

# The WAYZGOOSE GAZETTE



A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRINTING MUSEUM • BUENA PARK, CALIFORNIA

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2

SPRING, 1991

## *On The Trail of a Hoe*

In the nineteenth century, the firm of R. Hoe & Co. dominated American press manufacturing. Begun in 1805 under the name of Smith, Hoe & Company, the firm was involved chiefly with the construction and repair of wooden presses but by the turn of the century, most major newspapers were printed or had been printed on a Hoe press.

Robert Hoe arrived in New York as a young man from Liverpool at the age of 19 in 1803. Prior to leaving England, Robert purchased the remainder of his indenture to a carpenter, and upon arriving in the New World boldly called himself a professional carpenter. As he ventured through the deserted streets of New York (the yellow fever was raging through the city and many had fled to safer places), he stopped at one of the only open shops, that of Grant Thorburn, a nail-maker. After listening to the young

the last stages of the disease, Robert would have surely died. The debilitated nineteen-year-old was despairing of life when Thorburn had convinced the young man that his health was indeed improving. Within an hour of that good report, the fever had left Robert and he began to return to normal health.

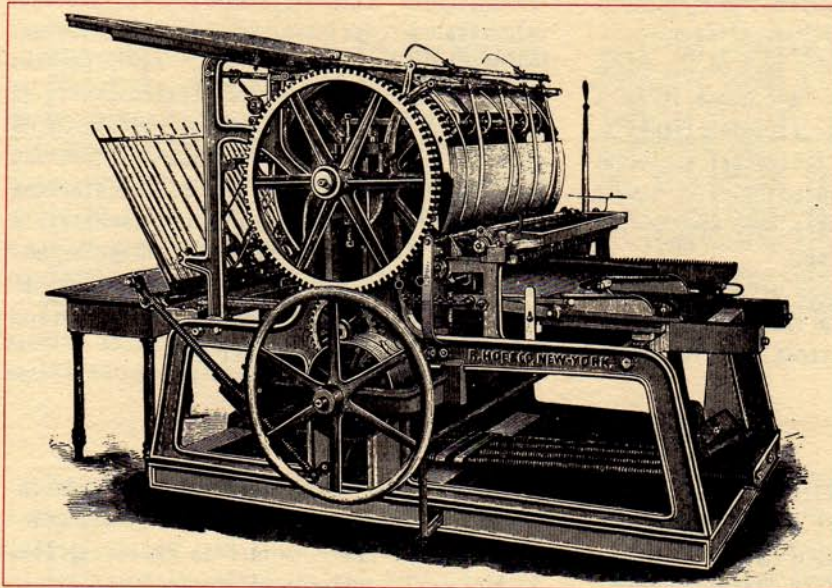
Robert Hoe met up with Matthew Smith in 1805, a printer's joiner and equipment maker. They formed a partnership and began manufacturing printing equipment for the growing New York printing industry. When Matthew died in 1820, Hoe became the senior partner in the firm, with Matthew's brother Peter filling the vacant spot. A carpenter and engineer as well, Peter Smith introduced an "Acorn" press in 1822. With a cast iron frame in the shape of an acorn together with a simple toggle mechanism to create the impression, the press was a powerful

replacement to the wooden presses of the day.

The Smith Acorn Press became the first "name" product for the firm, which by 1822 was called simply "R. Hoe & Co". The Smith press, along with the Washington Press, acquired in 1835 from the inventor Samuel Rust, were successfully manufactured and marketed throughout the century.

The hand press, however, had a limited if not doomed future. No matter

how powerful and simple the toggle mechanism could be, even with the addition of self-inking devices, the speed on a hand press could not top 200 impressions per hour. By 1811, a successful cylinder press was introduced by the German Koenig which could produce 800-1000 impressions per



lad's account of coming to America, Thorburn offered Robert accommodations until he could find gainful employment.

Within a week, Robert came down with the yellow fever, which nearly ended his life. Had it not been for the ingenious coaxing of Thorburn during

hour. The age of industrialization had come to the printing industry as the cylinder press rapidly developed into a highly efficient device capable of meeting the needs of a growing world. At the turn of the century, rotary perfecting presses were capable of an output of 48,000 eight page papers per hour, quite a difference from the 80-per-hour-output of wooden press a century earlier.

Throughout this development of the high-speed newspaper press, R. Hoe & Co. held one of the leading roles. The firm introduced their first cylinder press in 1830, the Single Large Cylinder Printing Machine, which by mid-century was available in three sizes, the largest costing \$1490. The account of how they developed that first cylinder press typifies the nature of firm's press developments and "improvements" over the years.

Mordecai Noah, who was a friend of Richard Hoe (the son of Robert), was in the position of surveyor for the port of New York. While in this capacity, a cylinder press from England, manufactured by David Napier, arrived and lay stranded at the port. Being interested in how this new Napier style press operated as well as needing to appraise it, he called on his friend Richard to set up the press. This gave Richard the unique opportunity to completely examine his competitor's machine.

Richard was highly impressed by the Napier Press, and in his judgement it was far superior to any press in America at that time. He made full use of the opportunity before him, detailing every part of the press through drawings. In this same time frame, Richard Hoe was actually able to view four separate Napier's, one of which he was allowed by the owner to duplicate by sand casting; Hoe had convinced the owner that he would be able to supply spare parts faster and cheaper than those available from England.

In short, R. Hoe & Co. was able to take an existing press, incorporate its successful ideas and introduce an "improved" version of the press under the firm's

name. The lack of international patent protection allowed the company to do this on a number of occasions. This technical resourcefulness combined with innovative engineering and the firm's successful marketing abilities allowed R. Hoe & Co. to take a leading role of printing equipment manufacturing. The Hoe catalogues contained scores of state of the art machines, some being their own development and others adapted from competitor's products.

The original Single Large Cylinder Press was manufactured by Hoe well past the middle of the nineteenth century, many of them finding their homes in rural country papers as second or third hand equipment. Their size was small enough to operate in the back woods areas where these country papers were often located, and yet they could give enough economical automation to meet the moderate circulations. Also, these presses could be powered by a number of means, from steam to electric, from human to hydraulic, which made a difference in areas lacking electric power.

Two years ago, the Printing Museum was able to acquire an early Hoe Single Cylinder Press, circa 1840, through the generous donation of Bill Shepard. It was used to print the Blue Lake Advocate near the border of California and Oregon from the 1890's until the 1960's. Prior to its use in Blue Lake, the large press, weighing 10,000 pounds, was used in San Francisco for book production. The Museum has begun the long process of restoring the press in order to bring it on exhibit, as well as researching its history from its manufacture on the East Coast to its shipment by clipper boat around the Horn into San Francisco. If you would like to assist in this process by sponsoring the costs incurred in its restoration or assisting in the physical restoration, please contact the Museum at (714) 523-2070. This is an opportunity to be tangibly involved in the preservation and presentation of our history as printers.

## *Volunteers in Action*

Many would not expect their Obstetrics and Gynecological doctor to have a side interest in antique printing equipment. But if Leland Whitson was scheduled to deliver your baby, you might need to have him paged at the Printing Museum. Leland, or "Doc" as he is known, has been volunteering at the Printing Museum since he first discovered us over a year ago.

Doc's interest in printing dates back to before he even took an interest in medicine. With the purchase

of some "Swift Set Rubber Type" by Superior in grade school, little Doc was well on his way to becoming the hobby printer on his block. The ambitious young boy would print a "supplementary sheet" for the papers on his newspaper route. He even received some attention for one of his newsheets when he announced for his paper route, "Press Breaks Down—Tribune Prints Times!"

In high school, Doc advanced his printing operations with the purchase of a small mimeograph

machine. But though most males of past generations had the opportunity to take Print Shop while in junior high and high school, Doc was constantly thwarted in his efforts. Having a father in the military often meant moving around the country and subsequently having to change schools.

In the various schools he attended, half of the boys were placed in Print Shop for the first part of the year while the others were placed in Mechanical drawing; they then switched halfway through the year. As much as Doc wanted to take Print Shop, he was placed in mechanical drawing with the hopes of taking printing in the second half of the year. Unfortunately, he moved before this could take place. In the next school he attended, he was again placed in mechanical drawing, since print shop was in the first part of the year! This happened to him each year; though he became quite proficient at mechanical drawing, Doc was never able to take a course in printing until taking a workshop at the Printing Museum recently!

Currently, Doc has equipped his hobby shop with a C & P Pilot press along with a Thompson cabinet filled with type. Both he and his wife Mary have been taking occasional classes at the Museum to refine their skills in hobby printing, and both are doing quite well; to have your spouse interested in your

hobby in such a way is enviable by most hobby printers forced to pursue their love of letterpress in the garage or dark basement!

Leland Whitson is a man who has a love for antiques and machinery, both of which he has found at the Printing Museum. A walk through his home gives you an insight into his love for old memorabilia. Over the years he has also spent some time at the Orange Empire Railroad Museum in Parris, CA. For some reason, railroads and printing seem to be a good mix! Many thanks, Leland, for all your hours of help and support to the Printing Museum.

Volunteers are in constant need at the Printing Museum; in fact, they are an important part of our operation. There is a need for docents to help give tours to the groups who visit the museum during the week. Usually the tours are in the late mornings and early afternoons. If you are a retired or semi-retired printer and love to talk to people, why not consider spending a few hours with us?

Other areas are withrepair and maintainance of the equipment; we even have a few projects of restoring some old presses if that is to your liking! Occassionally, we also have need of printing items, such as this newsletter. If there is a skill you have that might be of benefit to the Museum and you would like to help please contact us.

## *Museum Library of Printing History*

With modest beginnings, the Printing Museum has been developing a library devoted to the history of the printing industry. Rather than being solely a depository of rare books, the museum is focusing on books related to the history of printing, the manufacturing of equipment, catalogues, instructional manuals and text books, type catalogues and specimens, printing journals and periodicals.

The library currently has over 1500 titles, a number which is increasing monthly with new donations and acquisitions. Portions of the library are

long-term donations, such as the Gary Sakata collection of books on paper. Subjects within the holdings are Type & Typography, Biographies, Composing Equipment, Printing Journals, Engraving, Lithography, Printing History, Text Books, Letterpress Equipment & Paper.

If you have books that might be of interest to the Museum, please contact us. The Library is an important tool for research and developing new museum displays.

## *Museum Calendar*

The Museum's Workshop will be offering classes in the fall on hobby printing, calligraphy and paper-making. Classes will be on Saturday's by prior arrangement with individuals interested. Cost will be \$75 per four hour day, per person. Contact Mark at the Museum for more details.

The Museum is co-sponsoring a trip with Gutenberg Travel to PRINT 91 in Chicago, September 7th to the 11th. Last year we sponsored a similar trip to

Germany and had a fantastic time! Price will include just about everything from airfare to accommodations. Trip will also feature visits to printing history sights. \$950/per person. Contact theMuseum for details.

September will mark the opening of the Museum's new Composing Room Cafe, an area for light refreshments during a visit to the musuem. Take some time to stop by and see our latest development!

## Notes from the Curator

Activity at the Printing Museum as been on the increase since the beginning of the new year, rather pleasantly so. We have been concentrating our marketing efforts to private schools and many of them are responding very positively to the educational environment which the Museum provides. The combination of historical working exhibits and live theatrical performances of printing characters captivates the attention of the these young students. If you know of a school that would be interested in visiting the Printing Museum, please contact us and we will give them the appropriate information.

Two days after the curator returned from his honeymoon, the Museum sponsored a day-long seminar in conjunction with the Linotype-Hell Corporation. The seminar, "Type Over Time," featured nationally known speakers such as Alex Haley, who spoke on the subject of type, its history and current technology. Along with the speakers, manufacturers such as Linotype-Hell, Apple and Quark Xpress, demonstrated state of the art equipment and software. Over 500 visitors attended the seminar, which began in the morning and continued through until 7 p.m. The seminar was the first in a series to be sponsored by the Museum; a second one on type is scheduled for next fall.

Another area of activity for the Museum recently is working with the movie studios on rentals of equipment. Machines from the Lindner Collection have been rented to the movie studios for the past forty years, especially in the heyday of the Westerns; whenever you have a Western, you need a printing shop to destroy, it seems! There are over 80 movies and television shows which feature the Lindner Collection, such as Liberty Valance and Bonanza. We are currently working with an upcoming Disney film, called "Newsies," which is about a turn-of-the-century newspaper shop in New York. Another rental in progress is with an IMAX film for the 1992 World Expo about great discoverers, namely Gutenberg and Mergenthaler. Both will be filmed this summer.

For consideration of the Disney film, we managed to get our Whitlock Flatbed Country Newspaper press, on loan from the Shakespeare Press Museum, San Luis Obispo, into operating condition. The hand-fed, powered press rattled away for the first time in probably thirty years! Visitors to the Museum will be able to watch the Whitlock press in operation as it demonstrates newspaper production after the turn-of-the century!

## Museum Gift Shop

The Museum's Gift Shop offers a range of somewhat unique products related to the history of printing. If you have an interest in something particular, give us a call and we will see what we can do for you.

**Authentic Lithographic Stones**, approximately 8" by 10" in size with images on them — \$150

**Printing Museum T-Shirt**, many colors and sizes, please specify size — \$3.50

**Linotype Collection 1989**, a recent and complete type catalogue of Linotype's typographic library — was \$25, now \$10.00

**Old Type Faces**, a book on the Frederic Nelson Phillips Collection of type — \$7.95

**Printing Presses from 15th Century to Present**, by James Moran, a definitive history on the development of the printing press — \$19.50

**Incunabula**, a page from a book printed in 1492 by Johann Amerbach, rubricated by hand — \$75.00

**Gutenberg Creation Print**, a framed limited edition artistic representation of Gutenberg's workshop complete with a piece of type cast in Mainz, Germany! A beautiful piece commissioned by the PICA Foundation, now only available at the Printing Museum — \$350.00

Address all orders to Printing Museum Gift Shop, 8469 Kass Drive, Buena Park, CA 90621, or call (714) 523-2070. Make checks payable to IMGC. Please add 10% for shipping/handling (\$1.00 minimum) and appropriate sales tax for CA residents. Allow three weeks for delivery.

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is issued quarterly from the  
*International Printing Museum* which features  
the *Lindner Collection of Printing Machinery*  
8469 Kass Drive, Buena Park, CA 90621  
(714) 523-2070

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