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And his Typesetting Machine Collection at the International Printing Museum

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ERRATUM

Apologies for wrong (1993) date on the title page as well as others you may find

—MUSEUM PRINTERS

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By

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PRINTING MUSEUM

ERNEST A. LINDNER

THE story of Ernest A. Lindner and how he came to take interest in collecting antique printing machinery must begin with his aunt, Hedwig Lindner. In 1901, Frank Van Shack arrived in the bustling city of San Francisco to set up the first Mergenthaler Linotype office in the far western states. He hired Hedwig, or Heddy as she was affectionately called, to help in the office; she in turn opened the door some years later for Ernest G. Lindner, the uncle and namesake of Ernie A. Lindner. Ernest quickly became one of the best salesmen the Mergenthaler Linotype Co. ever knew. In 1908, Ernest introduced his younger brother August to Mr. Van Shack who hired him on as a machinist. His selection of August proved to be anything but disappointing, for then he went on to be known as the best machinist in the company west of the Brooklyn factory.

With a growing printing market in Los Angeles, the Lindner brothers were sent south to set up another branch office. Ernest remained manager of that office until his departure from the company in 1931. In that span of time, however, Ernest was able to create one of the most successful branch offices for the Mergethaler Linotype Co. His reputation spread, as well as the number of people who envied his position. Feeling that the company had not given him adequate compensation for his

years of service, as well as the pressure from within for his position, Ernest made the decision to break with the company in 1931.

During that same year, Ernest managed to convince the Los Angeles Times to have 23 of their machines rebuilt rather than purchasing new ones (a testimony to the mechanical skill and precision of Ernie's father, August, and the sales acumen of his uncle, Ernest). The Times advanced Lindner $10,000, and in 1932, Ernest and August established the E. G. Lindner Co., rebuilders and distributors of linecasting machinery.

Ernest A. Lindner, the nephew and son, credits even his life to the Linotype machine which has supported his family for more than two generations. Ernie was born in 1922, the third of three children to August and Beatrice Lindner. In his earlier years, August was known as a woman-hater; not so much that he hated them but more because he simply did not associate with them—he enjoyed his work, the outdoors and hunting, leaving him little time to consider women. It only took two weeks for those attitudes to change when Beatrice Kinsey was sent to the San Francisco office from a newspaper in Oregon. It was Linotype Co. policy to offer two weeks of free instruction when someone purchased a new linecasting machine. August and Beatrice fell in love and were married within months.

As a young man working for his uncle and father, Ernie began collecting."We would sell one man a machine and take in trade the piece he was replacing, bcause it was worn out, outdated or otherwise unsuitable," he recalled. "I couldn't bear to throw some of these wonderful machines away, so I began shoving them into corners, even after there were no more corners." Later, after the death of his father, August, and his uncle, Ernest, young Ernie began collecting in earnest. As president of the E. G. Lindner Company, he was no

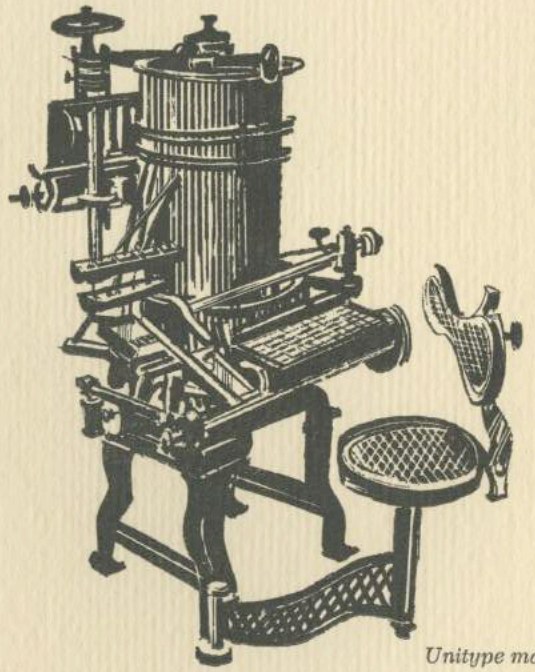
longer subject to stern disapproval for hoarding "worthless" machinery. He combed the world searching for hand-lever presses and typecasting machines that were the wonders of the machine age.

Over the years the collection grew in size and notoriety. The period of the 1960s and 1970s offered an especially unique opportunity for the collecting of antique printing machinery. With the revolutionary change between printing technologies, as offset lithography replaced letterpress, the machinery which had served printers for decades or more became obsolete. As an equipment dealer, Ernie Lindner enjoyed the added advantage of accessibility to these older print shops and their machinery.

Ernie built the collection slowly and methodically, one piece at a time, each having its own story and reason for inclusion into the collection. It is to Ernie's credit that he did not collect aimlessly but rather purposefully,"with blinders on," as he states it. Having a definite mission statement with the collection meant that he was able to select pieces which represented important developments in printing history—old machinery has no inherent value, only weight!

Because of this direction over the years, the Ernest A. Lindner Collection of Antique Printing Machinery is arguably one of the finest private collections in the world. Yet despite its significance, the collection remained in storage in downtown Los Angeles for most of its existence until 1988. In that year, David Jacobson founded the International Printing Museum as a private, non-profit museum to house the Lindner Collection and make it accessible to the general public, facilitating the permanent preservation of printing history. A visit to the Printing Museum in Buena Park, California, today will afford any visitor a view of the largest public display of working antique printing machinery in the world.

Each of the more than 100 machines in the collection seem to have a fascinating or personal story related to their acquisition when talking with Ernie. A few, however, stand apart from the rest. For a man whose birth is credited to an invention known as the "eighth wonder of the world," it is natural for him to be opinionated regarding such a machine. The



Unitype machine

Model 1 Linotype in the collection, circa 1894, is for Ernie Lindner, the one machine that both defines his life and the pride of his collection.

Originally found by Dr. Howard Hambley in the semi-ghost town of Jerome, Arizona, this early Linotype is the first of Ottmar Mergenthaler's machines to take on the characteristic "Linotype appearance" of all later models. With a serial number of 160-SJ, it is also one of 220 Linotypes specially de-

signed to use a "step justification" spaceband, a single-piece device with five incremental "steps" providing different word spacing.

During the early 1890s, the Mergenthaler Linotype Co. was experiencing litigation difficulty regarding the patents and use of their standard double-wedge spaceband; a legal battle which they lost to Jacob Schuckers. To complicate matters further, the company's rival, John Rogers, purchased the patent rights from Schuckers and was threatening injunctions on the manufacture, sale and use of Linotypes with the double-wedge spaceband. Mergenthaler was pressured and financially coerced by the company president, Philip Dodge, to invent the substitute spacing device. A limited quantity of machines were manufactured for use with the new step justification spaceband while the company worked out a resolution to their legal problems. At present, the Model 1 Linotype in the collection is the only machine of this limited production known to have survived.

It is believed that this particular machine was purchased new in 1894 by Senator Clark who was pouring great sums of money into the copper mines of Jerome and where a newspaper existed. The location of the machine in a stone cellar with a small doorway required that it be totally disassembled down to the base and the base turned sideways to come out the door. After the journey to Southern California in the back of Ernie's trailer, the many pieces were restored and the machine rebuilt over the course of the following year.

Also among the fascinating typecasting machinery in the collection is the Rogers Typograph, a strange looking contraption with hundreds of long wires. Invented in 1890 by an Ohio school superintendent, John Rogers, the Typograph represented the first serious competition to the Linotype. Although the Linotype was a superior machine, mechanically and other-

wise, the less expensive Typograph could cast bars of type and required less maintenance. Rogers, however found himself at the receiving end of a court injunction, barring him from the manufacure and sale of the Typograph. Pursuant to the arguments made by the lawyers of the Linotype Co., the judge decided that the concept of manufacturing whole bars

Linotype Junior

or "lines of type" was so unique, the Linotype Co. was entitled to a patent: any machine that produced bars of type was removed from what I refer to as the "typesetting race."

Rogers was able to continue the manufacture and sale of the Typograph in Berlin, Germany, where it was marketed to small European print shops as well as to developing countries such as in North Africa. The ingenious little Typograph re-

mained an economical, lower-quality alternative to the Linotype for the duration of the hot-metal typecasting era.

Ernie Lindner heard rumors regarding the availability of a streamlined version of the Typograph in the early 1960s (the factory was completely destroyed during the bombing raids on Berlin during World War II). Having interest in adding an early Typograph to the collection, he sent a letter off to Herr Wolff, head of sales for the new German Typograph Co. Though Herr Wolff was more interested in having Ernie function as an American distributor for the later model, he accomodated Ernie's request by locating an early Typograph in an old print shop. The particular machine he was able to acquire dates to the early 1890s, being a single-letter matrix machine (later models were all double-letter) of German manufacture requiring gas to heat the metal.

The story of John Rogers does not end with the Typograph, however. Though he could only manufacture his machine overseas, Rogers remained in America where he watched yet another patent battle unfold. His archrival, the Linotype Co., was experiencing litigation over their use of the double-wedge spaceband, described earlier. After acquiring the rights to the spaceband from Schuckers, Rogers proceeded to threaten the Linotype Co. with an injunction, something they successfully used themselves quite often. When he failed to gain the attention of the Linotype Co., Rogers next threatened the users of the Linotype machine—all the major newspapers. Knowing the financial risks of having their papers shut down due to an injunction, pressure was placed on the Linotype Co. by the newspaper owners to resolve the patent problem with Rogers.

Suddenly in 1894, the Linotype Co. settled the issue by purchasing the Rogers Typograph Co., along with the Schuckers spaceband patent, for the princely sum of $416,000 (the most ever paid for a patent up to that date). And to make it

even more interesting, John Rogers joined the Linotype Co. and later assumed Mergenthaler's own position as Chief Consulting Engineer and Inventor after Ottmar stepped down due to failing health. Linotype's chief competitor was now their chief engineer!

At the turn of the century, Rogers was asked by the company to resurrect the idea of his Typograph to assist in the company's competition with other manufacturers, namely the inexpensive Unitype machine. At $1,500 (compared to $3,200 for a Linotype), the Unitype was effectively sold to country printers in small shops with limited budgets. Rogers reworked the principles of the Typograph—using long matrices suspended on independent wires—and combined them with a Linotype keyboard. In 1899, new patents were given for the machine known as the Linotype Junior—asking price only $1,500! At that price the Linotype Junior was effectively used to remove the Unitype machine from the market. Often during trade-ins, the Linotype Co. destroyed their competitor's machine with a sledge hammer, thus keeping it off the used market.

The Linotype Junior always remained an elusive piece for Ernie to add to the collection. This was probably due to the tendency for the Linotype Co. to also take Juniors in on trade and then destroy them in later years, leaving only full-priced machines on the market. Ernie only heard of the machine's existence along with a few advertising drawings from old magazines. When the Printing Museum was being established in 1988, Ernie pulled me aside one day while we were removing machinery from his warehouse in downtown Los Angeles. In a semi-religious ceremony, he handed me a few of the long brass matrices from a Linotype Junior, cautioning me to guard them with my life—he had not been able to acquire or locate one during his many years of collecting.

After placing the matrices in a glass case at the museum, I accepted the challenge and began the hunt for this rare machine. Not more than a year later, a Junior was located in a university journalism department in South Dakota. Many years ago, the department was run by Oscar Abel, famous for his publication of the book *Mechanisms of the Linotype and Intertype*; being a school for country journalists, Abel probably came across the machine sometime in the early thirties or forties and acquired it for the department for display purposes.

In December of 1992, after two years of negotiations with the university, final approval was given making it possible to bring the Linotype Junior into the museum and help complete the typesetting machinery display. It took only three days for Ernie and I to be in South Dakota with his station wagon and trailer once the word was given. It was an arduous trek back to California as we headed into the first major snow storm of the season, following salting trucks on the roads, driving on when most had pulled off to wait out the storm.

The existence of such a strange machine as the Linotype Junior was due to the presence of the Unitype machine, a simple machine which could set and distribute foundry type. Invented by Joseph Thorne in the 1880s, the Unitype incorporated a cylinder which held specially notched or coded foundry type. When the operator activated the keyboard, the type was ejected from the cylinder, gathered, then placed by hand into a printer's galley. After printing, the type could be placed back into the cylinder and sorted automatically because of the notch arrangement.

Though not a high-end typesetting machine, the Unitype found its market with the country printers and newspapers; shops that wanted to automate their typesetting but could not afford the more expensive Linotype. The destruction of the

Unitype after the turn of the century due to the trade-in policies of the Linotype Co. caused few of them to survive. Fewer than a dozen are known to exist.

One day, a man walked into Ernie's warehouse and mentioned seeing such a machine in the loft of a small shop in Waverly, Ohio. Though most equipment leads are dead-ends, Ernie always followed through with them; occasionally they produce a treasure. After a letter of inquiry, the newspaper owner related a story of when a new model 5 Linotype was purchased in 1917 to replace the shop's Unitype machine. After delivering the new Linotype, the newspaper owner was told they would be back to take the Unitype (all competitive machines, except the Intertype, were to be destroyed). Being an honest man, the owner pushed it aside, waiting for the Linotype Co. to return. They never came back. The Unitype remained in the loft until Ernie's fortuitous visit.

The Lindner collection at the International Printing Museum includes many other rare and unusual examples of typecasting history: an early Linograph, serial number 32; an early Intertype; an All-Purpose Linotype from the 1930s (Linotype's unsuccessful answer to the popular Ludlow); an Intertype Fotosetter; Thompson Casters; Ludlows and more. Their colorful stories will be told on other occasions while the hunt for other important machines continues.

A tour through the Printing Museum will give any visitor a better understanding of the magnitude of Ernie Lindner's legacy to the preservation of printing history. This legacy to the printing industry is the gift of one man's life, a man whose life has found meaning in that marvelous machine called the Linotype.

Typographic note for

ATF

MEMBERS

This booklet was composed on an Intertype linecasting machine in Linotype Caledonia and printed on a Vandercook Universal III. The paper is Curtis Tweedweave Illustrations are printed from Polymer plates made and donated by Patrick Reagh and mounted on PAT-MAG *base*

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