

# The WAYZGOOSE GAZETTE

A NEWSLETTER OF THE INT'L PRINTING MUSEUM, BUENA PARK, CA. THE MUSEUM WAS FOUNDED IN 1988 BY D. JACOBSON AND FEATURES THE LINDNER COLLECTION OF ANTIQUE PRINTING MACHINERY.

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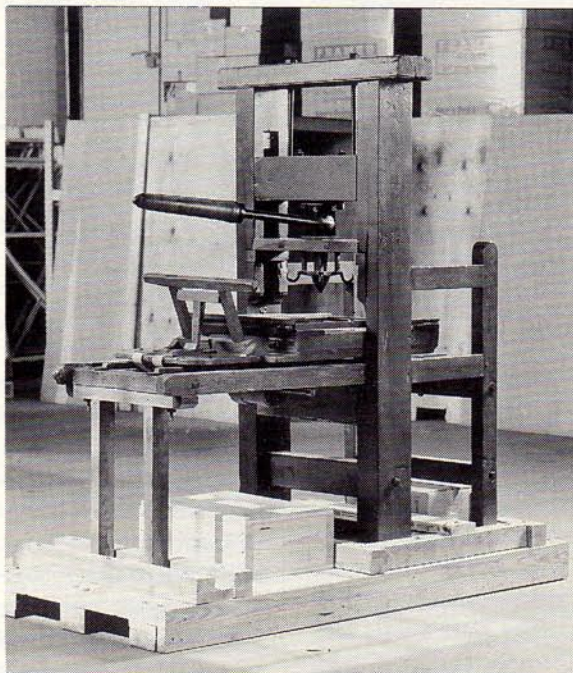
## *Lunch with the McNally's: The Acquisition of a Ramage and Other Precious Gems*

It began with the red-eye to Rochester. A short, New York-style taxi ride brought me to my home for the next seven days, a 25-ft Ryder truck, while I procured the museum's recent acquisitions.

My first stop that Monday morning was at RIT where the second oldest Linotype machine waited for me on the loading dock of the Printing Department. Built in 1890 and known as the Square Base Model 1, it was the first Linotype to begin the resemble all the later models.

This was one of a half-dozen machines Ernie Lindner, whose collection is at the Printing Museum, had challenged me to find and add to the museum's collection. Mind you, the machines on this list of Ernie's were no Sunday shopping trip; they represented some of the most difficult and precious pieces left in existence, ones that had eluded Ernie during his 50 years of collecting. The Square Base Model 1 was the fourth on his list that I had been able to secure.

From RIT, I headed east to Eaton, NY, just south of Syracuse to the home of Stan Harris, a hobbyist and collector from whom we had acquired a series of small presses and a collection of 19th century copper electrotypes (images of horses, wagons, etc. sold by the type foundries to printers). Among the treasures was the oldest Pearl Press manufac-



*The 1806 Ramage Press donated by Rand McNally.*

tured by Golding with a serial number of 10. One of two to have survived, it is a bench model press with a stirrup-style handle which you pull for the impression. Along with it were a number of other small, decorative table top presses including the unusual Lowe Press.

The Lowe Press has a rectangular printing area but the printing cylinder is shaped as a cone, pivoted from one corner of the press. Invented in 1851 by Stephen Lowe of Boston for use by amateurs in their parlors, the press gained favor with the military during the Civil War. Because of its

light weight and portability, it was used as a field press for commanders to print orders and other communications. It is certainly one of the most unusual presses I have ever seen, and one that I had been searching for some years.

It didn't take much coercion by Stan to have me stay for a wonderful, homestyle dinner of lasagne and salad prepared by his wife, knowing this would probably be my best meal for the next week. After leaving Eaton, I ventured west, back through Rochester and Buffalo as I headed toward Chicago.

On trips such as this, my general policy is to drive as long as I'm alert, then sleep as much as I need to and continue on. Sometimes I surprise myself with how far I can travel, though being in a





*Securing the rare Square Base Model 1 Linotype.*

large rental truck with a speed governor set at 63 does limit one's progress. I pulled over somewhere around Erie, PA, locked the doors on the truck and slept for several hours. I couldn't bring myself to spend \$30+ at a motel just to sleep for a few hours. Besides, showers and facilities are rather cheap at truck stops.

I arrived in Chicago on Wednesday morning where I was to pick up the 1806 Ramage Press, et al, donated by Rand McNally (the "et al" was another seven pallets of uninteresting surplus letterpress machines, cabinets and casters, which I was asked to take as well). This Ramage Press represented number 5 on Ernie's list (and I almost had number 6 on this trip but lost the bid for it!).

The Ramage Press was beautifully and professionally crated, which the workers already painstakingly opened up a month earlier for photos of the machine to be taken. They were a little less than enthused when I told them the crate had to be completely disassembled because of the height requirement of the rental truck—we needed every inch we could spare just to get the press inside.

While we were working on the crate, the foreman received word that Ted McNally wanted to come down and watch the loading process. This was not good news! The last thing I needed was for the workers to be under the watchful eye of their boss, stressing out about working on a very valuable piece of history. I gently told the foreman to have Ted come down in an hour or so, which would give me enough time to safely get the press and other artifacts onto the truck. The workers were quite happy with my logic!

Ted finally came down and I was able to have him pose for a few pictures by the press before I loaded it on. While running around the press, blocking it up on the loading dock, I forgot about

the 8 inches of space between the dock and the truck. I realized too late that air provides poor support for the human body as my leg slipped down, up to my mid-thigh. A brilliant move in front of Ted McNally! The pain was definitely sharp, and I knew I would have a bruise to match the feeling, but I tried to walk it off and not focus on it.

After the press was safely on the truck, I asked Ted to autograph one of the deluxe Rand McNally Road Maps I was given by them in 1994 when I first began my efforts to acquire the press. But as his pen hit the page, the sound of a breaking pallet and falling press could be heard in the background.

The foreman was in the process of moving a Vandercook proof press with the forklift when it decided to move off of its pallet and slide to the ground. Having all of my tools with me, especially my J-bar lever, I was able to quickly upright the press and position it back onto a pallet while Mr. McNally just observed in the background. I think I adequately recovered from my earlier faux pas at the loading dock.

Ted McNally invited me to join him for lunch in the company cafeteria, where we talked about the museum's plans for a new home, our educational tours and the adventures of my trip.

The acquisition of the 1806 Ramage Press was a long three-year process which began in Indianapolis, where I knew the press was originally located. After mentioning my interest in the press to Dave Churchman, a local used printing equipment dealer and hobbyist, he took me over to the printing plant where he knew it was on display. Dave was as shocked as I was to find the large publishing plant empty except for one person who informed us that Rand McNally had acquired the plant some years ago and was now closing down the facility. We inquired about the Ramage Press and were told it had been crated and moved to Chicago.

Of course I left the following day on that trip to knock on the door of Rand McNally. There I met Ralph Deringer, the man responsible for disposing of the used machinery. As an old letterpress man, we connected very well from the beginning. An interesting point of our discussion was Ralph's interest in litho stones. He had found several stones, including one with the image "The McNally Olive Ranch, La Mirada, CA", which he presented to Andrew McNally III (now 90). The McNally's had several pieces of property in Southern California, including an olive ranch not far from the the Printing Museum in Buena Park. Ralph showed me



the press, then mentioned he would talk with the McNally's about donating it to us.

Several years later, and a few lunches with the McNally's, I received a call in November of last year from a deep voiced Ted McNally, who mentioned they had decided to donate the press. Only days before this final decision however, the Smithsonian, upon hearing the press was to be donated to an institution, had sent a communication to the McNally's requesting the press. I couldn't believe it. This press which I had worked so hard to acquire and which would represent the oldest printing press in the collection, was close to slipping out of my hands to the Smithsonian, who already had eight or nine such presses.

A quick call on a Saturday morning to Stan Nelson's home, the Smithsonian's curator, did little to avert my fears. Though the McNally's had not made him aware

of our interest in the press, Stan had already directed a letter of interest to Rand McNally. The best I could do was wait for Ted McNally to make his decision. Knowing the Smithsonian was involved would make the results all the more bitter or all the more sweet! And sweet it was when Ted called later in the week and slowly mentioned with his deep voice, while I waited in agony, "...we've... decided... to... donate... the press .....to you!"

With the Ramage Press on board, I continued on to my next destination, Lincoln, Nebraska. There I loaded onto the truck another gem, the Gordon Alligator Press of 1851. This was one of the first platen presses ever invented, the first attempt by George Gordon, the inventor of the standard platen press used by printers until the 1960's (known by many as C & P's).

This press was given the name "alligator" because of its nasty tendency to smash the printer's hand without warning. The former owner of this press who donated it to the Nebraska State

Historical Society in 1911, personally knew of ten such printers who experienced this dreadful calamity. The curator and I carefully winched this old beast up the ramp of the Ryder truck.

From Lincoln I headed south to Oklahoma City

in order to cut across on I-40, rather than go across the Rockies. This whole trip was planned and timed to happen when the snows had melted in the North. I called Ted McNally and RIT frequently to check the weather conditions during February and March and felt that late April would be ideal. In fact, it was sunny and pleasant throughout the northern states. I did not take into account, however, that I would get snowed-in in Tucumcari, New Mexico, of all places!

Coming out of the Texas panhandle, the rain quickly turned to snow and the two-lane

highway was reduced to 3/4's of a lane. In New Mexico, my speed was reduced to 5 mph as I giggled and rocked over the icy roads. Trucks were laying on their sides in the median, cars were abandoned alongside the road. After continuing westward for several miles, it dawned on me that I hadn't seen any vehicles traveling on the eastbound lanes for the past twenty minutes, except of course the snow plows (I curiously also noted that in the Texas panhandle, they only seemed to plow the roads heading into Texas, not going out!).

I pulled off at a truck stop in Tucumcari and was given the bad news that the freeway was shut down up ahead and would be so until the following morning. This was April 28th. I couldn't believe it. New Mexico was suppose to be a sprawling desert region and this was the Spring! So at 2:00 in the afternoon I got to fight for the last roach motel room in beautiful Tucumcari. Dinner was next door at Juan's Chinese Palace where I met a few fellow stranded truckers. When he saw me sit down, the



*Edward McNally with curator Mark Barbour during the loading of the Ramage Press into the Ryder truck.*



trucker barked out, "What did we ever do to deserve this, getting stuck in Tukumcari?" Before I had a chance to respond to his rhetorical question, a nice looking lady seated behind him turned around and responded matter-of-factly, "I don't know. I've been here my entire life!"

Home was only a day and half away when I was finally able to leave the next morning. My bride of six years and children screamed with great

joy when they heard my big truck pull up at home.

Throughout the whole trip, I couldn't really believe the awesome load of treasures I was bringing home for the Printing Museum. At a time when the Museum is challenged with losing its current home and funding source, and having to find a new one, this trip during the Spring of 1997 was able to re-energize me with a sense of hope for our future. Besides, I just can't resist the temptation to collect!

## *Notes from the Curator*

We have just past the one year mark from the time we were forced to vacate our Buena Park facility by Caltrans. It's odd to have to describe ourselves as "the world's largest, *homeless*, printing museum." I remind myself constantly that the goals we have for the Printing Museum will take time to accomplish, that our efforts to establish and develop a new home cannot be accomplished overnight.

We are making progress in our search for a building or location. Our efforts began even before our departure from the Buena Park property. Our initial focus was in Buena Park, though our search continued into Santa Ana, Glendale and Burbank.

Our focus has now shifted to Los Angeles. We have had several meetings with their Community Redevelopment Agency, who have expressed a strong desire to bring the Printing Museum into the city of Los Angeles, a museum which they feel would be an important cultural asset for the city. With their help, we met with the Hearst Corporation to explore the use of the old Herald Examiner newspaper building.

All of this exploration has lead us to our current concept which I believe is the most viable and has the most promise. We are currently talking with the County of Los Angeles regarding the possible use of a historic building called the Plaza House in downtown, facing the restored Pico House from the 19th century and famous Olvera Street.

The property has most of the ingredients necessary for our successful use of it. It is the right size for our displays, has been vacant for 26 years, needs major restoration and retrofitting, it is in a redevelopment zone, it is located next to a significant cultural attraction and major transportation routes, and it is owned by the County. It even used to house a French newspaper in the 1890's.

If we are successful on securing The Plaza House, it's development will take us at least a year or two. This creates a dilemma regarding our storage arrangements in Riverside. Paul Berardi of

Flyer Graphics generously made a commitment to provide storage space for the Printing Museum for only one year, which we have already exhausted.

We are seeking a new storage location (about 5,000 sq. ft) to serve our needs during this two-year transition. We have been knocking on the doors of building owners to find someone who has surplus floor space they would be willing to donate. If you have any leads for us to follow, please give the Museum a call as soon as possible.

Thank you for your continued support of the Printing Museum during this transition! I will continue to keep you updated on our progress. We have printed and video material available on the Printing Museum's efforts to find a new home and raise the money for it. Please give me a call if you would like some sent to you.

We remain very busy with our outreach program to schools, *History in Motion*, and our continued efforts to raise the funds necessary for our new facility; we even find time to track down a few new artifacts for the collection!

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### THE WAYZGOOSE GAZETTE

is issued regularly for the Friends of the International Printing Museum, founded in 1988 by David Jacobson and featuring the Ernest A. Lindner Collection of Antique Printing Machinery.

"Wayzgoose" refers to a traditional printers' celebration.

Membership into the Friends begins at \$25 annually and goes to support the programs of the Museum. The Printing Museum is a recognized 501(c)3 public charity; contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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