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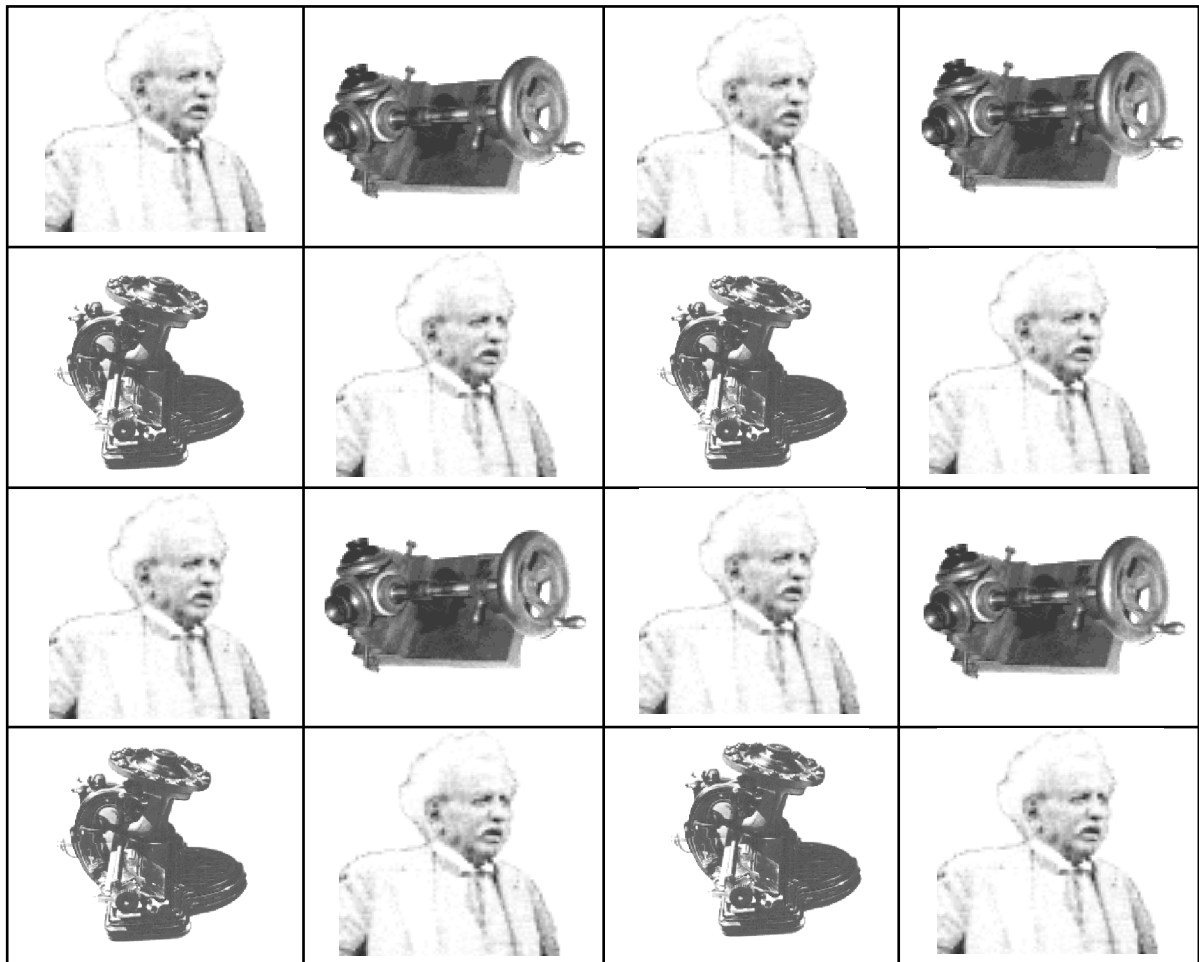


FIFTH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

ETCetera

Magazine of the Early
Typewriter Collectors Association

No. 21 ---- December, 1992



Lambert Speaks!

Full Story on page 4

ETCetera

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Typewriter Collectors
Association

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EDITOR'S NOTES

"Welcome to ETCetera..."

Some of you will recall the opening words of this column in October, 1987 when ETCetera No. 1 was published, giving the Early Typewriter Collectors Association a reach beyond Southern California, where it was founded.

With this issue our magazine celebrates its fifth anniversary, successfully publishing 21 consecutive issues.

Things haven't changed all that much in five years. We've improved our production quality a bit by printing by offset instead of xeroxing, and polished the layout somewhat, but the

pattern begun in 1987 wasn't a bad one, and we'll continue with it, unless I hear some loud objections from the readership.

Page-for-page, we've now published more than *double* the material of any other American typewriter collector journal. Until now, we've also managed to keep it up without delays or long breaks, and we hope to continue doing so in the future.

†††

In many settings, computers and word processors have completely replaced typewriters as writing machines. It's a little ironic, then, that the vast menu of computer typefaces includes many which simulate the typewriter. The standard is one called Courier, which looks like this:

J.Q. Vandz struck my big
fox whelp.

A more old-fashioned look is available in a font called American Typewriter:

J.Q. Vandz struck my big
fox whelp.

But my nomination for the "Best Yet" typewriter font is "Harting" which is made to look like a typewriter with 100,000 miles on it!

J.Q. Vandz Struck my big
fox whelp.

Just think, a mere \$2000 worth of computer hardware can give you the look of a \$20 flea market machine!

†††

Ken Gladstone, of Jacksonville, FL recently sent in an ad for the Tuloss School of Springfield, Ohio from *The Gregg Writer* of Jan., 1917. The heading: "*Gymnastic Finger Training That Doubles Typewriting Speed: A wonderful new method of acquiring speed and accuracy in typewriting; 80 to 100*

words a minute now easy for anyone; how it has doubled and trebled stenographers' salaries." The reasoning was, if musicians use exercises to train their fingers, why shouldn't typists? The ad is illustrated by pictures of hands in all sorts of odd gyrations. In Los Angeles, you'd think you were looking at a police sheet interpreting gang signs. One picture looks like Spock saying "Live Long and Prosper." I wonder if the finger exercises also burned off calories?

†††

Bruce Hotchkiss, of Easton, MD sent in an op-ed piece from the New York Times that had been sent to *him* by a friend. The piece waxed nostalgic for neglected manual typewriters, and mentioned bestselling author David McCullough whose "creative juices flow best when he's pounding the keys of his old Royal. 'I like the tactile part of it,' he said. 'I like rolling the paper and pushing the lever at the end of the line. I like the bell that rings like an old train. It's a great piece of machinery. I don't like the idea that technology might fail me.'"

†††

New York Sen. Alfonse D'Amato staged a 15-hour filibuster in early October. Typewriters figured big in his harangue. He was seeking aid for workers left jobless after Smith Corona closed its last U.S. typewriter plant in Cortland, NY.

†††

From the L.A. Times, 9/23/92: "Solomon Waters of Altadena, a 6-year-old first-grader, came home from his first day of school and excitedly told his mother how he had written on 'a machine that looks like a computer-but without the TV screen.'

She asked him if it could have been a 'typewriter.'

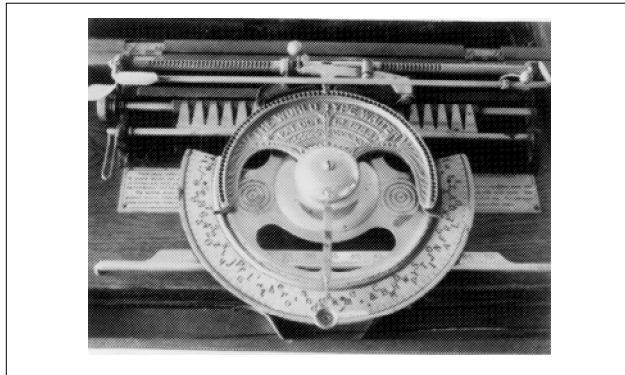
'Yeah! Yeah!' he said. 'That's what it was called.'"

World Update

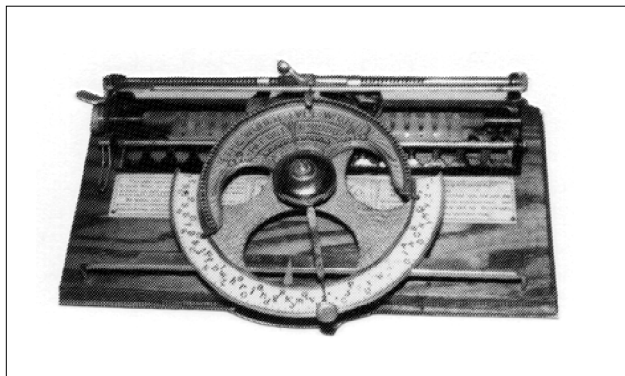
Here's some new information on differences among World Typewriters.

Thanks to help from Peter Muckermann and Heinz Schropp, of Germany, we're able to show you the two distinct varieties of double-case Worlds.

First is the common version, having a typehead consisting of a stamped metal sheet, with a curved opening at bottom through which the scale may be seen. This machine types 77 characters. A photo is shown below.



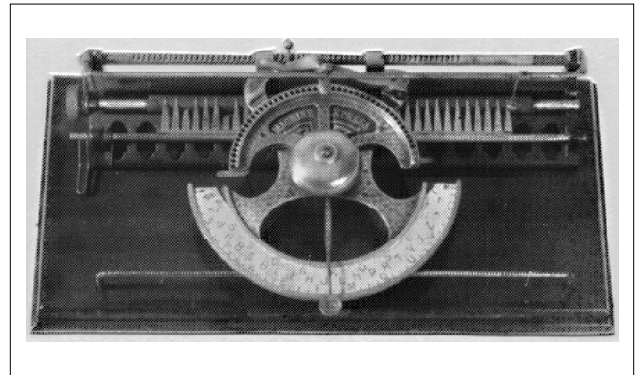
Heinz Schropp has an example of the other, earlier version in his collection. The next photo shows a machine with spokes at 4-o'clock/8-o'clock on the typehead. This corresponds to most of the advertising cuts for the double-case World. Counting the letters, we can see that it is a 72-character machine.



By studying advertisements for the World Typewriter, we see that the 72-character machine was first offered in December, 1888. The first ad we've seen for the 77-character machine dates from June 1889, though the record is incomplete and the newer machine may have debuted earlier than that month.

In any case, we can conclude that the 72-character machine was the earlier offering, and that its life span was quite short, explaining its rarity today. In the future, collec-

tors should now specify 77 or 72 characters when listing or describing their double-case Worlds.



We have also heard that the World was marketed in Europe as the "Boston" typewriter. While this may be so, it appears that the name "Boston" may have appeared only in advertisements, brochures or trade literature. We've been unable to uncover any machine that actually has that name on it. What we *have* seen is a European version of the World with a paper label naming it "Machine Express." This photo (above) comes via Uwe Breker, of Cologne, Germany. The machine is a single-case World with a "£" sign indicating it might have been intended for the British market.

Anyone else with interesting World variations is invited to send them in for future *ETCetera*s.

International News

Germany

Uwe Breker's semi-annual auction in Cologne provided, as always, some fascinating items. Among the rarities offered was a German "Karli," described as a *taschenschreibmaschine*, or "pocket" typewriter (one of 3 known, according to the catalogue). Also offered, a super-rare Spalding Adding Machine, an 1884 device made in Springfield, Mass. The catalogue says only 4 of these exist today. Martin's reference book on calculators said (in 1925) that the machine was never put into production. The other extraordinary machine of note was one of the infamous German ENIGMA code machines of WWII, capable of generating 22 billion code combinations.

Denmark

Three Malling Hansen writing balls were stolen from The Danish Museum of Science & Technology last December. Ser. #46 (paper on curved frame), ser. #87 (paper on platen) and a third machine for writing on telegraphic tape. A 50,000-kroner reward is offered. The museum address: Ole Røomers Vej, DK 3000, Elsinore, Denmark

Lambert's Voice!

By Aaron Cramer
with additional research
by Allen Koenigsberg

The following article originally appeared in "Antique Phonograph Monthly." Permission to reprint it here was given by editor Allen Koenigsberg, who is also the author of "Patent History of the Phonograph" (see ads, p. 11).

Ln December, 1877, Thomas Edison recorded his famous "Mary had a little lamb..." on the world's first phonograph. This first machine, which used tinfoil wrapped around a grooved drum, was little more than a curiosity, and it was not until 10 years later that Chichester Bell (Alexander Graham Bell's cousin) and his partner Charles Sumner Tainter finished developing the *Graphophone*, which, using replaceable wax-coated cylinders, leading the way to commercial production of "talking machines." Until now, Bell and Tainter have generally been acknowledged in their successful follow-up role, but it appears that Frank Lambert, inventor of the famous Lambert Typewriter, actually beat them to the punch. The concepts appearing in Bell & Tainter's machine were used in a machine Lambert built (but received no patent for) in 1878. For phono historians, this rewriting of history is big news!

Edison's first recording was lost to posterity, because the tinfoil on his original machine was removable, and the recording was destroyed in the process. After the first demonstration, many others were tried, and the "Mary had a little lamb..." we've all heard in modern times was recorded well after the fact, recreated in a 1927 newsreel.

This is a remarkable story of chance discovery and subsequent sleuthing in which Lambert's previously unknown machine was first uncovered, and its intact recording, perhaps the world's *oldest*, was played and clearly understood!

For collectors of any kind, this is a whale of a tale. For typewriter collectors, it opens the door to the life of a man who invented one of our most-loved machines.

Little is known about the life of François Lambert (for that was his original name) before he arrived in the U.S. in 1876. A small clue found in the postmark on a relative's letter has now been verified: he was born in Lyons, France on June 13, 1851, and was given the same name as his father, a maker of



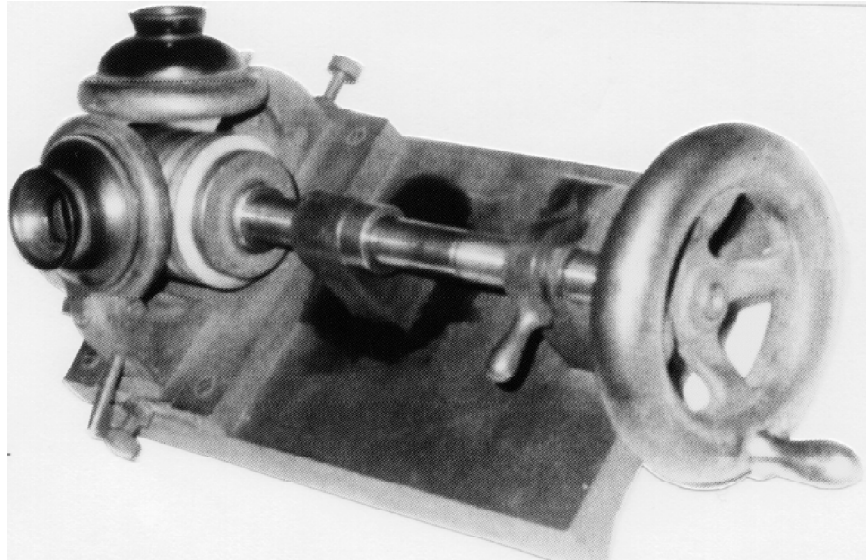
Frank Lambert at home, 1926.

shawls. His mother's name was Vincelette Fayard. Lyons was a center of textile production (especially silk) and it was there that, the Jacquard loom had been invented. But it seems more likely that Frank, as he would soon become known, was apprenticed to a local machinist.

When he arrived in the U.S., the country was celebrating its first Centennial, and among the new devices exhibited in Philadelphia were Bell's telephone and the first practical typewriter. We can not yet prove that he attended the Philadelphia Exposition, but the inventive bug soon hit, and in a remarkable coincidence, he applied for his first patent (on a "Striking Mechanism for Clocks") the same week as Edison applied for his phonograph and received it (200,518) on the same day as Edison, Feb. 19th, 1878. Lambert shared this first patent with Walter Davies of Brooklyn, NY, who himself would gain a series of patents on striking mechanisms with others in his family, Henry and Edward. As a result of his affiliation with Davies, Lambert soon relocated to Ansonia, CT, a center of clock manufacture, but then moved back to Brooklyn by June, 1880.

Sometime in 1880, while living on Grant Street as a boarder, Lambert met and soon married Jeanne-Marie Donval, a woman a few months older than himself. She already had a daughter, Julia Ida (born Dec. 27, 1876), a son Alexander (b. 1878), and may have been widowed from a furrier named John Simonet (the legal question of Julia's "adoption" came up years later in a court battle over his will). Frank and Jeanne-Marie had five children of their own: Eugene, Frank, George, Martha, and Jeanne. Only Jeanne, who died childless in 1965, survived her parents.

While Lambert was living in Ansonia, he met a man who would have a profound influence on his life, John Thomson. In 1883-1884, Lambert assigned one half of his first type-



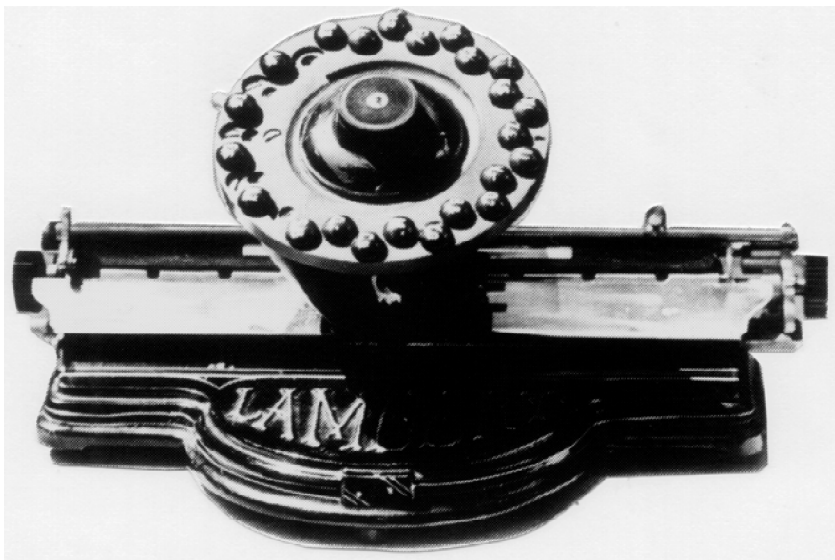
Hand-cranked phonograph built by Frank Lambert in 1878.

writer patent to Thomson (who had originally been a clock inventor) and more prophetically, shared a patent with him on water meters in 1887. Lambert continued to improve fluid-measuring devices and together they formed the Thomson Water Meter Co. whose facilities were located at 100-110 Bridge Street in Brooklyn(now torn down). When Thomson was ailing in May, 1925, the company was sold outright to the Neptune Water Meter Co., and Lambert received \$800,000 in cash.

The invention for which he is best known, at least to modern collectors, is the typewriter that bore his name. Its strange circular keyboard has often led to its classification as an index machine, though it is really a keyboard machine, since a single press on the desired letter yields the printed result. An American company was organized in early 1900(Lambert had become a U.S. citizen in 1893), but the

foreign rights(except for North and South America, the Philippines, and the Sandwich Islands) soon went to The Gramophone Co., Ltd. of London, in an idea of Wm. Barry Owen who planned to sell them at the same price as the “trademark” Gramophone; the company was renamed to include the typewriter. Despite the precaution of patenting it in Sweden, India and New South Wales (among other places), the well-made machine was not widely successful although Lambert did receive \$20,000 in advance royalties. G&T discontinued regular sales by 1904 (after making approximately 10,000 units in England) and reverted to their old name in 1907. We don’t yet have production statistics for the American company, but its time frame is probably similar to the British firm.

The mid-twenties were pivotal years for Lambert; his diabetic wife died on Sept. 20, 1925 and Thomson would die in June, 1926. However, for a 74-year-old, he bounced back with a great deal of vigor: on Jan. 13, 1926, he married(at the



Frank Lambert’s personal typewriter. It has no serial number, and was probably among the first from the factory.

NYC Municipal Building) Jeannette Justine Lawson Ebbets, who was 44 years his junior; she had originally sold sheet music in his son-in-law's office and learned the real estate trade. He then left on almost a year's honeymoon throughout Europe. When he returned, he appeared to throw off his Brooklyn roots, and at his wife's urging, moved from his large house (not standing today) at 192 Prospect Park SW to the 22nd floor of the Savoy Plaza Hotel in Manhattan. Her mother and two brothers accompanied them. His final years (after 1932) were spent with his second wife at the elegant Waldorf-Astoria on Park Avenue.

Although there is no record of any invention credited to him after 1925, his other interests continued. He had long been an avid collector of shells, gems, and minerals. He owned several rental properties in Brooklyn, and some undeveloped land on Long Island, and when he died in 1937, his estate amounted to over a million dollars. He may not have been well-known (no obituary appeared), but he was certainly not the stereotype of the impoverished inventor.

Several years after Lambert started his new life at 74, he apparently rewrote his will, leaving the bulk of his estate to his second wife. Only the income from a \$20,000 trust was left to his daughter Jeanne and the interest on \$30,000 to his only granddaughter Martha Emily Gillott. This aspect of his life gained journalistic attention as the *NY Times* trumpeted (8/19/1937): "Lambert's Millions in Will Contest." Jeanne and Martha were each offered a small outright settlement in addition as a result of the legal action.

Apparently the widow (who never remarried) had a head for business, for when she died in 1975 (but without a will herself), her estate was valued at over \$15,000,000 (at least on paper)! She had been something of a recluse at the end and court documents speak of wading through piles of papers "several feet deep." Her niece (also an executrix of her estate), Jeannette Veronique Minturn, a landscape designer at Rockefeller Center, would eventually die in reduced circumstances (ca. 1991), leading to the curious events surrounding his lost invention.

Lambert's phonograph was acquired from an antique dealer who had bought the contents of a sealed storage room (at auction) from the Public Administrator when the fees could no longer be paid. Most of the contents, ranging from a grand piano to letters, paintings, and books, had been placed there between 1927 and 1937. And most enticing of all, were the models of his inventions - water meters, typewriters, gyroscopes and the talking machine.

At first, I thought the heavy, odd-looking device incorporated an obvious improvement over the Edison tin foil phonograph, that is, the foil could be wrapped around a removable (pre-grooved) metal sleeve. But when I brought the machine to Peter Dilg at the Baldwin Antique Center, he

immediately guessed that the grooves (80 per inch) were not a guide for the foil at all, but themselves contained a recording directly *cut into* the lead! Peter then used the steel recording point to make a new groove on a separate brown wax cylinder. When he had fitted a reproducing stylus to that track, he knew he had one that would fit the lead sleeve. He soon devised a delicately-adjusted electrical pick-up, and for the first time in over 110 years, as we rhythmically cranked away, these unexpected words eerily came forth: *One o'clock, Two o'clock, Three o'clock, Four o'clock, Five o'clock, Six o'clock, Seven o'clock, Eight o'clock, Nine o'clock, Eleven o'clock, Twelve o'clock.* ("Ten o'clock" was omitted, perhaps because Lambert was still a relatively new immigrant).

There are other words too, including even a track going in the opposite direction, but they cannot be clearly understood at the present time. Some of the grooves appear to be damaged, or were perhaps over-cut, as this is the first phonograph equipped with a shaving device to erase a previous recording. The recorder used a tin diaphragm .008" thick and 2-3/8" in diameter and the reproducer diaphragm would be the same, presumably. The recording stylus is a finely ground steel cutting tool, with a draft at the edge to allow removal of the lead swarf. The top enclosures seem to be gutta percha and are threaded into brass mounting rings.

The machine base itself is solid 6" by 11" milled steel, and the length of the shaft and winding wheel is 15"; the overall height is about 7". A quick release lever allows the main threaded shaft to be repositioned immediately after recording. The total weight is about 22-1/2 pounds.

Invented Allen Koenigsberg to look over the machine and together we tried to get into the mind of Frank Lambert. Allen agreed that the device was very early (1879-1880), probably made not much after the first tinfoil phonograph. It made no sense for Lambert to use such heavily machined materials after the introduction of wax cylinders later in the decade. And Why did Lambert continue his testing beyond a traditional "one, two, three?" It could only have been done for the full sound track necessary for a talking clock! This supposition was somewhat confirmed when Allen compiled a detailed list of Lambert's 60 patents. There, at the beginning of his inventive career (in the late 1870's), were two for clock devices.

Another line of research recently opened up. It is relatively easy to consult published patents, but what happens to the ones that were never granted in the first place? I found out over the summer when my wife Thea and I visited the National Archives in Suitland, Maryland. The ungranted applications are generally not saved, but since they were accompanied by a down payment of \$15, Patent Registers were maintained, listing serial number, name of inventor, date, title of invention, etc. In the time available, we were only able to go through the year 1880 (the names are not fully indexed alphabetically for that period). But there, two in-

triguing possibilities emerged, two Lambert applications that were never granted: the first was for the vaguely-worded "Clocks" (filed on June 17th) and the second was for "Screw Cutting Lathes" (filed on Aug. 2nd)! Could it be that these cryptic references hid what Lambert was really doing?

With the purchase of the machine, I was also able to obtain many of Lambert's personal effects, including some original patents, business letters from his patent attorneys (including pioneer Edith Griswold), die stocks, scrapbooks and photos. Amongst nearly 2000 newspaper clippings of poems and poetic sayings, I found a curious one from about 1896. It was a two-inch announcement about a talking clock, but apparently that of the Swiss inventor Casimir Sivan, who employed vulcanite discs to announce the time. Did this stir his memories?

At this point, Allen recalled that Edison himself, in the optimistic days shortly after the invention of the phonograph, predicted that his creation would be used in talking clocks and said so in a published article in the May-June 1878 issue of the *North American Review*. As a matter of fact, he even arranged a contract to produce one (on Jan. 7, 1878) with Daniel Somers and Henry Davies. That must have been the link, for it was to the same Henry J. Davies that Frank Lambert assigned one half of his first granted patent!

Edison had planned a copper plate, lever-wound *spring* phonograph which was successfully built in Ansonia and described in a letter to Alfred Mayer on Feb. 11, 1878. Lambert was asked to produce a cylinder that could be used as a master matrix so thousands of other cylinders could be produced from one master. He was not trying to invent a phonograph as that had been done. No one had invented a means of mass producing replayable cylinders. Once the foil was removed it couldn't be put back and played. That's why the Lambert recording is the world's oldest. It preceded the Graphophone by 5 to 7 years.

And now, as we go to press, we have located a little known court case through the kindness of researcher Ray Wile. It was filed against the Edison Phonograph Works by the American Graphophone Co. in 1892 and contained some startling testimony from several experts in the field (U.S. Circuit Court, Dist. of NJ, In Equity, No. 3500). Summoned to the Edison table in early April 1896 as a defense against Bell and Tainter's patent 341,214 was none other than the President of the Thomson Water Meter Co., one Frank Lambert. In answer to several detailed questions, he testified under oath that he had indeed built a recording machine "around 1879," and that he had actually *engraved* the sound vibrations on a permanent metal sleeve. All of our guesses and suppositions had miraculously been proved true!

Tainter and Bell, you see, were suing Edison, the inventor of the phonograph, for infringing on their patent. They said

Edison's original patent was only for indenting soft material such as tinfoil. Edison, however, claimed his original application covered recording by indenting, removing material (by engraving or acid etching: subtraction) and by adding material such as electroplating. Lambert's testimony showed that engraving to record voice was a common practice, and Bell should not have received his patents for it (1885-6) in the first place! Although Lambert said he could not locate his original machine in 1896 and had destroyed his only duplicate, Bell and Tainter found it in their best interests to settle and cross-license Edison in December 1896.

There might be other candidates for older "recordings." Among them are tracings on lampblack-coated cylinders made by a device called the "phonograph" invented by Leon Scott. Scott's machine made marks in the lampblack when someone spoke into the mouthpiece, but Scott did not provide a playback mechanism. In fact, there is even a story that Scott took a tracing of President Lincoln's voice in 1863, but this particular cylinder has yet to resurface. There is also an extant tinfoil strip of the aged voice of scientist Joseph Henry (1878) made on an Edison device. But primitive sheets of sound like these have never been restored to playable condition, and no one has yet developed a way to turn Scott's lampblack tracings into sound. Until that day arrives, the rhythmic words of the modest French immigrant who settled in Brooklyn constitutes the oldest playable record in the world.

Frank Lambert died in New York at the age of 86 (from pneumonia and uremia) on June 21, 1937, and was buried in a solid copper casket at Green-Wood cemetery in Brooklyn. He lies there in good company today, among the likes of Samuel Morse (telegraph), Elias Howe (sewing machine), Walter Hunt (safety pin) and Louis C. Tiffany (stained glass). But there is a final mystery, even in death, surrounding him. Although Green-Wood has verified that Frank Lambert is indeed buried in Lot #28721 and his first wife and three of his children have their names clearly engraved on the handsome marble tombstone, his own name is not to be found at all. An omen, no doubt, of the obscurity into which he would soon unjustly fall.

Our thanks to Ruth Edge at EMI Archives, Peter Dilg, Allen Koenigsberg, Thea Cramer (above and beyond the call of duty), Daniel Marty, Jean-Paul Agnard, the National Archives (James Cassedy, Greg Bradsher, Robert Marris, John Silardo), Ray Wile, the Musée de Lyon and Theresa La Bianca at Green-wood Cemetery.

More on the life and death of the Lambert Typewriter, based on original documents from the inventor's estate, will be published in future issues of ETCetera.

COLLECTOR'S Q & A

by Steven Sperber



Collector's Q&A is written to satisfy this author's curiosity about the active members of ETC and their collections. The personal side of this avocation is often as fascinating as the machines themselves, and lends new interest to our multi-faceted hobby (or, in some cases, mania). This first installment of Collectors Q&A features Thomas A. Russo, of Wilmington, Delaware. Tom's background thoroughly qualifies him as one of the country's premier typewriter collectors.

In 1954, after serving a tour of duty in the US Navy, he took a position with Remington Rand selling typewriters in Kansas City, Missouri. Over the years, one promotion followed another as Tom advanced from product manager in Des Moines, to sales manager in Chicago, to branch manager in Cleveland, and finally to branch manager of the Philadelphia office. In 1971, Tom started his own company — Delaware Office Co., Inc., now over 20 years old.

Always active in the industry, Tom served as President of the National Office Machine Dealers Association (NOMDA) in 1985, and in 1986 was named "Man of the Year" by Office Products Dealer Magazine. In 1988 he was named NOMDA "Dealer of the Year."

The following Q & A was created after a series of phone conversations and letters with Tom.

Q. How long have you been a typewriter collector?

A. Even though I've been in the industry over 37 years, it was only four years ago that I became interested in the early history and the machines that have changed the way we do business today. "Interested" is probably not the right word -

"obsessed" is more descriptive. In the years I've been collecting, I have accumulated over 400 machines and read everything I can find about our industry's history.

Q. Which is the favorite typewriter in your collection?

A. Because of my background with Remington, I'm especially interested in acquiring a complete collection of Remington products. Among my favorite machines is the first Remington (which was called the Sholes & Glidden). I believe this machine was manufactured in 1875, making it approximately 117 years old, and yet it is still in remarkable condition.

Q. Can you tell us an interesting typewriter discovery story?

A. One of my most interesting historical discoveries was not a typewriter, but rather an old *Ilion* newspaper. It featured a front page article on the Remington Typewriter Company. The article gave the reader a complete view of a modern typewriter manufacturing company (probably around the turn of the century).

From an artifact standpoint, my favorite discovery was made while browsing through an Antique Mall. Suddenly I came face-to-face with a 27" x 40" door windowpane from an early Remington Typewriter Company sales office. The lettering on the windowpane indicates that this Remington office also sold the Monarch and the Smith Premier typewriter. This had to occur during the time of the great typewriter trust — The Union Typewriter Company — which was started in the year 1893. It is hard for me to believe that this window sign has been around all those years without

a chip or break.

Q. What typewriter are you still seeking?

A. I'm still searching for several Remingtons for my collection, models 3, 4, 8 and 9. I am also looking small Remington portable typewriter called the 3b.

Q. Any advice for beginning collector?

A. If I were to give any advice to a beginning collector, it would be to start out slow, unless you have a background which gives you a better-than-average knowledge of the evolution of the industry and its early machines, as well as their values. Of course, belonging to the Early Typewriter Collectors Association is helpful, and I might add enjoyable as I have made many new and pleasant acquaintances.

Q. How do you display your collection?

A. I am fortunate in that I have some space to display my collection. I realize this is difficult for many collectors. My collection is on display as part of my business office, covering an area approximately 16' x 19' with close to 275 machines. In the reception area of our office are several lighted display cases housing an additional 100 machines.

Q. Do you display then restored or "as collected?"

A. In view of the fact that I started collecting late in life, I have concentrated on acquiring the machines and not restoring them. After retirement, I'll have ample time to restore those that need it. I've restored a few machines myself, but

my background is marketing and not mechanical service so I will be limited as to the extent of the restoration. However, I have picked up some good tips on restoring from other collectors, and I'm looking forward to attempting more in the future.

Tom said he believes that a trip to the NOMDA Museum in Kansas city to view the Clark collection should be a goal of every serious typewriter collector. This is no surprise, coming from a man who says that the history of typewriters is very important to him. Tom also graciously invites any collectors who are in the area, or just passing through, to come and see him, see his impressive collection and chat about the industry's early history and the machines of the office equipment evolution.

Collection Sampler

Sholes & Glidden
Hammond #1
Odell #1
Crandall
Curved-keyboard Williams #1
Densmore #1
First electric Remington (1925)
Jewett #2
Barlock #4 and #6
Salter #5 and #6
Daugherty
Pittsburgh #10
Lambert
Commercial Visible

Sir John Herschel's Bright Idea

The following piece was submitted by Marco Thorne of San Diego, CA. It quotes a letter sent to the London Times by Sir John's son, J.O.W. Herschel in early 1933 and was reprinted in the New York Times.

"Sir John Herschel (1792-1872), an astronomer and scientist, and son of the astronomer, Sir William Herschel, was studying fingerprints and their identification in India in 1857. With some frustration he wrote to his younger brother, Alexander, a student at Cambridge University:

'Dear Alick—

I can't stand it any longer. I am writing my wrists off and shall soon have to learn to write with both hands at once and on two different subjects at the same time.

'I want a writing machine — a piano that shall print a letter for each note I touch. What's the difficulty?

'I want a box with little knobs on the surface arranged so as to fit the fingers as the hand is put down on the table — one set for the right hand and one for the left, the paper to lie in the middle on a traversing platform. And as each note is pressed I want the hammers of the piano to come down and stamp their letters on the paper, shifting the paper at the same time, of course.

'Try what you can do when you get clear at Cambridge, or else stick the idea into someone's head who has the leisure. It must be done. I can't waste time writing as I do.'"

One wonders if this letter might have accidentally been delivered to Sholes, or Ravizza or Mitterhoffer!

BACK TO BASICS for beginning collectors

The Beginner's Oliver

What's more common in the nation's flea market typewriter inventory than an Oliver #5? Why, an Oliver #9, of course. If you didn't know that, then, yes, you *are* a beginner, and this column is for you.

Since something from the Oliver line is usually one of the first machines a collector acquires, beginners should know how the various models differ so they can tell what's what.

Oliver history, in a nutshell, begins in 1894 when Rev. Thomas Oliver, pastor of the Methodist Church in Monticello, Kansas, made his first prototype, largely out of tin cans and pieces of rubber. It was a radically different design, with U-shaped typebars standing erect and swinging down from each side. It is the only such design ever manufactured.

In 1896, Oliver moved to Epworth, Kansas and organized a company to make his machine. Once he had manufactured units in hand, he went to Chicago, and in 1897, got the big-time backing he needed to make the Oliver Typewriter on a large scale. The enterprise was a resounding success, with more than a million Oliviers manufactured over the next two decades. The predominance of 4-row keyboards and the company's inability to field its own 4-row design contributed to the Oliver's decline.

The rarest of all Oliviers is the No. 1 machine. Presumably, some (perhaps all) of these were made in Epworth before the move to Chicago (the windy city was home to the corporate offices, the actual factory was in Woodstock, IL). Since the No. 1 is a collector's "Holy Grail," beginners should know how to tell it from later models.

Look at the photo. First, the No. 1 has a nickel plated base, which is a very flat casting when compared to later machines. One either side, you'll see

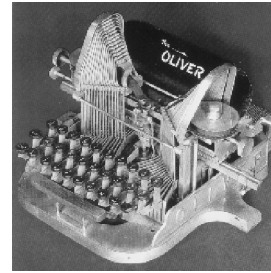
the "handles" meant for lifting the machine. The No.1's handles are flat to the surface. On later models, they curl upward like a pair of horns. Now look at the name plates on either side of the machine. First, notice that the "O" in the "Oliver" is a closed loop. On most (but not all) later models, it is open. Second, carefully look at the shape of the nameplates. Notice how the front edge is scalloped with two curves. Can you see how two *different* castings had to be used—one for either side of the machine? On later models, the leading edge had only one curve so that only one casting had to be made, which was interchangeable for either side of the machine. Next, you'll see that the ribbon spools are exposed on the No. 1. Later machines had enclosed spools. Finally, look at the key levers. They are straight strips of metal, *folded* at a right angle to create the "L" shape. Later machines had levers punched out of flat steel with no fold.

OK, that's the No. 1. Look for it. If you find one, you have a treasure. There are maybe only five known to exist.

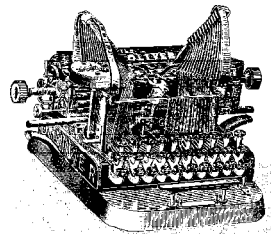
The No. 2 is the earliest Oliver a beginner is likely to find. It's best described when comparing it to the Oliver No. 3, because the two machines are so similar. Basically, the No. 2 has a thinner base. There are other mechanical differences as well, but the base is the most visible distinction. Most No. 3's will say "No.3" somewhere on the machine, usually on the base at the front. No.2's usually have model designations in the upper right corner of the paper table. Historic literature varies on dating these two machines, but the No. 2 seems to date from about 1897-8 and the No. 3 from about 1901.

An Oliver No. "1-1/2" has been reported, but this designation is "optimistic." This machine has a nickeled base, while the No. 2 has the familiar olive color. In any case, a "1-1/2" is *much* closer in desirability to the No. 2 than the No. 1.

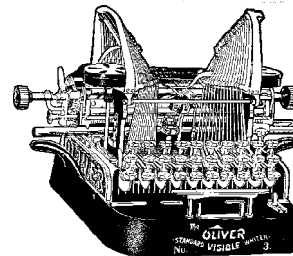
Heading up the chain we might expect an Oliver No. 4, but after the No. 2, the even numbered models are simply British-made versions of the odd-numbered machines. So, the next Oliver we



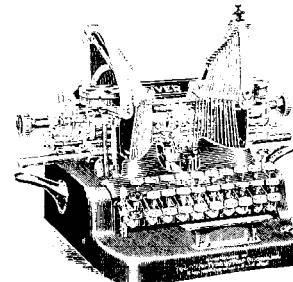
No. 1



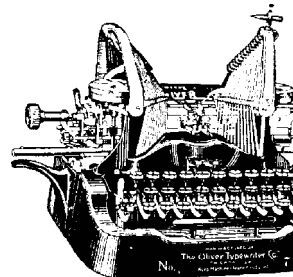
No. 2



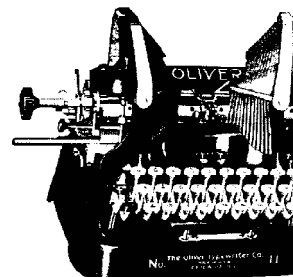
No. 3



No. 5



No. 7



No. 11

find is the No. 5, introduced in 1907. On this model, the side nameplates are eliminated, and the works are mostly enclosed, where on earlier models, they are exposed. The No. 7 was introduced in 1914, quickly followed by the No. 9 in 1915. The two machines are virtually the same, with an even greater enclosed "look" when compared to the No. 5. The 5's, 7's and 9's included a pencil clamp which swung down from the right-hand typebar frame enabling the user to draw lines on the paper as it rode in the carriage. These models are also found with the "Printype" typeface, which looks more like book printing, though was still a typewriter monospaced font.

The last model made by the Oliver Co. was the 1922 No. 11, also known as the "Speedster," though that designation is probably debatable. Oliver 11's are painted black instead of Olive and the familiar "horns" on the base are gone in favor cutouts enabling the user to fit his fingers under the frame so the machine could be lifted. The horns were much easier on the hands.

The Oliver Co. quit business in 1928, selling its designs to British investors, who made the No. 11 until 1931 under the name "British Oliver."

The following serial number list comes from Paul Lippman's book *American Typewriters: A Collector's Encyclopedia*, and the 1924 *American Digest of Business Machines*. It should give you an idea of the date your machine was made and the relative rarity of the Oliver models:

Model	Serial #	Year
Oliver No. 1	1	1896
Oliver No. 2	5000	1898
Oliver No. 3	35000	1901
Oliver No. 5	183000	1907
	212000	1910
	280000	1912
(backspace added @ 282000)		
Oliver No. 7	494000	1914
Oliver No. 9	551000	1915
	800000	1919
Oliver No. 11	1000000	1922
	1018000	1924
	1025000	1925
	1035000	1928

It's easy to see why the No. 9 is so pervasive. It represents nearly *half* of all Oliver's ever made. During the machine's production, Oliver fired all its salesmen and offered the machine factory direct at half the old retail price. It also sold machines on time, with typical payments at \$5 a month. Unfortunately, a lot of those buyers defaulted, and Oliver ended up with truckloads of repossessed typewriters. This contributed to the company's downfall.

A prototype of a four-row Oliver was made in 1922, but never brought to market (see ETCetera No. 6). The U-shaped typebars were turned 90° to create a frontstrike machine. Only one was made, and it has either been destroyed, or remains somewhere *undiscovered*... a real treasure for any collector to seek!

ADVERTISEMENTS

(for sale=verkauf / wanted=suche / trade=tausch)

FOR SALE: Mignon \$150. Two original production dies for Lambert type element (face and reverse) from Lambert estate. Best offer over \$300 each. Aaron Cramer, Box 537, Brooklyn, NY 11229. (718)332-3330.

WANTED: complete carriage/ upper part of Jewett typewriter, or complete parts machine. **FOR SALE:** Victoria (German Gardner) 1/1, Edison 3/2, Kniest 2/1. Prices on request. Manuel Dierbach, Waldingstrasse 44a, 2000 Hamburg 65, GERMANY

FOR SALE: HAMMOND 2 Ideal, one keytop missing, poor case otherwise 2/2. Black BENNETT w/case, missing right platen knob, frozen mechanism but no rust. REM-BLICK 2/2. Alfred Balk, Assoc. Prof. S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse, NY 13244-2100. Ph: (315)443-4170. FAX (315)443-3946.

FOR SALE: Detailed 11-pg. index to ETCetera issues #1 (Oct., '87) thru #18 (Mar., '92). US \$1.60, Canada \$1.70, elsewhere \$2.70. Marco Thorne, 4325 West Overlook Dr., San Diego, CA 92115-6116.

FOR SALE: American Visible, Bennett (silver), Blick 9, Ingersoll, Merritt, Niagara, Odell #2, Smith Premier #1, Standard Folding, Stenograph. **TRADE** for ribbon tins- original 1907 letterheads from old TW companies: Remington, Smith Premier, Monarch, LC Smith. Darryl Rehr, 2591 Military Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90064.

PHONO COLLECTORS: NEW BOOK! "Patent History of the Phonograph" by Allen Koenigsberg. Info on 2,144 patents, 1,028 inventions covering the entire field of recorded sound. 101 illustrations. \$54.95. With original Edison-style tinfoil \$59.95. From Allen Koenigsberg, 502 E. 17th St., Brooklyn, NY 11226.

WANTED: Common old adding machines - in quantity if you have them. Pre-1940. Burroughs, Dalton, Monroe, etc. GiGi Colburn, 1243 N. Gene Autry Trail, Suite L, Palm Springs, CA 92262.

FOR SALE: Rem 6 (VG+), Oliver 9 (G+), Royal 1 ser#3947 (EX), Rex Vis. #4 (good, some decals worn), Rem Jr. (VG but broken escapement dog), Underwood 5 (EX), Continental port. (G+), Corona adder (VG). Jack Wood, Red Fox Ridge, Routh #2, Box 258, Cashiers, NC 28717. (704)743-5375.

WANTED: Old hand-held *electronic* calculators. Bruce Flamm, 10445 Victoria Ave., Riverside CA 92503

FOR SALE: Ford Typewriter, ser. # 185. Very good condition. 18000DM. Bernd Bertsch, Binnetstr. 7, D-7107 Bad Friedrichshall, GERMANY. Tel. 0 71 36 / 2 13 45

FOR SALE: Blick 5/case, 2 type wheels. Very good cond. \$140. Jaye Fitch, 1117 N. Nowry Ave., Springfield, OH 45504. (513)322-4530.

FOR SALE: duplicates from Dennis Clark Collection. Wide variety, common to amazing. Dennis Clark, PO Box 25, Ledyard, Ct. 06339. (203)848-7260.

TRADE: Tip-Tip (Czech version of Mignon), in VG cond. w/case for American index or similar machine. Günter Pschibl, Galgenberg 4, D-8483 Vohenstrauß, GERMANY. Tel. (0 96 51) 21 73.

RIBBON TIN ROUNDUP



A mixed bag of items from the tin pile this issue, among them, six idfferent tins from Carter Ink.

As always, we encourage you to send in photos of tins from your collection. Please photograph tins close so that six tins fill up one frame of film. Place them against a plain background and keep camera square-on. Shoot outside or near a window during the day, and don't use flash, or you'll get hot spots. Also, avoid red-on-black tins—they don't reproduce well in black-and-white.



KEY:

Brand - colors; descriptive details, if needed (Ribbon company, if known/Tin manufacturer, if known)

TOP PHOTO: **Carter's Cavalier**-tan, black (Carter's Ink Co.). **Carter's Valiant**-grey, black, red, white; cardboard box. **Carter's Buccaneer**-green, black, white (Carter's Ink Co./Anchor Hocking). **Carter's Guardian**-lt. blue, dk blue, silver(Carter's Ink Co./Anchor Hocking). **Carter's Guardian**-blue, black, white; cardboard box (Carter's Ink. Co.). **Carter's Five O'Clock**-tan, white (Carter's Ink. Co.)

BOTTOM PHOTO: **Super-Superb**-beige, navy, gold; small picture shows beaver chewing on tree(M.B. Cook, Co./Decorated Metal). **Allied**-grey, black, white, red; screw-on lid (Allied Carbon & Ribbon Mfg. Corp.). **Badger Brand**-blue, gold (Chas. Saltzstein & Bro./Decorated Metal). **Imperial**-blue, gol.d. **Official**-gold, black (Snelling & Son). **Monogram**-blue, black, ivory (Neidich Process)