The Mission and the Missionaries:

Arts and Crafts Ideology in Boston's Society of Printers, 1905–2005

The Mission

BOSTON'S Society of Printers was an outgrowth of the British Arts and Crafts Movement. But contrary to what one might expect from this connection, the chief inspirations of the Society's founders were neither the Arts and Crafts style nor the desire to return exclusively to handcrafts. Rather, the goal was to challenge the primacy of profit-driven management by bringing cultural values into the factories where books were manufactured. Knowledge of design history and handwork would be the basis for guiding the esthetic standards of rapidly evolving printing technology, with a particular concern for the design and use of type. These aims were distilled into the ten-word mission: *for the study and advancement of the art of printing*.

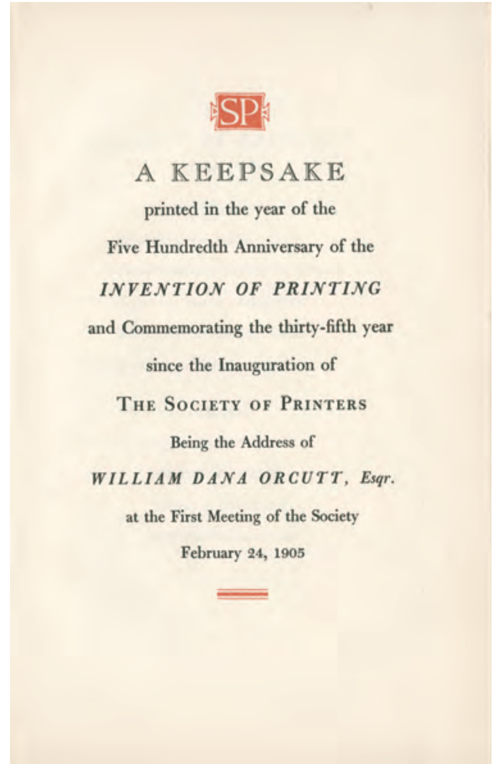
The name of the Society is misleading, since at its founding on February 14, 1905, the Society of Printers would become the first graphic design organization in the United States — before the term came into the language. Metal type was the medium of graphic design in 1905, and book designers either owned, were employed by, or had close alliances with printing companies. Those were the only ways to control the outcome of one's design — conditions that, of course, no longer apply today. Personal

computers have created a new working condition that SP member Stephen Harvard called the "Electronic Scriptorium." As in the days before the invention of type, graphic designers in remote studios can now compose pages of text themselves — with a speed that the scribes of old could hardly have imagined. The Internet and the proliferation of various digital printing devices have caused further upheavals. The resulting attrition of actual printers within the membership might seem to have made anomalous the Society of Printers name and mission statement. Nevertheless, the members remain proud of a name that reminds them of their origins.

The purpose of this centennial essay is to go back in time, to consider how the mission was carried out by eight of the Society's leading members — from Charles Eliot Norton (1827–1908) to Ray Nash (1905–1982). The contemporary period is given a brief overview at the conclusion. Even a centennial might not warrant an investigation of so small a group had its members not formed the intellectual hub of American graphic design, uncontested up to World War II. They were involved in the founding of the American Institute of Graphic Arts, and they received half of the Institute's first twenty-eight medals. SP members led the way in establishing a literature of design history; and their contributions to journals, including *Print* magazine, which they started in 1940, helped develop a national awareness of the profession.

During the research for this essay, there emerged an unexpected secondary theme — the influence of socialism and other varieties of progressive thinking within the Society of Printers. The role of political reformers in the British Arts and Crafts Movement is well known, from John Ruskin through William Morris, Walter Crane, Emery Walker, and Stanley Morison. While some graphic design historians acknowledge Carl Rollins's involvement in printing communes, other manifestations of American Arts and Crafts social activism have tended to be ignored in favor of discussions of

style. This resulted partly from self-censorship by the designers themselves, who apparently thought it necessary to protect their careers. The dangers were quite real. Professor and calligrapher Lloyd Reynolds, who had friendships within the Society and was a teacher of this writer, was summoned by Senator Harold Velde to appear before a 1954 session of the House Un-American Activities Committee held in Portland, Oregon, resulting in his temporary suspension from teaching at Reed College.[1]



The colophon for this keepsake states: "This edition, limited to 300 copies, is arranged and printed by D. B. Updike, The Merrymount Press, Boston, in the Month of May 1940."

No word in the political lexicon describes the wariness of big business that united such diverse people as Charles Eliot Norton, Daniel Berkeley Updike, Bruce Rogers, Carl Rollins, William Addison Dwiggins, and Ray Nash. These were literate men, committed to the tradition of the printed book as a foundation of civilization. They fought to preserve cultural values against the pressures of industry — exactly the same problem that had politicized John Ruskin and William Morris a century earlier. That the Society of Printers would concern itself with the art of printing, rather than practical business matters, was stated explicitly by William Dana Orcutt at the first meeting in 1905, and elegantly printed by Updike for a new generation of members in 1940, a year before his death. And yet these men were often superb businessmen and

masters of marketing. The necessity of such skills was not in question; the fight was over priorities. How far should artistic and moral standards be compromised for the sake of profits? Graphic designers in the Society had entered a battlefield of ideologies.

When American design history is viewed in this political light, the polarity of modernism and classical design takes on new meaning. By mid-century the debate was joined between defenders of books and literature, on one side, and designers for corporations, on the other. The book industry formed a special arena, split between publishers controlled by their sales and business departments and those, like Alfred A. Knopf, who defended designers — including Dwiggins — from marketing managers.

From its beginnings, modernist typography was commonly associated with consumer goods more than it was with literature. Its leading theoretician, Jan Tschichold, wrote in 1946, "The New or Functional Typography is perfectly suited to advertising the products of industry."[2] The machine esthetic, with its geometric sans serif types, asymmetrical arrangements, and bold use of photography, was ideal for promoting technology-based corporations. After World War II growing corporate patronage brought prosperity to young modernist typographers, giving them credibility and status. Regardless of such financial success, Tschichold and others came to lament the modernist tendency toward orthodoxy and its disregard for some valid classical principles. Orthodoxy has no appeal for the admirers of modernism within the SP, such as current members Carl Zahn, Matthew Carter, Michael McPherson, and Wynne Patterson, whose work is a post-modern fusion of classical and modern informed by a careful study of typographic history.

This archetypal conflict between culture and industry — or tradition and progress — was eloquently revealed in the career of William Addison Dwiggins. He was a plain-living pacifist — a writer and artist armed with an irresistible sense of humor — who

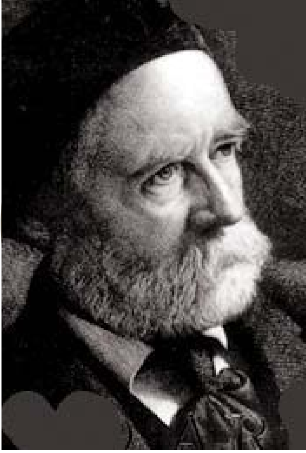
left ample evidence of his skepticism about the machine age and capitalism. Dwiggins was perhaps more sympathetic to modernism than anybody else in the Society, having worked in advertising for decades and being a master of Art Deco and asymmetrical typography. But an increasing concern that modernist experiments interfered with reading led, in 1949, to a clash of the titans as the old master publicly exchanged shots, in print, with his young rival, Paul Rand. Dwiggins's internal struggle with the machine age and big business is given extra space in this essay because it is emblematic. He gave voice to any person who defies pressures of society or the marketplace — who follows a vision for the future, or preserves a tradition — or both. Dwiggins, like the Society of Printers itself, provides a microcosm for studying the dueling ideologies of American graphic design, whose underground currents may ultimately prove to be as meaningful to posterity as the ephemeral evidence of style.

The Missionaries

THE FOUNDERS of the Society of Printers named two honorary members from the preceding generation: Theodore Low De Vinne and Charles Eliot Norton.

Theodore Low De Vinne (1828–1914)

THE PREEMINENT American printer of his time, Theodore Low De Vinne set a standard of superb craftsmanship with the new steam-powered cylinder presses and electrotype relief blocks that were transforming the industry. Born in Stamford, Connecticut, he learned his craft at the *Newburgh Gazette* (New York) and later in the shop of Francis Hart, a high-quality printer in New York City with a wealthy clientele. At Hart's, De Vinne had an opportunity to develop a tasteful sensibility that aspired to timelessness: plain types well set, elegant but practical proportions, restrained use of ornament, and clear presswork. After Hart's death in 1877, De Vinne took over the company, giving it his own name.



Theodore Low De Vinne

It was during his years at Hart's that De Vinne became a dedicated scholar of the early masters of the printer's art, eventually writing monographs on Caxton (1872), Gutenberg and the invention of printing (1876), Aldus (1878), and Plantin (1888). While other printing historians had been influenced chiefly by the superficial aspects of style in the work of the old masters, De Vinne looked for — and found — something deeper and more lasting: a sense of printing as art, dedication to fundamental principles governing letterforms and the proportions of the page, and a seriousness of purpose that has always motivated the best printers. As a master of both craft and business, De Vinne had an appreciation for the primitive tools and the frequently hostile political climate of the early printers — and of the value of their work. His observations about Christopher Plantin, the sixteenth-century printer of Antwerp, helped to define printing ideals for the next generation:

> "The man is greater than the machine," and Plantin was master over his presses. From uncouth unions of wood and stone, pinned together with bits of iron, he made his pressmen extort workmanship which has been the admiration of the world.
>
> The books which he and others printed aroused the mental activity and inspired the freedom which soon made the Netherlands the foremost state in the world. Kings die and beliefs change; the bronze statues made to be imperishable are destroyed, but the printed word stands. The book lives, and lives forever. Horace was right: it is more enduring than bronze.[3]

After praising the typography of Aldus Manutius, the conclusion of De Vinne's essay on the Venetian printer offers a moral

opinion that echoes Ruskin's well-known complaints about the Italian Renaissance and the plight of the poor. Preparing the ground for the Arts and Crafts Movement, De Vinne reminds the reader that even the great Aldus faltered in pursuit of printing's true mission:

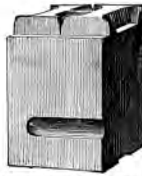
> His books . . . did not fully accomplish the purpose for which printing was sent. Of help to the wise, but of no benefit to the ignorant, they really widened the gulf between the two classes at a time when they should have bridged it. It was not in the shadow of St. Mark, where Aldus labored, nor in the palaces of the Medici and of the Vatican, where his sons were welcomed, that printing received the nurture that made it a reorganizing force in the world. The seed from which the greatest harvest of good came was sown by early printers, like those of England, who seldom printed a Greek or Latin text, but who made books in languages that common people could read.[4]

Nowhere did such words ring more true than among the founders of the Society of Printers, all of whom were weaned on De Vinne's work. De Vinne's most famous writing was *On the Practice of Typography*, two thousand pages of history, theory, and practice, issued in four volumes — a feat that has not been attempted since. And his greatest accomplishment in printing and typography was *The Century Dictionary*, twelve inches high, issued in ten volumes during 1889–1906. It was against such achievements that the younger generation would measure their own work.

De Vinne's viewpoint was surprisingly similar to that of the Bauhaus, which he preceded by decades. His belief in functional typography and a dislike of ornament were both stated and practiced. Perhaps most important, he demonstrated how handcraft standards could be transferred to factory work. It was his example of the commercial scholar-printer, rather than the English private

Punch of letter H.

Matrix of letter H.

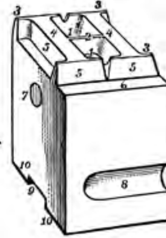


View of body inclined to show the face.

Letter H, from a type of canon body.

Face of the letter on the body.

1 counter.
2 hair-line.
3 serif.
4 stem, or body-mark.
5 neck, or beard.



6 shoulder.
7 pin mark.
8 nick.
9 groove.
10 feet.

Wood engraved illustrations from De Vinne's *Plain Printing Types*, pages 16, 17, and 29.

press movement, that seemed to offer a more practical path for Society of Printers men, including Daniel Berkeley Updike, Bruce Rogers, Carl Rollins, Joseph Blumenthal, Fred Anthoensen, and Roderick Stinehour. Not only did the Americans not have the personal wealth of Morris or T. J. Cobden-Sanderson, but they shared, in varying degrees, the egalitarian ethos that had also inspired De Vinne and the great printers before him. They recognized that the machine was morally neutral. It could be an instrument of exploitation, suffering, and destruction, or it could be guided intelligently to produce high-quality, inexpensive goods, while providing dignified employment and reducing hard labor.

Updike's *Altar Book*, the Kelmscott-inspired project that launched the Merrymount Press, was printed at the De Vinne Press during the years 1893 to 1896. Acknowledging that the great man was "frankly out of sympathy with the style of the volume," Updike forever turned his back on that embarrassing episode in his career, choosing instead to follow the example of De Vinne.

The American typographic tradition of the commercial scholar-printer that had passed from Isaiah Thomas (1749–1831) to De Vinne was then solemnly taken on by Updike, who in his turn would show the way to his own and a younger generation.

Charles Eliot Norton (1827–1908)

The second honorary member of the Society was Charles Eliot Norton, professor of fine arts at Harvard (the first art history appointment in an American university) and a prominent voice among New England's intellectual elite. His forebears were leading Puritan clerics and intellectuals, beginning with John Norton, who arrived in New England in 1635. Andrews Norton, the father of Charles, was the Dexter Professor of Sacred Literature at Harvard and a Unitarian leader. Among his students were young men, including Ralph Waldo Emerson, who later, as Transcendentalists, became his intellectual adversaries. In the family tradition, Charles Eliot Norton combined vast learning with a moral mission. As the rising power and status of merchants and industrialists challenged the old order, Norton was in the forefront of the defenders of culture. Early in his career he was also a practical social reformer whose contributions to adult education and housing for the poor included creating a Cambridge night school for men and boys in 1846 and serving as treasurer for the School of Design for Women, from 1854.[5]

Charles Eliot Norton

His close friend and counterpart in England was Oxford professor and artist John Ruskin (1819–1900). Both men were alarmed by the harm being done to society, culture, and the environment by the fast-rising industrial economy, and their writing became increasingly political and moral. Ruskin's most influential work, *Unto This Last* (1860), was a passionate, well-argued case

John Ruskin

against the prevailing economic theories and for protecting fragile humanitarian, environmental, and cultural values against the unregulated growth of industry. William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones read an earlier work of Ruskin's, "On the Nature of the Gothic" (a stand-alone chapter from *The Stones of Venice*) while students at Oxford, causing them to be "born again" into a life of political activism that helped to define the Arts and Crafts Movement.

The movement's name came from the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, formed in 1886. Although neither Ruskin nor Morris helped to create the society, its esthetic standards and mission were inspired by the ideas of both men. The society's first president, Walter Crane, wrote, "It is a protest against that so-called industrial progress which provides shoddy wares, the cheapness of which is paid for by the lives of their producers and the degradation of their users."[6]

Significantly, most of the Arts and Crafts leaders were bookmen in one way or another. Ruskin's self-help book on the importance of reading great literature, *Sesame and Lilies*, became a best seller in America and England. Morris, Walker, and Crane were all famous for their work with books, type, and illustration. Why were books and printers so prominent in the Arts and Crafts Movement? While considering the similarity between Ruskin and Norton, SP chronicler Ray Nash saw a common idealism: "They shared the same interest in printing as a craft having more possibilities for the cause of spiritual regeneration than those buried deeper in industrialism."[7]

Nash's belief that the printed book is an agent of spiritual regeneration is similar to De Vinne's faith in printing as a "reorganizing force in the world." But Nash seems to overlook that no craft

is more deeply involved in industrialism than printing. The Industrial Revolution began, as S. H. Steinberg pointed out in *Five Hundred Years of Printing*, with the invention of the adjustable type mold by Peter Schöffer and Johann Gutenberg. The adjustable mold was used for the mass production of identical, interchangeable units of metal type. It was this breakthrough, more than any other, that allowed the number of books in Europe to multiply from an estimated fifty thousand in 1450 to more than eight million by 1500. Eventually, after more than three centuries, the book factory principle of interchangeable parts spread to other forms of manufacturing.

"The printer dwells in two worlds," wrote SP member Stephen Harvard, "that of art, literature, and scholarship on one hand, and on the other the world of craftsmanship, tools, and materials. It is the printer's daily work to bring these two worlds together."[8] Required by their trade to be more knowledgeable, literate, and articulate than the typical craftsman, printers were often in the forefront of social or political change, as demonstrated by Isaiah Thomas of Worcester and Benjamin Franklin. When the political crisis of industrialism was attracting leading thinkers such as Ruskin and Norton, it is not surprising that printers and graphic artists like William Morris, Emory Walker, T. J. Cobden-Sanderson, and Walter Crane stepped into the lead of various reforms that were called "Arts and Crafts."

The same involvement of book artists occurred when the Arts and Crafts idea took root in Boston. A thriving book industry and the nation's first publicly funded library, the Boston Public Library (founded 1848), created a climate that was receptive to the printing revival of William Morris's Kelmscott Press, as well as its decorative, medieval style, which was widely copied. In the years 1896–1897 an Arts and Crafts exhibition group formed in Boston, immediately followed by a permanent organization, the Society of

Arts and Crafts. Upon incorporation in 1897, its newly elected president was not a craftsman, but Norton. Not only did his friendships with Ruskin and Morris make him a likely choice, but he also had become a mentor to Boston's young printers and had recently started an annual Labor Day children's craft exhibit and prize in his summer home in Ashfield, Massachusetts.

Henry Lewis Johnson (1867–1937)

ONE OF the young men in Norton's circle was Henry Lewis Johnson, the son of a Congregational minister, who was educated at MIT and who in 1891 had begun publishing *The Engraver and Printer* magazine. Although Johnson's name is rarely mentioned today, Ray Nash, in *Printing as an Art*, convincingly credits him as the foremost organizer of Boston's Arts and Crafts Movement, including the Society of Printers. Why, then, is his name so rarely spoken? It may be partly because few Johnson works survive — not even a decent portrait — and those that do remain have been little studied. Obscurity may simply be the fate of any organizer, magazine editor, and teacher — fields that do not often attract the kind of acclaim that came more readily to authors, printers, designers, and illustrators.

Henry Lewis Johnson

An important early achievement of Johnson was to become director of the advisory board that mounted the first exhibition of Arts and Crafts in 1897, where printed works by Bruce Rogers, Daniel Berkeley Updike, Will Bradley, and the Heintzemann Press were displayed amid the wood and metalwork, ceramics, and other crafts. The success of the exhibition led immediately to the formation of another, more ambitious committee, under the chairmanship of Harvard professor and architect H. Langford Warren, with Johnson as secretary. Nash wrote that it was

under Johnson's guidance that in 1897 "the necessary steps were taken . . . to reach an agreement on the incorporation of the Society of Arts and Crafts, and to equip it properly with by-laws and officers"— including the election of Norton as president. This society, the first of its kind in America, would be the model for others, including the Society of Printers, whose early membership included Johnson and Norton and other incorporators of the Society of Arts and Crafts: Frederick Allen Whiting, C. Howard Walker, Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, and D. B. Updike.

Under the leadership of H. Langford Warren, the Society of Arts and Crafts decided to focus on standards of craftsmanship and to avoid becoming involved in the politics of working conditions. Outraged, two of the most influential members ultimately resigned: president Arthur Astor Carey and Mary Ware Dennett.[9] Likewise the Society of Printers constitution was apolitical, focusing on artistic standards. While the social reformers found allies within both organizations, they usually had to look elsewhere to pursue those ideals.

Johnson's talent as an organizer led in 1900 to the creation of the Massachusetts State Commission for Industrial Education, followed in 1903 by the establishment of *The Printing Art* magazine. Finally on January 10, 1905, Johnson headed a "committee for the formulation of plans for a society relating to printing." D. B. Updike, Carl Heintzemann, Bruce Rogers, and George French discussed a draft constitution and membership rules prepared by Johnson. After a second meeting at Updike's home on January 30, the new organization, still unnamed, was announced in the February issue of *The Printing Art*. On February 14, allowing time for the Merrymount Press to hand-compose and print the constitution in Caslon, the Society of Printers met for the first time, eating dinner, adopting Johnson's charter, and electing its first council.

Johnson's idealism was focused on education, still a vigorous tradition in the Society of Printers a century later. He not only threw himself into exhibits and publications but also promoted universal public school instruction in lettering and design, continuing education for teachers and printers, and the provision of bibliographies for public reference collections. He later taught business printing at Boston University and participated in setting up courses at MIT and Harvard's Graduate School of Business Administration. Johnson prepared two books of his own: *Historic Design in Printing* (1923) and a typographic manual, *Printing Type Specimens* (1924).[10] After he ceased to be involved with *The Printing Art*, he originated and edited two more periodicals: *The Graphic Arts,* and *New England Printer.*

Daniel Berkeley Updike's memorial to Johnson was read at the January meeting of the Society of Printers in 1938. After reviewing his friend's life, Updike said:

> None of these varied activities came to great fruition — to him. When his schemes succeeded, they fell into other hands. When they failed, it was he who generally lost as well — either in money or influence. . . . His life was not a material success, . . . and it came to an end under circumstances of discouragement, illness, and privation. We sit comfortably at this table and perhaps inwardly pray . . . that our last end may *not* be like his. For most of us, I do not think that is at all likely. It is not likely because apart from visionary qualities he also had vision — far more than some whose activities have been more effective, prosperous and rewarding. He did "follow the gleam" even though it was sometimes but a will-o-the-wisp, and there was something fine and noble about his persistent efforts to carry on, to do which he tried far harder than most of us think worth while. In short, he faithfully followed the light he saw and he led others to it. And to do that is success.[11]

Daniel Berkeley Updike (1860–1941)

UPDIKE'S Rhode Island ancestors, like Norton's, were among New England's first colonists. As Anglicans they stayed aloof from the Puritans in Boston, but his uncompromising attachment to principles shaped a character that to his twentieth-century friends seemed puritanical. His friend and biographer, Society of Printers comrade George Parker Winship, summed up the man:

> He did things his own way or not at all. He declined to do anything for anybody of whom he disapproved. . . . Everything, including success, reputation, sufficient prosperity, followed from stubborn, undeviating adherence to this determination to do nothing that did not satisfy his own strict standards.[12]

Another Society of Printers friend, W. A. Dwiggins, writing in the British typographic journal *The Fleuron,* gave a somewhat warmer, more lively portrait:

> A connoisseur of life, a good judge of men, a wit, a retailer of anecdotes, a social creature. An accomplished performer in that lost art, conversation; but timid withal, when forced to speak formally before an audience. A man of no school, graduate of no major academy; but a finished scholar, with an adequate technique of research and criticism. A conservative for generations, recalling with a pride, mitigated by humor, the Tory leanings of his American forebears; but practicing, nevertheless, unconsciously, a kind of socialism. Citizen of that vivid world of scholars and gentlemen that we call the Renaissance; citizen not quite so easily, perhaps, of this world of machines and wrecked idealisms; quite willing citizen of all the country that stretches between. Citizen of the world, in any event.[13]

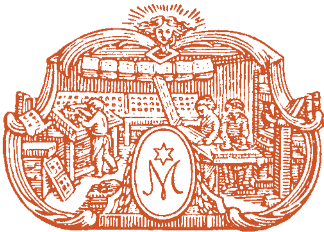
Daniel Berkeley Updike

In those pre-McCarthy days, especially in a British publication, it was still safe to say that a

man practiced "a kind of socialism" without fear of wrecking his career. That Updike let the label stand should not be surprising, for he was one of the founders of the Society of Arts and Crafts, some of whose members experimented with socialist remedies such as craft communes.

John Bianchi

Updike knew about factories. As a typographic designer at Houghton Mifflin, he was associated with one of the largest printing factories in the country, the Riverside Press. He also was involved in the marketing of the Houghton Mifflin list, mastering promotional skills that would serve him well later. In 1893 the commission to produce the *Altar Book* enabled Updike to enter self-employment as a graphic designer, freeing up the Riverside Press position for Bruce Rogers. Updike realized immediately that he could not always rely upon others to correctly execute his book designs, so he gradually started building a little printing business of his own. Updike was a genius at converting a raw manuscript into the subtle dynamics of a typographic page, but he worked at his desk with pencil and paper — never at the type cases or on press. His plan required someone to help manage those departments for him.


One of several marks used by the Merrymount Press

Through extraordinary good luck, Updike hired John Bianchi, brother of a former Riverside colleague and immigrant son of an Italian sculptor. Content to stay in the background, Bianchi possessed craft and business skills, a grasp of printing history and typographic style, and physical stamina, all of which would be crucial to the success and longevity of the company.

In 1912, the year he acquired a law degree, Bianchi also was admitted to the Society of Printers. By 1915 he had become a full partner in the press, which he purchased after Updike's death in 1941.[14]

Merrymount Press mark by Rudolph Ruzicka

As the Merrymount Press grew, it needed quarters that could support heavy printing equipment. This required moving from a genteel Beacon Hill neighborhood to a commercial building near South Station. Very likely it was two of Charles Eliot Norton's books that helped precipitate the move: *The Poet Gray as a Naturalist* (1903) and the *Opera Minora* of Tacitus (1904). Possibly unwilling to see beyond the Kelmscott private press model, Norton must have expressed concern about the growth of Updike's little printing "factory." In an October 1903 letter preserved at the Huntington Library, Updike defends his decision to Norton:

> I am trying to be led without fear or favor, pride or prejudice, to do what I believe will make my work not harder, but more perfect, and now that this has led me away from a pleasant part of town into one less pleasant. . . . I hope that when you come to Summer Street, you will not find it as hateful as it sounds. . . . My ideals and methods have not changed, but we must speak of this when we meet.

Paying more heed to De Vinne than to Norton, Updike had wisely accepted power-driven presses. But it would be thirty-nine years before mechanical typesetting would appear in the Merrymount Press. In 1926 he and Bianchi began considering Monotype equipment, but Updike was not yet convinced, regardless of his confidence in his new friend Stanley Morison, typographic adviser to the English Monotype Corporation. Finally in 1932, while Updike was out of town and therefore unable to pre-

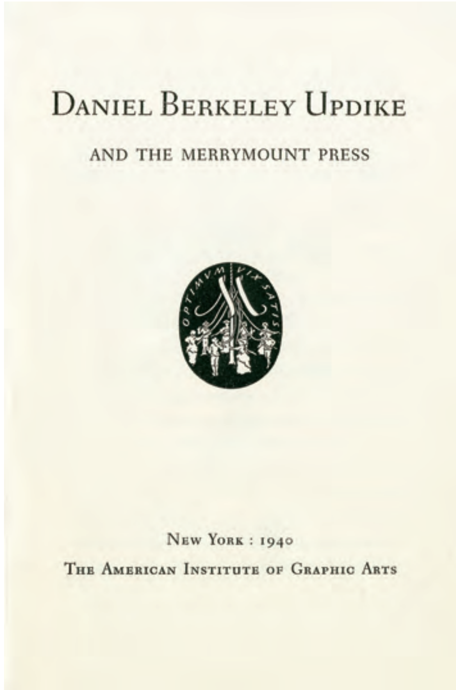
vent it, the frustrated partner acquired second-hand Monotype equipment and had it shipped to the Merrymount Press. Bianchi's judgment proved sound. The English Arts and Crafts Movement's influence led the English Monotype firm to pursue the highest quality of any mechanized typesetting — above even Mergenthaler Linotype, or Lanston's American Monotype — making it the new standard for serious book printing for the next sixty years.

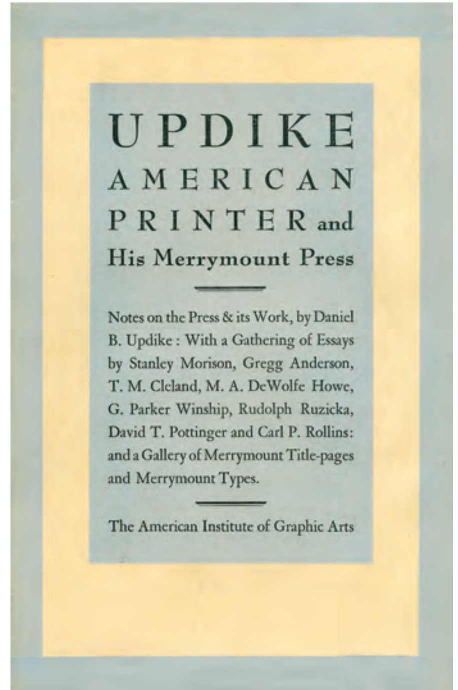
Even small factories like the Merrymount Press, which never exceeded thirty-five employees, were capable of earning significant profits. But Updike repeatedly declared that he refused to put commercial goals ahead of excellence, even if it meant reducing profits — as it surely did at Merrymount. To a gathering of the Society of Printers in 1913 he said:

> We live to-day in an atmosphere in which speed, quantity, and immediate returns are made the criterion by which success in work is judged. If the speed is great enough, the quantity large enough, and the results colossal enough, we are apt to call it "progress." There is another point of view which defines progress in quite another way. It is not how fast, how large, or how successful is mere production, but how thoughtful, how careful, how excellent, indeed, how exquisite, that production may be. This result is arrived at by work and study, and by nothing else. I believe that this Society should stand, not for the first ideal, but for the second. We should be intensive gardeners, whose work is measured, not by acreage, but by fruits![15]

In 1922, at the peak of his career, Updike concluded his great work *Printing Types* with similar thoughts about commercial success:

> The better types employed in better ways have been used by the educated printer acquainted with standards and history, directed by taste and a sense of the fitness of things, and facing the industrial conditions and the





LEFT: Title page of the 1940 Merrymount Press exhibition catalogue sponsored by the AIGA. RIGHT: Dust jacket for the two-hundred-page book issued by the AIGA in 1947 in honor of Daniel Berkeley Updike.

needs of his time. Such men have made of printing an art. The poorer types and methods have been employed by printers ignorant of standards and caring alone for commercial success. To these, printing has been simply a trade. . . .

This [former] camp I think the only one worth living in. You may not make all the money you want, but will have all you need, and moreover, you will have a tremendously good time.[16]

The respect shown to Updike by his colleagues exceeded that given to any other American graphic designer of his time. The American Institute of Graphic Arts awarded him their second

medal in 1922, then followed with three solo Merrymount Press exhibitions: in 1928 and 1940, and posthumously in 1947. Each exhibition was accompanied by an AIGA publication, concluding in 1947 with a two-hundred-page book, *Updike: American Printer and His Merrymount Press*, the most ambitious publication of the AIGA up to that point.

Updike's contemporaries would be surprised to learn that his name does not appear in the popular histories of twentieth-century graphic design by Philip Meggs, Richard Hollis, and Jeremy Aynsley; and *Graphic Style* by Steven Heller and Seymour Chwast mentions only Updike's Kelmscott-like *Altar Book* from the beginning of the Merrymount Press (as previously noted, a design later dismissed by Updike as a youthful imitation). Part of the reason for this diminishing interest is that today interactive media enhanced with sound and motion, along with corporate design and advertising, offer new artistic challenges, and far greater economic opportunity than does the typographic book. SP member Alston Purvis, who was assigned editorial responsibility for the fourth edition of the late Philip Meggs's *A History of Graphic Design*, has commented on the problem with Updike:

> Perhaps because of a long-held prejudice and misconception, I have always viewed Daniel Berkeley Updike more as a type historian than a book designer. For me, his designs for books are usually not those that stand out visually in spite of their typographic excellence. I am thinking about his title page design for *The Book of Common Prayer* in particular. However, this subject reminds me of Beatrice Warde's essay title, "Printing Should Be Invisible," and with Updike this is more than often the case. Updike should certainly be a significant part of any book devoted solely to book design, but because of its broad scope I found it difficult to include him in the fourth edition of *A History of Graphic Design*. In retrospect, though, I may well come to the conclusion that

this was one of many regrettable omissions to be remedied in a future edition.[17]

Those who still admire Updike today note that he chose the solid content of books over the shifting sands of advertising and corporate branding, carrying the tradition of the scholar-printer well into the twentieth century. Although devoid of modernism's arresting experiments, the subtle dynamics and details of Updike's typography transcended modernist and classical doctrines, providing lessons for both camps — as did his frequent warnings about taking commercial success too seriously. While the mainstream today may find Updike's beliefs discordant, or his work irrelevant, there is still a small counter-culture, whose members, like Updike's contemporaries, study and learn from his book design, and his writings.

Bruce Rogers (1870–1957)

GROWING UP near Lafayette, Indiana, a thousand miles from Boston, Bruce Rogers was determined to become an artist. He read John Ruskin's *Elements of Drawing* at the age of twelve, eventually continuing his art education at Purdue University and graduating in 1890. Three years later in Indianapolis, Rogers met J. M. Bowles, the publisher of the progressive periodical *Modern Art*. An early enthusiast of the Arts and Crafts Movement, Bowles possessed several Kelmscott Press books, which he showed to Rogers. That a book itself could be a work of art was an epiphany for Rogers. He contributed to *Modern Art* and other Arts and Crafts publications, including lettering and ornaments for the books of Thomas Bird Moser in

Bruce Rogers

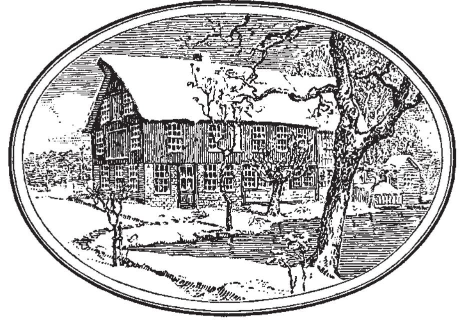
Portland, Maine, who had made a reputation producing handsome, small books often with pirated texts.

Rogers followed Bowles to Boston after the struggling *Modern Art* magazine was purchased by Louis Prang and Company, the renowned Boston lithographers. Before long Rogers found himself at Houghton Mifflin, then under the enlightened directorship of George H. Mifflin, who was committed to a fundamental ideal of the Arts and Crafts Movement: the fostering of high artistic standards in factory production. Rogers was responsible for the design of sales catalogues, advertisements, and approximately 235 trade books, but his best-known work there was a line of expensive books that he produced for Houghton Mifflin's Department of Special Editions at the Riverside Press.

During his sixteen years there, Rogers perfected a manner of working based on historical allusion, suitable to an author's style and period—work that he compared to stage design. Unlike the consistent house styles cultivated by the private presses of the time, every new book from Rogers was a surprise of virtuoso typography and ornament.

Bruce Rogers's personal press mark

A restless desire for improved types led Rogers to the revival of Riverside Press's neglected Bell types, then called Brimmer, and to supervising the hand-tooled modifications that resulted in the "Riverside Caslon." With the backing of George H. Mifflin, Rogers designed his first typeface, Montaigne, based on Nicholas Jenson designs, in 1902. The punches cut by John Cumming of Worcester, not up to the work being done in Europe, disappointed Rogers. Nevertheless, he used Montaigne with distinction in several books and broadsides from 1904 to 1911.


The Dyke Mill, by Bruce Rogers

Mifflin's sponsorship of an elite division was a high-water mark for Boston publishing, attracting the attention of bibliophiles from afar. Such was Rogers's celebrity that President Theodore Roosevelt visited Mifflin and Rogers in 1907 to pay his respects. Despite such acclaim, younger managers disagreed with Mifflin's strategy, an investment that they felt was not warranted by sales. Rogers departed Houghton Mifflin in 1911, never again to choose full-time staff employment.

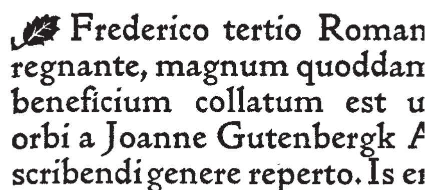
Rogers kept his political ideas to himself, but was drawn into collaborations and lifelong friendships with two of the most visible socialists in the typographic world: Emery Walker and Carl Rollins. During 1914 and 1915 Bruce and Ann Rogers took occasional work retreats to Rollins's Montague Press in the Dyke Mill, where they produced three books. The most famous was *The Centaur* by Maurice de Guérin, marking the debut of Rogers's typeface Centaur, which had been commissioned for the Metropolitan Museum of Art by its secretary, a new member of the Society of Printers, Henry Watson Kent.

Centaur not only surpassed the Montaigne type but was universally considered the most successful of numerous attempts to create a modern version of Nicholas Jenson's Eusebius type (Venice, 1470), thought by many to be the most beautiful letters ever cut in metal. William Morris, with help from Emery Walker, used the same model for the Golden type, whose added weight reflected a Ruskinian preference for medieval esthetics. Walker pursued the Jensonian ideal again, with Cobden-Sanderson, resulting in the Doves type. In contrast to Morris's insistence on handwork (though he employed photography in the making of

The Jensonian Types

qui omnibus ui aquarum ſubmerſis cum filiis ſuis ſimul
mirabili quodā modo quaſi ſemen huāni generis conſerua
utinā quaſi uiuam quandam imaginem imitari nobis con
quidem ante diluuium fuerunt: poſt diluuium autem alii c
altiſſimi dei ſacerdos iuſtitiæ ac pietatis miraculo rex iuſtu
bræorū appellatus eſt: apud quos nec circunciſionis nec m

1. Above is Jenson's type used in Eusebius, *De Præparatione Evangelica*, Venice, 1470, reproduced from Updike's *Printing Types*. This type is considered by many to be the most beautiful from the first two decades of printing. Emery Walker and William Morris were the first to attempt designing a new typeface based on Jenson's models. Others have continued the quest. A few examples are shown below.


Frederico tertio Roman
regnante, magnum quoddan
beneficium collatum est u
orbi a Joanne Gutenbergk A
scribendi genere reperto. Is e

2. The Golden type by William Morris and Emery Walker at the Kelmscott Press.

sweet lyre, & quieted the ho
the right hand of heaven s
tight. How unto just peti
substances be deaf, who, in
wish to pray unto them, we

3. Montaigne designed by Bruce Rogers.

These Books printed, as
field of literature remains op
there is an immense reprod
cheap form, of all Books wh
stood the test of time. But

4. The Doves type of Emery Walker and T. J. Cobden-Sanderson.

INSTRUCTIONS, HOV
dered him a good practical L
married Miss E. Cartlitch, a
both by beauty and abilities,
two sons, William and Henry

5. Centaur foundry type designed by Bruce Rogers.

INSTRUCTIONS, HOV
dered him a good practical L
married Miss E. Cartlitch, a
both by beauty and abilities
two sons, William and Henry

6. Digital OpenType version of Centaur, too thin because of its failure to emulate the thickening caused by ink-squeeze in letterpress printing.

INSTRUCTIONS, HOV
dered him a good practical L
married Miss E. Cartlitch, a
both by beauty and abilities
two sons, William and Henr

7. Adobe Jenson designed by Robert Slimbach, working, like Rogers, from fifteenth-century originals.[18]

his Golden type), Rogers was relieved that the pantograph machine had eliminated his reliance on the unpredictable American craftsmen.

> I had fugitive prints enlarged from the Jenson photographs and then . . . wrote over the lower-case letters with a broad pen, as rapidly as I could drive it. The capitals required more careful drawing. . . . After writing a page which contained practically all the letters of the alphabet the best of them were selected and their obvious imperfections touched up with a brush and white. By Fred Goudy's advice [an SP member] these designs were sent to Robert Wiebking of Chicago, for cutting on his machines.[19]

There is no better example of how the handwork of an artist can be adapted through a carefully monitored mechanical process for mass production. The admiring Emery Walker persuaded Rogers to voyage with his wife, daughter, and "700 or 800 lb. of Centaur type to London in the midst of a great war; all to produce one book [Dürer's *On the Just Shaping of Letters*, 1917] which will hardly pay anyone concerned."[20]

Rogers admired the influence of the private press movement in "the revival of good trade printing" by a few English publishers, including the Cambridge University Press, where he next found employment as a typographic consultant. His views at the time were identical to those of Updike and Rollins:

> The private presses were still concerned with proprietary types and handicraft, scorning the machine. And yet the most lasting contribution made by the Arts and Crafts movement was one which would have startled its leaders: the principle that good design, when coupled with an intelligent use of machinery, could produce first-rate work.[21]

Since Rollins had closed the Montague Press when he took a position at Yale, upon his return to America Bruce Rogers

Restoration of the Society of Printers Mark

The original SP mark designed by Bruce Rogers in 1905, and long forgotten, was discovered during the research for the centennnial. Digital scans were e-mailed to various members of the Society for comparison with later versions. There was widespread, although not unanimous, agreement that the 1905 design was the best of the lot, and should be revived. Beginning in the Autumn of 2004 Lance Hidy made drawings and consulted with interested members. Finally, at the December SP meeting, 2005, he submitted a finished drawing (H, below).

A 1902

A is from an alphabet traced by SP member Frank C. Brown from a Renaissance inscription, and published in 1902.[22]

B 1905

C 1905

B and C are the original 1905 logo by Bruce Rogers, possibly engraved in metal or wood by an unknown hand.

D 1945

E 1955

D and E are Rogers's own revisions of 1945 and 1955.

F 1976

G 1990s

F is the official logo of 1976, based on the Trajan Inscription.[23]
G is a slight revision that came into use in the 1990s.

H 2005

H is Lance Hidy's 2005 redrawing of the 1905 design.

searched elsewhere, finding a part-time position with the printer William Edwin Rudge. With Rogers adding to its already impressive Arts and Crafts credentials, the Rudge plant in Mount Vernon, New York, became a magnet for talented men. Among them were Joseph Blumenthal, author of the definitive biography of Rogers, whose work he considered the "finest realization" of the American typographic renaissance. When Rudge's son, also named William Edwin Rudge, started *Print* magazine in 1940 (with Society of Printers men Ray Nash, Carl Rollins, and Robert Dothard), Rogers's fingerprints were playfully incorporated into the cover design. In 1925 the AIGA awarded Rogers their fifth medal. Later he received honorary degrees from three leading universities, and saw his Father Time trademark cast in bronze for a door to the Rare Book Room in the Library of Congress. Nobody had been more astute than Rogers in understanding the genius of William Morris and the Kelmscott Press. He was the first graphic designer to go deeper than mimicry of Morris's style, carrying the Kelmscott Arts and Crafts ideals from the realm of the private press into the rigorous environment of commercial book design and manufacturing.

Cover, *Print*, vol. 1, no. 1, June 1940, with Bruce Rogers's fingerprints, designed by Howard Trafton.
Courtesy of Print magazine

William Addison Dwiggins (1880–1956)

LIKE Bruce Rogers, William Addison Dwiggins was a talented young book artist who followed an older mentor to America's Arts and Crafts mecca, Boston. Dwiggins's guide was Frederic Goudy, with whom he had studied lettering at the Frank Holme School of Illustration in Chicago. After Fred and Bertha Goudy relocated their Village Press to Hingham, Massachusetts, which

William Addison Dwiggins

had a burgeoning Arts and Crafts community, they persuaded Dwiggins to join their little bookmaking venture. He arrived in 1904 with his bride, Mabel, and threw himself into making books with his former teacher. Unable to subsist in Hingham, the Goudys moved the Village Press to New York two years later. Bill and Mabel Dwiggins chose to remain in Hingham permanently.

Dwiggins was raised in rural Ohio. Both his wife and his physician father were Quakers (though not his mother). The free thinking, simple living, and pacifism of the Quakers were woven throughout Dwiggins's life and work. It is not surprising that Daniel Berkeley Updike felt an affinity for the young couple, whose home he would enjoy visiting in later years. Beginning in 1907, Updike commissioned Dwiggins to make decorations for the Merrymount Press and arranged funding for the couple's trip to Europe the following year, providing them with introductions. He helped bring Dwiggins into the Society of Printers, although by the time Dwiggins became a member in 1912 his reputation had been established, hardly requiring Updike's endorsement.

Dwiggins was sufficiently younger than Updike and Rogers to appreciate and participate in Art Deco and other manifestations of modernism. But the tension between his left-leaning, Quaker views and his fascination with the machine age resulted in a creative friction that animated his life's work. These internal struggles and his comments on his profession and society can be tracked in his written works, marionette dramas, and illustrations.

Dwiggins enjoyed tinkering with technology (his innovations in marionette mechanics are still employed today), but was concerned about America's tendency to worship machines,

Reproduced from *The Dolphin*, no. 2, 1935

Emblems invented by Dwiggins during 1927–1928 for the *Saturday Review of Literature* and later reproduced in the book *Emblems and Electra*. They were accompanied by quatrains witten by William Rose Benét in response to the drawings (pages shown cropped).

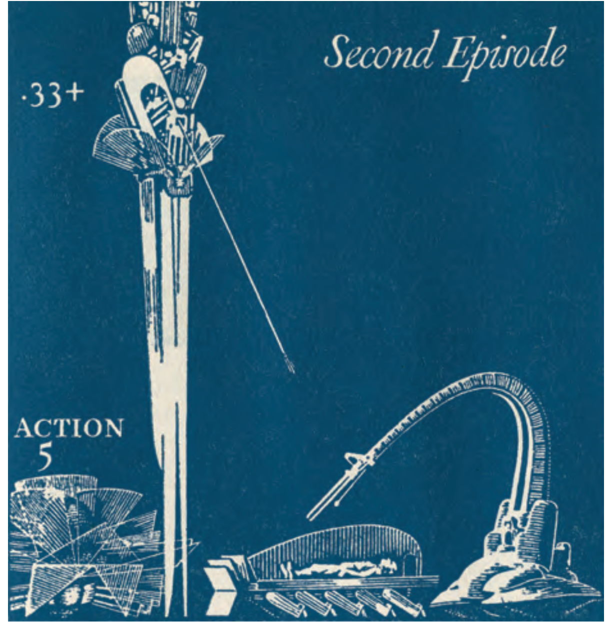
including machines of war. His 1914 drawing *The Last War* (Supplement to *The Cornhill Booklet*, October 1914) expresses his concern about modern warfare, embodied in his fantastic vision of skyscrapers and airplanes. He warned of society's naïve trust in business and technology. The Roaring Twenties made Dwiggins uneasy, as if he sensed the capitalist disaster that lay ahead. In 1927–1928, a collaboration with poet William Rose Benét for the *Saturday Review of Literature* provided Dwiggins an opportunity to express his forebodings. In his annotated checklist of 1949 Dwiggins recollected: "Most fun I've almost ever had. Benét and I rigged up a game. I drew pictures and sent them to him and he

wrote quatrains on the titles I put under them. . . . In the back of my mind there was some notion of those 17th-century books of moral and religious emblems."[24]

"The Icons" depicts sky-obliterating buildings, with a worshipful flock of investors bowing to the false moons of electrified gasoline pumps. "The Knight's Lady, Death, & the Devil" would make a good anti-smoking poster today, but it was a comment on affluent society, presumably the same people who were profiting from the glowing gas pumps.[25] The Albrect Dürer–like monogram confirms that this is a reference to Dürer's 1513 engraving "Knight, Death, and the Devil."

Fortunately for Dwiggins, when the Great Depression came, design commissions from Mergenthaler Linotype and book publishers, primarily Alfred A. Knopf and the Limited Editions Club, kept him solvent. This enabled him to continue his private marionette theater as an outlet for his social and political views — as the Kelmscott Press had been for William Morris. Unlike Morris and his neo-medieval idylls, Dwiggins, a keen reader of H. G. Wells, preferred science fiction as his vehicle.

The first issue of *Print* magazine (June 1940) included one such science fiction piece, "The Five Hundred Years: A Time Problem, and Its Solution," part of a story he had been developing both in prose and in drama. In the year 2400 we see killer machines chase humans into hiding, destroying their cultural records. We are not so surprised to hear about books crumbling to dust because of the use "of chemical liquors in making of paper." But when he warns of ephemeral, non-analog electronic media and a worldwide telecommunications network leading to loss of cultural records, it sounds as if he has just emerged from a conference of twenty-first-century librarians and archivists. Television broadcasting was in its infancy as he wrote: "The function of printed lettersigns became in a measure obsolete during this era —

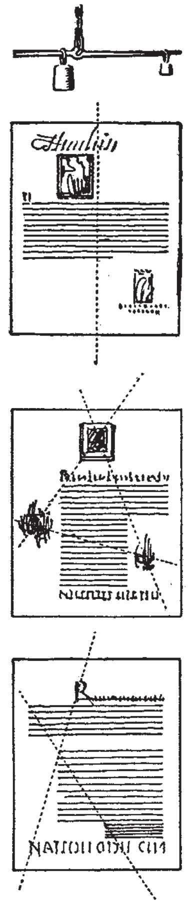


Dust jacket and illustration for the play *Millennium 1*. The story is related to "The Five Hundred Years: A Time Problem, and Its Solution" from the first issue of *Print* magazine, and to *Cedar Hill*, a Dwiggins manuscript purchased by Philip Hofer for the Department of Printing and Graphic Arts in Harvard's Houghton Library. The play was never produced, but its *Star Wars*–like marionettes are displayed at the Boston Public Library.

the people depending for their information upon other methods for transmitting ideas — new technics for spreading the voice of a single individual over the whole surface of the globe — new means for displaying images of distant events as they occurred."

Social concerns aside, Dwiggins began promoting modernist design in 1922, with a warning about the pressures to compromise artistic standards that he had experienced in advertising. Using the term "graphic design" for the first time in print, he urged his colleagues to loosen their attachment to the old bookish ways and to try new styles of illustration and typography suitable for offset lithography, as well as for the swift pace of commercial ephemera. He even referred to *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair* magazines as examples of good modern design.[26]

Six years later, in the textbook *Layout in Advertising,* Dwiggins developed his ideas in greater detail. Appearing the same year as Tschichold's pioneering *Die neue Typographie*, the book includes several pages on "unsymmetrical balance," or "the principle of the steelyard," where a heavy weight near the fulcrum balances a light weight out on the end of the beam. For Dwiggins, asymmetry was merely another arrow in his quiver — not the cornerstone for a new epoch of design, as it was elsewhere. In the book's brief postscript, Dwiggins defines modernism, almost as if he were explaining it to the skeptical Updike: a "natural and wholesome reaction against an overdose of traditionalism"— a state of mind, laying aside the past (which Dwiggins had already internalized) to play a game, to experiment, and to have fun. He noted the words that he used repeatedly in the text — *logical, simplicity, unity* — those universal attributes of good design also adhered to by De Vinne and Updike. But this time his warnings about the dangers of advertising went beyond artistic compromise, and took on a sharper moral tone:



Marginal illustrations by Dwiggins for his textbook *Layout in Advertising*, explaining principles of asymmetric typography. It was published in 1928, the same year that Jan Tschichold's *Die neue Typographie* appeared.

There are features about advertising—some kinds of advertising—that are emphatically not points in a gentleman's game. The major part of the activity is honorable merchandising, without taint. But there are projects that undertake to exploit the meaner side of the human animal — that make their appeal to social snobbishness, shame, fear, envy, greed. The advertising leverage that these campaigns use is a kind of leverage that no person with a rudimentary sense of social values is willing to help apply.[27]

A complaint about the hitherto available Gothic types (sans serifs) in *Layout in Advertising* led to the famous chal-

lenge seven months later (in the spring of 1929) from Mergenthaler's Harry L. Gage for Dwiggins to design a better one. The near-simultaneous appearance of the modernist typefaces Futura, Kabel, and Gill Sans during the period 1927–1929 spurred Gage to commission a competitive product. By accepting Gage's challenge, Dwiggins stepped onto the international stage for the first time as a type designer. The result was Metro. Commercially successful for a while, especially for newspaper work, Metro launched Dwiggins's career as a type designer—just as Gill Sans had done for Eric Gill and Futura for Paul Renner.

Gill and Renner, along with Rudolf Koch, Jan Tschichold, and Georg Trump, produced important modernist typefaces. However, their work, like Dwiggins's, defies easy categorization as either modernist or classical. Benefitting from the Arts and Crafts Movement's emphasis on letterforms, they were trained in the rich history, techniques, and theories of scripts and lettering. These designers gained prominence through sharpening their discernment of spacing and letterform by creating text pages in many styles with pen and ink— similar to painters who discipline their eye by drawing the human figure. It was Goudy who taught Dwiggins how to make letters by hand, but other influences of the time were Edward Johnston and Rudolf von Larisch. Dwiggins had been exposed to the European scribal tradition of Edward Johnston, but had moved beyond it. Even before Johnston's famous book was published in 1906, Dwiggins was developing a unique calligraphic style. His fluid scripts were a mix of influences that, like his typography, could be called post-modern. It was inevitable that one day he would try his hand at type design.

The market's call for a geometric sans serif may not have provided the ideal starting point. Neither De Vinne nor Updike considered sans serifs to be suitable for text. De Vinne said so in his *Plain Printing Types*; Updike mentioned them only in a revision

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN
OPQRSTUVWXYZ&
abcdefghijklmnopq
rstuvwxyz12345678

Linotype Metroblack

(enlarged from a letterpress proof)

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN
OPQRSTUVWXYZ&
abcdefghijklmnopq
rstuvwxyz12345678

Linotype Metrolite

AGJMNVWWaegvw
AGJMNVWWaegvw

Alternative Characters

COMPARISON OF DIGITAL REISSUES

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVW	FUTURA
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVW	METRO*
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVW	GILL SANS
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVW	KABEL
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz	FUTURA
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz	METRO*
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz	GILL SANS
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz	KABEL

*Also marketed as Geometric 415

22

printers' marks
and seals
designed or redrawn
by W. A. Dwiggins

WAD

1929

WILLIAM EDWIN RUDGE

NEW YORK

WER

In 1929, the year he designed Metro to satisfy market demand, Dwiggins's own design was going in a different direction. This title page was entirely done in pen and ink for a limited edition book of his emblem and trademark designs.

note to *Printing Types*. Dwiggins saw his design as an advertising face, which would explain why he drew only Metro Black, leaving Mergenthaler's draftsmen to finish the lighter weights under his supervision.[28] But Dwiggins did provide the familiar, traditional forms of the a and g, as Gill had done in his Sans, to make Metro more readable in text sizes.

While drawing Metro, Dwiggins stayed with some of the less fashionable, traditional traits of the Victorian Gothic letters, such as wide capitals and the elliptical O. Modernist purists preferred the machine-like, circular O of Futura, Gill Sans, and Kabel. Was Dwiggins unaware of or unimpressed by Johnston's classical theory of a geometric "Essential Form" for letters — pure circles, squares, and triangles — that we know influenced Gill, Koch, and Renner?[29] Over the past fifteen years Metro has enjoyed a revival, albeit in a modified digital version, edited to look more like Futura. Dwiggins's preferred letterforms have been replaced by the more geometric alternates, including the round a and g, the pointed M and W, and other angled letters with sharp rather than flattened joints. His original design is not currently available for computer typesetting.

Electra (1935) and Caledonia (1938) were Dwiggins's other major achievements as a type designer. In the announcement of Linotype Electra in 1935, Dwiggins has fun with the classical-modernist debate by inventing a conversation between himself and Kobodaishi, whom he calls "the Patron Saint of the lettering art — great Buddhist missionary in old Japan":

> The trouble with all you people is that you are always trying to reproduce Jenson's letters, or John de Spira or some of those Venetian people. You are always going back three or four hundred years and trying to do over again what they did then. What's the idea? . . . You don't live in Venice in 1500. This is 1935. Why don't you do what they did: take letter shapes and

Kobodaishi was a legendary Japanese calligrapher and Buddhist priest, described by Lafcadio Hearn in *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, published by Houghton Mifflin in 1894. Dwiggins's illustration shows the master writing on a tablet across a swollen stream. Did Dwiggins see this as a metaphor for his own struggle to bridge tradition and modernism? Reproduced from *The Dolphin*, no. 2, 1935.

see if you can't work them into something that stands for 1935? Why doll yourself up in Venetian fancy-dress costume and go dodging around in airplanes and automobiles dressed up that way?

Electricity sparks, energy — high-speed steel — metal shavings coming off a lathe — precise, positive — say it with a snap. . . . Take your curves and stream-line 'em. Make a line of letters so full of energy that it can't wait to get to the end of the measure. My God — these Lino machines that you tell me about — what kind of letters would they spit out if you left it to them? 1500 Venetian? Not!

All the personality you want. The more the better. All I'm saying is that the personality of Jenson, or Caslon, isn't the personality you want. You want the personality of an individual living in A.D. 1935. Take yourself, for instance. . . . What would your personality be, expressed in type?

Then Dwiggins explains how he tried to apply modernist ideas while retaining calligraphic features:

The weighted top serifs of the straight letters of the lower-case: that is a thing that occurs when you are making formal letters with a pen, writing quickly. And the flat way the curves get away from the straight stems: that is a speed product. Things like that were what Kobodaishi meant, no doubt.[30]

Three years later, when publicity for Caledonia was required, Dwiggins used his pseudonymous alter ego, Hermann Püterschein (a pun on the futility of polishing pewter, a particularly unmodern metal), to lampoon modernist purists:

But [Dwiggins's] "style" misses the real essence of the true contemporary feeling. And what may that essence be?

Modern aesthetic design is a repudiation of the human animal in toto. It denies that anything is shaped by human hands — that anything possibly could be shaped by human hands. Its very life-source is a strenuous and perpetual denial of the fact that any such soft mammals are alive on the earth. Its life is a life of metal; hard, square-edged, unyielding. It turns away in disgust from the suggestion that any material object could grow, or be punctured, or eat, or bleed, or digest. . . . Dwiggins leaves all that out of his "contemporary" style. He creates an illusion of machines. But his machines are a masquerade. There are men inside them. . . .

Dwiggins pretends to love steel. He deceives nobody who thinks steel. He deceives his friends — Victorians like himself. He does not deceive me. . . . Dwiggins loves the forms of his youth — split-rail fences, the dust of the road, shady farm-lanes, hills, clouds, sunshine, rain, a simple breed of semi-barbaric rural morons — all the sentimental hogwash of the days when he was young. With a rack of drummer's traps like that for his equipment he undertakes to express to you the sonorities of this era! A sense of humor would have saved him from some of the contradictions and absurdities of his "style"— he has no humor. A word from a discerning friend at the right time ought to have shown him where his real ability lay — he would not listen.[31]

As the modernists of the diaspora fled Stalin and Hitler, many established themselves in America. The machine esthetic was perfect for technology-driven businesses like IBM. Lavish corporate patronage initiated a gold rush into modernist design. Dwiggins's ideological dismay over some modernist tendencies reached a crescendo after World War II. Sounding more like Ruskin and Norton, Dwiggins became increasingly vocal. He warned against overconfidence in technological progress and about being too cozy with big business — or "selling out," as the sixties generation would call it. He was particularly upset by disregard for the long-proven tenets of book design. By the time Dwiggins turned seventy in 1950, modernism —like a pet alligator grown too big for the bathtub — would no longer delight him.

Dwiggins's first important postwar statement on modernist design was delivered at a symposium organized by Bookbuilders of Boston, a trade organization dedicated to improving book design and manufacture, founded in 1937. This extraordinary venture by Bookbuilders into the intellectual dimension of design filled the auditorium at Harvard's Fogg Museum of Art for two days in January 1949. Three Society of Printers members, Dwiggins and Carl Rollins, and the moderator, Harvard's Philip Hofer, shared the stage with an eclectic mix of speakers, including György Kepes, P. J. Conkwright, Lynd Ward, Edna and Peter Beilenson, Samuel Chamberlain, and Merle Armitage. Paul Rand had to cancel his appearance, but he contributed his essay to the ensuing book, *Graphic Forms*. In this formal setting Dwiggins put kidding aside, claiming that modernist book design had been corrupted by marketing considerations and that the needs of the reader were not being met:

To my mind the Modernist effort, when it comes to books, has to be kept under control. A book page is a highly conservative affair. The handling

of its component parts has been established practice for such a long time that you can't jump out of the familiar usage suddenly without mixing the reader up. . . .

You can ignore "tradition." You can change the margins, move the type rectangle about — and *if you are in harmony with the music of space*, you may come out with something fine! But the full blown Modernist necessity to strike *only* for dramatic pattern and startling novelty can't quite be counted as playing fair with the function of a book — or with the reader! [32]

In defense, thirty-five-year-old Paul Rand, who, like Dwiggins, was a book designer for Alfred Knopf, shot back a few months later in the pages of the *Penrose Annual*:

One cannot deprecate the contributions made by such men as Goudy, Rogers, Dwiggins, Cleland, etc. To say, however, that any of these men is creative in the vernacular of the twentieth century is certainly an error in classification. For these men, who are perpetuating the past, are in a sense, historians. As traditionalists, they have added *new old material* to the typographical archives. But have made little or no contribution to the understanding of the plastic arts in relation to our new, dynamic conception of space.[33]

Rand's dismissal of Dwiggins did not persuade Marshall Lee, however, who included Dwiggins's designs for *The Time Machine* and *The Power of Print and Men* (which used Metro on the title page) next to Rand's work in the influential AIGA exhibition and catalogue *Books for Our Time*. The ailing Dwiggins continued the fight in his correspondence with Alfred Knopf and Knopf's production director, Sidney R. Jacobs (not to be confused with the designer S. A. Jacobs). Some of the letters (from around 1951–1953) were published in *Postscripts on Dwiggins*.

When an editor complained that Dwiggins's page roughs for Wallace Stevens's *Necessary Angel: Essays on Reality and the Imagi-*

nation (1951) did not look sufficiently modern, Jacobs inquired whether a compromise was possible. Dwiggins replied:

I certainly do not want to be listed as belonging to the Joseph Pennell sour-belly school which screams about any change in the arts, and says any experimental work is rotten—but I must say that in the region of BOOKS I think these Our Time boys, Armitage, S. A. Jacobs, Rand, etc., etc., are destroying the FUNCTION OF BOOKS. Their influence is spreading widely (vide your editor) — I submit that the books they turn out just simply can't be read. They catch the public fancy, plainly, and are exclaimed over — but what about the time when the entranced purchaser gets the book home and tries to read it?

Big question involved. Are written and printed texts passing out as an engine of human communication? Are people getting so used to Our Time printing gymnastics that they really CAN read them? . . . Up to me, anyway, to carry the flag for the "function of the book"! 34

In another letter to Jacobs, around 1953, he continued his attack on Rand and some others:

The whole art of book design has been shaken loose from its foundations — there is no doubt about that. It's the work of these Rand fellows and the Bauhouse [sic] working in Chicago at advertising typography which is not anything like book typography. These people use type masses as grey elements in a picture technique without any concern for the movement of the narration, or the author's dramatic intention. They think they are interpreting the author's intention, but I am sure they are fooling themselves. Just plain type, reasonably arranged, is what the story needs.

I think the bizarre Chicago style, dearly loved by most publishers as a sign of "the latest thing" has been a trouble to you, in the highly competitive book publishing business, and I can understand how they are pushing you. I can imagine your sales people saying to you, "Why don't

we get out some modernistic books like these other people? Our stuff is pretty tame!"

[Knopf's footnote: "I do not think he was being fair to Paul Rand, whose work for us I have always admired."][35]

There are many like Knopf who appreciate both Dwiggins and Rand, and struggle to make some sense of the dispute. One such person is art director and design historian Steven Heller. In 1986, with his wife, designer Louise Fili, he enlisted the help of Dorothy Abbe, Dwiggins's longtime assistant and studio partner, and a National Endowment for the Arts grant to mount an exhibition, Typographic Treasures: The Work of W. A. Dwiggins, at the International Typeface Corporation in New York. In the accompanying brochure, Heller wrote that Dwiggins's "influence ebbed in the Forties, when the tidal wave of European theory hit the American shores. . . . Regrettably, today he is virtually unknown among a generation of young design Turks. . . . His art is a landmark in the history of graphic design." Soon after this exhibit, Heller coauthored with Seymour Chwast a survey of graphic design: *Graphic Style, from Victorian to Post-Modern* (Abrams, 1988). Surprisingly, Dwiggins was not included. When this author asked why, Heller responded:

Good question about the omission of Dwig from *Graphic Style*. And frankly, I don't have a good enough answer. I did include him in *Typology* [Chronicle, 1999] although since it is not sitting here, I cannot cite chapter and verse. [Metro is listed, but not shown.] I've also written about Dwig in two essays in *Design Literacy,* second edition. Alas, I've always loved the work, and I believe he is a truly important figure on many accounts, not the least his importance to the craft tradition, but also his "authorship," which concerns me a lot today. I think his omission from *GS* was because I held this skewed modernism model which I bought into after spending much time with Paul Rand. I am writing a kind of se-

quel to *GS* now, in which the Classical tradition will be better covered. . . . Now it is much more relevant to my interests.[36]

Historian Robin Kinross gives the classicism of Dwiggins and his colleagues its due in his book *Modern Typography*: "Among the work of those typographers commonly included with the traditionalists, that of W. A. Dwiggins represents the most interesting application of traditional values to tasks newly defined by modern conditions."[37] As the twentieth century recedes into the past, it is likely that more scholars will follow the example of Kinross—fairly weighing the merits of the classical and modernist contributions side-by-side.

When the end came for Dwiggins, the integrity of his hard-working life had been praised often by his peers. While collecting Dwiggins's work for the Department of Printing and Graphic Arts at Harvard's Houghton Library, Philip Hofer wrote an article about him for the second issue of *The Dolphin*, in 1935. In 1947 came the honorary Harvard degree. The AIGA had awarded Dwiggins the gold medal in 1929 (for his work in advertising, not his book and type designs), followed in 1937 by an exhibition and eighty-page catalogue. The Boston Public Library joined Bookbuilders of Boston in mounting a Dwiggins exhibition in 1948, documented the following year with a *Checklist*, introduced by Rudolph Ruzicka and annotated by Dwiggins. The American Academy of Arts and Sciences named him a Fellow in 1949. The Typophiles issued the posthumous *Postscripts on Dwiggins* in 1960—a two-volume, slip-cased gem designed by Ruzicka, containing tributes, type specimens, and artwork.

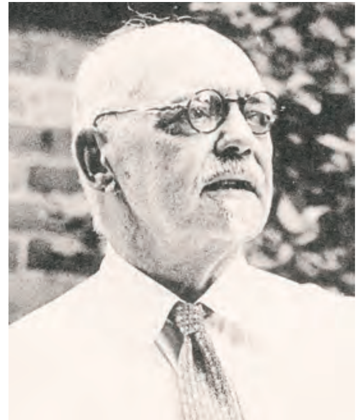
The inspired works from his hands are now preserved in many special collections, but the major archive is in the Rare Books and Manuscripts Department of the Boston Public Library, where his marionettes, their theater, a chair he designed, and his

drawing table are surrounded by many works on paper, including typeface drawings, books, and manuscripts. That institution also cosponsors with the Society of Printers the annual Dwiggins Lecture, a major event for Boston's design community that continues to honor and preserve the Dwiggins name.

Carl Purington Rollins (1880–1960)

BORN the same year as Dwiggins, Carl Rollins grew up in West Newbury and Newburyport, Massachusetts, towns that had changed little since colonial times and the era of the clipper ships. When he was twelve, Carl was given a Golding tabletop press by his father, who died the following year. The boy set up shop in the attic, losing himself in work. Perhaps to heal his grief, he set type by the light of a kerosene lamp, publishing a monthly stamp collectors' journal for two years. Thus formed, he would print for the rest of his life. It did not matter whether it was the little country newspaper in Georgetown, Massachusetts, dining hall menus during his Harvard years, or work as Printer to Yale University — printing for Rollins had been sacred at the beginning and would remain so until his death.

No member of the Society of Printers was more outspoken in support of the socialist ideology of the Arts and Crafts Movement than was Rollins. C. E. Norton was at the end of his academic career when Rollins attended Harvard, where he was a "special student," not eligible for a degree. But the elderly Norton was evidently not the primary inspiration for the young man's awakening; rather, it was the Russian Prince Piotr Kropotkin, whose carefully reasoned advocacy of communes and wariness of centralized government



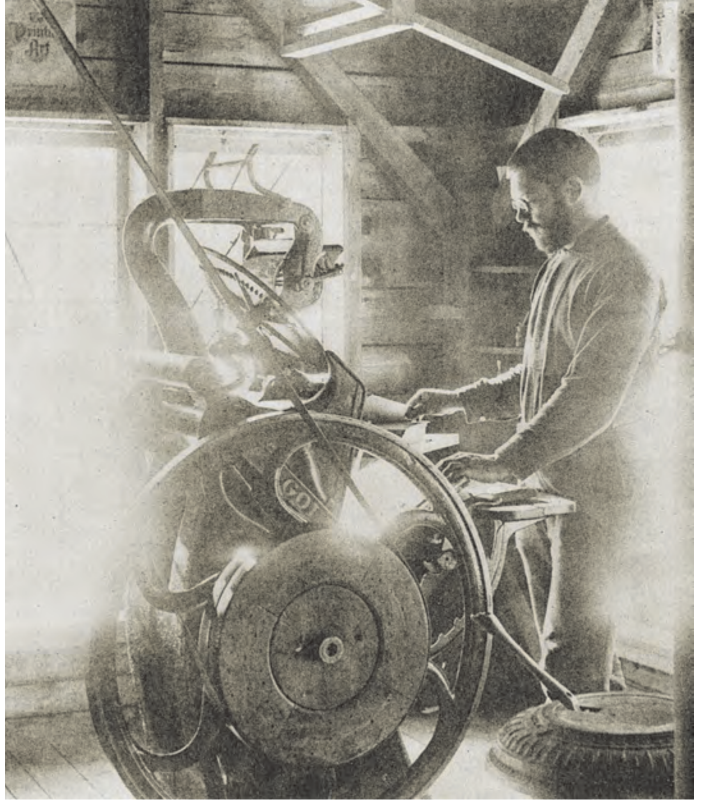
Carl Purington Rollins on his seventy-fifth birthday at the Dyke Mill.

brought upon him the now alarming label of "communist anarchist." After appearing in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Kropotkin's *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* were published by Houghton Mifflin in 1899, the same year as the London edition of his *Fields, Factories and Workshops*. These were followed in 1906 by *The Conquest of Bread*. Rollins's widow, Margaret, in her 1963 talk to the Columbiad Club, said of her husband's Harvard transformation: "With Kropotkin, Ruskin, and William Morris, he formed a distrust of the machine and the social system that fostered it and, as he expressed it, read himself out of his inherited Republicanism into Socialism."[38] Steadfast at age sixty-five, but guardedly identified only as a staff correspondent for *Print* magazine, Rollins wrote: "I have long been interested in the Law of Diminishing Returns, especially as it affects health and happiness, and in the current delusions about 'labor-saving' machines. Perhaps I first got interested in these matters by reading Peter Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories and Workshops*."[39]

After Harvard, Rollins sought — and was offered — a job at the Merrymount Press. Updike may have seen Rollins's potential, for the offer was accompanied by a non-compete rider — if he took the job, "he would agree not to go out and start a printing-office of his own."[40]

Rollins decided to apply instead for a job with Carl Heintzemann, who would become one of the founders of the Society of Printers a few years later. The Heintzemann Press offices, designed by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue in an Italian Renaissance style similar to that of the Boston Public Library, became a gathering place for the Arts and Crafts crowd, including the founders of the Society.

Through Heintzemann Rollins heard about New Clairvaux, a Utopian Arts and Crafts commune in the rural village of Montague, Massachusetts. New Clairvaux was founded by Ed-



Carl Rollins at the New Clairvaux Press ca. 1903, from *C.P.R.: Keeper of the Human Scale*.

ward Pearson Pressey, a Unitarian minister and recent Harvard graduate, who was a protégé of Edward Everett Hale. Pressey had set up a little printing operation for the purpose of issuing *Country Time and Tide*, a monthly that appeared between 1902 and 1908. Rollins found it all irresistible, and moved there in 1903. Within three months he was managing the New Clairvaux Press, which issued the following year a twenty-four-page book in two-hundred copies: *The Arts and Crafts and the Individual,* co-authored by Pressey and Rollins.

At the end of 1904, after Rollins lost the sight of one eye, he drifted away from Montague, trying other work that would cause

less strain. He finally returned to cabinet work in New Clairvaux's Village Shop, in partnership with Charles F. Kimball. Their advertising flyer from 1907 was mostly manifesto:

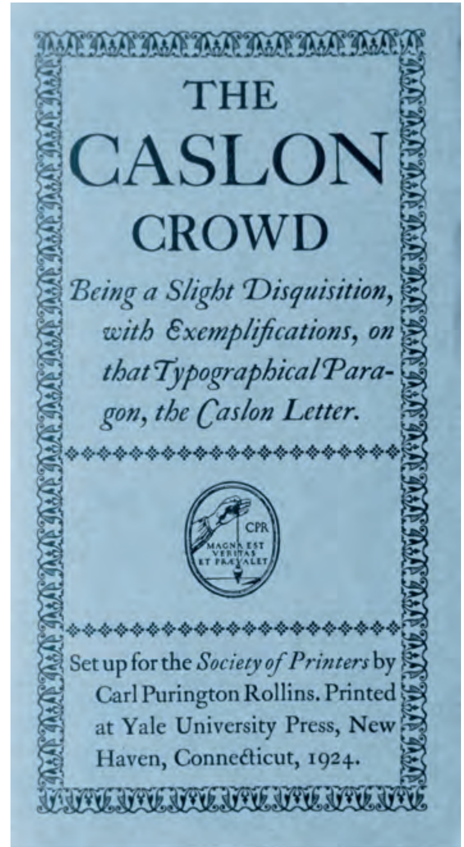
> In harmony with the general idea underlying New Clairvaux the cabinet work will be carried on in conjunction with work on the farms owned by the craftsmen. . . . There is no way to realize the full significance of the Arts and Crafts movement but by doing good work in the country. The position of the average craftsman, as a city-dweller, is anomalous, and threatens the stability of the movement. . . .
>
> It is the policy of the Shop to regard good material and good workmanship as equal in importance to good design. In securing good workmanship no fetich [sic] is made of hand work. If an operation can be done as well and more easily by machinery, we endeavor to use machinery; but the popular way of using machinery as an inexorable master finds no support here.[41]

New Clairvaux ceased to exist that winter. Determined to stay in Montague this time, Rollins bought an old mill building in 1908 with the help of his mother and set up his own printing business and cooperative. Rollins soon became busy enough to require help with the paperwork. A restless Boston bank clerk, Phelps Soule, recalls, "I consulted Miss Mork of the Harvard Appointments Office, who was helpful, but cautious. 'There's a Mr. Rollins, in a place called Montague, who is looking for an office manager for his printing plant at fifteen dollars a week. I must warn you that Mr. Rollins is very radical. I don't think he is a Socialist, but he is very radical.'"

Throwing caution to the winds, Soule signed on with Rollins. Thirty-one years later, while director of the University of Pennsylvania Press, Soule recalled those days for *Print* magazine, for which Rollins was a contributing editor. Describing their time working at the Dyke Mill, a ramshackle affair operated by unreli-

able water power, which housed the Montague Press (as well as dyeing, weaving, cabinet work, and candle-making in the early years), he wrote:

> Carl and I lived in his new house in the Connecticut Valley, and strove to make a living. We maintained, perforce, the New England tradition of high thinking and plain living — so plain that for years I could not look a shredded wheat biscuit in the face without a shudder.
>
> Carl himself was not the suave and substantial typographer of today. The beard was there, but untrimmed; his hat was a black five-gallon affair; his necktie was frequently a red Windsor affair, flanked by the Socialist button with clasped hands.
>
> Even then he was recognized by the few as a brilliant printer and designer — "one of the Caslon Crowd." Fred Whiting [another founding member of SP], then secretary of the Boston Society of Arts and Crafts, whose magazine, *Handicraft*, we published, came to Montague now and then. Other visitors were George Winship and Bill Dwiggins, and of course [Bruce Rogers], whose *Centaur* was later produced there.[42]



The Caslon Crowd was first issued by Rollins at the Montague Press in 1916. He reprinted it for the Society of Printers in 1924 (eight pages plus cover).

In 1911 Rollins produced his first newsletter to solicit business. In it, he described the theories behind the cooperative and its mainstay, the Montague Press:

THE DYKE MILL BULLETIN

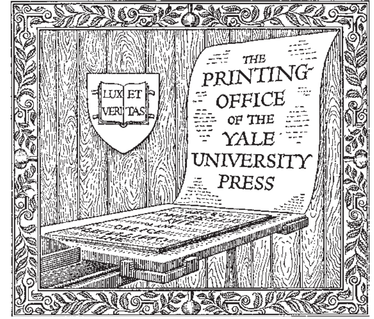
PUBLISHED BY THE DYKE MILL, MONTAGUE, MASSACHUSETTS.
MARCH 1911, NO. 1.

The Dyke Mill is an industrial and social experiment in a New England country village. It has been founded in the belief that man's work lies rightfully in the country and that even today and in the midst of a commercial civilization, attended as it is by the "regimentation" which Herbert Spencer so deplored, it is possible to organize a small group industry along human and enjoyable lines. The work has been incorporated under the laws of the state of Massachusetts, and the certificate of incorporation authorizes the Mill to "manufacture various articles of use and beauty; rugs, furniture, dyed linen thread, printing, etc., under more than ordinarily favorable conditions, ethically, artistically and socially.... To promote and encourage the union of agriculture and the crafts."

The Montague Press The office is under direct charge of Mr. Rollins, the Treasurer of The Dyke Mill, who has had many years' experience as a printer. There is no attempt at the Press to establish a "style," unless the restricting of its compositors to two or three only of the best faces of type can be called style. No attempt is made to establish a publishing business, but the Press undertakes to print for its patrons the forms, circulars, books, etc., which they need. These are done in a more careful way, and with a better assortment of type than is usual in printing offices, and while no attempt is made to hark back to any former era in the laying out of work, we do try to get as near as we can to the spirit which underlies all of the good work of the past.[43]

Margaret Rollins (they were married in 1915) remembers that the press "did not do too badly financially—it was out of the red every now and then—but as World War I wore on, the demand for fine printing began to dry up."[44] After their first child was born in 1917, it was apparent that the income from the Montague Press was insufficient to support a family. Socialist and communist criti-

cisms of America's involvement in World War I had resulted in a chilling crackdown on dissent that included indictments for treason and faculty dismissals. A growing public skepticism about socialism did not help the prospects for the Dyke Mill. Through the Society of Printers network, Rollins attracted sympathetic supporters, including Henry Watson Kent, secretary of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, who commissioned the Centaur type from Rogers. Henry Kent and the John Woolseys, like Bill and Mabel Dwiggins and Bruce and Anne Rogers, visited Carl and Margaret in Montague. With Bruce Rogers's endorsement, and after seeing Rollins at work himself, Kent (along with Judge John M. Woolsey) helped Rollins obtain a job. In 1918, he moved to New Haven to direct the Manufacturing Department of the Yale University Press, where he would design over two thousand volumes.



An advertisement by an unknown artist in *Print* magazine, vol. 2, no. 1, May 1941.

Seeing that its new printer possessed no college degree, Yale University provided him an honorary masters in 1920. It was followed by an honorary doctor of humane letters in 1949. In 1941 Carl Rollins became the eighteenth recipient of the AIGA medal — the tenth Society of Printers member in that select group. A more personal tribute was given by a circle of his friends in 1954, on Rollins's seventy-fifth birthday. Ray Nash delivered an oration that is preserved in a pamphlet of 250 copies, *C.P.R.: Keeper of the Human Scale*. Senator McCarthy's communist witch-hunt had met its ignominious end that same year, but its effects lingered. Nash, trained as a journalist, chose his words with special care:

All the works and ways of Carl Rollins imply his credo that the welfare of the workman and the excellence of what he makes are inseparably bound

up together. He early sharpened up this point editorially in the columns of *Handicraft*. . . . He still sticks stubbornly, gallantly to describing himself as a Socialist though the name has generally been thrown out to the Marxists, his lifelong adversaries. A statement comes into the address on "The Ordeal of William Morris":

"There was no help for it: if you want good art you must have good life, and you cannot have good life under a system which makes the workman the tool of interests which seek to value the work produced solely in terms of its money worth in the market. . . ."[45]

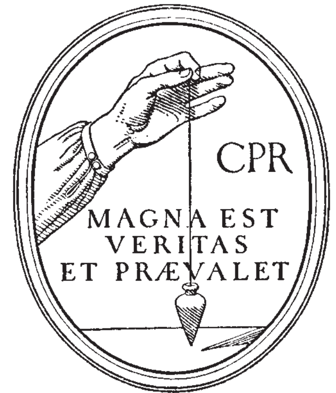
Rollins's love for letterpress and printing history led him in 1924 to establish a bibliographical and laboratory press in the basement of the Yale library. It had an Albion hand press, a Reliance, and a Vandercook, with Caslon, Centaur, Futura, and Granjon types. Bibliographic presses were useful for demonstrating and experimenting with printing methods of the past — giving an understanding that cannot be grasped by reading alone. Rollins's enthusiasm was infectious. Presses proliferated on campuses nationwide, and in England. Empowered students turned them into laboratories for making broadsides and books of their own, and for job work. Little printing offices appeared in the basements of Yale's residential colleges. The first was the Jonathan Edwards College Press, donated in 1936 by law student August Heckscher (the brother-in-law of SP member Philip Hofer, who eventually did the same at Harvard).[46]

The Chandler and Price platen press in Yale's Jonathan Edwards College Press, used by SP members Leonard Baskin, David Libby, and Lance Hidy.

The Jonathan Edwards press was employed in 1942 by the twenty-year-old sculpture student Leonard Baskin to print his first Gehenna Press book, *On a Pyre of Withered Roses*. Another Society of Printers member, David Libby, also started his graphic arts career in the J. E. Press, as did this writer.

Rollins's printing library is preserved in the Arts of the Book Collection, Sterling Memorial Library, which also houses his Bibliographic Press. Gay Walker, former curator of the collection, compiled a list of more than two-thousand books Rollins designed and printed, including those from the Dyke Mill in Montague and the Printing Office of the Yale University Press.[47]

The Works of Carl P. Rollins also lists 151 "works and contributions" and editorial work for periodicals: *Handicraft*, *The Dolphin*, *The Colophon*, *The New Colophon,* and *Print*. Of particular note are his essay in the two-volume Typophiles chapbook on De Vinne, and "Since Gutenberg," which appeared in the first two issues of *Print* magazine and was amply illustrated with collotypes printed by the Meriden Gravure Company. This concise overview of printing history surely reached a larger audience than did the exhibition on the same subject that the Society of Printers mounted at the Boston Public Library in 1906.[48] His reviews and articles about the graphic arts played an influential role in helping to establish graphic design as a respectable profession, both within the field and without. However, his most remarkable accomplishment may have been the Montague Press and Dyke Mill cooperative—a pure expression of Arts and Crafts ideology. That it attracted Rogers, Dwiggins, and many others was a tribute not only to Rollins himself, but to the shared idealism that his Dyke Mill symbolized.



"Great is truth, and it will prevail." This emblem was drawn for Rollins by Dwiggins.

LANCE HIDY

Ray Nash (1905–1982)

Of the generation born after 1900, Dartmouth College professor Ray Nash had possibly the largest influence on the Society of Printers. Elected to membership in 1940 and made an honorary member in 1980, he was the author of the fifty-year history, *Printing as an Art*. Nash believed that to be a printer or graphic designer, it was necessary to know the history of printing. Furthermore, to understand that history, one must practice calligraphy and learn how to print from hand set type, woodcuts, and intaglio plates. He was an active link to those of a similar mind in England and on the Continent.

Nash's students learned about prints, early printing, and private presses, and they experimented with the crafts of etching, woodcutting, calligraphy, and letterpress printing. Nash's best-known Dartmouth protégés, Roderick Stinehour, David Godine, Stephen Harvard, Edward Connery Lathem, and Sinclair Hitchings, carried on the ideas of the founders of the Society of Printers through their work in printing, publishing, letter arts, and librarianship. Another prominent Nash alumnus, Alvin Eisenman, directed graduate studies in graphic design at the Yale School of Art. He wrote "Ray Nash: His Students and His Legacy" for the fiftieth anniversary issue of *Print* magazine (1990), of which Nash was a founding editor, serving for ten years. Ric Grefé, the current executive director of the American Institute of Graphic Arts, also studied with Nash at Dartmouth, where he won the coveted summer internship at the Stinehour Press.

Ray Nash

These former students have no difficulty explaining and praising Nash's accomplishments, but the man himself was an enigma. Nash's children point to the vivid contrasts in his upbringing and family background as a key to understanding

their father. Holly Nash Wolff, who still lives on the family farm in Vermont, wrote:

> My father was mysterious to other people (family included). . . . [He was] flexible, able to deal well with lots of different situations, . . . a dreamer, yet at the same time profoundly moral and very centered and practical. From his grandparents he was exposed to a particular, serious English working-class background, crossed with the bravado of an American western pioneer family. His Oregon Trail ancestry traced right back to the cream of the New England intelligentsia of the seventeenth century, a fact of which he later was proud.[49]

Ray Nash's paternal grandfather, Daniel Nash, who immigrated from England, was a potter. Ray's aunt Norma Bassett Hall was a printmaker and his sister a violinist. His mother was a schoolteacher, and his father, John Nash, a railway mail clerk who had completed one year at the University of Oregon. Ray Nash's working life began during visits to "his horse-trading [maternal] grandfather, who owned many acres of ranch land."

John Nash, a calligrapher and letter carver living in London, writes about his father:

> His youth was spent in a succession of very tough jobs — ranch work, migrant harvest work, and a spell as head of a gang building the Union Pacific Railroad across the Cascades. At one point he rode freights all the way across the country from West to East (my mother was in the East), learning a lot about hobo life in the process. . . . There was absolutely no intellectual tradition in his family and he was the first to [finish] college (the University of Oregon). Among the odds and ends of wise advice he gave me over the years, two stand out: 1. When you're jumping off a moving train, jump in the direction the train is going. 2. When you find yourself involved in a mass fistfight, wade right in and fight as hard as you can along with everyone else — if you hang back you'll get hurt.[50]

While a high school student in Portland, Nash held an apprenticeship at the Lane–Miles Standish Press. Later, while studying journalism at the University of Oregon, he took on a four-year apprenticeship as a proofreader for the University of Oregon Press. During that time, around 1926, the San Francisco printer John Henry Nash (no relation) helped establish a printing workshop for Oregon's School of Journalism, with letterpress equipment and an etching press. This was just two years after Rollins's bibliographic press was established at Yale. During Nash's senior year (1928), he was one of five students attending John Henry Nash's two-week workshop to produce an excessively grandiose edition of the twelve-page volume *Education and the State*. Eisenman suggests that young Nash may have learned much there about how *not* to run a workshop.

Nash seemed to be on the path to a career in journalism when the Depression hit. He found work in Manhattan in corporate public relations, also teaching an evening printing workshop at the New School for Social Research. In New York Nash became more aware of the plight of European designers uprooted by Hitler. German typographer and artist Berthold Wolpe, who was Jewish and had been a disciple and assistant of Rudolf Koch, was among many who were unable to continue their work. On February 28, 1935, Wolpe received a notice from an officer of the Reichskammer der Bildenden Kunst, Berlin: "As you are non-Aryan and as such do not possess the necessary reliability to create and spread German cultural values, I forbid you to further practice your profession as a graphic designer."[51]

Fortunately Wolpe found refuge in England in 1935, and later told Nash's daughter that her father was among those who assisted his relocation. John Nash remembers a similar case involving the young German typographer Hans Schmoller, who was a successor to Tschichold at Penguin Books from 1949 to 1980:

In 1937 Hans Schmoller, training in England, was faced with the prospect, as an alien, of having to go back to Germany and face certain death. (In fact, he lost both his parents.) My father was one of those who were instrumental in arranging for the job at the Morija Printing Works in Basutoland [Lesotho, South Africa] which meant that HS was safe and producing fine printing throughout the madness in Europe.[52]

Nash provided another kind of help to Josef Albers, the Bauhaus master, who, with his wife, Anni, came to the United States after the Bauhaus was shut down in 1933, taking a position at Black Mountain College in North Carolina. In 1939 Nash organized an exhibition of Albers's work at Dartmouth, and wrote a profile of him for the fall 1945 issue of *Print* magazine, in which he quoted Albers's statement that machine-made work could be as respectable as handmade, and just as worthy of artists' attention. This effort may have helped pave the way for Albers's 1950 appointment as chair of the Department of Design at the Yale School of Art. Nash was clearly aware of the ideological link between the Bauhaus and the Arts and Crafts Movement.

Regarding Nash's ideology, John Nash remembers: "[My father] had socialist-leanings rather than being an out-and-out 'socialist'— as far as I know he joined no movement or party of any sort."[53] Holly Nash Wolff expands:

He was no socialist or pacifist, although he was very interested in progressive ideas and experiments in living, in aspects of socialism and communes, and was certainly utterly opposed to fascism, violence, racism, and militarism. He [was] a supporter of independent small capitalism (in which there is enough for everyone who will work for it), and an opponent of big capitalism (in which there is much more than enough for the few). He also opposed big government, both state and federal, and wasn't that happy with F.D.R. (He disliked Truman much more). . . .

There was plenty of political discussion at home, but never political

argument. It was somewhat like religion — ultimately left to the individual to decide in private. We were never allowed to find out for whom our parents had voted, for example. When I tried, my mother told me this was a privilege bestowed by the secret ballot — a good thing, she pointed out, since families then need not be split apart by ill feeling over political differences.

In sum, Ray Nash was not a man for labels. He was radical in some ways, conservative in others. . . . He didn't advertise or brandish his politics. He was a believer in "walking the walk," not in "talking the talk."[54]

John Nash recounts his parents' participation in the Depression-era "back to the land" movement, and his father's beginning at Dartmouth College:

They had to live for a time in New York, which they both hated; but it meant that he had work when no one else did, and was able to send my mother north with a check for a thousand [dollars] to buy a derelict farm from the Federal Land Bank, its big attraction being that it was only twenty-five miles away from the excellent library at Dartmouth.

Their abiding dream was to devise a life as self-sufficient as possible, combining graphic arts with light farming — at one point they planned a blacksmith's shop and water-powered electricity. These never materialized, and the farming part of their plan never worked out, depending as it did on finding the kind of dependable tenant farmer who didn't exist then or now.

But Dartmouth College (quite a different place then) allowed my father to sneak in the back door without the proper academic qualifications and set up his workshop, and eventually teach. So in the end they were able to realize a large part of their dream. . . . I grew up in the certainty that they had thought of it all themselves, and there certainly were few friends or colleagues in that part of the country (except Robert Frost) who were

Ray Nash's monogram

living in the same way. I'm sure William Morris was an inspiration, but Thoreau even more so.[55]

The Nashes moved to their Royalton, Vermont, farm in 1935, but he did not become a part-time instructor at Dartmouth until 1937, the same year he enrolled to study the history of prints with Paul J. Sachs at Harvard (ultimately earning a master's degree in education there ten years later). The timing was good, for in 1938 Philip Hofer founded the Department of Printing and Graphic Arts at the Harvard library, the first such department in a university library. Hofer, who became a lifelong friend of Nash's, joined the Society of Printers in 1939, and is likely to have facilitated Nash's admission to the SP the following year.

According to his students, Nash was effective in communicating his passionate interest in the Arts and Crafts Movement—including its antecedents and its modernist branches. All he had to do was show his students the work of the great printers of Europe, the private press movement, and the American scholar-printers, and they were hooked. Through Nash's eyes, they not only saw the milestones of book printing and design, they learned the basic crafts of the book arts and the underlying ideology. He continued to support his students after graduation, arranging internships at the Stinehour Press and fellowships at the Plantin-Moretus Museum in Antwerp, and making introductions to his steadily expanding network of correspondents on both sides of the Atlantic.

When William Edwin Rudge wanted to start *Print* magazine in 1940, Nash's journalism training made him a key member of the editorial staff, contributing book reviews for ten years. Nash also became involved after World War II with the restoration of the Plantin-Moretus Museum—the place that had inspired De Vinne a century earlier, but which had since been nearly forgotten in the United States. In 1964, with the cooperation of its director, Leon

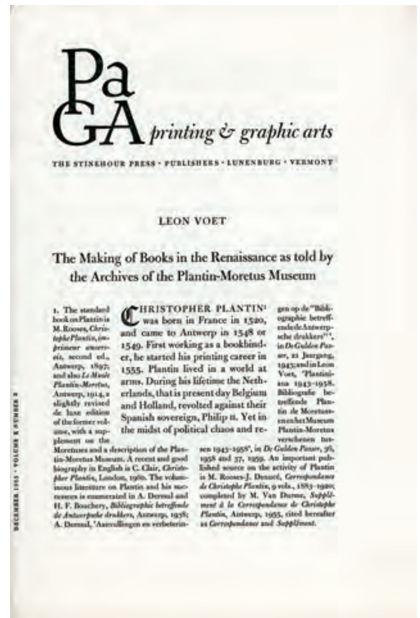
ABOVE: Roderick Stinehour and Freeman Keith.
LEFT: Stephen Harvard. Photos: L.H.

Voet, Nash created the American Friends of the Plantin-Moretus Museum, a group that facilitated scholarly research, exhibitions, lectures, and conferences, and also provided financial assistance to the museum. Nash also donated his time to the AIGA, whose student chapters he helped create at Carnegie Institute of Technology, Dartmouth, and elsewhere. The AIGA awarded Nash the thirty-third medal in 1956—the fifteenth to a Society of Printers member.

As a teacher and facilitator, one of Nash's finest deeds was loaning money in 1950 to a former Navy aviator who was studying with him at Dartmouth on the GI Bill. This down-payment enabled Roderick and Minan Stinehour to purchase the Bisbee Press in Lunenburg, Vermont. Renamed the Stinehour Press, this perfect embodiment of Arts and Crafts ideals would become the latest and perhaps the last of the great American scholarly presses.

Nash mentored Stinehour and the disciplined team of ex-Navy men who formed the nucleus of this bookmaking community—including Freeman Keith, a former Harvard classics major. In addition to making introductions to future patrons, Nash helped create and edit the quarterly *Printing and Graphic Arts* that Stinehour published from 1953 to 1965. This scholarly journal gave the press prestige and credibility among the learned institutions that would form its client base, and provided Nash a new editorial outlet after his departure from *Print* magazine three years earlier. In 1973 another Nash student, Stephen Harvard, joined the press and worked there until his death in 1988. A master of lettering, typography, ornament, inscriptional letter carving, and illustration, this youngest of the Nash alumni attracted a new generation of admirers and patrons to the Stinehour Press.

The meticulous professor preserved the traces of his life's work in seventy-five cartons of manuscripts, letters, books, photographs, and other artifacts in the Dartmouth College Library. As important as such research materials will be to future historians, they cannot be compared to his living legacy. When Nash's students looked at great printing, they learned to see, not only the paper and ink, but also the ideology and passion of the artists and craftsmen who did the work. Content is important, of course, but so is the noble art of printing, for one cannot survive without the other.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LEON VOET

The Making of Books in the Renaissance as told by the Archives of the Plantin-Moretus Museum

CHRISTOPHER PLANTIN[1] was born in France in 1520, and came to Antwerp in 1548 or 1549. First working as a bookbinder, he started his printing career in 1555. Plantin lived in a world at arms. During his lifetime the Netherlands, that is present day Belgium and Holland, revolted against their Spanish sovereign, Philip II. Yet in the midst of political chaos and re-

The final issue of *Printing and Graphic Arts*, published by The Stinehour Press, December 1965.

Conclusion

THE preceding eight portraits — De Vinne, Norton, Johnson, Updike, Rogers, Dwiggins, Rollins, and Nash — were chosen to help us remember, on the centennial of the Society of Printers, what has driven the passionate commitment to the art of printing. That these men also happened to be national leaders in their field underscores the importance of knowing who they were and what they thought — not just for members of the Society, but for anybody interested in the history of American graphic design.

Although the Arts and Crafts style went out of fashion early in the century, its underlying ideas of industrial and social reform stayed alive. The early bookmen of the Society of Printers did not speak their political views in the ways used by graphic designers today. There were no protest posters, and rarely a written statement. Their statements were made, instead, with their lives — by their choice of associates, choice of work, and by their conduct as businessmen. With supreme importance placed on strong content, books remained the preferred medium. When the graphic mainstream shifted away from books after mid-century, the remaining Arts and Crafts people tended to seek each other out for mutual support, forming bonds beyond their local communities.

One such chain of connections had important consequences, not only for the Society of Printers, but also for the emerging digital technology that transformed the art of printing. Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple Computer, in his 2005 commencement address to Stanford University, told about his experience with calligraphy at Reed College in Portland, Oregon:

> Reed College at that time offered perhaps the best calligraphy instruction in the country. Throughout the campus every poster, every label on every drawer, was beautifully hand calligraphed. Because I had dropped out and didn't have to take the normal classes, I decided to take a calligraphy class to learn how to do this. I learned about serif and sans serif type-

faces, about varying the amount of space between different letter combinations, about what makes great typography great. It was beautiful, historical, artistically subtle in a way that science can't capture, and I found it fascinating.

None of this had even a hope of any practical application in my life. But ten years later, when we were designing the first Macintosh computer, it all came back to me. And we designed it all into the Mac. It was the first computer with beautiful typography. If I had never dropped in on that single course in college, the Mac would have never had multiple typefaces or proportionally spaced fonts. And since Windows just copied the Mac, it's likely that no personal computer would have them.[56]

The popularity of calligraphy in Portland that drew Jobs's attention originated with Lloyd Reynolds (1902–1978), the professor of English literature at Reed College who had been temporarily suspended following his appearance before HUAC in 1954. Reynolds studied the Arts and Crafts methods of Edward Johnston and Alfred Fairbank for teaching calligraphy and the history of letterforms. Steve Jobs was not the only pioneer of digital design to have fallen under the spell of Lloyd Reynolds (mediated in his case through Reynolds's successor, Robert Palladino): Sumner Stone studied with Reynolds at Reed, beginning a career that eventually led to his heading the type development program at Adobe Systems. Along the way, Stone had also studied with Arts and Crafts–inspired calligrapher and Society of Printers member Hermann Zapf, at Hallmark. As Stone gradually realized his affinity with the community around the Society of Printers, he

Sumner Stone, self-portrait

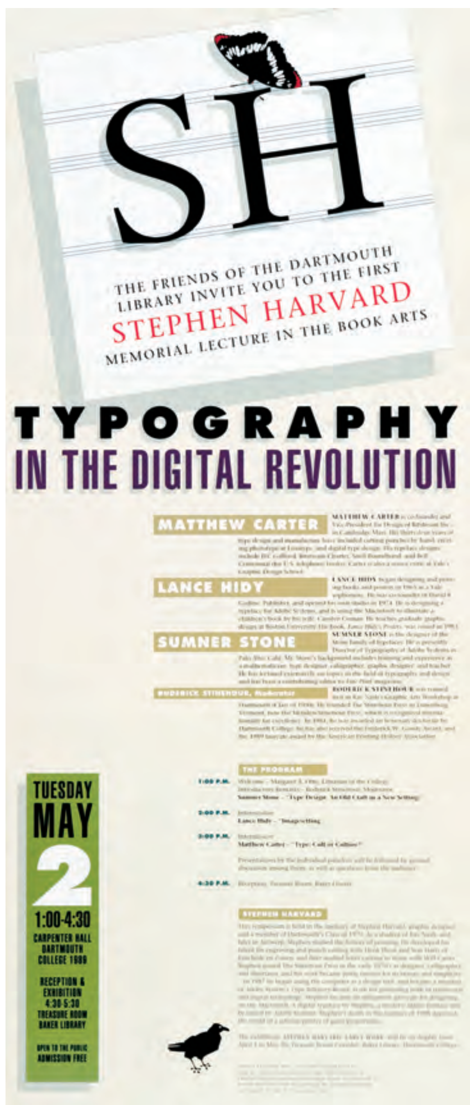
Matthew Carter. Photo: Steve Marsel

brought three of them into Adobe's type advisory board: Alvin Eisenman, Stephen Harvard, and this writer (also a Reynolds student).

Significantly, the other leading digital typefoundry of the time, Bitstream, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was founded under the creative direction of Matthew Carter, whose Arts and Crafts pedigree is second to none. Carter grew up in an English household imbued with the ideas of William Morris and John Ruskin. His father, Harry Carter, was, among other things, a type historian, who arranged for Matthew to learn to make letters by hand. But rather than calligraphy, he learned to cut punches at Joh. Enschedé en Zonen in the Netherlands. Carter, the most recent member of the Society of Printers to receive the AIGA medal, still lives in the Boston area.

There is a paradox in these stories. Classical hand and eye training with pre-industrial pens and burins, joined to the study of design history, happens to be ideal preparation for working in the high-tech medium of digital type. Moreover, history shows us that immersion in tradition often sharpens the hunger—and the vision—for better tools. So it should not be not surprising that SP members, using slide projectors in large auditoriums in the late 1980s, were among the first to explain the importance of the revolutionary digital tools to skeptical New England audiences.

Postwar design was marked by the modernist rejection of classical traditions. But all the while, Arts and Crafts ideals, practiced and taught by successive generations, continued to provide a strong and useful counterforce. Embracing both past and future, the Society of Printers' mission statement, *for the study and advancement of the art of printing*, has proven to be supple and wise.



LEFT: *Electronic Visions, Type and Image on Desktop Computers*, poster by Lance Hidy, 34 × 11 inches. Cosponsored by Society of Printers, with AIGA/Boston, Bookbuilders, and The Creative Club. Speakers Sumner Stone and Lance Hidy, introduced by Wendy Richmond. World Trade Center, Boston, October 20, 1988.

RIGHT: *Typography in the Digital Revolution*, poster by Lance Hidy, 25.5 × 11 inches. Stephen Harvard Memorial Lecture in the Book Arts, Dartmouth College Library. Speakers Matthew Carter, Sumner Stone, and Lance Hidy; Roderick Stinehour, moderator. May 2, 1989.

NOTES

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1 Rick Harmon, "In the Eye of the Storm," *Reed Magazine: The Quarterly Magazine of Reed College Online*, August 1997.
http://web.reed.edu/reed_magazine/aug1997/storm/index.html.

"When the two-day parade of 'friendly' and 'unfriendly' witnesses had concluded, three current members of the Reed faculty — Leonard Marsak, Lloyd Reynolds, and Stanley Moore — had been accused of communist party associations. . . . On June 20, 1954, President Ballantine suspended Professor Reynolds from teaching his scheduled summer-session course, explaining that the popular art history and English professor had 'created an emergency' for the college by citing the Fifth Amendment (the constitutional guarantee of freedom against self-incrimination) during his HUAC testimony. Then, in the course of statements made during July and early August of 1954, the Reed president and trustees made clear that all three teachers — Reynolds, Marsak, and Moore — would be fired unless they could assure college authorities that they were not presently communists. . . . In the end only Professor Moore, arguing consistently and publicly throughout the period of controversy that employers have no right to question employees about their political ideas and associations, was fired by Reed College."

SP member Philip Hofer helped Lloyd Reynolds assemble the 1958 exhibition and catalogue *Calligraphy: The Golden Age & Its Modern Revival* for the Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon. The Society of Printers and The Philip and Frances Hofer Lecture Fund sponsored a lecture and demonstration by Reynolds at Hilles Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts, on December 2, 1976. On October 1, 2003, the Society of Printers heard Gay Walker's illustrated talk "Lloyd J. Reynolds: The Passionate Pen."

2 Jan Tschichold, *The Form of the Book: Essays on the Morality of Good Design* (Point Roberts, Wash.: Hartley & Marks, 1991), xv.

3 Theodore Low De Vinne, "A Printer's Paradise," *The Century*, vol. 36, no. 2, June 1888, p. 236. The 23 wood-engraved illustrations include 12 scenes of the

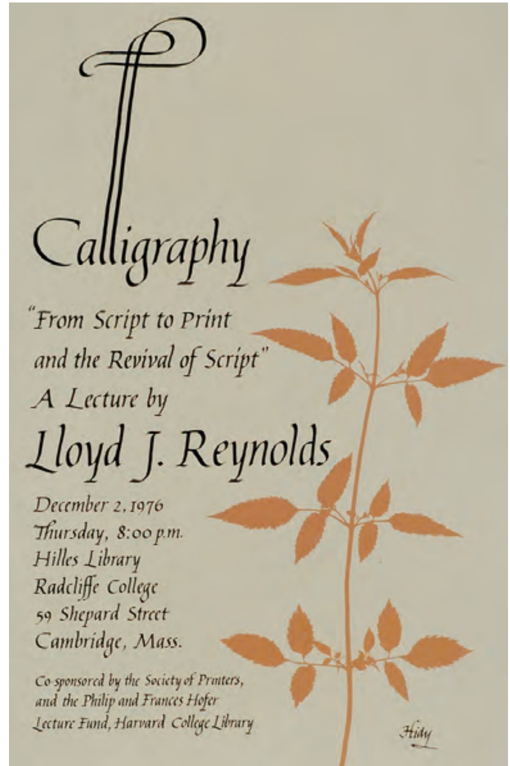
Plantin-Moretus Museum drawn on-site by Joseph Pennell. The essay has been reissued at least twice: the Grabhorn Press published a numbered edition of 425 copies in 1929, illustrated by Valenti Angelo; and in 1968 the Typophiles included it in *Theodore Low De Vinne,* a two-volume boxed set of 500 copies.

4 Theodore Low De Vinne, "The First Editor," *Scribner's Monthly*, vol. 22, no. 6, October 1881, p. 898. In addition to inclusion in the 1968 Typophiles two-volume set, this essay about Aldus Manutius was also published by Targ Editions in 1983, with illustrations by Antonio Frasconi, printed by Grenfell Press in an edition of 250.

5 Kermit Vanderbilt, *Charles Eliot Norton: Apostle of Culture in a Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 47.

6 Gillian Naylor, *The Arts and Crafts Movement: A study of Its Sources, Ideals and Influence on Design Theory* (London: Trefoil Publications, 1990), 124.

7 Ray Nash, *Printing as an Art: A History of the Society of Printers, Boston, 1905–1955* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), 24.



Poster for the 1976 Lloyd Reynolds lecture at Radcliffe College, sponsored by the Society of Printers and the Philip and Frances Hofer Lecture Fund, Harvard College Library. Two-color silk screen by Lance Hidy, 20 × 13 inches.

8 Stephen Harvard, Harold Hugo, B. A. King, Roderick Stinehour, *Vision & Revision: Introducing Meriden-Stinehour Incorporated* (Meriden, Conn., and Lunenburg, Vt.: Meriden-Stinehour, 1979), caption to plate 7.

9 Wendy Kaplan, ed., *"The Art That Is Life": The Arts and Crafts Movement in America, 1875–1920* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1987), 273, 300.

10 Henry Lewis Johnson's *Historic Design in Printing* (Boston: The Graphic Arts Company, 1923) has been reissued under a different title, *Decorative Ornaments and Alphabets of the Renaissance: 1,020 Copyright-free Motifs from Printed Sources* (New York: Dover Publications, 1991).

11 Nash, *Printing as an Art*, 67.

12 George Parker Winship, *Daniel Berkeley Updike and the Merrymount Press of Boston, Massachusetts* (Rochester, N.Y.: Leo Hart, 1947), 1.

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14 Daniel B. Bianchi, *D. B. Updike & John Bianchi: A Note on Their Association* (Boston: The Society of Printers, 1965).

15 D. B. Updike, *Society of Printers President's Report of 1912–13*. Reprinted for the membership in 1983 by SP president Duncan Todd.

16 D. B. Updike, *Printing Types: Their History, Forms, and Use:* third edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), vol. 2, 274–76.

17 Alston Purvis, e-mail to Lance Hidy, October 19, 2005.

18 Robert Slimbach, *Adobe Jenson: A Contemporary Revival: A New Multiple Master Typeface Family Based on the Original Types of Nicolas Jenson and Ludovico degli Arrighi* (Mountain View, California: Adobe Systems, 1994). The well-illustrated text combines a history of 15th-century type design with a detailed account of the development of Adobe Jenson.

19 Bruce Rogers, *The Centaur Types* (Chicago: October House, 1949; reprinted by Purdue University Press, 1996), 8.

20 James Wells, ed., "Letters from Bruce Rogers to Henry Watson Kent," *Printing and Graphic Arts*, Vol. III, No. 1, Feb. 1955, p. 3.

21 Wells, ed., p. 9.

22 Frank Chouteau Brown, *Letters and Lettering: A Treatise with Two Hundred Examples of Standard and Modern Alphabets, for the Use of Designers, Decorators, Craftsmen, and All Who Have to Draw the Letter-forms* (Boston: Bates & Guild Company, 1902), 22–23. This book was probably modelled on Edward F. Strange's *Alphabets: A Handbook of Lettering with Historical, Critical & Practical Descriptions* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1895). Edward Johnston's *Writing & Illuminating, & Lettering* (1906) may have been inspired by these earlier handbooks, but Johnston's is the only one still in print today.

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24 W. A. Dwiggins and Rudolph Ruzicka, *Checklist of an Exhibition of the Work of W. A. Dwiggins Held at the Boston Public Library, June–August 1948* (Boston: The Bookbuilders Workshop, 1949), 11.

25 W. A. Dwiggins and William Rose Benét, *Emblems and Electra* (Brooklyn, New York: Merganthaler Linotype Company, 1935).

26 W. A. Dwiggins, "New Kind of Printing Calls for New Design," *Boston Evening Transcript*, August 29, 1922, Graphic Arts Section, 3:6. Reprinted in

Ellen Mazur Thomson, *The Origins of Graphic Design in America: 1870–1920* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 184–89.

27 W. A. Dwiggins, *Layout in Advertising* (New York: Harper, 1928), 194.

28 The Metro drawings by the Merganthaler draftsmen are preserved in the collection of the Museum of Printing, North Andover, Massachusetts, along with the drawings for many other Linotype typefaces.

29 Edward Johnston, *Writing & Illuminating, & Lettering* (London: John Hogg, 1906), 276–77.

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31 W. A. Dwiggins, *A New Printing Type, Caledonia* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Merganthaler Linotype Company, 1939), xvii–xx.

32 *Graphic Forms: The Arts as Related to the Book* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), 27.

33 Paul Rand, "Modern and Traditional Typography in America," *The Penrose Annual*, 1949, p. 19.

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40 M. Rollins, *Carl Rollins at Montague*, p. 3.

41 *Cabinet Work at New Clairvaux*, Montague, Massachusetts, 1907. From the collection of Memorial Hall Museum, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, Massachusetts: http://memorialhall.mass.edu. Accession number #L02.031.

42 Phelps Soule, "Rollins at Montague," *Print*, vol. 2, no. 1, May–June, 1941, p. 44–46.

43 *Dyke Mill Bulletin, No. 1,* Montague, Massachusetts, 1911.
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44 M. Rollins, *Carl Rollins at Montague*, p. 16.

45 Ray Nash, *C.P.R.: Keeper of the Human Scale* (Montague, Mass.: The Dyke Mill, 1954), 7–8.

46 George D. Vaill, *Random Notes on the Origin of the College Presses* (New

Haven: Yale University Press, 1967). Also: David Farrell, *Collegiate Book Arts Presses* (San Francisco: Fine Print, 1982).

47 Gay Walker, *The Works of Carl P. Rollins* (New Haven: Yale University Library, 1982). Walker is now organizing the archives of Lloyd Reynolds at the Reed College Library in Portland, Oregon.

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52 John R. Nash, letter to Lance Hidy, January 23, 2006.

53 Ibid, letter to Lance Hidy, October 12, 2005.

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56 Steve Jobs, "'You've got to find what you love' Jobs says," *Stanford Report,* June 14, 2005.
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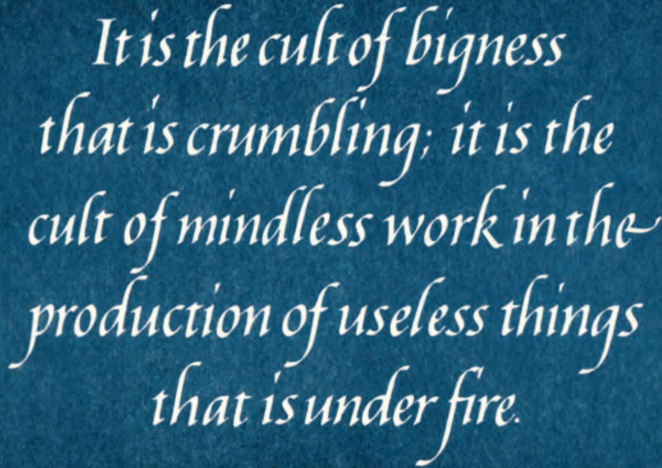

Reproduced from "A Printer's Emblems," 1976, a keepsake prepared in honor of Roderick Stinehour with lettering by Stephen Harvard. The keepsake concludes with these words by Stephen Harvard:

"The cult of bigness and its attendant ill, the production of useless things, are mentioned in the introduction by Roderick Stinehour to The Stinehour Press twenty-fifth anniversary catalogue. It was John Ruskin's conviction that the real mischief of the industrial revolution was not the use of machines *per se* but their use for demeaning ends. Morris and his followers showed that for printers the situation is reversible: small groups of craftsmen working together on projects of real worth will as a matter of course use machines intelligently. In the essay from which this inscription is taken, the aim of the Press is set out: '. . . to print books better than is ordinarily done — a modest goal and an attainable one.'"