it doesn't work and we didn't use it in college.

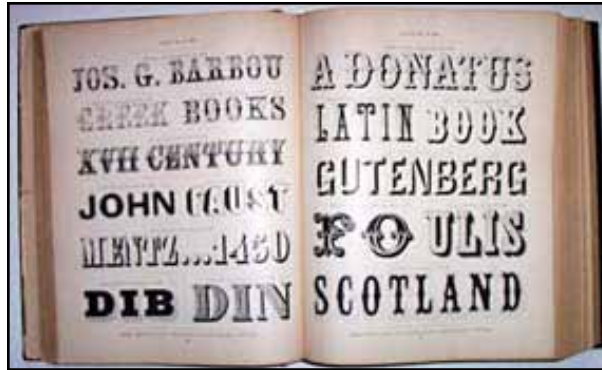


This is an English Monotype Display Caster, popularly known as an "Orphan Annie."

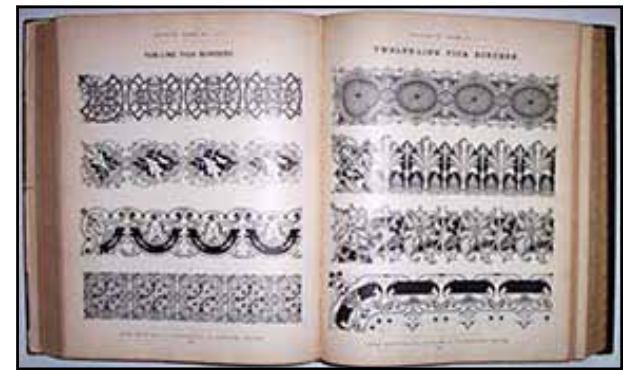
In one corner of the garage sits a pre-war Miehle v-50. As space in the garage is freed up, I'd like to get this machine running. I have a 7-color job ready to print, and I don't think I want to print that many impressions on the SP-15. I like the Verticals, and especially the prewar v-50. It has Art Deco styled guards, much more attractive than the post-war v-50. My press is in need of a paint job, but that is again something that probably won't happen in my lifetime.



This is my pre-war Miehle V-50. The guards are different than the postwar version.

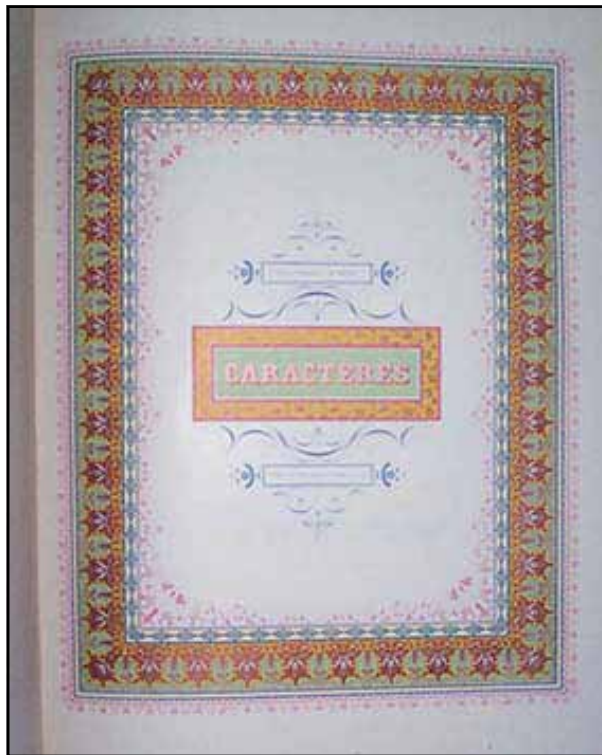


A few pages from the 1882 Bruce Type Specimen book. This specimen was notable because all the text used had to do with print-

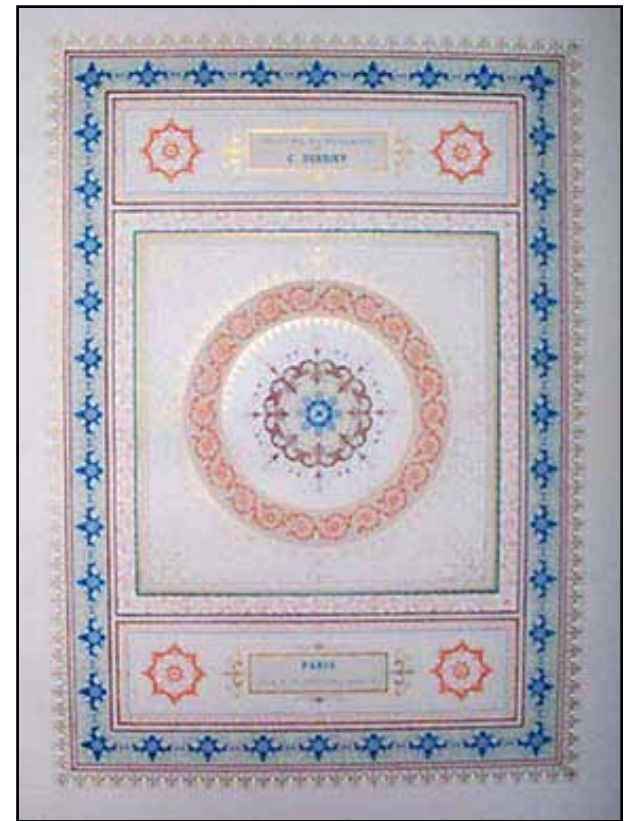


ers and books. Here Dibdin and Foulis are even spread over two typefaces.

The collecting habit is insidious. I find myself compelled to collect books about printing and type, especially type specimens. I have no idea how many books I have, but it must be two or three times what the library at Ferris State College had. I've concentrated on European type specimens, of any era. My tastes have evolved considerably over the years. In college, I read that someone said the BB&S Catalogue #25 was the best type specimen ever. It was my first purchase, and the \$80 I spent seemed like a lot. A few years later I discovered that it was really the 1882 Bruce specimen that was the best ever. I was now willing to spend \$375 for this gem, and it didn't seem all that bad. Then I found that the best specimen ever was actually the



The Derriey foundry in Paris specialized in ornaments. While the Bruce specimen is black and white, the 1862 Derriey specimen features over-the-top displays of multi-colored



ornaments. The quality of workmanship and pressmanship is simply stunning.

1862 Derriey Specimen-Album, and I must admit that it puts most everything else to shame. That was the most expensive book I ever bought. But now I find that it's not really the best specimen ever. That title actually belongs to the Page Chromatic Wood Type specimen. The current financial crisis guarantees I'll never be able to afford one, even if one becomes available. I don't know of any copy in private hands, but surely there must be one or two.

One last thing

Incidentally, you can see the typesetting work of several APA members, including myself, in a new book from the Bird and Bull

Press of Henry Morris. The book, edited by Rich Hopkins, is titled *The Private Typecasters, Preserving the Craft of Hot Metal Type into the Twenty-First Century*. You can read about the book at the [Oak Knoll website](#).

After you get over the shock of the \$800 price tag, click on "View Slideshow" and you'll see some images of the book. Slides 3-of-7 and 5-of-7 show my work, most noticeably 144 pt. Stymie Inline cast in a hand mold. Slide 6-of-7 features Rich Hopkins' work. The other APA members whose typesetting is featured are Mike Anderson, Phil Driscoll, Dan Jones, Rich Hopkins, and Sky Shipley. 🍷



Here are some of the pages featuring my contribution to the book *The Private Typecasters, Preserving the Craft of Hot Metal Type into the Twenty-First Century*.



- There'll be a few openings in APA the first of the year. If you have any printer friends who you think should be a member, direct them to our [website](#) and have them fill out an application, send a sample of their work and \$30.
- So, will our printed books be replaced by digital e-books? Get a little insight into this topic from [this article](#) in the *New York Times*.
- You've probably seen it, but it's a good [video](#) on letterpress from the Firefly Press. A good one to show friends to explain just what we are all about.
- For those of you who don't have some of the old specimen books, you can get a little peek at some of the goodies contained in a few of them at [this site](#).
- Word from Dave Churchman that former APA member Robert Merrill died this past March. Robert had been an active member and served as mailer for two terms during the early 1980s.
- And finally in this issue I want to leave you with a video that has absolutely nothing to do with letterpress printing but I found very entertaining. Best to view and listen to the [video](#) to the end.