



The WAYZGOOSE GAZETTE

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

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The Grasshopper

Back in the late 1870's there was a certain Baptist minister by the name of Enoch Prouty who was desirous of printing a small temperance paper to help in the campaign against the abuses of alcohol. Prouty was the minister in a small rural church in the town of Boscobel, Wisconsin, which is about 120 miles west of Madison. The cost of newspaper presses available to him, coupled with their heavy weight and powering by steam, caused his attempts at establishing the temperance paper to fall short. His salary as the pastor of a small congregation limited his ability to purchase a press; also, the fact that he was located in the country made it imperative that the press be both lightweight for transporting into the area as well as powered by hand rather than by steam.

Rather than succumb to his circumstances, the resourceful Prouty who had a fondness for mechanical pursuits decided to design his own press that would meet his needs. Within years he was successful in creating a country newspaper press that came to be known as

the "The Prouty Power Press," and Prouty engaged in the publishing of his "Temperance Watchman." Representatives from the Wisconsin firm of D.G. Walker & Company were so impressed with the design and efficiency of the press that they began to manufacture and market the press in the 1880's.

The Prouty Country Newspaper Press was manufactured in three different sizes: seven, eight and nine newspaper columns. When you consider that the average seven or eight column press available in the 1880's weighed close to 8,000 pounds, the Prouty was extremely lightweight at about 4,000 lbs. This meant that it could be disassembled with ease,

transported into an area that probably has extremely poor roads if any, and set up to print a weekly paper. The only power it required was the strong arms and back of a young man to crank the cylinder for a few hours. And with the modest price of \$550 for the seven column, the press quickly became a favorite of many country printers.

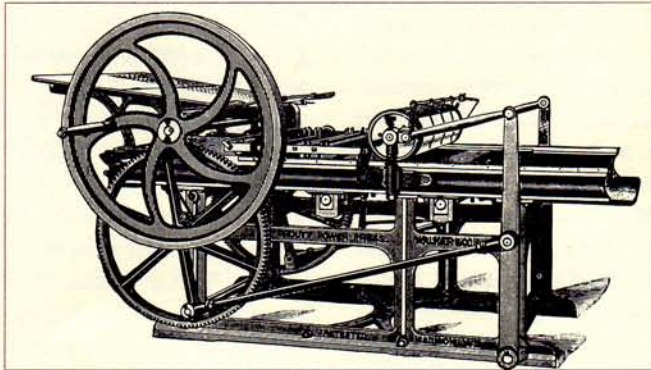
D. G. Walker & Company continued to manufacture the press into the early twentieth century.

Soon after its introduction on the market, the Prouty press received the curious nickname of "Grasshopper," because the cylinder, traveling the length of the bed, is activated by two long slotted bars along the side of the press which swing back and forth. This movement of the bars resembles the legs

of a grasshopper each time an impression is made.

To operate the press, one fortunate individual had to crank the cylinder while another stood on the opposite side of the press feeding one sheet of paper at a time into the head stops. Usually perched on a stool,

this "fly boy" lifted a sheet, gave it a shake to create a cushion of air underneath the sheet, then slid it down the wooden feed board into the head stops. The grippers picked up the sheet, held it tightly against the cylinder as it rolled over the bed of type, creating the impression. After the cylinder traveled the length of the bed, it released the sheet and returned to the feed board, similar to a Vandercook proofing press. However, to prevent the type from printing onto the cylinder when it returns, a throw-off mechanism lowers the bed out of contact after each sheet is delivered. Two swift operators could reach speeds of 1,500 impressions an hour, but this would depend on



what day of the week it was, what hour of the day, and how liquid their lunch was!

The Printing Museum in Buena Park has an operating seven column Prouty on display in an exhibit on country printing. The press is part of the Ernest Lindner collection, who located the press in an abandoned print shop in the small town of Calico

Rock, Arkansas, along the banks of the White River. The efficient little Prouty Power Press is a fitting tribute to the Baptist minister who's name it bears. After a few months of being a country printer, however, I'm not sure how much Enoch Prouty was preaching on the subject of temperance!

Show Your Support and Join the Gutenberg Society!

The Printing Museum in Buena Park, CA, was founded in 1988 by the Gutenberg Society, a private and non-profit educational foundation. During its first two and half years of operation, the museum has established itself as one of the foremost exhibits on printing history in the world. With the antique printing collection of Ernest A. Lindner, the museum educates the public on the history and importance of printing to their everyday lives. Visitors are able to take working tours through the collection, watching the machinery in operation and receiving keepsakes printing on 19th century presses. Video presentations on freedom of the press and literacy are also presented, as well as a live theatrical show with actors portraying such characters as Benjamin Franklin, Gutenberg, Mark Twain and others.

As printers, we have a history to be proud of. Our industry could easily be considered the most vital foundation for western civilization; without the printed word we would remain in the dark ages and we would not know the freedom and liberties we enjoy today. Yet this fact remains obscured in the minds of most members in our society, who take printing for granted and who often view printers in a less-than-glorious light.

One of the major goals of the Printing Museum is education, to educate both the general public on printing and its history and to reach and inform the next generation about an industry which offers excellent career opportunities. Over half of the visitors to the museum are between the ages of eight and sixteen. As we take them through over five hundred years of colorful history, they are presented a positive view and memory of the printing industry.

The Printing Museum is now creating an opportunity for individuals and companies to become partners in preserving the history of our industry. By becoming a member in the non-profit Gutenberg Society, you give tangible support to the

museum, giving it the ability to further develop displays and fulfill its goals of preserving printing history. This is a small and simple way to become a part of the world's largest printing museum.

Annual membership into the Gutenberg Society is only \$25. As a member, you will receive four issues of the Wayzgoose Gazette, which is the quarterly newsletter for the Printing Museum. The newsletter features articles on the equipment in the collection, information on upcoming exhibits and special events, gift shop items, recent acquisitions, workshops and more. Once a year a limited edition keepsake will be produced on the museum's equipment and presented to each member of the Gutenberg Society; this year's frameable keepsake is a letterpress broadside produced in three colors using 19th century wood type. Members will also receive a membership card which will entitle them to four complimentary visits to the museum, worth in itself \$26.00.

Your membership and involvement in the Printing Museum is important; the museum must be seen as YOUR museum, one which you as an individual have an active role in. The largest representation of the printing industry is here in Southern California, and now the largest printing museum is also located here. Get involved on some level. Membership into the Gutenberg Society is more than worth it, and by it you help to ensure the preservation of the history of printing. And by the way, your contribution is tax deductible!

To join the Gutenberg Society, contact the Printing Museum at (714) 523-2070 or write us a letter at 8469 Kass Drive, Buena Park, CA 90621. Checks should be made out to the Gutenberg Society. Complimentary copies of the first issue of the Wayzgoose Gazette, published for Winter 1991, are available during the months of January and February, 1991. To receive a copy, just call the museum or write us a letter.

Volunteers in Action

An important part of the operation of most non-profit institutions is the help they receive from volunteers. By supplying their valuable resources, namely their time and abilities, these individuals make possible the development of many programs and the overall advancement of the museum. Often their value is underpraised, but we would like to feature a highlight of one museum volunteer in each newsletter, and hopefully express some of the gratitude the museum has for the contribution of their time and energies.

The Printing Museum is always in need of volunteers to help in the daily operations of the museum as well as involvement on special projects. This is an excellent opportunity for semi-retired and retired printers, but also for those who just have a passion to be around antique printing machinery.

The museum's areas of needs are varied enough to fit almost anyone who has an interest. There is a need for docents to assist in giving tours to groups and demonstrate on the machinery; machinists to work on keeping the presses and typesetting machines in operation; individuals to help in cataloguing the collection; restoration of machinery; also such skills as cabinetry, construction, design, etc. There's probably nothing we do not need! Get involved as a volunteer and enjoy the satisfaction of being a part of the Printing Museum. Almost from the beginning two and a half years ago, one volunteer has been consistently contributing his knowledge and assistance to the museum. Of special note is the area of the typesetting machinery; whenever you take a tour through the collection and are able to watch a Linotype or Typograph

typesetting machine in operation, much of the thanks goes to Ray Ballash. Almost religiously, Ray shows up every Wednesday to tinker on the machines, keep them tuned and running properly. He has even managed to get some of our machines that were hopelessly broken down running again.

Ray Ballash is a man who has a passionate love for typesetting machines; how else can you describe a man who has about ten such machines in his garage and another two or three railroad boxcars full of them in Parris, California? But along with that love for the machines is his knowledge of their operation. There have been countless times when Ray's understanding of machinery has solved a problem for us; having a museum with operating machinery requires the help of such individuals. His favorite typesetting machine is probably the Linograph, introduced after 1912, and is a smaller, economical version of the Linotype. The museum currently has a Linograph, serial number 32, and is probably the oldest around at the time; Ray has been faithfully working on it so that it is almost ready to cast type.

As a volunteer, Ray is a unique person. When he is not working at Jefferies Banknote in Los Angeles (which tends to be about 50 hours), he's either down here at the Printing Museum or out at the Railroad Museum in Parris. He has managed to amass a small collection of printing machinery out in Parris, next to the other love in his life: railroads. Ray was one of the founding members of the Railroad Museum in the late 1950's. Many thanks to Ray Ballash for all of his support and dedication.

Museum Workshops to Begin

In February of 1991, the Printing Museum will be offering a series of workshops related to the traditional processes of graphic communication. Two courses will be offered and will be held in the museum's workshop facility. "Beginning Letterpress Printing" will give basic instruction in handsetting type and printing. The classes will be held on four Saturday's in February, 1 pm to 5 pm and will cost \$225/person.

"Beginning Italic Calligraphy" will also be offered; this is an introduction course to art of beautiful writing. Classes will be on Tuesday and Thursday

evenings, 7:30 to 9pm, February 5th to the 28th, and will cost \$75/ adults and \$50/ students and seniors.

To register or for more information, please call the Museum at (714)523-2070. The museum will be offering a series of classes quarterly, and will include such topics as papermaking, advanced printing techniques, bookbinding and others. Spring courses will include Letterpress, Continuing Calligraphy and the History of Printing. If you have an interest in any specific workshop and would like to be placed on the priority reservation list, write to the Museum or give us a call.

Notes from the Curator

Welcome to the first issue of the Wayzgoose Gazette. Through this newsletter we hope to keep friends of the museum informed on upcoming events, new exhibits and acquisitions, and on the general activities of the museum. Our first two and a half years as a museum have been filled with development of new exhibits and programs and outreaching to the public on what the museum offers. If you haven't been able to visit the museum yet, you are missing an exciting journey through the colorful history of communication.

The name for our newsletter comes from our Country Printing exhibit, which displays a typical newspaper shop found in the rural parts of our nation. The shop is called, "The Calico Rock Printing Office", because the Grasshopper newspaper press in it was found in Calico Rock, Arkansas. A "wayzgoose" was a traditional printer's celebration held in August around Bartholomew-tide, which was the 24th. The first reference of this celebration was by Joseph Moxon in his book, "Mechanic Exercises on the Whole Art of Printing," published in 1683. He describes the Wayzgoose as good feast given by the Master Printer for his employees, held at his own house. After the feast he gave each of the

workers some money to go down to the local ale-house or tavern. Not a bad feast! The date in August was chosen because it was at about that time when the paper covering the windows in the shop needed to be replaced; this would be accomplished before the feast and drinking.

Various changes have been happening at the Printing Museum over the last year. Construction has just begun on a small cafe, which will offer light food for the general public. The facility will be called "The Composing Room Cafe," and will feature rotating exhibits on the subjects of composition, newspapers and books. The tables in the cafe have been designed to also function as display cases. The first exhibit is on mining town newspapers with photos of the shops and examples of the newspapers.

A new exhibit in the back gallery displays photos depicting a turn-of-the-century newspaper and job printing office, The Columbia Herald. The photos came from an album purchased for the Printing Museum by Dexter Shaler of Minuteman Business Systems, Inc. The exhibit was developed with the help of Earl Whitcher of Modernage Photography of Los Angeles. Pay a visit to the Museum and see what's happening!

Museum Gift Shop

The Museum's Gift Shop offers a range of somewhat unique products related to the history of printing. Each newsletter we will feature a few of the items offered, and make them available through mail-order.

15th Century Press Model – a perfect scale model of the type used by Gutenberg! \$39.95

Linotype Slug: "I got slugged at the Printing Museum" – a line of type cast on one of the turn-of-the-century casting machines in the museum. \$1.95

The Columbian Hand Press – a beautiful full color postcard featuring one of the key pieces in the Lindner Collection. \$1.00

The Biography of Ottmar Mergenthaler, Inventor of the Linotype – first reprint since 1898 edition. 126pp. \$30.00

Catalogue of 19th Century Printing Presses – an excellent book of advertising illustrations of most 19th century presses. 382 pp. \$15.95

Catalogue of 19th Century Bindery Equipment – the companion volume to the printing press book. 270 pp. \$13.95

Wood Type and Printing Collectibles – well illustrated with examples of 19th century wood type. 104 pp. \$7.95

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

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8469 Kass Drive, Buena Park, CA 90621
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Mark Barbour, curator

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