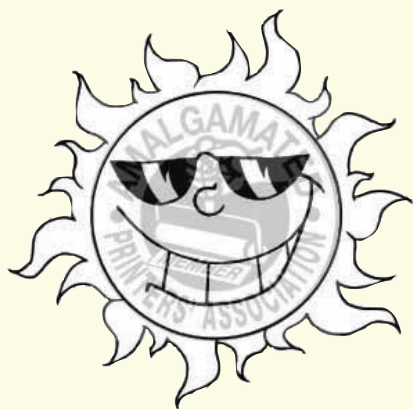


It was a 'hot time' at
the Phoenix Goose!

PAGE 2

Morris Fuller Benton,
Type Designer —
Fact or Fiction?

PAGE 10



PHOENIX GOOSE

Some traditions ignored; new efforts successful

A few might contend that the record-setting 108 degree temperature was the big news at the recent APA Wayzgoose held in Phoenix, June 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, 2013. They'd be wrong. Our "dry heat" brought some attention, but that was not even close to the "big news" from the Phoenix Goose itself.

First the statistics: 42 APA members and 34 guests were in attendance along with five spouses. There were a total of 35 who attended the three workshops. The swap meet sold 18 tables with the two biggest vendors there (John Barrett and Mark Barbour) very happy with their sales. The auction, while considered "small" by some past events, earned the APA treasury \$1,425. Also, 86 folks enjoyed the BBQ Buffet at the banquet and about 60 attended the Sunday tour of Skyline Type Foundry.

The Phoenix Goose program shook up some traditions of the APA Wayzgoose. Fri-



Friday morning was the kick-off for the official Wayzgoose to begin and attendees heard five presentations. There were over 70 members and guests in attendance to hear the talks.

day events at a Wayzgoose usually involve a tour at some printing-related plant and/or visits to members' home shops/studios.

At Phoenix, those in attendance spent the day listening to five excellent presentations from our own APA members. We have

so many talented and interesting people in the APA membership that Phoenix organizers thought it best to utilize some of these people.

Friday morning the first presentation was by Sky Shipley, titled "The mysteries of

type alignment." This was followed by a presentation, "Phantom of the archives," given by APA Archivist David Kent. After the noon lunch Jen Farrell led off the afternoon with her presentation, "Printing for profit with handset type." Right after her presentation, Kseniya Thomas gave her talk titled, "How ladies put life back in letterpress." Ending the afternoon presentation was the controversial talk given by Rick vonHoldt: "Morris Fuller Benton, type designer—fact or fiction." (Rick's talk is presented in this issue.)

And that wasn't the end of interesting talks on Friday. Dan Mayer of Arizona State University gave a talk on Adventures in Polymer Plate Making. While many members send out to have their plates made, ASU has done a lot of research on pushing the limits of photopolmer from low-tech to high-tech and processes their



ASU's Dan Mayer

plates in-house for artistic printing. Dan has over 30 years experience in letterpress printing and the samples of the artwork he presented were fantastic! This was held during the hospitality period on Friday evening so members and guests could partake

in hospitality or listen to Dan's talk. Nearly 50 people heard the presentation.

The other major item that totally broke APA Wayzgoose tradition was that Goose organizers this year went out of their way to invite guests to attend (at a slightly higher registration fee).

Initially the reason for this effort was to try and bring together those letterpress printers in the state, meet them and with this initial effort, there would be a base of printers to have future meetings with letterpress folks in the state.

Phoenix carried over another break with tradition that occurred last year at

the Mount Pleasant/Printers' Hall Goose event and that was holding workshops. These were held Wednesday and Thursday. Again, workshops were given by our own talented members: Jim Horton gave a two-day workshop on wood engraving; Jessica Spring on daredevil printing and Ron Hylton on learning the basics of the Heidelberg Windmill.

In promoting the workshops and the Wayzgoose on the Internet through the web site, organizers attracted some interested letterpress folks far from the borders of Arizona. The guest registrations grew and grew. Phoenix also welcomed students from Arizona State University.



Friday evening Dan Mayer a packed room listened to Dan Mayer tell about their experiments and research with polymer plates.

The effort proved very successful. A number of newbie's to letterpress showed up plus a number of students came to the Goose.

To try to break the ice at the Friday lectures, at the start of the proceedings that day everyone there (some 75 people) was asked to introduce themselves, where they were from, their occupation and why they were

continued on page 5

Phoenix Goose Workshops

4



Jim Horton conducted a two-day wood engraving workshop at the Goose. A testament to Jim's skills as an engraver and a teacher, many of the first-time efforts by these students were fantastic!



Jim giving some individual help.



Because of the large number of newbie's in Jessica's class, veterans were paired with newbie's. Here Marjorie Wilser is paired with Wilson Thomas.



Twenty registered for Jessica's workshop on Daredevil Printing. They pretty well took over the facilities while engaging in their projects.



Five students took Ron Hylton's basic Heidelberg workshop. Here students Peter Schaub and ASU student, Maria Talarera work on the press. (Ron is to the right.)

involved in letterpress.

The introductions proved to be a gateway for conversations for the entire event. Members were easily mixing with guests and students and also newbies found a wealth of information available to them. There was also interest from a number of people to join APA. This camaraderie between members and guests and long time printers and newbies permeated the entire weekend.

We can't leave Friday's events without giving the reason why Friday was such a successful day at the Goose.

That success can be explained in two words: Letterpress Central. LC is a 6,500 sq. ft. building and is owned by APA members Cindy and Gary Iverson. The building was just a short one-mile drive from the Goose hotel (a hotel van provided rides back and forth if needed). Letterpress Central is also home to the Iverson's Paper Studio, an in-house paper mill and online paper shop. Working with clients and artists on commercial printing projects is also a part of Letterpress Central along with giving community classes on letterpress printing.

Had it not been for Letterpress Central we couldn't have put on the workshops. Friday's program was at LC which meant we didn't have to rent a room at the hotel. But many thanks also go to the instructors—Jim Horton who drove over 1000 miles



Friday's events were held at the 6,500 sq.ft. Letterpress Central. This was also the location for the workshops that were held on Wednesday and Thursday.

from Michigan with tons of wood engraving supplies; Dave Peat for his info, history and samples of electrotypes and how they relate to wood engraving; Jessica Spring who taught and inspired almost 20 daredevils (that is a lot of students!) and Ron Hylton who taught folks how to simultaneously print, perf and number on the windmill.

Tradition took hold again on Saturday. That's when the Wayzgoose holds the annual swap meet in the morning and the auction in the afternoon. All events on Saturday were held at the hotel.

One aspect of the swap meet and auction that might add to an additional tradi-



Auctioneers Dave Peat and Sky Shipley did a fine job of getting maximum bids from the audience.

tion is that at both events there was a "wrap and ship" table present. Those who came by plane could wrap their purchases in pack



Top: Goose organizers: Jeryl Jones, Mike O'Connor, Cindy and Gary Iverson.

Left: We didn't ask, but we think Mark Barbour enjoyed the BBQ Buffet at Saturday's banquet.

Right: Genevieve Kent (daughter of APA Archivist David Kent) shows off her printer's hat which all attendees received at the banquet.



them in USPS Priority boxes and then they would be shipped out Monday. There were some 20 boxes mailed out. This proved to be a highly successful service.

Banquet attendees were treated to a BBQ Buffet put on by the hotel. The food received high praise and Goose organizers found out later that the gal who had been attending to all the needs at the hotel was back in the kitchen herself tasting everything before it went out.

The other treat at the banquet was the presentation was given by John Risseuw, professor of art at Arizona State University. His topic was "Seduced by ink and lead" and covered more than 30 years of printing experience. John also brought a lot of samples of his work (all of which has been purchased by the Library of Congress) and kindly stayed to answer questions and talk



Sky Shipley demonstrates his casters at the open house Sunday in Prescott.



Sky answers some questions posed by two students who attended the open house.

with banquet attendees.

Talk about a break tradition again—usually Goose attendees head home on Sunday; but not at Phoenix. Thanks to the

generosity of Johanna and Sky Shipley all were invited to their home and the Skyline type foundry in Prescott. The short two-hour drive gave folks a change of scenery at a higher elevation and an inside look at the premier type foundry in Arizona.

Attendees enjoyed watching the foundry in operation and also spent time in Sky's well-organized and equipped print shop.

As with all such events, the weekend went all too fast. Old friendships were renewed, new friends were made and all had a good time talking and participating in our



In the Shipley print shop, John Barrett gave a demo on the C&P. It proved to be hugely popular with students and newbie's in attendance. Click the photo to see a video.

MORE PHOTOS. Go to [THIS SITE](#) and see many more photos of the Goose. Once at the site, click Library. To add photos to the site, contact **Cindy Iverson**.

It does take a village!

by Cindy Iverson

We've all heard the saying "It takes a village." Well, I'm convinced that refers to hosting a Wayzgoose! I attended my first Wayzgoose two years ago in Michigan. Returning to AZ flushed with letterpress happiness and excitement, I told Mike O'Connor that we should host an APA Wayzgoose. While I think Mike initially thought I was crazy, he warmed up to the idea. We were excited that we would host the event in 2014. Then we were panicked when in August of 2012 we found out we would host the 2013 APA Wayzgoose—a year earlier than planned due to the move of the Hamilton Wood Type Museum. But under the steady leadership and guidance of Mike O'Connor, we were able to get things planned and organized. But in order to actually make things happen, it took a village and we want to thank those who helped.

First, a huge thanks goes to Mike O'Connor for designing the goose website, overseeing the registrations and hotel coordination.

Thanks to Jeryl Jones, who printed the fabulous programs/maps as well as brought in all the AV equipment, recycle/trash bins, coolers & tables as well as helping shop for lunch and hospitality snacks. Thanks to my dad, John who traveled from SC to attend the event as well as staff the registration check-in desk and be the official "Goose Greeter." Thanks to Charlie Bauder who printed all our lunch and dinner tickets—he even won a raffle with one of those tickets! Thanks to Dan Mayer for not only his lecture/demo but for helping set up and take down tables and chairs. Thanks to Ernie and Marsha Blitzer from Toledo—Marsha who helped set up lunch and Ernie, who stuffed keepsake envelopes, set up chairs, ran the AV equipment and handed out keepsakes. Thanks to David McFarlane for the APA apron auction donations and the all the "Fall of the ATF" books. And finally, thanks to Rick van Holt who identified all the mystery typefaces in our cabinets—what a BIG benefit to us for hosting the goose!



APA MEMBERS ATTENDING (42)

Here are attendees in alphabetical order: Mel Arndt, Mark Barbour, John Barrett, Charlie Bauder, Don Black, Ernie Blitzer, Marijane Curry, Susan Deneef, Jennifer Farrell, Ivan Gulkov, John Horn, Jim Horton, Benjamin Hulsey, Ron Hylton, Cindy and Gary Iverson, Ray Jerland, John and Nancy Jane Johnson,

Jeryl Jones, Matt Kelsey, David Kent, Arie Koelewyn, Bob Magill, Scott Moore, Bob and Carole Mullen, Dick Niehaus, Dave and Carey Oberheim, Mike O'Connor, Tom Parson, Dave Peat, Lawrence Peterson, Peter Schaub, Sky Shipley, Ivan Snyder, Jessica Spring, Kseniya Thomas, Rick vonHoldt, Marjorie Wilser, Karen Zimmermann

PRE3
SE3:

JIM DAGGS



Summertime musings

Glowing reports have been coming in about how impressive and enjoyable the

Phoenix Wayzgoose was for all in attendance.

From the positive and enjoyable sounds of the Phoenix Goose reviews, I am getting the feeling that we will be going back there one of these days for a repeat performance. I will do my best to make that event, for sure.

Needless to say, my summer-planned letterpress and equipment projects remain at the starting gate and haven't taken off yet. Sort of like some of my winter projects that remained undone after winter turned

into spring. But one spring project that is always enjoyable, is the weekend that Patrick Leary, #630, and I get together to set up the membership directory in hot metal type and get it ready to print.

We have some new names showing up on some very nice bundle pieces. If you get a chance, drop them a line and welcome them into the APA. I'm sure they will appreciate hearing from you and finding out that we are a welcoming bunch of letterpress "nuts".



Goosing it!

As you may have already read in the story about the Phoenix Goose, we strayed from some set traditions in APA Wayzgoose activities. We hope this may set in place maybe one or two new traditions in our annual event.

One of the things we did—and this also took place last year—was to have workshops. We realize this is not going to be

possible at most Goose events unless presses, typesetting, space etc. is available.

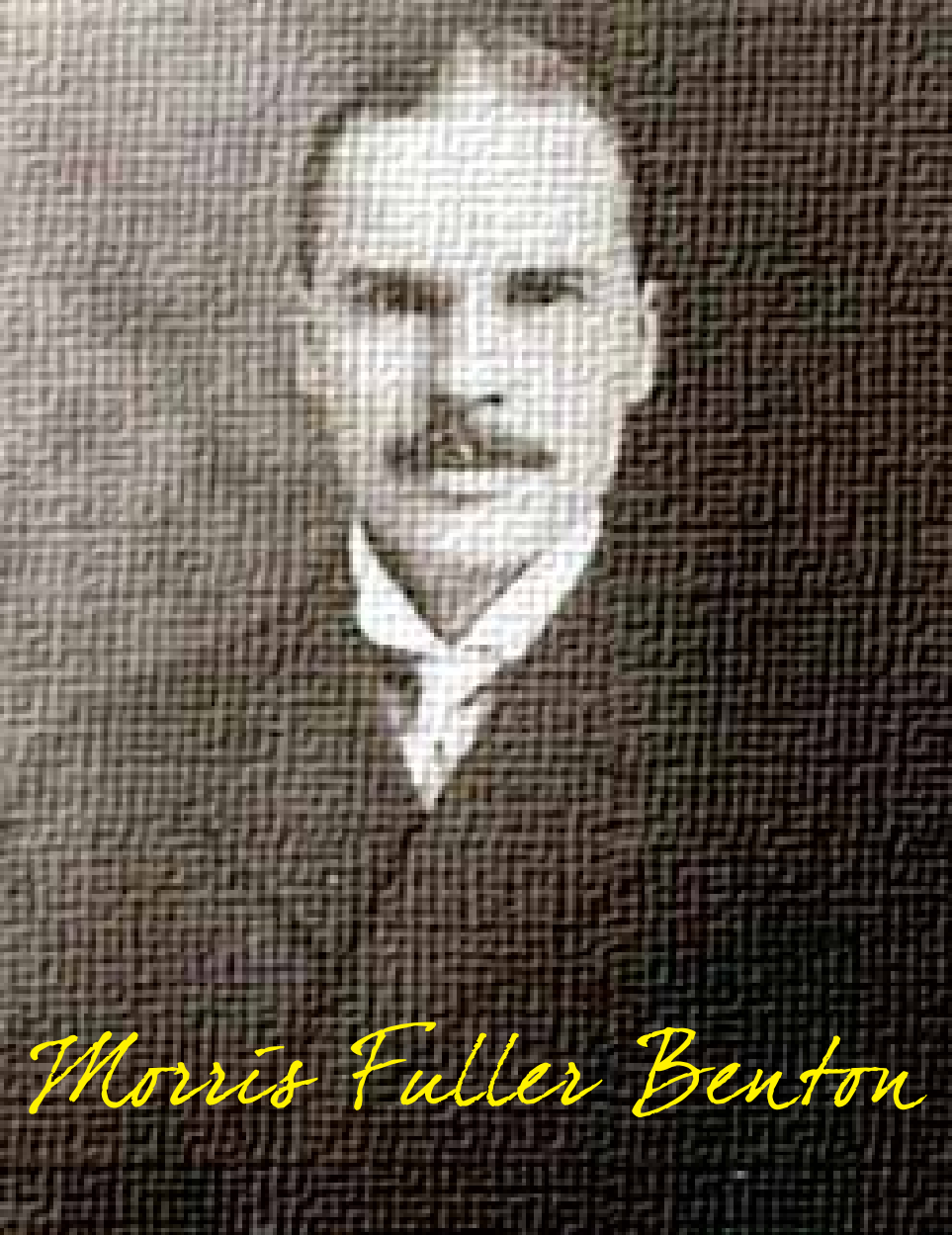
The second thing which transpired was to invite guests. I'm not going to go into the reasoning for this, as it was in the main story. But I might encourage future events to consider welcoming other letterpress printers in the area to come to the Wayzgoose event. It might be a tool to recruit a few new members and it will also help the local members sponsoring the Wayzgoose to meet some other letterpress printers in the area. Certainly guests should be welcomed to the swap meet and the auction.

The third thing we did was devote the entire day of Friday to presentations relating to letterpress. It's been no secret that APA membership contains a great deal of talent and knowledge. Why don't we have more

events at the Wayzgoose where these folks can share their knowledge with those in attendance?

I am not suggesting that a Wayzgoose should devote a full day to this as we did in Phoenix. But why not have a couple of presentations Friday morning or afternoon? This would still leave a half day for tours or what have you.

As was proven in Phoenix, APA members still had a chance to talk to their fellow members but there was an added benefit in that they also met new letterpress folks! And what we found out that was even better, you tend to attract newbie's and they really appreciate meeting folks who are established in letterpress. A few changes like this certainly helps promote letterpress.



Morris Fuller Benton

Type Designer

FACT OR FICTION?

by Rick von Holdt



American Type Founders building, Jersey City, circa 1910.

This presentation was given at the Amalgamated Printers' Association Wayzgoose, Phoenix, June 7, 2013.

LT HAS BEEN MORE THAN A MINOR irritation to me over the past few decades that a lot of credit has been given to Morris Fuller Benton as the designer of so many typefaces. This is a relatively recent phenomenon as he received little, if any, praise as a typeface designer during his lifetime. It is probably high time to try to set out the facts as they exist and have a discussion as to just what amount of credit is actually due to him.

I guess, for starters, I should define what I would consider a type designer to be. In his era, I would consider the designer of a new typeface to be the person that conceived of the new form/style and sat down and sketched his idea into visual form, with probably a lot of trial and error and lots of adjustments and alterations to get an alphabet into a cohesive typeface pattern. Basically the person that created the unique artwork that distinguishes and defines the typeface.

Morris Benton is now being lauded as "The forgotten Father of American Type Design" and the designer of the most metal typefaces ever! Mac McGrew lists 222 fac-

es credited to Benton in *American Metal Typefaces of the Twentieth Century*. The number varies with several different sources, but the reason he has been given credit as the "designer" is due to the fact that his name is listed as Designer on all of ATF's patent applications for those faces.

It has long been my contention that he was a brilliant engineer and organizer and headed the type design department at ATF, but I doubt if he ever actually took a pencil to paper and drew any of the typefaces that he is given credit for. He had a whole department of designers, artists and engineers under him and there were very methodical procedures established at ATF involving groups and committees of ATF employees who actually worked together to come up with typeface designs. Since it apparently was always a team effort, it was ATF's policy to list M. F. Benton, the head of the department, as the designer. It is not an uncommon business practice to give credit to the department head over the "team", and always over the individual. In fact, there was a long tradition of doing this in the nineteenth century by other typefoundries. Type designers were often considered as "workers for hire" rather than creative artists. The designers did not get royalties so it probably did not matter much to the designer if their name was on the patent or not. If you

study the old typeface patents you will find a great many of them are in the name of the proprietor or manager of the foundry. You have John G. Rogers' name on Boston Type Foundry patents and Andrew Little's name on patents for Farmer, Little. There are more examples. I don't think anyone would seriously think that they actually designed the type.

Does it not seem incomprehensible that there is absolutely no record of M. F. Benton writing or talking about his inspiration or design thoughts on any of the unique faces credited to him? There are also no existing sketchbooks or rough sketches belonging to Benton. Think of American Text, Canterbury, Chic, Clearface and Clearface Gothic, Cromwell, Eagle Bold, Freehand, Greeting Monotone, Hobo, Parisian, Souvenir, etc. There is also no record of him ever outright claiming to have drawn or designed a single typeface by himself. And probably most damning of all, he was never credited by his peers or even recognized by them as a fellow "type designer." The silence and lack of recognition during his lifetime is deafening.

What little that can be gleaned about the secretive internal workings of ATF shows that typefaces were developed by teams within the staff and that Benton's main role was to give direction and oversee all of the work. No doubt he gave them great guid-

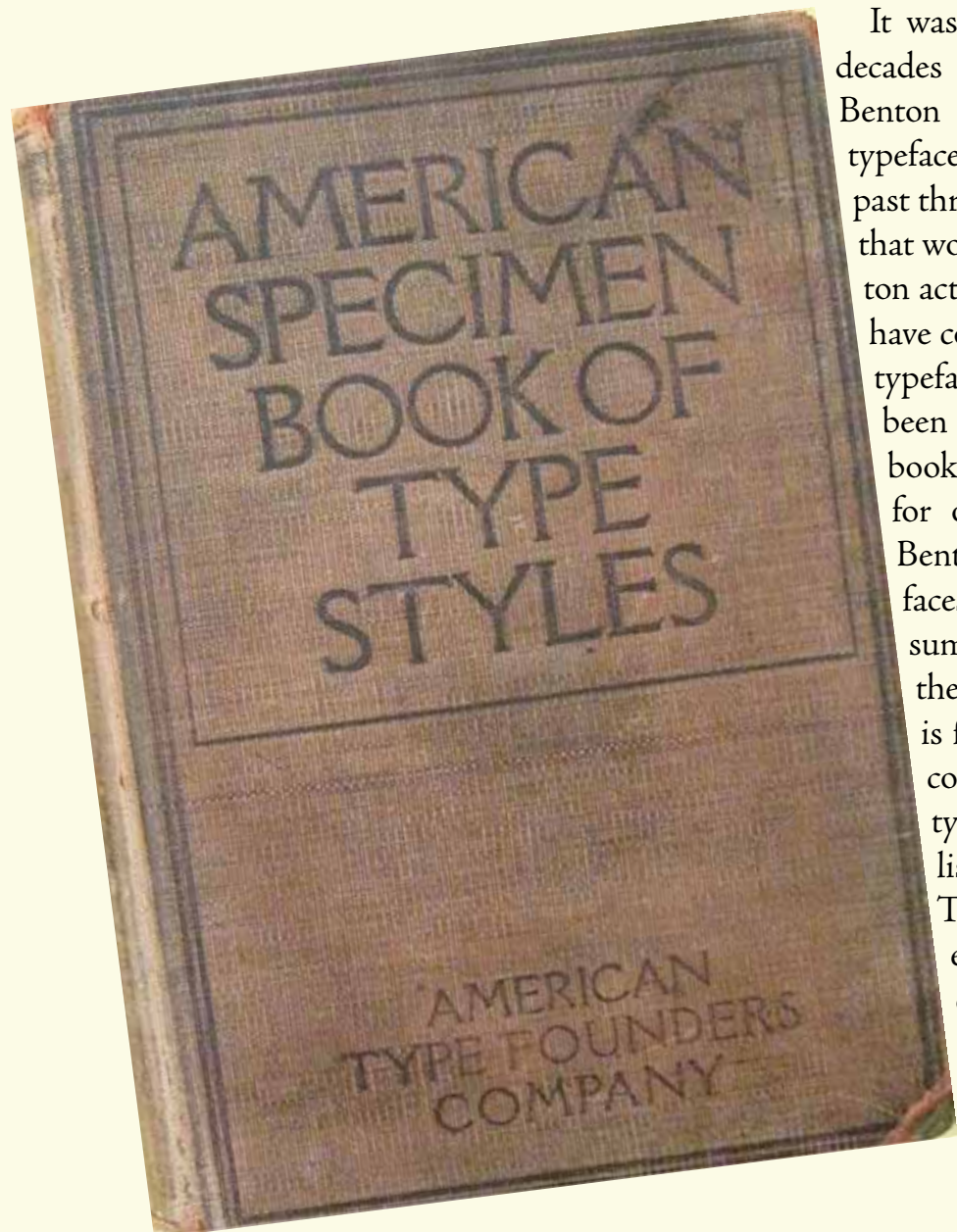
ance. He was an engineer by training and the work of organization came easily to him. He developed formulas and algorithms for the subtle optical adjustments used when making matrices for enlarging and reducing sizes of a face. He was also a great student

of typefaces and was well suited to add his input as to what sort of faces ATF should develop and promote. His personal favorite typeface was Cloister Oldstyle, which is in reality simply a cleaned-up revival of a 16th-century font by Nicholas Jenson.

It was almost an inside joke for decades within the industry that Benton was “the designer” of ATF typefaces. I have been trying for the past three decades to find anything that would confirm that M. F. Benton actually drew any designs and have come up short. The study of typefaces and their designers has been the subject of numerous books, pamphlets and articles for over a century. If Morris Benton truly designed so many faces for ATF, one would assume that his name would lead the field in this subject, but he is found missing in almost all contemporary writing about typeface design. I’ll have a list of examples further on. Think of the hundreds of events, banquets, dinners, etc. hosted by the AIGA and other prestigious printing organizations during the first four decades of the

20th century. Benton was not honored or feted even once! And keep in mind that this was in an era when typography and print were celebrated and honored by many organizations and publications. This would be unpardonable if he truly were the creative genius and designer of so many commonly used typefaces. Some claim that this is because he was incredibly shy, but I cannot accept that others would not have sought to laud and praise him in spite of this.

Some marvel at the variety of styles he was able to conjure up and design. The group/committee approach to type design goes a long way to explain the variety of styles that have been incorrectly credited to just one man. Another thing to consider might be just how many design proposals were submitted to ATF from outside sources and amateurs over the years. In Patricia Costs’ article in *Printing History* about the Bentons and Typemaking at ATF, she states that “Every year ATF received hundreds of proposed typefaces from enthusiastic letterers. The original drawings they provided could seldom be used as working drawings because independent designers rarely realized the complexities of the type manufacturing process. Most designs had to be redrawn to conform to technical limitations and particular word combinations.” One would wonder just how many actually were



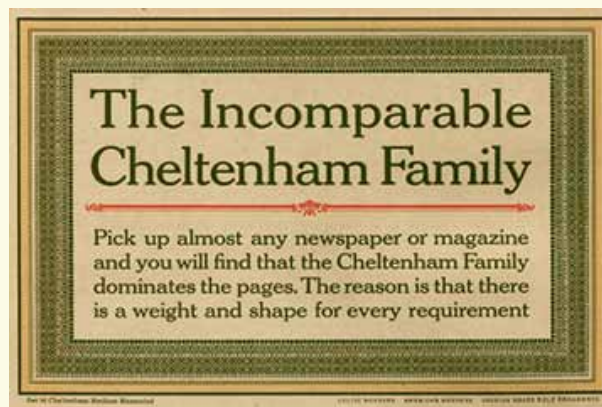
studied, considered and “redrawn” by ATF. I never could fathom that a face like Hobo originated within the rigid confines of ATF.

ATF was never above stealing or appropriating designs that they wanted to use. They asked William Morris for permission to use his Troy/Chaucer design and he told them to “Go to Hell” so they had John F. Cummings cut Satanick (a heavier version) based on drawings by ATF’s Joseph W. Phinney. When Bauer would not let them have Bernhard Cursive they simply had Willard Sniffin draw them a nearly identical version and issued it as Liberty. Frederic Goudy was not happy with his relationship with ATF and withdrew his services, but that did not stop ATF from expanding his Goudy Oldstyle and italic design into Goudy Bold and italic, Goudy Catalogue and italic, Goudy Extra Bold and italic, and Goudy Title – all of which bear Goudy’s name and none of which he gave any input on. Packard was modeled directly from the lettering style that Oswald Cooper had drawn for Packard advertising. ATF did not even consult Cooper about this and only after-the-fact actually acknowledged this and sent him a small stipend.

There are other instances where people had designed faces in which some characters needed to be slightly adjusted for practical foundry production by the design de-

partment at ATF, and yet unbelievably M. F. Benton is given credit as “designer.” Check out Bulfinch Oldstyle designed by William Martin Johnson in 1903 or Roycroft (first known as Buddy) based on the lettering style of Lewis Buddy and which ATF claims that Benton “partly” designed. Engravers Shaded is an ATF face that was experimentally modified by ATF punch-cutter W.F. Capitaine who used a unique and unusual shading technique (heavier at the top) to create Lithograph Shaded. Once again Benton is listed as the designer. Card Mercantile is credited to Benton, when in fact only the two smallest sizes were redesigned at ATF to be more compatible with the larger sizes already existing from the Dickenson Type Foundry. There are other examples.

Here are some more facts and observations to back up my contentions. They are in no particular order, but should form a body of information to perhaps make peo-



ple have second thoughts about seeing M. F. Benton as the greatest type designer of the twentieth century: 13

James Mosely, Librarian of the St. Bride Library (London) 1958-2000, founding member of the Printing Historical Society and first editor of its Journal had this to say on the Typophile chat site on December 5, 2007:

From what I can gather about his mode of work, I doubt if one could call M. F. Benton a type designer. Did he ever lift a pencil, seriously? There were dozens of keen and skilled young draftsmen to do drawings for him. What he and his fellow directors at ATF did was to dump most of the types they had inherited and somehow bring into being a range of reliable new faces that appealed to the customer base, and keep innovations coming, unfailingly and regularly.

He was first and probably the greatest of the 20th-century ‘type directors.’

I can agree with James Mosely on that point. I think that Benton was an Art Director or Type Director long before the term even existed.

From a series of three articles about MFB in the *Inland Printer*:

March 1936 issue: “Morris Benton, Type Designer – Executive”

In talking about what goes into designing type:

“Between the edicts of fashion and the frantic attempts of advertisers to out-do competition, the style flux in types would be entirely too fast for any type foundry to keep up with – if there were not some adequate means of coping with it. There must be system and organization to deal with this condition, or the large type foundry would be in a helpless turmoil. Morris Benton has organized a system that is dealing very effectively with this puzzling situation

“The basis of this plan is a constant study of the current type situation. This research work is directed by Mr. Benton. He is assisted by a type committee. At first, this committee was composed of three members, representing the various divisions of the business. But for several years now the committee has been much larger. The committee meets occasionally, but Mr. Benton and his assistant designers are on the job all the time.

“The committee system of design control is used because it is felt that no one man, no matter how able he may be, or even one department, regardless of how efficient it may be, is able to cope with the intricacies of present-day type demand. To keep track of this demand and to be able to appraise it accurately, the services of many persons are needed. The field to be surveyed is vast.”

All of this evidence is sifted and weighed

by Morris Benton’s committee. The design program is under the control of his committee.

There is a second article simply titled “Morris Benton” the following month in the April 1936 issue of the *Inland Printer*.

In talking about the design of Cheltenham:

“Mr. Benton’s first ‘assignment’ – as he is pleased to call his part in the expanding of Bertram Goodhue’s great type face – was to steer the drawings through the mechanical maze through which all drawings must pass before they materialize into actual type. The many details of this process are highly involved, and in attending to them young Benton had every opportunity to show his skill as an executive and engineer. When the job of putting Cheltenham into the works fell to Morris’ lot, he had been with American Type Founders only a few years. Up to this time he had been engaged principally in coordinating the heterogeneous line taken over from the twenty-three typefounders, which composed the ATF merger. In this work the youthful Benton had shown exceptional ability as an executive and as an organizer. The chief type designer of a large type foundry requires such qualities as much as he needs creative and artistic skill.”

Later in the article Benton eventually

goes on to talk about Cloister Old Style as his favorite face and all of the admiration he has for it and research that he did on it.

This is very interesting, because six years earlier in the June 1930 issue of *The Inland Printer*, Henry Lewis Bullen lamented “One of my efforts in behalf of the industry for which I shall probably get no credit was the introduction of the classical revivals: Garamond, Caslon, Cloister and Bodoni, all of which have been tremendous sellers and have dominated and improved the commercial typography of the United States.” There is more from Bullen later.

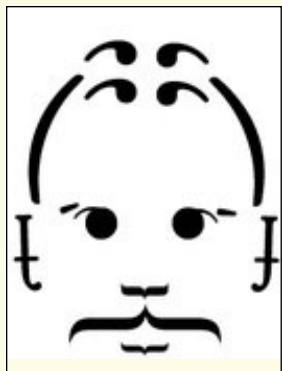
I have an article buried somewhere that tells about, as I recall, how disturbed Bullen was that Benton was getting all the credit for Cloister. It was Bullen’s contention that it was himself that championed the creation of an ATF face based on Jenson’s.

The third and maybe most telling article titled “Morris Benton” appeared in the May 1936 issue of the *Inland Printer*.

In writing about designing new types:

“Morris Benton has a system for detecting these trends. The designing of type is no longer a one-man job. Type today is designed by a group. There is preliminary work, the numerous field contacts which must be made to find out just what are the trends in the printing world, the analysis of the data thus obtained, ...All these make

up the group's work. The actual designing of the type is done by Mr. Benton, or is assigned by him to some other designer. The



designer still does the creating, but he bases his designs on what the field analysis indicates is wanted."

The article goes on to say: "Well, one might today still be a type designer, possessing such skill and artistry, but Mr. Benton doubts if such a designer could produce a saleable type, except possibly by accident. Because the successful designer, under current conditions, must have all of the professional requirements demanded of the artist in this field. In addition, he must be an economist, a student of distribution, of merchandising trends, be well informed on advertising tendencies, and so on down the list. The requirements are numerous and exacting."

The writer of this series of three consecutive articles in *The Inland Printer* was John Allen Murphy and he starts the second article by stating the MFB "seems one of the most difficult men to interview I have ever talked to – and I have interviewed thousands in my time. Try to pin some honor on him, or give him credit for some achievement, and

he will modestly sidestep with the remark that 'Lady Luck helped me a lot there.'"

Yeah, Lady Luck and whole staff of people. He always sidestepped taking credit—imagine that.

The concept of type families has been credited to Morris Fuller Benton by some writers. Here are excerpts from an article in the July 1924 issue of the *Inland Printer*. The article is titled "The effect of the Composing Machines Upon the Typefounding Industry" and was written by Henry Lewis Bullen, Head of the Typographic Library and Museum at ATF and also the historian and publicist for ATF.

The article talks about the formation of ATF and how it was solidified on firm ground when Robert W. Nelson assumed the management of the company.

Bullen writes: "Of the financial and administrative difficulties something will be told, but at this point the Nelson policy in type-making needs to be explained, for that policy was and is the foundation of the success of his company. Other departments are left in a

great measure to their respective managers, but Nelson is the active directing spirit of the type department, which, of course, has several managers. Great in many ways, he is, above all, a type man, selecting the type faces and following with critical care each design as it progresses through the designing department. No detail of design or manufacture escapes his scrutiny. He investigates every suggestion and complaint. Thus he has made his typefoundry preeminent and in doing so has revitalized American typography.

"Prior to Nelson taking over, Joseph W. Phinney's studies in type design, and his good judgment in selection, first gave the American Type Founders Company its leadership in type fashions. The greatest of Phinney's successes was the introduction of the William Morris types and decorative

Time wasted in hunting sorts constitutes one of the greatest losses encountered in a composing room. The way to obviate such a condition is to buy Job Type in Weight Fonts at Body Type prices and fair discounts.

Clearface

A new and very beautiful book and job letter with distinctive characteristics, making it very desirable where a stylish and easily read type is required. Unsurpassed for all-round work.

FOURTEEN EVENLY GRADUATED SIZES, RANGING FROM FIVE POINT TO SEVENTY-TWO POINT, FORMING A USEFUL SERIES

American Type Founders Co.

designs. Phinney produced the first type family – the Jenson family of related designs.”

Bullen further writes: “Nelson’s first selection of a typeface was the now celebrated Cheltenham Old Style, designed by Goodhue. Though by no means a perfect type design, it was an advance in certain ways on the Jenson Old Style. The price asked for the design was for that time unusually high, and a majority of Nelson’s advisers were against its acceptance. It proved to be the best seller in the history of typefounding, and was developed by Morris Benton into an extensive family, some of the Bentonian members of which have outsold and are outselling the parent design. The Nelson policy is to enliven printing by issuing a constant succession of good type designs and expanding each into a family, when practicable.”

And later Bullen adds: “This is the basic idea in Nelson’s policy: to increase the demand for type by increasing the demand for printing. Nelson moves his type families as generals move their divisions, not haphazardly, but with deliberation. The design announced today was planned two or three years before to support a further advance. The type family as developed by Nelson makes for saving in time by securing harmonious effects automatically. Printers now



buy families where once they bought series.”

It appears from this article that Nelson developed the type family concept *and* had a bigger influence on typeface selection at ATF than Benton did!!!

Neil Macmillan, in his book “An A-Z of Type Designers” (2006) states that “Benton has been credited with inventing the concept of the type family and although this is not the case he did do his best work expanding faces into families and adapting existing type styles for ATF.” He also says that “Morris Benton also worked closely with his contemporary at ATF, Henry Lewis Bullen, ...”

In “Books & Printing” (1951) edited by Paul Bennett there is a chapter about American Type Designers and their works

by Carl Purington Rollins. He briefly mentions Benton at ATF as “a man responsible for almost the whole type output of that foundry for many years.” Rollins does not mention a single face credited to Benton, but further in the article says “It is unfortunate that the names of the designers of the types put out by the American Type Founders Company have not been preserved except in rare instances.”

In “The Book” (1943) by Douglas C. McMurtrie there is a chapter titled “Concerning Type Design.” The only mention of ATF says: “The leading American typefoundry began, early in the twentieth century, under the able technical direction of Morris Benton, a number of revivals of notewor-

thy typefaces of the past..." He then goes on extensively about Frederic Goudy and also mentions Oswald Cooper, R. Hunter Middleton, W. A. Dwiggins and Rudolph Ruzicka and their contributions to typeface creation."

In "The Shaping of Our Alphabet" (1955) by Frank Denman, the only reference to Benton is contained in the sentence "For the general excellence of these ATF revivals we are indebted to the scholarship of Henry Lewis Bullen and the punch-cutting skill of Morris Benton." He then goes on to devote nearly a half page to Goudy as a type designer.

In "Letters of Credit" (1986) by Walter Tracy there are two references to Benton. The first is in reference to Garamond – "The American Type Founders Company issued a version in 1918, "designed" by Morris Benton and T. M. Clelland in collaboration." And later.... "Cloister Old Style, a face which had been popular ever since Morris Fuller Benton had supervised its creation at American Type Founders Company in 1913."

In "Type for Books & Advertising" (1947) by Eugene M. Ettenberg, in Chapter 8 (Masters of Typography in the 20th Century) the only specific mention of Benton's output is "He developed the extensive Cheltenham type family from Goodhue's original 11-point Cheltenham O. S. face.

He made "reproductions, adaptations and extensions" of the Bodoni and Bodoni Book (1911-1912). Designed the italic of the Cloister O.S. in 1914, ...Cloister Bold in 1915, its italic in 1916. Made Goudy Bold in 1917 and its italic in 1921, an adaptation of Garamond O.S. in 1919 and 1920, its bold in 1923. He is now living in retirement in New Jersey."

This seems to be an amazingly odd list because there is no mention of the unique typefaces that one now thinks of as having been designed by Benton.

One can currently go to www.linotype.com and find their web page for MFB. The main headline is "Font Designer – Morris Fuller Benton" but the copy starts "Fonts: Benton developed over 200 alphabets, all of which were published at ATF,..." I find this a very reticent way to start a listing of ATF faces. *Developed* and not *designed* or *created*????

Morris Fuller Benton is given zero mention or recognition in the following publications:

"American Type Designers" (1956) P. K. Thomajan. Stories of 13 designers – no MFB.

A short "History of the Printed Word"

(1970) Warren Chappel. No mention of MFB at all.

"Heritage of the Graphic Arts," a selection of lectures, (1972) Dr. Robert Leslie. No mention of MFB.

"Twentieth Century Type Designers" (1987) Sebastian Carter. Stories of 17 designers – no MFB.

Other publications that do mention Benton:

"The Heritage of the Printer" (1965) Dr. James Eckman – incorrectly credits MFB as developing the concept of a family of typefaces evolved from a single basic design.

"Rookledge's International Directory of Type Designers" (1994) Morris Fuller Benton is not mentioned as an individual as almost everyone else is, but is tucked into the umbrella of ATF

"American Type Design & Designers" (2004) David Consuegra. Late to the game and simply rehashing assumptions that MFB "is credited with being the most prolific type design-

er in American history, with over 260 typefaces to his credit, including some original and some variants of already existing fonts, an output twice as great as that of Frederic



W. Goudy, who started to design late in his thirties. Benton's designs are almost always a combined product of artistic inspiration and organized, systematic research. There is also a diversity of style found in his work that is uncommon among type designers" My guess is that David had no clue of the design-by-committee concept that would have explained all of that. And note that the number of faces credited to Benton just keeps getting bigger and bigger.

I believe that Benton's strength was his organizational skill and his engineering genius for developing methods and systems for enlarging/reducing designs and expanding them into families of related weights/widths/etc.

"Greatest or most prolific type designer of the twentieth century?" I simply just can't swallow that.

You might ask, just who were the commonly recognized early twentieth-century American type designers according to those knowledgeable about the subject? Here is a listing:

Frederic Goudy, Will Bradley, Warren Chappel, William Dwiggins, C. H. Griffith, Victor Hammer, Lucian Bernhard, Oswald Cooper, Sol Hess, Richard Kaufmann, Robert Middleton, Robert Wiebking,

Bruce Rogers, Rudolph Ruzicka, George Trenholm, Joseph Blumenthal, T. M. Cleland, and Bertram Goodhue

I should also note that there are actually a few ATF employees, other than Benton, that have been given credit for typeface designs at ATF while Benton was still there. They are:

Charles Herman Becker, ATF matrix and pattern maker. His faces were: Cloister Cursive Handtooled, Goudy Handtooled & Italic,* Novel Gothic, Quick-Set Roman and Italic, and Quick-Set Bold.

Wadsworth Parker, head of ATF specimen department. His faces were: Bookman and Italic, Gallia, Goudy Handtooled and Italic*, Graybar Book, Lexington, Modernistic, Stymie Compressed, Stymie Inline Title. (Both men worked on Goudy Handtooled and italic — again with no consultation or input from Frederic Goudy.)

This is hopefully enough information to get a discussion going as to whether or not Morris Fuller Benton deserves to be credited as the greatest typeface designer of the twentieth century.

* Goudy gave neither gentlemen input to work on his Goudy Handtooled.

■ Rick welcomes comments. Send him an [email](#).

I have never written an article or paper about this, but simply gathered information here and there. I am not a scholar by any stretch of the imagination, but simply consider myself a student of printing and typography. Everything that I have gleaned for this discussion has come from my own library. Morris Fuller Benton was shy and retiring and his relationship with his father and his personal life don't even come close to being normal, but others have written about that and I have only been interested in finding out if he really was the pencil-to-paper typeface creator that people are now so readily willing to give him credit as being.

I am obviously not neutral on this issue. I personally give M. F. Benton little, if any, credit as being a typeface designer.

It is difficult to try to piece all of this together a century after the fact, but if Morris Fuller Benton received absolutely no recognition from his peers as a legitimate type designer, there was probably a very good reason for that. I too used to believe that M. F. Benton designed all the faces credited to him, simply because I was naïve and that was the information being offered. The more I learn, the more skepticism I have. For those that think he did not get the recognition he deserved, what is that based on?



Goudy at the panagraph