

No. 2
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ETCetera

Newsletter of the Early
Typewriter Collectors Association



*The beautifully-ornamented Burn's No. 1 Typewriter #19
once owned by inventor Frank Burn's of Westfield, New York*

BURNS NO. 1

A Magnificent Obscurity

by Darryl Rehr

When G.C. Mares was writing his *History of the Typewriter* in the early 1900's, he wrote to the Burn's Typewriter Company of Buffalo, NY, asking for the firm's literature on their Burn's Typewriter, which had been produced in 1890. Unlike other companies, which provided numerous illustrations and detailed descriptions, the Burn's people wrote back:

"We have never had any catalogues or descriptions of the machine published and at present could not furnish you with the information that you ask for, and can only say that letter is written on a machine that has been in constant service for eight years without any repairs, and must leave you to judge whether the machine does good work or not."

(continued on page 6)

ETCetera

Newsletter of the Early
Typewriter Collectors
Association

January, 1988
No. 2

Editor
Darryl Rehr

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Collectors Association

EDITOR'S NOTES

The technology used for producing ETCetera would, no doubt, have made C.L. Sholes and his contemporaries gasp. In fact, it makes *me* gasp at times.

This publication is composed on a Macintosh Computer, using word processing and electronic layout software. The typefaces you see are, at the moment, dictated more by what is in my software than strict aesthetics. As for layout and composition, suffice it to say that it is a learning process, since I have never done anything like this before. I'll be experimenting as the next few issues come out, and the appearance may change.

Once composed, the publication is typeset on an Apple LaserWriter printer, which takes data from the computer's disc, and transforms it into a printed page using the xerographic process. The typefaces are built into the LaserWriter, and are very close to what you might get by using old-fashioned printing.

Masters from the LaserWriter need only to have illustrations added before being mass-reproduced. The illustrations are inserted in the old-fashioned cut-and-paste manner, as we can't afford the hardware to do it electronically. Perhaps one day...

The whole process is rather exciting. This, however, is offset somewhat by the fact that when I get *my* copy in the

mail, there is very *little* excitement. I already know everything that's *in* it!

†††

An antiques dealer who runs a booth at Seattle's Pioneer Square Antique Mall wrote to inform me of a typewriter being offered by one of the mall's other dealers. To quote, "It is a Multiplex Hammond, manufactured in the U.S. His tag says '1890-1900, \$749.00.'"

When somebody tells me a story like this, I often reply saying I'll sell that dealer all the Hammonds he wants for \$350 each (allowing more-than-double markup). I have never had a response.

†††

Anyone who frequents the flea markets may have noticed that the original not-so-old Polaroid SX-70 camera can be had for something in the \$25-range. For typewriter collectors, this is a bargain you may wish to grab. The SX-70 is a focusing reflex camera, which gives you the ability to take a single, good, close-up, in-focus picture of a machine on demand. Yes, SX-70 film is expensive, but when you just want that *one* shot to send someone for a proposed trade, it's better to spend a 75¢-\$1 instead of the \$7.50 or so for the whole roll of 35mm. If you plan to look around for a cheap SX-70, I suggest investing in a pack of film. Take it to the flea markets with you and have it handy as a tester to be sure your bargain works.

†††

Celebrity Typewriters: The L.A. Times recently ran photos of the writing machines used by two famous writers. First was Will Roger's typewriter: a Remington 3 portable, on display at the humorist's house in Santa Monica. Second was William Saroyan's "first" typewriter, an Underwood 5, on display at the playwright's home in Northern California. In Germany, *HBwaktuell* reports (with appropriate disdain, I would add) a \$58,000 (DM 95,000) price achieved at auction for the Remington portable (and supporting documents) on which Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf*. Let us know when you hear about the typewriters that other famous (or *infamous*) folks have used.

†††

TW's on TV: I saw three oldies on the Tube in recent months, all of them on PBS. First was on an episode of "Upstairs Downstairs," where Sir Richard employed a freelance secretary, who came equipped with her own machine. No closeups provided, but it appeared to be either a Perkeo, Bijou or Erika. At first I thought it was a Folding Corona, but it had a little lever outside of the frame at left of the keyboard. The European folders have such levers, Coronas don't. The "secretary," by the way, was correctly referred to as the "typewriter," and she remarked something to the effect that society would one day soon have to decide whether by that it means the machine or its operator.

A Folding Corona did show up on "This Old House." It was a strictly-ornamental accessory placed on an antique desk. Bob Villa's comment: "Hey, I like the typewriter."

A Remington blind-writer (#6, I think) was seen on the same show during a tour of a Victorian house/museum located in Phoenix.

†††

How Mistakes Are Made: A lady called me recently saying she had a typewriter made in New Zealand. A few questions revealed that the machine was not New Zealandish, but British, an Imperial. But what kind? I asked if it had a curved keyboard, and the answer was "Yes." I then went on to explain that this was most likely an Imperial Model B, made in England, etc. etc. I was going to advertise this in the Typewriter Trader for the lady, and since it was convenient for me to go see it, I did. To my surprise, I saw an Imperial Portable Model T of 1942. The moral: don't expect non-collectors to understand you when you say things like "curved key-board." To this lady, "typebars" and "keyboard" are equivalent concepts, and since the typebars were arranged in something of a curve, her typewriter had a "curved keyboard." No harm done in this case, but be aware of such pitfalls whenever you interview a prospective seller by phone or letter.

†††

TYPEWRITER MYSTERY

by Mike Brown

To solve the mystery, insert paper in the typewriter, space down 3 single spaces from the top, set side margins for a 50-space line, depress shift lock, and type line-by-line. Symbols: 21 sp means strike spacebar 21 times; 3V means strike V 3 times; 10 M means strike M 10 times, etc. The subject of the picture produced by typing out the puzzle will be revealed in ETCetera No. 3, but we won't show you the actual product--you have to do that yourself.

1- 21 sp, 3V
2- 20 sp, 5V
3- 21 sp, 5V
4- 22 sp, 4V
5- 23 sp, 4V
6- 24 sp, 4V

7- 24 sp, 4V
8- 25 sp, 4V
9- 26 sp, 4V
10- 26 sp, 4V
11- 27 sp, 4V
12- 28 sp, 4V
13- 28 sp, 4V
14- 30 sp, 3V
15- 31 sp, 3V
16- 22 sp, 10M, 3V
17- 21 sp, 12M, 3V
18- 20 sp, 13M, 3V
19- 20 sp, 13M, 1 sp, 3V
20- 19 sp, 14M, 2 sp, 3V
21- 18sp, 2:, 13M, 2 sp, 3V
22- 18 sp, 8:, 6M, 4 sp, 3V
23- 18 sp, 10:, 2M, 2:, 5 sp, 3V
24- 16 sp, 2I, 14:, 6 sp, 2V
25- 14 sp, 4I, 12:, 9 sp, 2V
26- 12 sp, 6I, 11:, 11 sp, 2V
27- 10 sp, 9I, 9:, 12 sp, 1:, 2V, 3:
28- 9 sp, 12I, 5:, 3I, 9 sp, 3:, 1V, 5:
29- 7 sp, 26I, 5 sp, 4:, 1., 4:
30- 6 sp, 27I, 2M, 13:
31- 6 sp, 27I, 2M, 8:, 1., 2:, 1., 2:
32- 5 sp, 28I, 2M, 8:, 1., 5:
33- 5 sp, 27I, 3M, 6:, 2 sp, 7:

34- 4 sp, 14I, 8M, 5I, 3M, 4:, 3 sp, 9:
35- 4 sp, 11I, 13M, 3I, 9 sp, 9:
36- 4 sp, 10I, 13M, 3:, 7 sp, 10:
37- 3 sp, 12I, 8M, 9:, 1 sp, 11:
38- 3 sp, 14I, 4M, 21:
39- 3 sp, 15I, 1M, 1I, 20:
40- 3 sp, 20I, 15:
41- 3 sp, 22I, 12:
42- 2 sp, 25I, 1 sp, 1:
43- 2 sp, 28I, 1 sp, 1:
44- 2 sp, 27I
45- 2 sp, 26I
46- 2 sp, 26I
47- 2 sp, 26I
48- 2 sp, 26I
49- 3 sp, 24I
50- 2 sp, 24I
51- 2 sp, 24M
52- 2 sp, 24M
53- 1 sp, 26I
54- 1 sp, 26I
55- 1 sp, 27I
56- 29I
57- 30I
58- 30I
59- 30I

BACK TO BASICS For Beginning Collectors

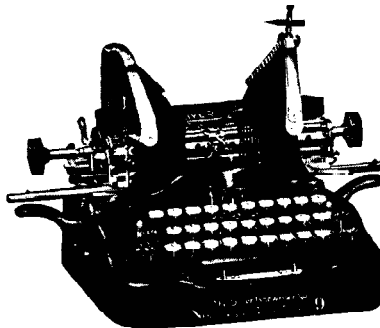
by Ed Peters

It's ostentatious of me to be writing this kind of feature for ETCetera, because there are so many others who are better qualified to do it. But, for various reasons of their own, most of them don't come forward and volunteer to share their thoughts.

That's always seemed peculiar to me. Here we are--collectors of one of the most important communications devices ever invented--and, with a relatively few notable exceptions, most of us are among the poorest communicators the good Lord ever put breath in!

I hope if you're new at the game, you'll resolve to get in the swim--to write, to call, to be responsive--because that's a big part of the fun of the whole thing. Sitting on your hands and enjoying your "secret collection" is kind of like scoring a hole-in-one when you're playing alone.

†††



Pardon that public airing of a private peeve. The real topic of the day is wrapped up in three little words: "What's it worth?"

Scientists can probably tell you why the sky is blue and the grass is green, but no one has ever devised a satisfactory answer to that simple little question, when the topic is antique typewriters. Much as we may yearn for a guide to typewriter values, it doesn't exist, as far as I know, and probably won't. A while back, there was a good bit of talk about some kind of list of "relative values," like two Blicks equal a Caligraph and such. But even that never got off the ground. Why? Because you couldn't find two people to agree with it, much less a whole group!

So you're on your own when it comes to evaluation, but there's nothing

wrong with asking around and getting other opinions. The only published prices I know of, apart from the ones we see in ads, are in those newsletters that drift in from overseas. But proceed with caution on those. They're often auction prices, and you know what crazy things can happen at auctions.

It doesn't take anyone very long to learn that there's a big price difference between a Corona and a Crandall, but the closer calls are the ones that puzzle us all. For example, which would you rather have--a fine Williams or a fine Lambert?

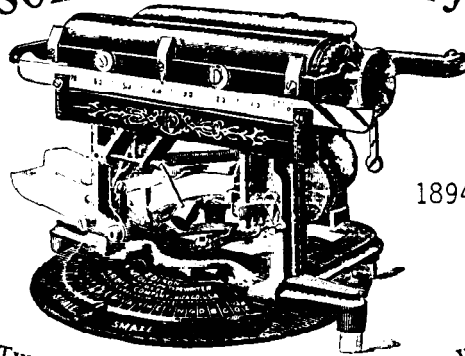
You'll learn, as you go along, that rarity and desirability can be two very different things. For example, my brass Underwood is exceedingly rare, but I'm sure it wouldn't bring nearly the price of, let's say, a fine Merritt, and there are quite a few Merritts around.

Evaluation is, in large measure, a subjective thing. How much do you like it? How much do you want it? What are you willing to give, or give up, for it?

In the final analysis, the best advice I can offer is to reflect carefully and seek the best advice available. Right now, as this is being written, I'm trying to decide whether I want an Emerson or a Geniatius in a deal. And you know what? I really don't know.

The Edison-Mimeograph Typewriter

\$22



1894

\$25

A Practical Typewriter At a Price Commensurate With The Times.

THE ONLY PRACTICAL LOW PRICED TYPEWRITER EVER MADE.

Prominent Points: A type-bar machine writing in perfect alignment permanently. Quality of work equal to the best. Durability unsurpassed. Simple in construction. Speed double that of handwriting. Steel Type. A heavy manifold. Especially adapted to mimeograph work. Does all that the standard typewriters do. Adapted to English, French and German. The best typewriter for all having a limited correspondence.

No. 1 Machine, 78 Characters, (English) \$22.00
 No. 2 Machine, 86 Characters, (English) - 25.00
 No. 3 Machine, 90 Characters, (English, French and German) 25.00

Dealers wanted everywhere.

Full descriptive catalogue sent on application.

A. B. DICK COMPANY, 152-154 Lake Street, Chicago, U. S. A.

BRANCH DEPOTS, New York and Philadelphia.

Illustration from the Paul Lippman Collection

THE EDISON MIMEOGRAPH TYPEWRITER

Triumph of Poor Design and Marketplace Disaster

by Paul Lippman
 Hoboken, NJ

One of the inventions for which Thomas Alva Edison is not hailed is his Mimeograph Typewriter. He had already invented the incandescent light bulb, but this machine put its user right back in the dark by its classic use of blind writing. Strangely, this effort was introduced well after writing-in-sight was a feature of several other typewriters. Perhaps wisely, today's Edison historians seem to actively ignore his typewriter, as on display in his Fort Meyers, Fla. summer home next to his cylinder gramophone is an Oliver.

Having recently acquired an Edison, and after a chance to examine it thoroughly, I find it to be a most remarkable index typewriter. Mine is a No. 1, with a capacity of 78 characters. New, it sold for \$22. Model 2 offered 86 characters and Model 3 provided 90, permitting it to be adaptable to several foreign languages having more letters in their alphabets. These models were offered at \$25 each.

Backward Design

Operation is almost ludicrously primitive for its late introduction date of 1894. (Patents were granted in 1895; my specimen states that U.S. and foreign patents are applied for,

suggesting it was made in 1894. Serial number: 1422) The 78 characters appear atop a corresponding number of very short rods, or plungers, which, despite being less than an inch long, are complicated by the presence of three protruding and rather slender pins. The type-plungers are set into holes drilled vertically into the circumference of a horizontal wheel. Two of the pins serve as guides in slots that compel the type rods to rise and fall in their holes without rotating. The third, thicker pin raises the type plunger to the printing point when the print lever is depressed. The lever raises the selected type plunger via a series of wobbly linkages and an upswinging hammer. The linkage works against spring tension which, with the aid of gravity, causes the hammer to drop; the type plungers fall on their own.

This requires absolute cleanliness of the holes in which the type plungers travel. One of the few restoration efforts I had to make was to thoroughly clean the holes and plungers of dried lubricant and re-lubricate with light mineral oil that would not create sludge.

A lever parallel to the print lever serves as a space bar. Depressing the print lever simultaneously depresses the space

bar to move the carriage after each impression. When spacing alone is needed, the space bar can be depressed without the print lever being engaged.

Depression of the print lever also moves the ribbon, via another wobbly linkage and a pawl that engages a toothed wheel on the left-hand ribbon spool. The 5/16-inch ribbon travels only from right to left; the right-hand spool connects to a crank for manually rewinding the ribbon when it is entirely collected on the geared spool.

The Edison's carriage tilts back in classic understroke style. Lateral movement of the carriage is accomplished by sustained depression of the space lever. Only single line spacing is provided, via a right-end ratcheted platen wheel. The margin stop collar trips a lever to ring a bell several spaces before the stop is reached.

There is a scale on the front support rail of the carriage indexed by a pointer on the carriage frame. A small finger-hook is provided at the left front of the carriage for pulling it back to the beginning of the line and for tilting it.

The carriage accepts a sheet barely 8 1/2 inches wide, making one ponder what width an 1890's Mimeograph stencil may have been.

A Clever Shift

The single truly ingenious aspect of the machine's design is its handling of what amounts to a "shift." The less-than-180° arc of the index accommodates all 78 characters. Three are displayed at each position. A horizontal indexing wheel at the base of the machine is geared to an axis that rotates the also horizontal type wheel. There are three 120° sectors to the pointer wheel, one lettered CAPITALS, another SMALL, and a third FIGS/CHARS, each with its own pointer. The pointers are finger-cups, centered on their respective arcs, and scribed with a white indicator line.

Simply by placing the pointer marked CAPITALS, SMALL, or FIGS/CHARS against the common index, one can select the one of three different characters available at each point on the index. The type wheel does not rise or drop.

Stencil Cutting

The print is very small, with a sharp impression obviously designed to cut a wax Mimeograph stencil cleanly. Disengaging the ribbon for that purpose, however, requires you to move the entire ribbon to one spool and disconnect the ribbon from the other. Only one spool is removable, so the task cannot be done simply by removing both spools. A curious complication, considering that the primary purpose of the machine is to cut stencils.

Release of the tension of the feed roller is primitive. A small tab at the left end of the large, nickel-plated paper table, when pressed away from the operator, minimally relieves feed-roller tension against very strong springs. A single feed roller

runs almost the width of the platen. On my specimen, the feed roller core is covered with grooved rubber which looks like a syringe hose. I do not know if this is original or an improvised replacement. Information on the feed roller cover on Edisons owned by other collectors would be appreciated.

Wrong Machine/Wrong Time

The Edison Mimeograph Typewriter's history is as unhappy as its design. It was introduced a few years after the successful introduction of Edison's Mimeograph device in the mid 1880's. If those of the Xerox generation do not remember the Mimeograph, it was a duplication process that used a paper-thin sheet of fiber-strengthened wax, which, supported by a heavy paper backing, was rolled into a typewriter and, without the ribbon intervening, typed-on to cut a stencil. This, minus its backing, would be wrapped around the rotating drum of a mimeograph rotary duplicating machine. Ink on a pad inside the drum passed through the cuts in the stencil onto paper as the drum rotated with its stencil on board. Hundreds of copies could be run off a single stencil, and the ink could be removed from the operator's hands in less than two weeks of scrubbing.

The idea of an Edison Typewriter for cutting Edison stencils was logical, but typewriter manufacturers were violently unhappy about a perceived threat to selling their typewriters for stencil work. They threatened a boycott of the Mimeograph Duplicator, which probably meant that typewriter company sales people and dealers would not sell Edison's duplicator but rather would push other similar systems, such as the Neostyle.

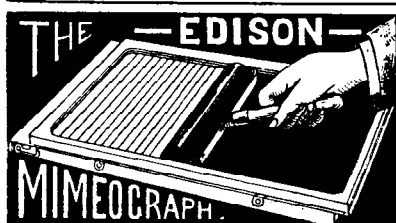
Inevitable Downfall

The boycott threat and—more likely—the awkwardness of Edison's Typewriter drove the machine off the market rather quickly. There was little reason for an office equipped with a Mimeograph duplicating system to buy an Edison typewriter for it when the conventional machines already in the office could, for the most part, cut a satisfactory stencil and type individual business letters as well.

While on the market, even the A.B. Dick company of Chicago, maker of the Mimeograph, admitted to the Edison Typewriter's shortcomings, stating modestly in its ads that "It lacks the highest speed, but..."

It's likely that few of the machines were sold in the first place, and that remaining stocks were destroyed when the Edison Mimeograph Typewriter was taken off the market. Specimens today are rare, and even more rare with an intact index plate, a fragile laminate of paper and celluloid. The Edison's brief life did not even permit it to appear in Ernst Martin's otherwise encyclopedic "Die Schreibmaschine."

Not one of Thomas Edison's brighter ideas, but a desirable addition to any collection of historic typewriters is the Edison Mimeograph Typewriter.



PATENTED BY THOMAS A. EDISON.

3000 COPIES From *One Original* Writing, Drawing, Music, etc. Of Type-Writer Letters **1500 COPIES** can be taken from *one* original. Recommended by over

Send for circulars and samples of work.

30000 USERS

A. B. DICK COMPANY 152 & 154 Lake Street, Chicago. 32 Liberty Street, New-York.

BURNS (continued from p.1)

Mares was disappointed, to be sure, but commented, "As the letter shows a perfect alignment and a good firm impression, this unparalleled modesty on the part of the Burns Typewriter Co., seems much to be regretted." *Unparalleled modesty* is the whole story in a nutshell. Because the Burns was never advertised or promoted, this stately machine is almost totally unknown today.

Those familiar with the literature of typewriter history may recall having seen a picture of the Burns in the Milwaukee Public Museum's catalog of the Dietz Collection. This photo, of Burns (ser. #7) is reproduced in Beeching's *Century of the Typewriter*. Mares' comments have been reproduced above (virtually in-full); Adler has a single sentence about the machine; and Ernst Martin has a brief description of the Burns in *Die Schriebmaschine*, although those who can't read German will have to have it translated.

When I discovered the existence of another Burns (ser. #19), I thought this might be the only such machine known other than the Milwaukee example. The excitement of the find was compounded by the fact that I would have the opportunity to provide a complete description, and perhaps some of the history behind it.

A "Test Bed" of Features

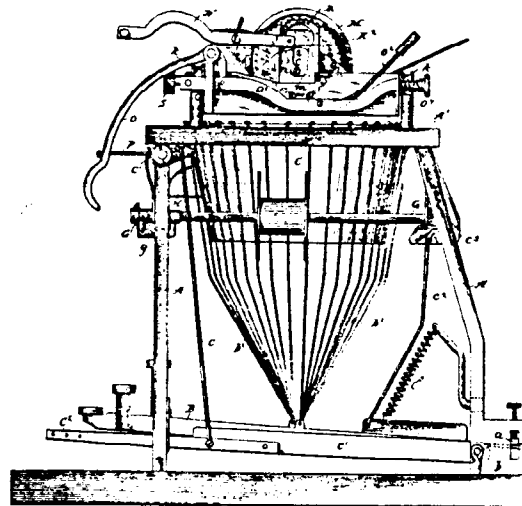
From looking at its photo, you can see that the Burns is a double-keyboard, upstroke machine with a silhouette very much like the Smith Premier. As it happens, it is substantially different from the SP, and on examining the machine, I found that the Burns is almost a "test bed" of many typewriter innovations of the age.

Frank Burns must have been an alignment freak, since a number of measures were taken to keep wayward type bars from straying outside their path. First is the printing-point alignment guide, which looks much like that on the Yost. The Yost alignment hole, however, is square, while the Burns is round. In addition, the type bars travel through a heavy cast-metal slotted comb, which today we would call a slotted segment. The International used a metal comb for alignment, but it was thin sheet metal, not a heavy casting. The Burns typebars were sent to the printing point by sublevers similar to those on the later Densmore.

The Burns ribbon is advanced by gearing driven by a pulley moved by friction off the carriage return string. Full width of the ribbon is utilized by a gearing system which moves the spools along their width one notch every time the manual ribbon reverse is punched.

The Burns, of course, is a blind-writer, but instead of lifting the whole carriage for viewing, the platen rolls forward when you press down on one of two levers at either side of the carriage. The platen then pops back into place when you let go. The whole platen assembly can be removed from the machine easily, as can the carriage itself. Printing width is 70 characters, and a lever gives you single or double line spacing. In addition, a little pullout button in the center of the left platen knob deactivates the linespace detent, allowing you to rotate the platen smoothly (similar to modern machines).

The Burns keyboard is standard double QWERTY with a total of 76 keys. There also is a backspace key located at center above the top row of keys, probably the first backspace in the industry. The Milwaukee description says machine was capable of writing on either side of its set margins. However,



Patent Drawing of Burns Typewriter

the margin stops (which are nothing more than hand-tightened nuts mounted in a track) are solid once set, and the Milwaukee writeup is in error.

Dating the Burns

In the course of researching this article, I found that my Burns was one of *three* now known to exist. The third example is on exhibit at the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society. The machine was donated by the Burns Typewriter Company in 1934, and included with the machine was a letter typed on company stationery. It states that the donated machine (serial no. 11) was one of a "lot" of typewriters made by the Burns Typewriter Co. in 1894-95. The letter states that the Burns "at the time of manufacture was far ahead, in improvements, of the then manufactured typewriters." While this is a matter of opinion, some of Burns ideas were indeed innovative when he first came up with them. You see, he was granted a U.S. patent in August of 1889, meaning it took five years to get the machine into production!

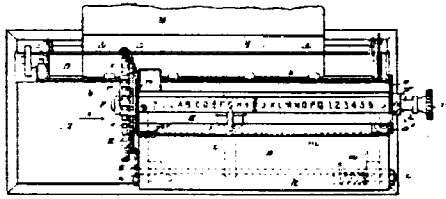
Burns holds no other typewriter patents for the era (I checked 1885-1895), except for one he assigned to Louis T. Weiss of Brooklyn, NY. The patent drawing shows an interesting index machine with its typewheel perpendicular to the platen as on the Columbia. The pointer is carried along the letter index by a cable wound around two pulleys geared to the type wheel shaft. I know of no evidence that this machine was ever produced. It, too, was patented in 1889.

Patent Variations

The Burns patent shows a design with distinct differences from the production machine. The patentable features listed in the patent summary for the Burns were the round-hole alignment guide, the ribbon transport system, the lever-linked carriage viewing system and the mountings for the removable platen. Also included were a round carriage track (sounds similar to that seen on the Oliver), and key levers with integral flat-metal key springs. These latter two features did not appear on the machine itself.

The patent drawing pictures a simple front-to-back key lever in one piece. The movement on the machine, however, is very different, with the front-to-back linkage broken up into

438,665. TYPE-WRITING MACHINE. Louis T. Weiss, Brooklyn, N. Y. Filed Aug. 29, 1889. Serial No. 322,362. (No model.)



Patent Drawing of Burns Index Machine

three pieces moving on two different fulcrum points. The existing system is complex and seems to introduce a lot of friction into the whole key-to-typebar path.

The Inventor

Frank Burns himself seems to have been well remembered in his hometown of Westfield. After his death at the age of 74 in 1937, the *Westfield Republican* wrote, "Mr. Burns, while a man of simple and unostentatious manner, was in one way at least an outstanding personality [in] his remarkable genius as an inventor."

Besides his typewriter, Burns' other inventions included a steam auto (which he drove around the streets of Westfield when he was a teenager), a vaporizer for allergy sufferers, and a device to prevent the clogging of cartridges as they were fed into the rapid-fire aircraft machine guns of WWI.

His hometown newspaper erroneously called Burns' writing machine "the first modern form of typewriter, improving upon the old Caligraph, the first one sold on the market." But then, the paper also said his steam auto was the first horseless carriage ever created.

Burns' funeral was held at the Crandall Funeral home. We doubt any connection to Lucien.

The Typewriter's Fate

The fate of the Burns Typewriter itself remains an open question. From examining #19, it seems clear that it was either a pre-production model or part of a very limited developmental run. The key shafts, for instance, are not uniform, having been individually hand-fit to corresponding levers in an (unsuccessful) attempt to make the keytops even at the finger end. Something like this would never appear on a mass-produced machine.

The Burns was probably, therefore, never actually manufactured for sale. This would explain the total lack of advertising or promotion materials available today. Just why it took the company so long to get the machine from drawing board to production remains unanswered. By 1894, it may have been too late to succeed, given its design. However, the enterprise was obviously undertaken with a long view toward the future. We note that the Burns is emblazoned

with the legend "BURNS NO. 1," meaning that its makers looked forward to the eventual introduction of "No. 2."

Burns and His Company

The Burns Typewriter Company itself appears to have had long-term success on a small scale in producing metal type for other typewriters as well as metal stamps, dies and other light machinery and tool specialties. The company lasted at least into the 1940's, but its episode in typewriter manufacture became a mere footnote in its own history.

THE STORY BEHIND THE FIND

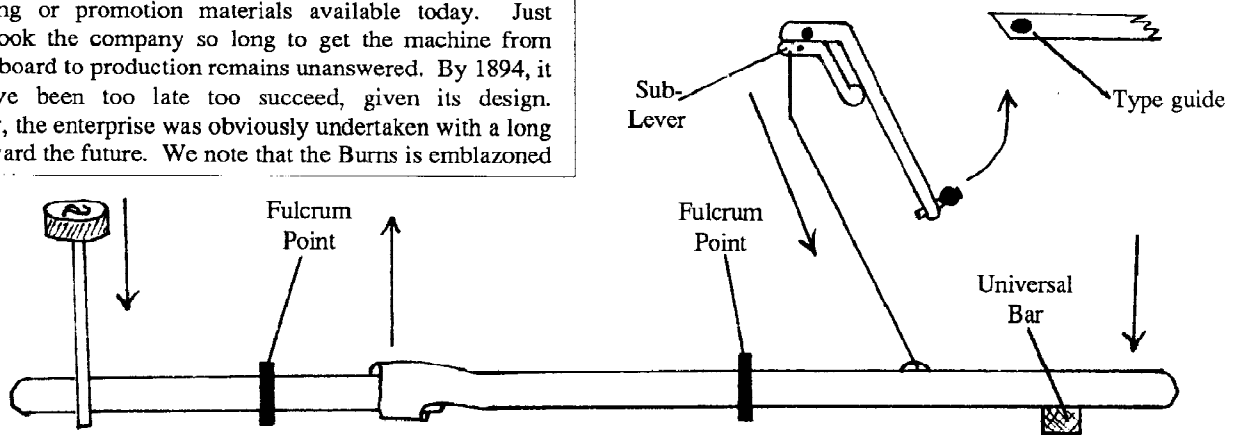
The letter came in July of last year. It was written by an antique dealer in Westfield, New York, inquiring if I would be interested in purchasing a Burns typewriter. The machine on offer was the personal property of the inventor, Frank Burns, who was a lifelong Westfield resident (the dealer had purchased many of his personal effects some years ago).

Negotiating the purchase was maddening. The dealer first told me she didn't have time to deal with the typewriter until fall, at the end of the tourist season. She also seemed very hesitant about packing and shipping the machine.

This last problem bothered me until I got the idea to enlist the aid of a fellow collector. Don Boyd, of Buffalo, was the closest collector known to me. I asked him if he would be willing drive the 90 miles to Westfield, pick up the machine and ship it to me. Even though I was going to pick up the costs, I realize I was asking a lot, but was gratified when Don said he'd be happy to do it. I sent him enough money to ship the machine, pay for his gas, and take his wife out to a fancy lunch. As it turned out, the Boyds made a nice day trip out of it, and, a couple months later, the machine arrived, perfectly packed and completely intact.

Don has set a good example for all of us. Many of us would be wary of letting another collector know about such a machine, as we are all competitors as well as colleagues. As I was writing around trying to dig up more information about the Burns, one collector wrote to me, in a friendly way, saying, "The only thing that I can add to your Burns is the sound of my teeth gnashing in envy and the woodsmoke from my brain as I try to figure out a way to latch on to your lead and get it for myself!" I hope, however, that if any collector contacts another for aid in consummating a find, he'll get the kind of help Don Boyd gave me.

Schematic of Burns Movement



RATING TYPEWRITER CONDITION

by Darryl Rehr

German typewriter collectors have, in-place, a numerical system for rating typewriters that we feel would be useful to adopt to improve communication when describing machines in articles, on collection lists, or in the course of trading. The German system is a six-point one, and two numbers are used to describe a machine. The first number describes the machine's appearance, the second number describes its function. The numbers are separated by a slash. Thus a 1/1 machine is best, a 6/6 is worst. A 1/3 machine looks great, but doesn't work so well.

The numbers are given the following word descriptions by the Germans as published in their collectors' journal *HBw/aktuell*:

- 1- very good
- 2- good
- 3- slight traces of use; a bit of rust or dirt but fully able to function
- 4- strong traces of use; scratches, slight functional disorders
- 5- defect; small parts missing
- 6- completely defect; important parts missing; irreparable

Bear in mind that these are English versions, and something might be lost in the translation. However, using these basic words as guides, we rated six machines at the recent So. Cal. meeting of ETC members, and found wide disagreement. In fact, the margin of error was approximately *two levels* of condition. A machine rated by one person as a "1" was just as likely to be rated a "3" by someone else. I think we can attribute this to a fault in the words used to describe the numbers.

One of the machines judged was a Salter 7 recently sold at the Hanover auction and rated in the German publications as a 2/3. The American group differed widely on the evaluation of function since that is more difficult to determine in a brief look—but we uniformly agreed that the machine did not rate the "2" it was given by the Germans. This tells us much about how the system is practiced in Germany, and how we can learn its use

so that we all understand we mean when we use these numbers.

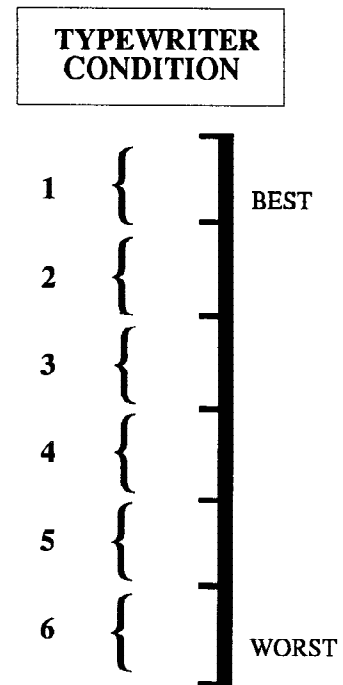
I believe that we should understand that machines are rated optimistically by their owners. This is important to remember since, when we are trading or buying, the rating we get comes from the owner. This was not the case with the Salter, and that brings me to another point: you must look at the whole picture when judging a machine. Picking away, point-by-point can lower a rating. You must also step back and take a look. Does the machine you see deserve to be called "good?" If so, then a "2" appearance rating would be appropriate, according to the above definitions. The trouble comes when you see that there are "slight traces of use." That would mean downgrading it to a "3." But who says something with "slight traces of use" isn't *also* "good?"

So now we understand that we need better, more accurate words to go with the numbers. We also need to completely segregate the appearance side from the function side, providing different sets of words for each. And we must remember that one does not affect the other. Missing parts for instance might include a nameplate. If this does not affect otherwise perfect function, the function rating would still be a "1."

Among the issues we discussed was that of "dirt" versus "rust." Since dirt is easier to remove, should these two defects weigh equally in rating machines? Suppose a machine is a "3" because of "a bit of dirt," but could be improved to a "2" by removing the dirt? One would think that this machine would be rated higher than a similar one that has a "bit of rust" instead of the dirt.

Members at our meeting also seemed to miss a "mint" or "near-mint" category. We agreed that "mint" is an over-used word, accurately used only on machines that have *never*...and we mean *never*...been used (and, of course, are in perfect condition). However, in the above descriptions, "very good" is as high as a machine can go, and we all know that some machines are *better*

than "very good." I think the way to handle this is to think of the six numbers not as levels along a spectrum, but as *ranges*. Picture the condition spectrum like this:



Technically, there are *seven* levels, but we use *six* numbers to represent the spaces between the levels. So, that "near mint" machine would be in the upper end of the "1" range. This means, of course, that when trading, you should obtain a complete description of condition, letting this numerical system serve only as a *convenience* to be used when discussing machines briefly.

In future issues of *ETCetera*, we will attempt to formulate better words to describe the six levels of condition. However, we need input from members. PLEASE GIVE US YOUR THOUGHTS ON WHAT WORDS GO BEST WITH THE NUMBERS.

In time, we hope, we'll come up with a system we can really use.

†††

PETER'S PAGE

by Ed Peters

Buying Typewriters Through the Mail: There are certain risks involved in buying typewriters sight-unseen through the mail, even when photographs and/or descriptions have been supplied. People have different definitions of what is poor, fair, good, excellent, etc., and pictures do not always reveal rust, damage, missing parts, and other detriments.

For that reason, I ask the right of return of the item, at my expense, for a refund of the payment.

It is customary, unless otherwise agreed, that the buyer pays the shipping cost.

The seller has several obligations. One is that the item should be mailed promptly -- within two weeks is considered a reasonable time.

Proper packaging for shipment is another responsibility of the seller. Use a box that is considerably larger than the item and stuff plenty of packing around it. If nothing better is available, crumpled newspapers will do. If the machine is in a case, pad the inside of the case as well.

Any collector would rather pay a few more dollars for shipping than have damage. If an item is damaged in transit and if payment cannot be obtained from the Postal Service or UPS, it is up to the shipper to adjust for the loss.

All items, unless they are of very minor consequence, should be insured for full value and the insurance number sent to the recipient.

The seller should place his own name and that of the addressee inside the package as well as on the outside in the event the outside address is lost or obliterated.

†††

Had a nice visit a while back with Dick Dickerson, who was in the East for one of those high-tech meetings he goes to. Just before, I had acquired (in Dick's honor, you might say) a very nice Franklin No. 9. Funny thing--it has no serial number. Considered stamping 00001 on it, just to confuse Mr. D, but thought better of it.

Same day, Art North and wife Evie were on the premises, and the evening before, the "Mayor of Norwich" [Ed refers to Dennis Clark, for those who don't know] had paid a call. Put them all together and maybe you could say we had a mini-ETC meeting.

†††

It's refreshing to see the enthusiasm of a new typewriter collector, and one of the most energetic fellows I've encountered in quite a while has the confidence-inspiring name of Gerry Fair. If he keeps going at present pace, it won't take him long to become one of the major collectors. If you have interesting dupes to sell, contact Gerry at 8214 Hemingway So., Cottage Grove, MN 55016.

†††

Andy Rooney, that sometimes-funny fellow on 60 Minutes, did a bit on typewriters a while back, referring to an old Blick as a "Blickensdorfer." No reason to expect accuracy from network news commentary, is there? Anyway, Andy must truly like old typewriters, because an article recently said he's lugged home 17 Underwood 5's. Keep it up, man. If you corner enough of that market, maybe the rest of them will get to be worth something.

Rooney has a habit of starting a lot of his little squibs with words like, "Didja ever wonder why...?" It isn't a bad lead-in, and maybe we could borrow it. For example:

Didja ever wonder why some collectors make a big thing of getting cases for their typewriters, then throw them in a musty, moldy pile in the basement?

Didja ever wonder why the machine you buy, with the thought of selling it to a guy who loves that kind, is never the one he's looking for?

Didja ever wonder how some people who've been in the hobby for two years get seven machines you haven't been able to find in twenty?

Didja ever wonder why most of the people who write to you for information about good items are never heard from again after you make an offer?

Didja ever wonder about things like that? Sure you have. Send me some of your favorite "didjas" and watch them show up in print.

†††

A collector of our acquaintance likes to recite this story--at the drop of a hat, as the saying goes--and there's a moral in here somewhere. He cultivated the friendship of a dear lady who ran a small antique shop and told her he was interested in antique typewriters. For the next year or so, he received just about monthly calls and he went to her store and dutifully brought a succession of Underwood 5s, LCS 8s, Royals with windows and Remingtons from the 40's. Five was about the going price. Then, one day, he went to her shop and was offered a fairly rare machine, for the same price. Of course, he paid more, but it still made all the others worthwhile. What's the moral? Cultivate. Persist. And more often than not, it pays off.

†††

All of the typewriters in my displays bear little white tags, some with information about the machines, some with no more than the estimated date of manufacture. It helps answer a lot of questions for guests. On one occasion, when I was expecting a visit from a collector colleague who shall be nameless, I substituted little pink tags on some of the machines and told him, "The ones with the pink tags are the ones I might trade or sell." "That's fine," he said, "but there's one problem. I'm color blind." What is it they say about the best laid plans...?

†††

*Collector Ed Peters
loves to write to
and hear from his
colleagues nationwide
write to him at
108 East Conestoga Street
New Holland, PA 17557*

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Items in this column are derived from the publications of the German, British and Dutch collector societies, as well as correspondence from overseas collectors.

ROBERTS NINETY

The reproduced advertisement for the Roberts Ninety appearing in *Historische Bürowelt* No. 18 gives a surprising piece of information about this machine. Note that the ad prominently touts the 90's *interchangeable* type bar segment!

Nowhere in any of the English-language literature have I seen this feature mentioned for the Blick 90. It would seem to me that the interchangeable segment would make this Blickensderfer descendant all the more appealing as a collector's item. The Pittsburg Visible also had an interchangeable basket, but the keyboard went with it. The British Imperial downstroke machines behaved likewise. Anyone know of any other typewriters with a lift-out segment as featured on the Roberts 90?

†††

BRITISH GOING BUST?

Organized British typewriter collectors are having a hard time of it these days. The recent issue of *TYPE-WRITER TIMES* was accompanied by a letter from Bernard Williams Treasurer of the British collectors' group saying the organization would soon be winding down due to a greater-than-expected workload on journal editor Peter Tandy. The British club recently changed its name to the "Anglo-American Typewriter Collectors Society" and added Paul Lippman as U.S. Consultant. Paul's role is to collect American material for *TYPE-WRITER TIMES* and to typeset it using his home computer.

Paul, however, writes that he, Bernard Williams and Graham Forsdyke have agreed to continue production of *TYPE-WRITER TIMES* despite the adversity. One more issue will be published under Peter Tandy's nominal stewardship, with the help being subsequently passed to Paul alone. If you'd like to express support or offer help, a note to Paul would be appropriate. His address: 1216 Garden Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030. (We note that Paul has been quite unselfish in his support to *ETCetera* as seen in his excellent article on the Edison in this issue, and a future feature on the Folding Corona.)

†††

THE NEXT INTERNATIONAL MEETING?

ETC is planning to host the next international typewriter collectors' meeting in the Los Angeles during February of 1989. We have picked this date so that travellers can take advantage of the warm Southern California climate to get away

THE ROBERTS NINETY



Combines every Feature and Characteristic of Modern Typewriter Construction. Superbly Attractive in Appearance. A Practical, Portable Typewriter, weight Eight Pounds.

AND

Ninety Characters to Meet the Demands of Any Keyboard and All Languages.

The Most Remarkable and Only Interchangeable Type Bar Segment.

THE ROBERTS IS A MACHINE
THAT WILL SELL AND ENDURE

Territory To Exclusive Agents Is Now Being Assigned.

L. R. Roberts Typewriter Company
Stamford, Conn., U. S. A.

Headquarters for Europe and British Empire
THE BLICK TYPEWRITER CO., Ltd., 9-10 Cheapside, London, E. C. 4, England

from otherwise cold climates, and to allow us enough time to develop a well-organized program.

Collectors from all over the country and the world will be invited and encouraged to attend. We would like to plan the meeting to meet the needs of those attending, so please let us know what you want such a meeting to do for you. What ground rules should we establish, if any, for the buying, selling and trading of machines? What types of informational presentations should we have? Are there any collectors who wish to give lectures or make presentations?

We'll plan our program based on the information we receive. Otherwise, we'll make it up! Send your ideas to *ETCetera* for the time being, and we'll pass them along to the ETC board.

-D. R.

SO. CAL. MEETING

ETC members from Southern California met at Jack Lacy's house on December 5. About a dozen members attended, including Dick & Betty Dean, who are based up north in San Jose (Europeans consult your maps), but are currently "on the road" in their motor home.

Among the impressive machines on display were Dick Dickerson's pair of Hammond One's - one mahogany, and one oak, with the latter equipped with an add-on copy holder. Dick also brought along a bright and shiny Remington #4, interesting in that it had no identifying decals. My Burns No. 1 was on display as was Jack Lacy's near-mint Jewett No.2.

The Deans also happened to have a photo album of their formidable collection along. Among the photos was one of an "Englehard" Typewriter, which looked exactly like a Williams No. 2. Dick said he'd write up something on this unusual machine for a future *ETCetera*.

Jack Lacy and Dan Post cooked up a little auction for us, consisting of a group of machines acquired from the family of the late instructor of typewriter repair at Chino State Prison. Jack traded the owner a modern machine valued at \$60 for the dozen-plus TW's and adders, telling us that he needed his money back, and any profit from the auction would go to the ETC treasury. Nothing especially rare folks, but a 3/3 Royal 5 went for about \$30, and a 4/5 Standard Folding #2 for about \$45. In all, \$192 was added to ETC's funds.

If those ratings numbers you just read mean nothing to you, look at the article on page 8. We discussed the use of the German system for rating typewriter condition, and rated six machines during our meeting. There was plenty of healthy disagreement, but we all learned from it nonetheless.

-D. R.

OLD TYPEWRITERS TO THE TRADE

by Don Boyd

Don Boyd, of Buffalo makes his living running trade shows for, among other things, office equipment dealers. He writes the following of his experiences:

Our firm, Professional Program Management Inc., produced its first office equipment tradeshow in 1977 in Buffalo. A year or two later and idea was born to display old manual office machines at the tradeshow in an "Office of Yesteryear" booth. Our first thought was to borrow such machines from the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Museum.

In September 1982, after three of four years of asking without success, we were finally able to borrow and display the entire collection of early office machine of the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society.

The collection was in the Society's warehouse and not on display in the museum, as is the case with most museums. It included only five typewriters:

- Caligraph No.2
- Smith Premier No. 10
- Oliver No. 9
- Underwood "1910-1920 model"
- Remington "1910-1920 model"

Other Society artifacts bolstered the collection to make an attractive display area that first year: two checkwriters, two adding machines, a time clock, two Dictaphones and two telephones.

However, borrowing the Society's property posed time-consuming and worrisome problems of insurance coverage, security and transportation. We looked for a solution.

Our intent then was not to display early typewriters (had we found any) but to display manual typewriters that might have been in use in the 1940's or 1950's--machines to which

the older show visitors could relate, and machines that would contrast with current models on display in exhibitor's booths. The "Office of Yesteryear" was conceived to be an attention-getting, contrasting feature of a state-of-the-art office equipment tradeshow rather than seriously historical or educational.

Beginning immediately after that September 1982 Office Expo, we set out to look for manual office machines at flea markets and antiques shows. Since we attend such events every weekend we can, we thought it would be fun to appropriate approximately \$200, which was the cost of insuring the museum's collection for a week, to acquiring our own machines. (*\$200 would be a decent price for the museum's typewriters altogether! -Ed.*)

Beginning in September 1983, after a year of "collecting," we were able to set up our "Office of Yesteryear" display using our own machines occasionally supplemented by some brought to a show by exhibitors. The increasing interest shown by show visitors has led us to develop more contacts within the collecting community as a way of learning more about this fascinating subject.

WESTERN NEW YORK MEETING

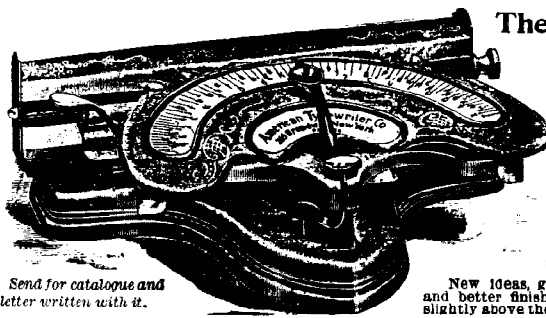
Don Boyd is also taking the initiative to organize a meeting of typewriter collectors in the upstate regions of New York State. In a late November mailing, he approached interested parties in an attempt to schedule a get together sometime in January. If, for some reason, you *haven't* heard about this, contact Don at 1552 Hertel Ave., Buffalo, NY 14216-2882. His phone number is 716-834-9431.

ETC AT WOMDA

No, WOMDA is not a strange Australian marsupial. WOMDA is the Western Office Machine Dealers Association, which held its trade show in Anaheim, CA on October 23 & 24, 1987.

ETC had a booth positioned in the lobby adjacent to the entrance to the main showroom so that anyone who went in or out of the show went right by our booth. Many, of course, stopped. Jack Lacy provided his newly-acquired near-mint Jewett and his beautiful American Index. I brought a Blick 7, Hammond 2, Imperial B, Merritt and red Folding Corona to provide a reasonable sampling of attractive oldies for the showgoers. Dan Post contracted some local sign-makers to produce a magnificent hard-backed blowup of the ETC logo which gave our booth identity with a real visual punch. Bob Terry, of La Mirada, CA and Ed Volk of Canoga Park, CA also contributed their time in operating the booth.

As with our previous show appearance at SCOMDA, we made numerous contacts, gave out a lot of literature, and, we hope, will have encouraged a number of new members. -D.R.



The New Model
No. 2

IMPROVED
American Typewriter \$8

IS NOW READY.

The latest model of the first successful low-priced typewriter.

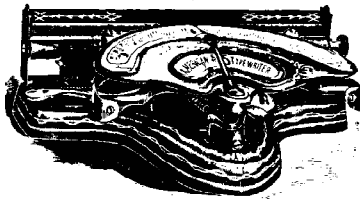
New ideas, greater speed, improved construction and better finish. Sold by the makers direct at price slightly above the manufacturing cost.

Send for catalogue and letter written with it.

AMERICAN TYPEWRITER CO., 267 BROADWAY, N. Y.

American \$5 Typewriter

Complete, Simple, Durable.



The very best CHRISTMAS PRESENT

for that boy or girl of yours. Teaches spelling, punctuation, composition, a splendid educational aid. Writes Capitals, small letters, figures, and marks on full width paper. It is the new standard among low-priced typewriters, better than anything before offered at three times the price. A perfect, practical writing machine simplified so as to come within reach of any one—both as to ease of learning and price. It will surprise you. Send for Catalogue.

American Typewriter Co.,
265 Broadway, NEW YORK.

AMERICAN INDEX

Two Models to Choose From

I don't know how many people have ever noticed this, but the American Typewriter Company made two different models of its famous and popular swinging sector index machine. Two models are mentioned in *Collectors Guide*, but no details are given other than the erroneous fact that both were sold for \$10.

I came across an ad from a July, 1895 issue of *Scientific American* which sheds some light on the American Index. As you can see, "The New Model---No. 2" was advertised as "now ready" for the eager buying public. The price: \$8 (it was later raised to \$10). Earlier ads for the American pictured a nearly identical machine carrying the logo "American \$5 Type-writer." If you have trouble otherwise distinguishing the two machines, look a little closer. The Model No. 2 has a significantly

larger plate surrounding the letter index, giving the machine a beefier appearance.

The American index machine is not usually mentioned by model number, so now those of us armed with this critical information can be merciless in confounding the ill-informed. Next time somebody offers you an American for trade or sale, ask whether it's a Model 1 or a Model 2 and see what kind of reaction you get!

--D. R.

LETTERS

Just got today your first issue of "ETCetera." I like it very much, a lot of interesting information and nicely done. Congratulations and go ahead in doing this good job.

Uwe Breker
Cologne, W. Germany

I want to congratulate you on the very professionally done and printed ETCetera newsletter. I enjoyed it and read it from cover to cover.

Larry Wilhelm
Wichita Falls, Texas

I want to say how very much I enjoyed my first issue of ETCetera. It was very interesting. I especially enjoyed the article on the Franklin typewriter. I didn't know there were so many different types. I learned that mine is a type IVa. I'll be looking forward to my next issue.

Steve Hosier
Lancaster, CA

When I was in LA Junior College ...the college issued a newspaper and it was set by Linotype. One of two typesetters was a woman (unusual in that day) and she brought with her a large keyboard laid out like a typewriter which fit over the Linotype keyboard. Where Linotype operators usually used the middle finger of each hand to tap keys, she was using all ten fingers up to a point on this QWERTY keyboard. She did not go much faster than the other operator because a Linotype machine can only go so fast. Anyone know about these devices?

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and may you find every typewriter that you want at unbelievably low prices or advantageous (but ethical) trades.

Marco Thorne,
San Diego, CA

ADVERTISEMENTS

FOR SALE: Virotyp, tiny French index machine, used but complete. Nice Picht index machine with typewheel (German, 1900) **OFFERING:** "Leertaste," monthly 4 printed pages full of informations to typewriter- and calculator- collectors. Completely translated into English. \$35/year ppd. American checks accepted. FRITZ NIEMANN, Wiesenstr. 11, D-4503 Dissen, W. Germany

WANTED: American Index, Mignon. STEVE HOSIER, 1301 E. Ave. I, Sp. #243, Lancaster, CA 93535

TRADE: Hammond 1 with case. **WANTED:** Yost, Emerson, Bar-Lock, Williams, Franklin. Will consider others. RON WILD 6108 Northwood Dr., Carmel, IN 46032 (317)844-5850

TRADE: Bennett (Spanish keyboard), Columbia Bar-Lock 10, Hall #2, American Index, Hammond 12 Ideal. **MORE AVAILABLE** in THE TYPERWRITER TRADER, a computer-compiled bulletin-board-by-mail for collectors. Updated daily. Free ads for anybody. SASE for copy (\$1 Canada, \$2 overseas). DARRYL REHR, 3615 Waiseka Ave. #101, L.A., CA. 90034 (213)559-2368