

No. 5
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November
1988

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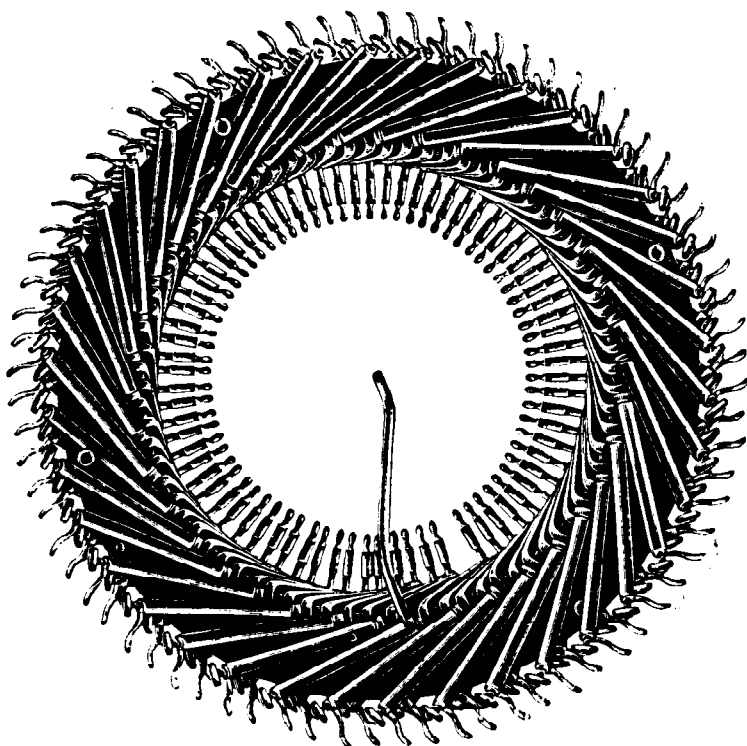
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ETCetera

Newsletter of the Early
Typewriter Collectors Association



**SEASONS
GREETINGS**

The bearings of the Smith Premier make a perfect holiday wreath if you see them from a bird's-eye-view. The illustration is taken from *Schriebmaschinen und Schriften-Vervielfältigung* by Friedrich Müller, originally published in 1900. Best wishes to collectors everywhere as ETCetera begins its second year of publication.

ETCetera

Newsletter of the Early
Typewriter Collectors
Association

Nov., 1988
No. 5

Editor
Darryl Rehr

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Collectors Association

EDITOR'S NOTES

Ed Peters sent me a note written to him by Dave Kintzler asking about the triple-shift Hammond he had recently acquired. Ed says he has never seen one and asked me if I had.

Yes, indeed. In fact, the first Hammond I owned was a folding model with a triple shift. This is the "engineering" model mentioned in the Hammond instruction manual available in reproduction form from Dan Post. The shuttles for this machine have four rows of characters. The one I owned, unfortunately did not come with any four-row shuttles, so the machine's features could not be fully exploited.

+++

Taking Ed Peters' continual advice to seek publicity, I sent an article on the Burns Typewriter (see ETCetera #2) to the Buffalo News in hopes that it might smoke out another one, and, if not that, then maybe some other old goodies. The paper did not run my piece, but did quote from it extensively, and ran a photo of the Burns on display at the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society. Despite the understanding I thought I had made with the paper over the phone, they stiffed me. They used my material, but did not run my address as they said they would. Nice guys!

+++

Based on tip from Jim Kavanagh, I started fooling around with handyman's

shop hand cleaner as a cleaner for typewriter parts. It really works well! The stuff I used was STP brand. It's a greasy, lanolin-enriched product, and I notice there are many similar products on the hardware shelf. I intentionally chose not to use a hand cleaner with ammonia in it, as I have used a greasy ammonia-laden metal cleaner before, and, though it works, it does tend to strip decals off some machines. The hand cleaner works especially well when accompanied by light scrubbing with a 3M nylon pad. The pad might scratch metal or painted surfaces if used dry, but with the hand cleaner as a lubricant and emulsifier, you've got an ideal combination.

+++

I take a little pride in sharing the following with fellow collectors. *Pennsylvania Magazine* recently accepted an article I wrote for them about Pennsylvania typewriters. After a suggestion from Ed Reis of Pittsburgh, I submitted the piece to PM, and they accepted. Not hard to come up with an article centered on the Keystone State. Sholes, after all, was a Pennsylvania native, as was Densmore. Machines produced in Pennsylvania were the National of 1889, Daugherty & Pittsburg, McCool, Bennett, Keystone, Travis and Elliott-Fisher. Erie was the birthplace of George Blickensderfer, and Allentown was home to Richard Uhlig, the prolific inventor of the Allen (named after the town), Commercial Visible and many others.

Another publication seeking out my writing work was *The Office*, a national magazine for office managers. I wrote them a piece (for their November issue) on the development of the modern typewriter in "only" five major improvements on the first. These quantum leaps in typewriter technology were: 1) the shift key, 2) visible design, 3) electric typewriters, 4) the golfball design of the IBM Selectric, 5) electronic typewriters. At least that is my interpretation. Anyone think I left anything out?

+++

Bob Oliver, of England, sent me a nice gift recently to express his appreciation of my work on ETCetera. It was an homemade clock made of matchsticks with pictures of old typewriters instead of numerals on the

face. On the rear was this message: "ETC CLOCK....Something I made with a few matches. There are a lot of years between this and the other side. Hope you find it useful."

+++

A man at a hardware store gave me a valuable tip on freeing frozen screws. Get a small punch-type tool (I used a nail countersink). Place the tip at the outside edge of the screwdriver slot on the frozen screw. Give it a few taps with a hammer, and watch the screw start to move. It really works.

+++

At a recent antique show, I picked up an old Johnson Smith catalog, vintage 1938. Any kid in America who ever read a comic book will remember Johnson Smith's ads for its giant catalog of "novelties," including such gizmos as X-Ray Specs, and the ever-popular "Ventrilo" which enabled you to "apparently" throw your voice.

In the 577-page 1938 edition, I noted two typewriters for sale: a Simplex and an American Flyer. The Simplex was offered in caps only for \$1.25 and with upper and lower for \$3.95, a surprising price difference. The American Flyer, available only as an upper/lower machine, was \$2.50, and was sold via a full-page layout versus 1/3-page for the Simplex. Though toys and toy-like objects are the meat of the Johnson Smith Catalog, neither typewriter was sold as such. Both were highly-touted for being able to produce work as good as the "standard" machines, and this as late as 1938.

+++

Ned Brooks of Newport News, Virginia wrote and wondered why I didn't mention *The Century of the Typewriter* by Wilf Beeching in my piece on typewriter books in last issue's *Back to Basics*. Gee, Ned, I suppose I should have. The Beeching book is a good one for pictures, many of which are taken from the Milwaukee Public Museum's catalog of its Carl Dietz Collection. The Milwaukee catalog is no longer available, so Wilf did us a service in republishing some photos of very rare machines. However, *Century* has some serious factual problems. Still, it belongs in any collector's library.

THE APOCHRYPHAL ROYAL "GRAND"

Rarest Typewriter of Them All?

Every so often one comes across a reference to the Royal "Grand," but no one has ever actually seen one. And its history, or the fact of its existence, has never been documented satisfactorily. While rummaging through my files I came across an interesting clue to this elusive machine.

It is on a clipping from what I guess to be an issue of Ames' *Our Man Friday*, house organ for typewriter repairmen and dealers. Undated, but I would guess 1940's, possibly 50's.

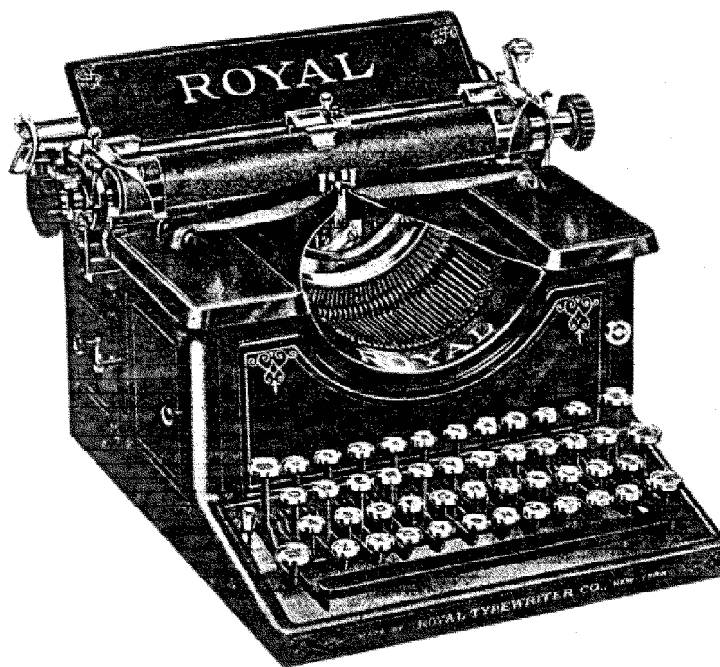
Under the headline "Old Machines," the article pictures a Royal Grand, looking very much like a Royal No. 10, but with the ribbon spools concealed beneath the top deck instead of atop it. The illustration could be a photograph, but it looks more like a rendering. The name "Grand" does not appear anywhere on the machine.

Here's what the clipping says about the Grand:

The 'Royal Grand' is a typewriter not commonly listed in the typewriter field as it never actually got started on the market. Authentic rumor had it that the 'Grand' infringed upon patents owned by another typewriter company. It came out about 1905 [The *Condensed History of the Writing Machine* gives a date of 1906] together with the No. 1 and No. 2 Standards. [Has anyone ever seen a Royal No.2? - PL]. The 'Grand' selling for \$100.00, and the 'Standard' selling at \$65.00. The No. 1 and 2, with the addition of the No. 5 later, sold over 300,000 machines before the No. 10 replaced them. The first No. 10 was practically the same machine as the 'Grand.'

What machine was it that the Grand was rumored to infringe upon? There were several of the period which resemble it: the Monarch, Stearns, Underwood, L.C. Smith, but the picture is not sufficiently informative.

--Paul Lippman



TYPEWRITER MYSTERY

By Mike Brown

*The typewriter mystery returns to
ETCetera with this issue.*

*As usual, the solution will appear in
the next issue, but you have to type it
out to really see it!*

Typewriter mystery for Elite or machines with 90 or more spaces. Keep shift lock down.

- 1- 23sp, 1\$
- 2- 22sp, 2\$, 1sp, 1\$, 10sp, 1\$
- 3- 22sp, 3\$, 8sp, 1\$, 1sp, 2\$
- 4- 23sp, 2\$, 8sp, 3\$
- 5- 23sp, 1\$, 9sp, 2\$, 1\$
- 6- 23sp, 1\$, 1sp, 1\$, 6sp, 2\$, 1sp, 2\$
- 7- 22sp, 1\$, 1sp, 1\$, 6sp, 2\$
- 8- 25sp, 1\$, 1sp, 2\$, 1sp, 2\$
- 9- 22sp, 13\$
- 10- 23sp, 11\$, 50sp, 1\$
- 11- 26sp, 5\$, 22sp, 2\$, 28sp, 2\$
- 12- 26sp, 5\$, 21sp, 2\$, 27sp, 5\$
- 13- 27sp, 3\$, 21sp, 3\$, 28sp, 4\$
- 14- 28sp, 3\$, 13sp, 4\$, 2sp, 2\$, 28sp, 8\$

- 15- 28sp, 4\$, 3sp, 16\$, 30sp, 6\$
- 16- 5sp, 1\$, 22sp, 24\$, 26sp, 8\$
- 17- 4sp, 4\$, 19sp, 24\$, 3sp, 2\$, 21sp, 12\$
- 18- 3sp, 4\$, 20sp, 30\$, 22sp, 8\$
- 19- 4sp, 6\$, 16sp, 19\$, 2sp, 5\$, 5sp, 2\$, 16sp, 13\$
- 20- 2sp, 7\$, 15sp, 13\$, 10sp, 9\$, 3sp, 2\$, 17sp, 8\$
- 21- 12\$, 9sp, 3\$, 3sp, 6\$, 15sp, 2\$, 6sp, 2\$, 16sp, 15\$
- 22- 3sp, 5\$, 12sp, 1\$, 5sp, 5\$, 27sp, 1\$, 22sp, 2\$
- 23- 1sp, 10\$, 9sp, 1\$, 3sp, 3\$, 32sp, 1\$, 21sp, 2\$
- 24- 12\$, 7sp, 2\$, 2sp, 2\$, 34sp, 2\$, 20sp, 2\$, 2sp, 5\$
- 25- 2sp, 9\$, 11sp, 1\$, 40sp, 22\$
- 26- 1sp, 9\$, 10sp, 2\$, 28sp, 13\$
- 27- 12\$, 7sp, 1\$, 16sp, 14\$
- 28- 5sp, 2\$, 11sp, 1\$, 6sp, 11\$
- 29- 5sp, 2\$, 13sp, 5\$
- 30- 5sp, 2\$, 5sp, 8\$
- 31- 4sp, 8\$
- 32- 4\$



A WINDOW ON BLICKENSDERFER

Introduction

After several frustrating attempts to locate a former Blickensderfer employee to interview, I finally got lucky. I met Mr. Joseph Pittaro, quite by chance. A Ms. Vaccaro wrote to me about restoring a Blickensderfer typewriter that belonged to her grandfather. In our correspondences, I mentioned my problem in locating a former Blickensderfer employee. In her effort to help, she discovered that her uncle worked for that company about six years. Although the following is structured as a single interview, it actually is based on more than one contact. I did edit and rearrange the questions to improve continuity. However, the essence of what was said has been carefully preserved.

--P. R. Aubert, Editor

Interviewers were P. Robert Aubert and Paul Lippman, typewriter historians. Also present was Dolores Vaccaro, Mr. Pittaro's niece.

Stamford, Connecticut - January 16, 1988

AUBERT: Mr. Pittaro, when did you start working for the Blickensderfer Company?

PITTARO: I don't remember exactly, but it was about a year after graduating from grammar school. I started there before the First World War.

AUBERT: How old are you now?

PITTARO: I was born in 1899. I'll be eighty-nine in February.

AUBERT: Let me see, at graduation you probably were about fourteen. Did you start working at Blickensderfer's then?

PITTARO: No, I worked at Zapons for a few weeks. They processed leather and it was a dirty job. After that, I goofed-off for awhile. Finally my father told me I would have to go back to school or go to work! Since he knew Willie [Blickensderfer], he got me a job there. That would make it about 1915.

AUBERT: What was your father's relationship with the Blickensderfers?

PITTARO: Willy's wife, Cecelia, frequently came to our house and talked with my father about somebody in trouble with the law. She often helped that person's family in some way. Sometimes she would even bail somebody out of jail and get them a job in the factory if necessary. She was a great woman always helping others in any way she could!

LIPPMAN: When you worked for Blickensderfer, how long were you there and why did you leave?

PITTARO: I worked about six years. Then they closed up.

LIPPMAN: What did they tell you then?

PITTARO: I think we got a notice that there was no more business. You see, before the War, we sold a lot of typewriters overseas, Germany especially. During the war we made machine gun loaders and things. The company hired on a lot of extra people. After the War they got laid off right away.

AUBERT: Do you remember a man by the name of Stephen Mapes?

PITTARO: Yes, he took over right after the War. He called

together a few people from each department and we were told that all profits would be ours when we started making money again. He said there would be typewriter work. But we didn't get back the business!

LIPPMAN: How many people worked there?

PITTARO: I don't know exactly but it couldn't have been more than a hundred during the War, but I think usually fifty or so.

AUBERT: What was it like to work there?

PITTARO: It was a good place to work and you needed some drag to get in there. But the pay was awful. We worked ten hours a day except on Saturday. We thought that was great because we got off an hour early!

LIPPMAN: What were your hours?

PITTARO: We started at seven and got an hour for lunch.

AUBERT: Where did you eat lunch? Did they have any area with picnic tables or any place to sit down?

PITTARO: No, we didn't have any things like that, there wasn't any union. We could walk uptown or sit at our work place. But you had better clean it up afterwards! They were very strict about that.

AUBERT: Was there ever any attempt to organize the shop?

PITTARO: One time a new guy came to work and started to talk about it. But he only worked a day or two. All you had to do was say the word "union" and you were gone!

AUBERT: Did the factory work any Sundays or overtime?

PITTARO: No, never any Sunday work. If we worked an

hour or so overtime we just got our normal hourly rate. Once, after the War they paid us a bonus. We got 10% of a whole year's wages. They must of overcharged the government or something. (laughter)

AUBERT: Were you paid by check?

PITTARO: No, the paymaster would give you an envelope with cash inside. But you had to sign for it.

AUBERT: Do you remember when the Federal Income Tax came in?

PITTARO: Oh yes! I almost got arrested, because I didn't report my income. They sent me a notice and I quick ran down to the Post Office and paid the tax. That squashed it!

LIPPMAN: Did you have off any holidays?

PITTARO: We did get off for New Years Day, Washington's Birthday, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, but you didn't get paid those days.

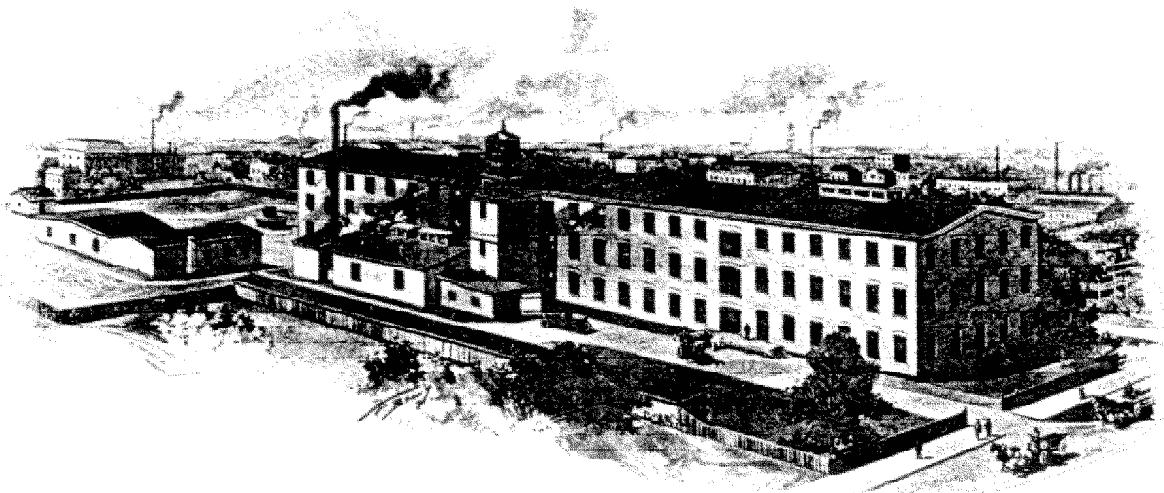
AUBERT: What kind of people were the Blickensderfers to work for? I mean, did they treat you decently?

PITTARO: They were okay. I didn't see George very often. He was the brains of the outfit. Willie would come around every so often and look things over. I suppose George gave his brother a good job. It was a decent place to work and everybody wanted to get in there. But there was no money!

LIPPMAN: What do you mean by that?

PITTARO: Once you got in, you had steady work. But the pay was lower than other firms around town. I

(continued next page)



illustrations from Post-Era Archives

BLICK (continued from previous page)

think I got 15¢ and hour then. The factory was clean, too. In fact, they had a man who would wash the floors with soap and water. On Saturdays, production would stop and hour early so everybody could clean their machines.

AUBERT: Who was in charge of plant operations?

PITTARO: We had a wicked superintendent. He would come around and make sure you were working, and if he caught you idle, he fired you.

AUBERT: Do you remember his name?

PITTARO: Knapp - his name was Superintendent Knapp. I remember he had a small goatee and moustache. Once he caught me talking with the girls, I was a teenager and liked to do that. He warned me about talking on the job. But he didn't fire me because he was afraid of Willie! You know, he got me in there. Once my father sent in his typewriter for repair and Willie told him to give it to me to take home. When he did, he said "no charge." He didn't like that a bit.

LIPPMAN: Can you tell us something about the factory?

PITTARO: There were three floors and a basement. The typewriters were assembled on the top floor. I worked in the production machine shop on the second floor. There was an open elevator and I could see the typewriters on skids coming down to the shipping department on the first floor. On that floor there was the tool room, machine shop and stamping department. They made the key levers there. Also on the first floor was the Company office. The paymaster and several clerks worked in there. Each floor had a timekeeper. In the basement, they did metal hardening. They had a furnace or two down there and a couple of men worked there. I think they did the nickel plating down there, too.

AUBERT: Did they have a foundry or casting department to make the frames?

PITTARO: No, I don't believe so. We may have had it done elsewhere.

LIPPMAN: How was the plant powered?

PITTARO: There was a powerhouse towards the rear of the building. John Engle was the engineer. The steam engine in there ran the overhead shafts and pulleys on each floor. They made a lot of racket. Later, during the War, they had a large electric motor doing that job. When I worked at Yale & Towne Lock there was an electric motor for each machine and it wasn't so noisy.

AUBERT: What kind of work did you do on the typewriters?

PITTARO: I was a machinist and made small parts. I also made the little ink rollers.

AUBERT: How was that done?

PITTARO: I punched them out of a thick piece of felt with a foot press.

AUBERT: Did you put in the small brass tube, too?

PITTARO: No, I just punched them out by the thousands. I had to keep up with the girl who inked them. I often wondered why they needed so many since the typewriter only needed one.

LIPPMAN: When the ink dried out, another had to be installed. They sold a number of pre-inked rollers in a small glass tube for ten cents or so.

VACCARO: I think ten extra ones came with a new machine.

AUBERT: What other parts did you make? Would you recognize any of them if you saw a typewriter up close?

At this point we showed him a Blickensderfer No. 9.

PITTARO: No, I didn't know exactly what I was making. I would make all kinds of small parts by cutting and facing on a lathe. Howard Knapp, the superintendent's son and me ran the automatic screw machines too. We made things like these.

He pointed to small kurlled screws on the shift lock and on the carriage line set.

AUBERT: Do you remember making spark plugs?

PITTARO: I didn't, but I recall two men doing that over in the corner. It was strange because the plugs lit up when they sparked.

LIPPMAN: Where did you learn to be a machinist?

PITTARO: Oh, it was all on-job training. The forman set up the job and showed me what to do. He taught me how to use a micrometer - that took about five minutes - and they usually allowed us plus or minus one thousandth of an inch for the part.

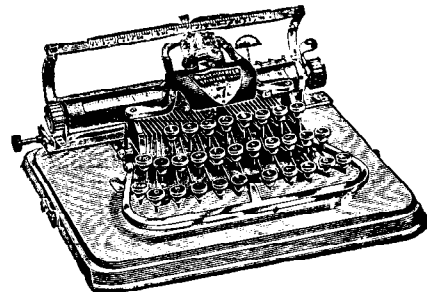
AUBERT: Did you work on an assembly line?

PITTARO: No, but sometimes I had a girl or two helping me on a job. One of them, I remember was Liz Watson. Also, my wife, Florence, worked with me but we weren't married then. Parts were made until they said there was enough. Then we made something else.

AUBERT: Did you ever assemble a typewriter?

PITTARO: Oh no! That was done upstairs. I was up there only once or twice. The Fencil brothers worked on that floor but they are both dead now. A man by the name of Troy also worked in that department, but he is dead, too. There were others, but I didn't know them. When the Blickensderfers closed down, none of the assembly people were able to get good jobs!

The story of Blickensderfer's demise as recalled by Joseph Pittaro will appear in our next issue.



GETTING HOOKED

REMINISCENCES OF A TYPEWRITER ENGINEER

by Robert H. Oliver
Sussex, England

Year 1926. Age 14.

On the first Monday morning after leaving school I walked around looking for a job feeling somewhat scared. After a while I saw a notice in a shop window "Errand Boy Wanted." Walking on, I was trying to pluck up enough courage to go in, wondering all the time what I would say. Well - faint heart never won fair lady - and that was it. The shop window was showing various items of stationery and a few typewriters, which if memory serves me right, were portable: a Corona 3 bank, Corona 4 bank, and a Remington with raised typebars. The lady I spoke to was very friendly and I felt calm. After asking me my name, age, when I left school, and what subjects I liked most, I said "Arithmetic and carpentry Miss." She wrote down four numbers and asked me to add them up and divide the answer by 14. Now fear was creeping in. I think she sensed it and said, "don't worry Robert, just take your time." I did, and returned the paper to her with a shaky hand. She studied it for a while and said, "That's fine Robert, I think you'll do nicely. The hours are 8:30 till 5:30 p.m. with 1 hour for dinner, and 8:30 till 12:30 on Saturdays. Now run home and tell you mother that you have got a job and come back next Monday at 8:30 and don't be late. The wages will be ten shillings per week."

"Thank you very much, Miss" I said and full of the joys of Spring, I skipped all the way home. I don't know to this day whether the sum I did was right or not. This was the start of a very long and enjoyable career, and is still so.

After three months I was told to go to their warehouse and help with the handling of hundreds of used typewriters which were imported from USA. Their ages were mostly from 1900 to 1920 which gave me a varied knowledge of models, serial numbers, and different improvements.

Later on I had to go to a bonded warehouse where the machines were held prior to being exported to various European countries. My job was to unpack the cases and report on the makes, model numbers, serial numbers, any breakages or missing parts, and if working or not, style of type, general condition, whether poor, fair, good or excellent. One instance which will live with me forever was after taking the lid off one case, it was alive with maggots! The packing of the machine contained various food bags and obvious sweepings of the floor. After reporting it, the case was immediately put in 'quarantine' clearly marked DO NOT TOUCH. I found out later that the machine was a Royal Model 5 and dumped in the River Thames. I have such a machine in my collection today and when I acquired it, the memories came flooding back and I gave it a very severe inspection before I was satisfied that it was not 'the one.'

During my stay with this firm - Tylor's Typewriter co. Ltd. 74 Chancery lane, London - I had the pleasure of talking to Mr. Naumann when he visited our warehouse in Ormond Yard,

Great Ormond St. London. I did not know it at the time, but I was later told that he was a partner of the firm Seidel & Naumann in Dresden, Germany, who made and sold the Erika Folding Portable, which is also in my collection. He asked me (in broken English) my age and if I liked what I was doing. "15 Sir, and I like it very much," I replied.

"Stick with it lad, and you will never regret it." His words were very true for me.

MEETING IN SAN JOSE

About two dozen collectors gathered in San Jose, California on August 20-21 for a meeting staged by Jim Rauen. Jim had been anxious to host a meeting in northern California for some time, but had to wait until the end of the school year, as he teaches for a living.

Richard Current, author of *The Typewriter and the Men Who Made It*, delivered a talk on the early history of the Sholes and Glidden. Robert Otnes, American's expert on adding machines spoke on his speciality, and Richard Dickerson talked about research techniques he uses in uncovering previously unknown details about famous collectible machines.

Those in attendance came from all areas of the U.S. and included two visitors from Europe: Fritz Neimann of Germany and Eric Meary from France.

Jim Rauen is to be complimented for the effort he put into organizing the meeting, and we hope collectors in other parts of the country will do likewise in the future.

NEW MEMBERS

The membership of ETC has now gone over the century mark, with the honor of being our 100th member going to Robert Otnes, of Palo Alto, Cal. We urge you to add these names to your roster and drop a line to welcome our new members.

LAURA JOSS GRIFFIN
Onandaga Historical Assoc.
311 Montgomery St.
Syracuse, NY 13202

CARL KOFLER
467 Curtner Drive
Milpitas, CA 95035

ERIC MEARY
63 Boulevard ARAGO
Paris 75013
FRANCE

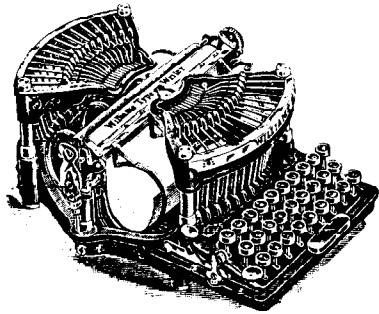
ROBERT K. OTNES
2160 Middlefield Rd.
Palo Alto, CA 94301

DALE R. BEEKS
PO Box 2515
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

WILLIAMS vs. BROOKS

A CASE HISTORY

by Thomas Fitzgerald
Philadelphia, Pa.



We tend to think of business today as being so much tougher and more competitive than in the "Good Old Days." I think we sometimes envision the business climate of a hundred years ago as being almost genteel by comparison, with tales of contracts being made on the basis of a handshake, and a man's work being his bond. In truth, the hand doing the shaking was often encased in a glove of mail, and the man an arm's length away often had a heart as hard and cold as the celluloid collar he wore around his neck.

We sometimes forget that the technical wonder known as the typewriter, and often billed as the liberator of Victorian Womanhood, was born and weaned in the days of ruthless Robber Barons and the bloodiest labor disputes in our nation's history. It was a time when children worked in soot-darkened factories from sunup to sundown, six days a week, for pennies a day.

No, the truth is there few were saints in business back then...especially the typewriter business.

In studying the more than 600 pieces in my collection of typewriter documents, it quickly becomes evident that some of our favorite inventors, so idolized for their genius, either had uncommonly bad memories or were simply outright liars.

Typewriter patent infringement suits kept an army of lawyers quite busy throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries. What with some of the biggest players banding together to form illegal trusts for the purpose of fixing prices and restricting competition, the smaller ones had to resort to all kinds of ploys just to stay in business.

These suits did not always pit inventor against inventor, or even patent holder against patent holder...sometimes the suits were directed against third parties...and often were initiated simply to throw the proverbial monkeywrench into a competitor's production machinery. Such was the case of a suit initiated by the Williams Typewriter Company against the S.S. White Dental Manufacturing Company in 1896.

S. S. White, like so many manufacturers of the day, often took on jobbing contracts from other companies who lacked the capital to build their own factories. This, in fact, is how Remington and Smith (both arms manufacturers) got into the typewriter business.

The S.S. White Company had already begun manufacturing the "new fangled" bicycle for one such company when they were approached by Byron A. Brooks with a proposal that they begin manufacture of the Brooks Typewriter.

Companies like S. S. White took on such contracts to maximize the use of their factories and personnel, and to offset their own operating costs.

S. S. White had completed less than a thousand machines for Brooks and his parent "The Union Writing Machine Co.," when a letter arrived from Williams' attorney threatening suit for patent infringement. This, of course, could not have come at a worse time, since the relationship between S. S. White, Brooks and Union had already been strained to the breaking point over several other problems (but that's another story!).

In a letter dated April 13, 1896, Brooks wrote the S. S. White company that the letter from Williams attorney, "...is simply a 'bluff.' They have probably heard through some of your employees that you are thinking of manufacturing the Brooks machine and do this to deter you if possible. As you probably know we have a suit against them for over two years for infringement of our patent of June 30, '91 which covers their machine completely and which we are in a fair way to win, and if so will entirely stop the manufacture of their machine."

In an inter-office memo dated May 25, 1896, from A. K. Johnson (S. S. White plant manager) to Mr. Simpson (another S. S. White executive), Johnson writes, "Our Mr. Hillard, at the suggestion of Mr. Brooks, saw the president of the Williams Co., and talked with him about the exchange of licenses; the Williams Co., to give the parties who are to handle the Brooks machine a license to use the Williams patent, and the Brooks people to give the Williams Co. a license under its patents so far as this mechanism is concerned." This simple solution apparently never came to pass, inasmuch as the battle continued on for three months during which time no less than four law firms located in New York, Washington and Philadelphia became involved. The legal fees alone must have been enormous, if not by today's standards, then at least when compared with the payroll of the entire Brooks manufacturing operation, which amounted to a mere \$14.40 a day!

After three months of investigation, patent searches, and depositions, Joseph C. Fraley (S. S. White's chief counsel) advises, "...in my opinion there is no infringement of any of the claims of the Williams patent, under such a construction as would pressure their validity...I do not feel that the danger of attack thereunder is a very substantial one, or at any rate of



The Union Writing Machine Co

194 CHURCH STREET,

New York,

Dec. 1st. 1896.

This is a letterhead used by Byron Brooks for his business correspondence for at least part of 1896. The Union Writing Machine Company is the entity he formed to market his typewriter. This should not be confused with the Union Typewriter Company, more popularly known as the "Typewriter Trust." It has been erroneously reported in the past that the Brooks Typewriter was a product of the Trust, but recent research by the author pointing out this difference in names corrects the error.

RECEIVED
DEC 16 1896

314 McDonough St. Brooklyn, N.Y.
April 15th, 1896.

S.S. White Dental Mfg. Co.
H. M. Lewis Esq. Pres't.

Gentlemen:-

Yours of the 11th, is at hand and contents noted.

First allow me to say that the letter from the Williams attorney is simply a "bluff". They have probably heard through some of your employees that you are thinking of manufacturing the Brooks machine and do this to deter you if possible. As you probably know, we have had a suit against them for over two years for infringement of our patent of June 30, '91 which covers their machine completely and which we are in a fair way to win, and if so will entirely stop the manufacture of their machine. The subject matter is the double shifting platen which is covered in my claims 5 to 10 which they infringe. I have not a copy of the patent or would send it and you can probably get it from the patent office sooner than I could do so.

Our other patents are Oct. 21, '90 & Nov. 24, '91. But the first patent is the principle one. Williams has a specific device for locking the platen shown in his claims 23 & 24, which they claimed we infringed over a year ago.

They wrote us about it, but we paid no attention to it as we considered that it was of no consequence and did not infringe and they gave us no further notice until this letter to you. The people at the factory have long known about the matter and we decided a year ago to change it for a better device which we embodied in the new model.

RECEIVED
3

Now you can dispose of all of these machines in England and many more if you can make a satisfactory price promptly. I heard to day by cable that they are satisfied with the machine and want the best price at once by cable for an order of 5000 machines to be delivered within two years, beginning within three months. That is, on condition as stated in your letter of Mar. 20, "if you have satisfactory assurances of sufficient capital or other absolute and undoubted security that the parties giving the order shall comply to the letter with the agreement", all the terms of the contract being satisfactory, at what price can the machine be furnished F.O.B. in N. Y. for cash or its equivalent. What they want now is simply what will be the lowest price for such an order, all the terms being made mutually satisfactory, of course, or no contract. This can include a part or the whole of the present lot, as you may prefer and will not interfere with the arrangement with the Island parties, but would aid it, an ample security would be afforded to you at once for going on, and such arrangements could be made with them later as should be satisfactory. They would doubtless pay more for the present lot, but you both might prefer to let the foreign parties have part at a less price. Their price would have to be based on actual cost of future machines, though it might help to cover the deficiency on these. If you let them have the bulk of these machines, it will eliminate any patent question. I believe the price will have to be in the neighborhood of \$25, including \$6. to me and \$2. to the U.S.M.C., which would give you \$23 each, a good price on such a lot and many more to follow.

Now gentlemen, this is business, and if it does not "materialize" it will not be my fault. The matter of giving the price at which the machine can be niched on satisfactory conditions must be determined at once if at all.

Byron Brooks

Pages 1 and 3 of the letter on which this article is based (reduced 50%). We have omitted page 2 for lack of space--it contains Brooks' detailed arguments to White on why it should ignore the Williams threat. At this point it seems that White had agreed to make 1000 machines. The prospect of multiplying that business by 5 is raised on page 3. Note Brooks' last paragraph which gives us a rare insight on what machines of this era brought at the wholesale level.

such importance as to prevent you from going ahead and attempting to wind up the manufacture...in other words, I regard it as a business chance which, in view of the importance of getting rid of the matter, might fairly be taken."

Apparently, the suit was dropped...and apparently Brooks was right when he surmised that the whole affair was "simply

a bluff." The monkeywrench had been removed from the machinery and S. S. White continued to produce the Brooks for another few years.

While we do not have details on Brooks' alleged suit against Williams, it is apparent he did not "entirely stop the manufacture of their machine" as he had boasted.

**The
Inventor**



Mr. Alexander T. Brown, the world's foremost typewriter expert, invented and built the first


Smith Premier

typewriter; brought it to its present perfection; and now as Vice-President of this company will continue to keep it

The World's Best Typewriter

Send for book of inside typewriter facts.

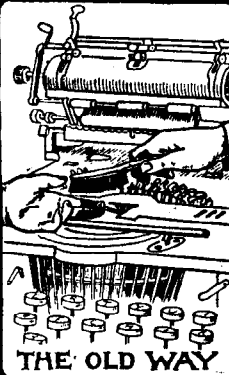
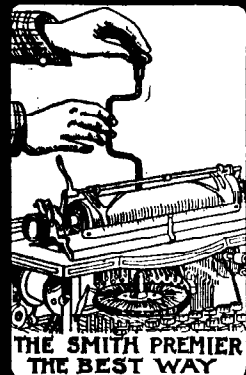
The Smith Premier Typewriter Co.
 Factory, Syracuse, N. Y.
 Executive Office,
 287 Broadway, N. Y.
 Branches in all large cities.



**The
Invention**

Alexander T. Brown reaped both fame and fortune as inventor of the Smith Premier. He's featured prominently in this ad from Harper's Monthly of December, 1903.

**TWO WAYS TO CLEAN
TYPEWRITER TYPE**

THE OLD WAY **THE SMITH PREMIER
THE BEST WAY**

ONE type at a time, with a pin and an old tooth brush. Result — Time wasted, hands dirty, temper bad.

ALL type in a few seconds with The Smith Premier Type Cleaning Brush. More about it in our new Illustrated Catalogue. Free.

**The Smith Premier Typewriter Co.,
Syracuse, N. Y., U. S. A.**

The Smith Premier cleaning brush was a powerful incentive for those considering the purchase of a typewriter. Ad is from Munsey's Magazine, 1903.

ALEXANDER T. BROWN'S BATTALION OF BRUSHES

by Darryl Rehr

Alexander T. Brown, as you may know, was the inventor of the Smith Premier Typewriter. He worked for L.C. Smith in the 1880's, designing guns for the successful firm. In 1886 (not '87 as I have previously written), Brown filed his first patent for the typewriter the company would begin producing in 1889. This first patent described the swinging/rolling motion of the platen for viewing the type. Many more patents would follow.

One of the Smith Premier's most-touted features was its built-in cleaning brush, illustrated above in an advertisement from a 1901 issue of *Munsey's Magazine*. This brush was patented in 1889, but was only one of *four* cleaning brushes Brown cooked up.

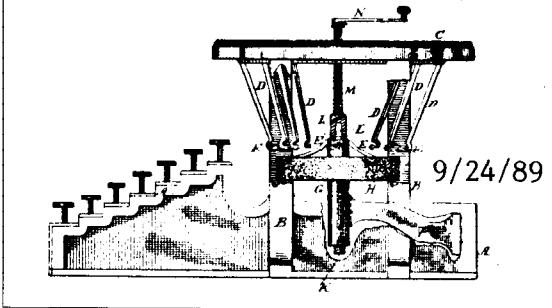
In looking through the Smith Premier patents in connection

with another research project, I discovered that Brown was unusually prolific in the type-cleaning-brush field. What a specialty!

Reproduced at right are the drawings from the U.S. Patent Gazette for each of Brown's four brushes. The patent covering the brush which appeared on the production machine was the second one granted, although it was the first one filed.

We've no way of knowing if any of the later brushes were seriously considered for production. Perhaps Brown thought the general need for a cleaning brush system was so acute that all typewriter makers would soon want to install them. If so, he was smart in patenting every idea he could think of, trying to cover all his bases so that other makers would have to pay him royalties if they wanted to install systems of their own.

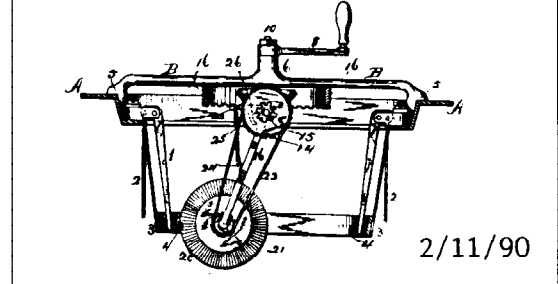
411,421. TYPE-WRITING MACHINE. ALEXANDER T. BROWN, Syracuse, N. Y. Filed Oct. 31, 1887. Serial No. 253,893. (No model.)



Brown's Brush #1

This is the simple screw crank brush as it appeared on the Smith Premier. Note in this drawing the characteristic profile of the machine even at this early stage of development.

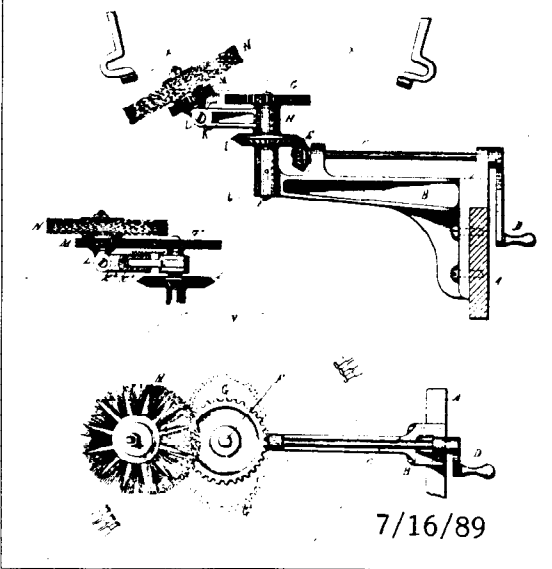
421,044. TYPE-CLEANER. ALEXANDER T. BROWN, Syracuse, N. Y. Filed July 18, 1889. Serial No. 317,846. (No model.)



Brown's Brush #3

This appears to be a more temporary cleaning attachment, though it was quite a piece of machinery. On this one, the brush is mounted perpendicular to the type circle. The crank on top rotates it with a chain linkage as it moves it around the type basket.

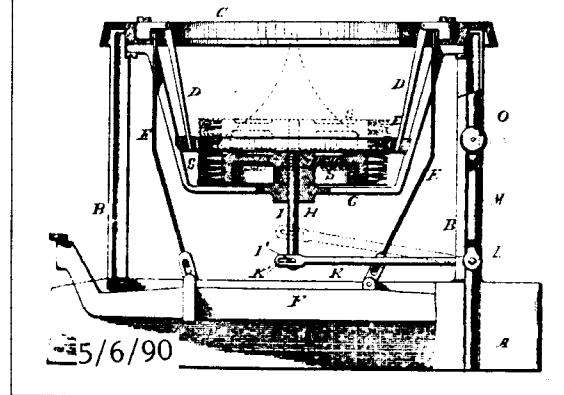
406,873. CLEANER FOR TYPE-WRITING MACHINES. ALEXANDER T. BROWN, Syracuse, N. Y. Filed Sept. 24, 1888. Serial No. 286,173. (No model.)



Brown's Brush #2

The first of Brown's Brushes to be granted a patent, although the patent filing was nearly a year after the earlier brush. With this cleaner, the brush swings out of the way of the type when not being used. To clean, the brush flips into place, and rotates as it moves around the type basket by means of planetary gears. Described in the patent as an "attachment" for cleaning, it looks like it was intended to be attached permanently.

427,393. CLEANING ATTACHMENT FOR TYPE-WRITING MACHINES. ALEXANDER T. BROWN, Syracuse, N. Y. Filed Oct. 28, 1889. Serial No. 328,409. (No model.)



Brown's Brush #4

Maybe old Alex was influenced by dentists and their various philosophies on brushing teeth. This one, would have served the up-and-down school of thought. A lever is pulled back and forth to move the brush up and down.

RESTORING PAPER BAIL ROLLERS

When the small rubber rollers on the paper bail in front of the platen cylinder are worn, broken, hardened or flattened, use replacement rubber hose from an automobile supply house. For a Royal portable of 1931 vintage and for a Corona Silent portable of the mid-1930's we used hose that had an outside diameter of about 1/2 inch and an inside hold of about 1/4 inch. Samples of the small metal core cylinders from each machine's rollers were taken to the store to assure a proper fit. At one well known popular auto store the various size hoses were on a self-serve display gondola. The cost for the one we selected was 39 cents a foot.

Some typewriter paper roller bars have a longitudinal flattened section to hold a thin metal spring that has two 90-degree projections at each tip. The projections fit over the ends of each roller. You'll need to take special care of these in the procedure which follows. Also, note that if one roller is replaced, than all must be remade to assure even pressure on the paper surface.

Once you've purchased the hose of proper size, try this method for installation. Cut the hose either with a sharp razor-like craft tool, or by stuffing a soft wood dowel in the hose hole, then sawing with a fine tooth hacksaw in an accurate, vertical slot of a miter box. Cut only one end of the hose neatly. Soak the cut hose end in hot water from the tap for about 3 to 5 minutes to soften it. The metal cores on which the rubber fits usually have flanges of various sizes at each end. Holding the metal core gently with pliers and the heated hose in a gloved hand use, use the hose as its own leveraged tool. Force the hose over one end of the metal core flange with a twisting, rolling motion. When started, slide the hose to the other end of the metal core, even it, and then use a knife to trim off the excess hose. If the roller uses one of the small flat springs, be sure there is no rubber projecting from the roller end to rub on the spring end projections as the roller revolves on the bar.

--Marco Thorne,
San Diego, Cal.

LETTERS

By now you know that I am a member of ETC and many thanks for copies 2 & 3. They were very informative, and I liked very much the Typewriter Rating Condition. Also the questionnaire. The latter I have had copies done and will use them for all my machines. Paul Lippman's article "Another Typewriter Gone Wrong" was interesting and quite a puzzle to read it first off. Wishing you every success in the future for ETC.

R. H. (Bob) Oliver
Sussex, England

Jay Respler, of Freehold, NJ was kind enough to send in a lengthy discussion of our ongoing print debate on Rating Typewriter Condition. Many of his ideas will figure in a future article on this subject, but, for now, an interesting point to consider:

As far as dirt versus rust, they should weigh equally in ratings. We are describing current appearance. If there is so much dirt that a machine looks a grade lower, that is how it should be accurately rated. How can we guess and be sure how a machine may look later? We wouldn't give a mechanically poor machine a higher rating saying that if you overhaul it, it will then be in good shape. You rate the current condition. The choice is to clean it up now so that it can get a higher rating. Of course, I'm talking about a machine that has so much dirt you can't accurately tell what's underneath. A couple of small grease spots that can easily be wiped off should have no affect on rating. If rust also can be removed, a machine can be upgraded. If it can't be removed, the machine will remain at its current condition.

Jay Respler
Freehold, NJ

Just when you think you've seen most of the things that can go wrong with a typewriter, a new one comes along. A lady came into the shop carrying a little SC electric portable. She was in some distress because she was in the middle of an urgent typing job when--are you ready for this?--her

guinea pig chewed up the power cord! Fortunately (for the piggie) the damage wasn't that great, but I learned one thing. It ain't easy to laugh and tape at the same time.

Ed Peters
New Holland, PA

ADVERTISEMENTS

TYPEWRITER TIMES, a quarterly magazine published by the Anglo-American Typewriter Collectors Society, is now being published in a new and larger format, under the editorship of Paul Lippman. Subscriptions for Americans are \$20/year. TWT has 16 pages, including a full-color photograph of an unusual machine on the cover. Current subscribers may renew for \$15. Contact **PAUL LIPPMAN**, 1216 Garden St., Hoboken, NJ 07030. Sample copy \$1.

TRADE: New electronic typewriters, word processors/computers and calculators for your antique typewriters. **JAY RESPLER**, Advanced Business Machines, Co., 230 Randolph Rd., Freehold, NJ 07728. (201)431-1464

Tues., Oct. 11, 1988

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Los Angeles Times

ANTIQUES 2400

CORONA TYPEWRITER 1917
\$2000 213/645-3905pp

NOMINATION TIME

The time has come to select new officers for ETC. We will need to elect new members to fill the following positions: President, VP-Membership, VP-Publicity, Secy/Treasurer, plus three members of the ETC Board.

Send your nominations (yes, you may nominate yourself) to:

JIM KAVANAGH
19820 Collins Road
Canyon Country, CA 91351

ADDRESS CHANGE!

Please take note of a new address for the ETCetera publication office:

11433 Rochester Ave. #303
L.A., Cal. 90025
(213)477-5229