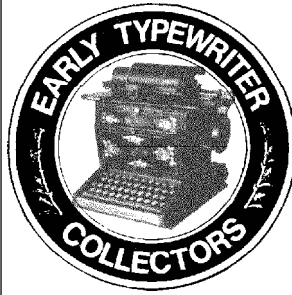


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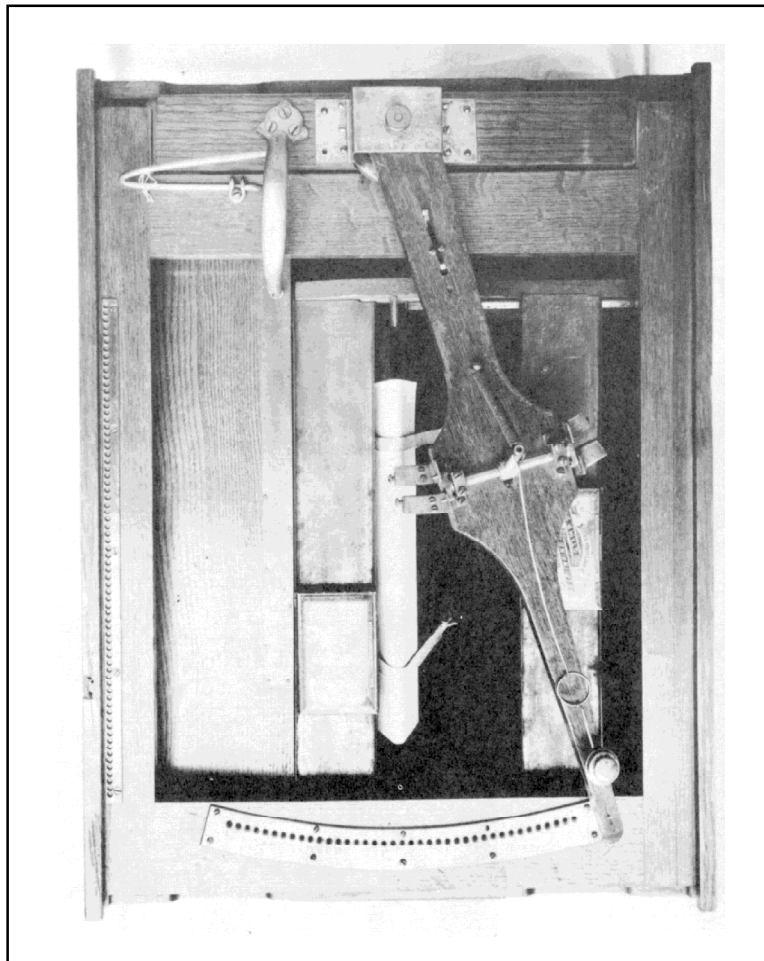


ETCetera

Magazine of the Early
Typewriter Collectors Association

No. 29 ----- Dec., 1994

The First American Typewriter



SMITHSONIAN PHOTO

Overhead view of the 1829 Burt Typographer. Photo shows an 1893 reconstruction of machine, built by the inventor's grandson. Full story, page 4.

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Dec., 1994
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EDITOR'S NOTES

Color Supplement Update. Things are looking good for not one, but *two* pages of color in each ETCetera starting next year. We'll do it by printing two pages of the magazine itself in color. Since that'll keep the entire issue to 12 pages (without adding a sheet for a supplement), ETCetera will squeeze (barely) into a lower postal weight class, saving money, and making the extra color possible. Any objections?

†††

WANTED! Speaking of the color Supplement, I'll be looking for good color material to publish. I have an extensive library myself, but I'd rather get the rest of the membership involved and the least I can do is offer a little incentive.

Ribbon Tins. We need good images of ribbon tins. Take your favorites to a copy store with a high quality color copier (usually Canon or Kodak). Have the clerk place a whole bunch of your tins directly on the copier window, and ask him to copy them at 50% for regular tins. Please copy tall tins at 100% (since most of those are about 1-1/2" wide, a 50% reduction makes the image too small). For every tin image I use, you'll get a \$1.50 discount on the following year's ETCetera subscription. That should more than cover the cost of a page-full of tin images.

Machines. Please send me clear shots of interesting machines that look good in color. Don't worry too much about the size of the image. The size that fits on a regular print is usually OK. Please send me *two* copies of the photo. I will usually trim these and use the original for pasteup, so I would appreciate an extra for the files. For each machine image published, you'll get a \$2.50 discount on the following year's description.

Color Ads or Ephemera. Use your judgement. Generally these'll have to be color copied at a reduction so they won't take up a whole page by themselves. Same discount as machine photos—\$2.50 per image used.

†††

And speaking of incentives, I may as well mention the freebie offered for those who submit articles as well. Anyone who submits material resulting in two or more pages of ETCetera's content gets a free subscription the following year. I know, it's not much, but we'll try to do better once our subscriber list reaches its first million.

†††

Some local dealers here in the L.A. area are pricing their old typewriters in the stratosphere. One high-end retail dealer, who does extensive restorations, prices his machines to reflect the expensive labor involved. When his prices appeared in a local antiques newspaper, other dealers started to

follow suit... except that they didn't bother to do the restoration work! So, when the paper published the price of an Oliver at \$495, a lot of dirty, rusty \$495 Olivers started showing up, with the article often displayed to "justify" the price tag. One dealer offered a real bargain, though. Seeing a \$1495 price published for a restored Yost No.4, he offered his own rusty machine for peanuts at \$300. Too bad it didn't include the carriage.

†††

In Print: The *Wall Street Journal's* Peter R. Kann wrote a column in August entitled "Ode to the Typewriter and (Gasp!) Those Who Still Use One." The article was part of the *WSJ's* "Personal Technology" feature, regularly written by Walter Mossberg, who was on vacation at the time. The column usually targets hardware in the computer field. When Kann told Mossberg he used a manual typewriter, Mossberg said, "you're the only one!" Kann's piece was written to proclaim the contrary. Says Kamm, "If radio can coexist with TV, matches with lighters, parents with teenagers, why not typewriters with computers?" Ayup.

†††

Last August, I received a visit from Jan Beck of Seattle and Peter Tytell of New York. Both were in town for a meeting of forensic document examiners. The Tytell name, of course, is familiar to typewriter collectors. Peter and his father Martin are proprietors of a well-known TW business in Manhattan. They have long been prominent in the field of identifying machines from the documents they produce by carefully examining the typeface, and Peter was quite a whiz at recognizing any font I happened to put in front of his face! Anyway, we all crawled around my garage, scrutinized a couple of Sholes & Gliddens I had on hand, and had a great time talking shop. Both Jan and Peter signed up as new ETC members, and we welcome them.

The First Woodstock

by Alexander "Sandy" Sellers

Mention "Woodstock" to most collectors, and the reaction will likely be as enthusiastic as if you mentioned an Underwood No. 5. To many collectors, and supported by most reference books, Woodstock models 3 or 4 or even the Electrite are simply not worth the shelf space. However, did you ever wonder about models 1 or 2? Read on. The *first* Woodstock was apparently not related to the Emerson/Roebuck/Woodstock Typewriter Companies at all, but was rather a cheaply-made *Oliver* merchandised solely through the Montgomery Ward Catalog of 1898-99.

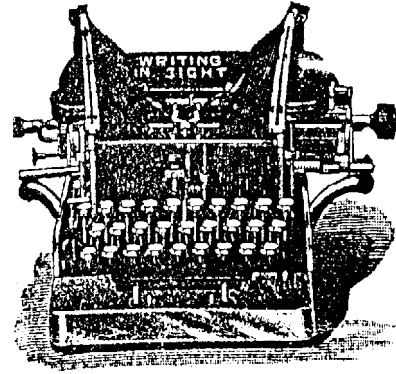
In an 1899 pamphlet published by the Linotype Company of Canada (manufacturers of the Oliver for Canadian and South American markets) this very first Woodstock is described by W.A. Waterbury, manager of Oliver Typewriter Company, Chicago, as "an unguaranteed machine, of which 19 were all that were made." They were made specifically for department stores, and only Montgomery Ward contracted for them. The agreement with Montgomery Ward specified that the Woodstock was not to be sold for under \$60—the price that appears in the Fall-Winter 1898-1899 catalog. Perhaps on account of poor sales, the model was withdrawn after 10 months—but not before agents of the Typewriter Trust had taken notice and used the catalog ads in an attempt to discredit the manufacturing, marketing and bidding practices of the Oliver Typewriter Company.

Oliver tried to minimize these attacks, countering with the information that only 19 were made and "proving" it by offering \$5000 to anyone producing 20 of their "Woodstocks"—a price I think any collector would certainly be willing to pay for only a dozen of these, the rarest of the Oliver family. But how to identify it? Unfortunately, the line cut from the catalog gives little indication of how the actual machine was labelled, or what name (if any) was cast into the plates below the carrying handles.

The Woodstock name reappeared about 15 year later in association with the Woodstock Typewriter Company, which at first manufactured the unusual Emerson Typewriter, but, in 1914, introduced the conventional Woodstock. The first model, however, was "No.3." Perhaps the bad press of 16 years earlier concerning the "Woodstock" name dictated some prudence in designating the "new" Woodstocks with a model number suggestive of considerable improvements. This remains an unresearched area.

As for the name "Woodstock?" It was in Woodstock, Illinois that the main Oliver factory was built, and where its competitor, the Woodstock Typewriter Company later set up shop. Now, who will tell me how it was that Thomas Oliver, born in Woodstock, Ontario, just "happened" to build his factory in Woodstock, *Illinois*?

The Woodstock.



To meet the demand for a really high grade machine we offer the *Woodstock* to our patrons, a *standard* typewriter, at a low price. The business, professional or literary man wants a *high grade* typewriter at a moderate price. We are now able to supply this demand in the above typewriter, secured through special contracts, enabling us to supply to you direct, thus avoiding agent's commissions, a typewriter equal to any machine in the market and now guaranteed by us in particular. Shows every word and letter as fast as written. As a manifold it has no equal. For mimeograph work it produces a copy that cannot be distinguished from original writing. It possesses all of the strong features of the \$100 machines, as well as a number of new ones peculiarly its own, insuring permanent alignment. The machine is particularly adapted to filling out blanks and forms where writing on ruled paper is desirable, as well as tabulated work. The machine has steel type and produces a clear, legible text. It has 84 characters obtained from a standard universal keyboard, and is readily operated by anyone familiar with other machines. The machine is complete in a highly finished metal case with handle, and weighs about 20 pounds, or about one-half the weight of other high grade standard machines. Price each \$60.00

Facsimile ad from 1898-99 Wards catalog. The original was of poor quality, requiring resetting of type. In addition, some words in the original were lost in the margin—most important, the description of the machine's weight. The word "half" is the editor's guess! Oliver's were certainly close matches in weight to other "standard" typewriters (about 30 pounds), so the Ward's blurb here, indicating a 20-pound machine, hints at a tantalizingly lightweight version!

Sandy Sellers has special interest in machines of Canadian connection: Barr, Jackson, Horton, Bradford, Oliver, etc. He is presently researching the development and marketing of Empire/Wellington/Davis typewriters.

The First American Typewriter

by Darryl C. Rehr

America's first typewriter is hardly an undocumented secret. The "Typographer," invented in 1829 by William Austin Burt is mentioned, often prominently, in nearly every comprehensive typewriter history in print. This machine's operation, however, is much more fascinating than its appearance implies, and typewriter history students have yet to learn some of the personal history surrounding its invention and the later reconstruction of the prototype.

Much of the information to follow comes from materials provided by John S. Burt of Orange, California. John, the great-great-grandson of William Austin Burt, is author of *They Left Their Mark*, a biography of his illustrious ancestor. The chief thrust of the book is Burt's contribution to the field of surveying, including his invention of the *solar compass*, a device which made accurate mapping possible in the expanding United States of the 19th-century.

William Austin Burt was born on June 30, 1792 in Petersham, Massachusetts. With little formal education, he was largely a self-taught man, his knowledge acquired from books. One favorite was a volume on navigation, leading Burt to think of going to sea. His mother, however, persuaded him to stay ashore, and led him toward surveying, which, after all, is certainly related to navigation—it just takes place on *land*.

At age 25, seeking greater opportunities than the East had to offer, he headed West. His travels eventually took him to the Michigan territory, where he became, among

other things, a pioneering surveyor, discoverer of rich mineral sites, a Circuit Court judge and a territorial legislator.

After a term in the Legislature ending in 1827, Burt returned to his home facing an immense pile of correspondence. This, according to John Burt's book, was the impetus for his ancestor's foray into typewriter invention. William Austin Burt was looking for a way to ease the burden of writing with a pen and quill. His answer was America's first *writing machine*.

The Burt *Typographer* was patented on July 23, 1829. The patent document, signed by President Andrew Jackson

and Secretary of State Martin Van Buren, has been reproduced frequently in typewriter literature. The actual patent, with its accompanying drawings was destroyed in the Patent Office fire of 1836, but a copy of the text was preserved, and the drawings were later reconstructed for Patent Office records.

Much of what has been written about the Burt Typographer's design gives an erroneous impression of its mechanism. Here's how it worked:

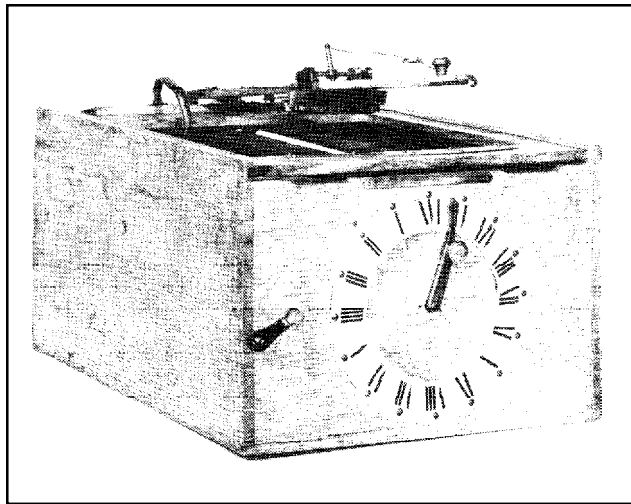
The types were mounted in a pivoting arm. That seems obvious enough. They were inked by two pads running most of the length of the machine.

The paper transport is, perhaps, the most interesting part.

The paper was attached to a cloth band which rode over a thin impression bar running perpendicular to the type (patent Fig. 3). Inside the machine, the band looped



William Austin Burt (1792-1858)



SMITHSONIAN PHOTO

Burt Typographer of 1829, reconstructed by the inventor's great-grandson in 1893.

around a roller, which was attached to a ratchet wheel. After the user pressed the type arm to print, a pivoting arm (patent Fig. 2) engaged the ratchet wheel, advancing the paper one notch. The characteristic “clock face” on the machine’s front was linked to the paper roller and measured the length in inches of the line typed, *not* the number of lines or number of words as others have written. Nor was a continuous roll of paper used. The machine was intended to use single sheets, attached to the cloth band with clips.

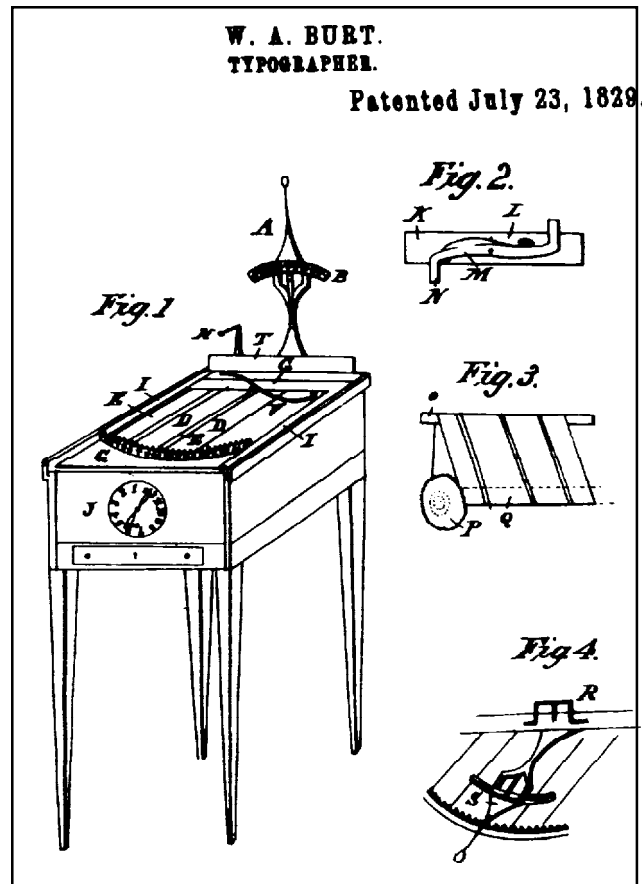
The whole type-arm/inking assembly rode in a frame that traveled forward and back (drawer-style) in two grooves at each side of the machine. To advance to the next line, the user moved this frame forward one notch, and cranked the handle on the clock face back to the starting point, moving the paper to the left margin.

Burt also designed an early shift mechanism into the machine, allowing for two sets of type to accommodate the desire for “italics, capitals, Greek letters, &c.” To shift, the user pulled on the ring seen attached to the cable on the type arm. A spring returned the type to the ordinary or “lower” case letters. Burt is credited by typewriter historians for designing the world’s first double-case machine.

In the patent, Burt said the machine could be any size needed, but a usual model would measure about 18" wide, 24" deep and 12" high. This would print lines 10" wide on a sheet of paper 13" long. The patent makes no mention of the graceful, tapered legs seen in the drawing. This, of course, would have been largely an aesthetic choice, and not a patentable attribute.

In his patent, Burt suggests a model to type multiple copies, not with carbon paper, but with a series of multiple type-arms and paper rollers, all linked by parallel wooden arms. What a fascinating machine *that* might have been!

The standard typewriter histories do make mention of the attempts to market Burt’s machine. Chief among the



Burt's original patent drawings were destroyed by the Patent Office fire of 1836. These are reconstructions made later by patent office employees. Fig. 2 shows the lever which actuates the geared wheel of the paper transport, shown in Fig. 3. Fig. 4 illustrates the shift mechanism.

interested parties was newspaperman John P. Sheldon, of the *Detroit Gazette* (precursor to today’s *Detroit Free Press*), who provided the metal types for Burt’s original model. Sheldon was unhappy with the name “Typographer,” and sought a more user-friendly name by seeking suggestions from the readers of several newspapers. The scheme would also help drum up publicity for the machine. The best idea Sheldon got was “Burt’s Family Letter Press.” Burt himself stuck with “Typographer.”

Burt wanted no part of setting up a factory to produce his invention. He just wanted to sell off the rights and be done with it. One investor, a Cyrus Spalding, gave Burt \$75 for rights to make the machine, but after 8 years of effort, Spalding gave it up and asked for his money back! We don’t know if Burt complied.

Burt’s original model was submitted to the Patent Office, where it was destroyed by the same 1836 fire that consumed the original patent. Burt built a second model in 1830, on which he typed a letter to his wife Phoebe. The fate of that second model is unknown.

New-York March, 13, 1830

Dear Companion,

I have but jest got my second machine into operation and this is the first specimen I send you except a few lines I printed to regulate the machine, I am in good health but am in fear these lines will not find you so and the children from the malenholley account your letter gave me of sickness and deaths in our neighbourhood,, I had rested contented to what I should if it had been summer season about the health of my family, as it is jenerly healthy during the winter months; but

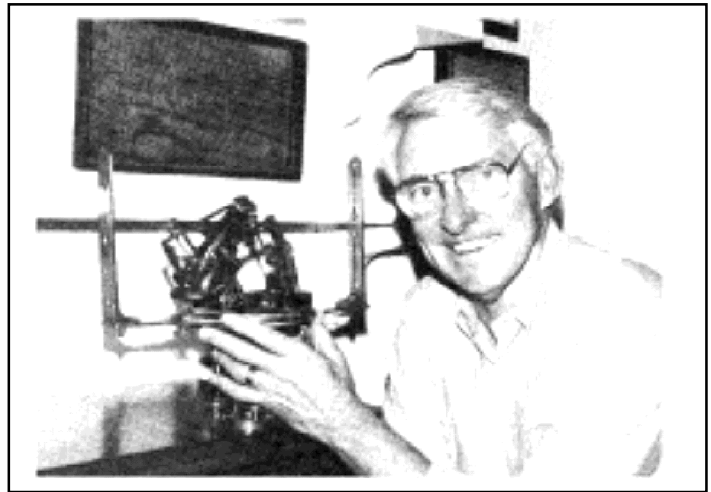
their has ben an unusual quantity of sickness here this winter, and it has ben very cold in Urope as well as in America, a strong indication of the change of season that I have so often mentioned.— Mr Sheldon arrived here four days ago he went immediately on to Washington and took my model for the Patent Office, he will return here next week at which time I shall put my machine on sale and shall sell out the patent as soon as I can and return home, at any rate I shall return home as soon as the Lake navigation is open if life and health is spared me. I have got along but slow since I have been here for the want of cash to hire such help as I wanted; I have been as prudent as I could, have taken my board with a family from Nyuga who keep a boarding house they are very good christian people and are kind to me. I pay three Dollars a week for my board.— You must excuse mistakes, the above is printed among a crowd of people asking me many questions about the machine. Tell the boys that I have some presents for them. If I had any news to communicate I would print more but as I have none I must close hoping these lines will find you well. I wish you to write as soon you receive this, do not make any excuses I shall like see it in any shape

William A. Burt.

Phoebe Burt

Burt's letter to his wife Phoebe written on the second model he produced. Note his apology for the mistakes, saying he was writing with a crowd of people watching and asking questions. The "Mr. Sheldon," then enroute to Washington with the patent model, was newspaper editor John P. Sheldon, who apparently was much more enthusiastic about the machine than Burt. Sheldon seems to have wanted to get Burt involved in actually manufacturing the machine for sale to the public. Burt, as this letter shows, just wanted to sell off the patent rights, and move on to other things.

John S. Burt, great-great-great-grandson of William Austin Burt, with his ancestor's most-famous invention, the solar compass. John S. Burt is author of "They Left Their Mark," a biography of William Austin Burt.



The original model found new life in 1893, as Americans prepared for the great Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The U.S. Patent Office decided it wanted to reconstruct Burt's machine for its exhibit, and the person named to do it was Burt's great-grandson Austin. Austin's work is the source for the familiar photographs of the Burt machine seen here in *ETCetera* and elsewhere. John S. Burt has the manuscript of an autobiography written by Austin in which he relates being drafted into the job:

"During the last of the Winter term [1892, presumably], my cousin Hiram Burt wrote me from Washington that the Patent Dept. had appointed me to reproduce the original model of the first typewriter invented by my great-grandfather and that I would have a position at the World's Fair [Chicago's Columbian Exposition, 1893] in the Government Dept. for working it. This opened up the only hope for seeing the Fair besides making something of a name for me. I am in doubt over the wisdom of my course in accepting the offer since it completely knocked me out of my spring term work in the University [Cornell].

"In some ways I do not regret accepting the offer and in others I do. From subsequent occurrences I am inclined to think that it was best as it was. I received the drawings from the Gov. Patent Dept. at Washington showing the complete details of the typewriter and I set to work with a will and worked night and day on it. Father has taken occasion several times to complain because I neglected my university work and I feel in looking back over it now that he had a right to—but somehow no one can possibly know how intensely interested I became in that machine—forgetting many times to even go to dinner—and I cannot find room to wonder, now, that I neglected my other work.

"As soon as it was done I packed it up and started for Chicago about the middle of April. My work in the Gov. Building consisted of arranging the models in the Patent Dept. under special agent Greely. I found

a room on 63rd St. and through my old friend Cleaver Wilkinson, who was at that time in the Chicago University, I secured admission to the Students Dining Association, so any board and lodging did not cost to exceed \$4.00 a week, and I received \$2.00 per day for 8 hours work. I had a splendid chance to see the fair and become acquainted with the University Students. It was a continual feast from the time I commenced until I left."

It's interesting to compare young Austin's experience at the Fair with that of May Estelle Munson (see *ETCetera* No. 26), who demonstrated Blickensderfer Typewriters in the commercial exhibits. May was paid \$9 per week plus \$10 for her room and board. Then, as today, female wages were usually less than male wages, but in this case, May seems to have bettered her counterpart. Then again, we are comparing private sector employment to public, where wages were, and are, often less.

In the 1920's, Austin Burt was asked to build another Typographer for the Science Museum of London. He declined, but the Science Museum had its own model built in Washington, presumably working from Austin's 1893 reconstruction (now at the Smithsonian). The tradition of reconstructing such historical machines continues today. In the 1980's some reconstructions of Mitterhoffer's 19th century typewriter were built in Austria, and currently, a Dutch craftsman is offering reconstructions of the 1623 calculator of Wilhelm Schickard (see *ETCetera* #28). Perhaps the Burt machine offers an opportunity for a modern craftsman to bring the first American typewriter back to life, supplying specimens for today's collectors, who would, no doubt, be eager to own one.

=====
Those interested in obtaining a copy of "They Left Their Mark," by John S. Burt, should write to: Landmark Enterprises, 10324 Newton Way, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670. Price is \$35.00 plus \$3.00 shipping. California residents, please add sales tax.

BACK TO BASICS

for beginning collectors

Beginners Odell

Antique dealers, looking for a rule of thumb to identify desirable old typewriters, often say, "if it doesn't look like a typewriter, you probably have something!" Few machines fit that bill as well as the Odell Typewriter, an index machine that many beginners will have an opportunity to own.

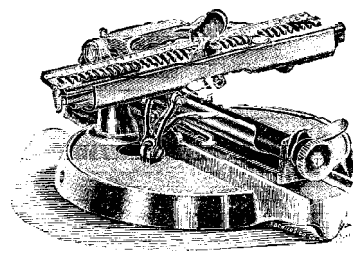
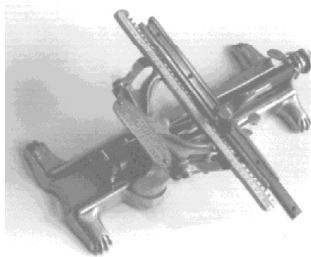
The Odell is the most common of what are often called "linear" index typewriters. The types are located on a sliding bar. To type, the user slides the bar to the appropriate point, and presses down. The type brushes past an ink roller before contacting the paper, which is fed around a narrow cylindrical platen.

Fortunately, identifying Odell's various models is fairly easy, since most of them are designated. The earliest models (1 & 2) are not, and that's where the beginner needs the most help.

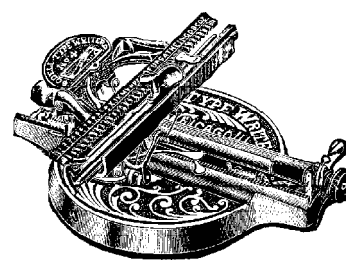
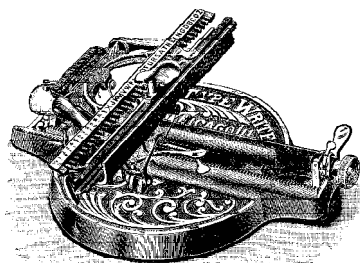
The first model ("1a") of the Odell Typewriter is also the rarest, with only two examples currently known. Collector Jos Legrand, of Belgium has dubbed this the "seal" model, because of the little "feet" (resembling seal feet) on the base. While all other Odell typewriters have round bases, the seal model is long and narrow, with only its feet to prevent it from rocking back and forth as you type. The first Odell types 41 characters, capitals only, and its nameplate designates Lake Geneva, Wisconsin as its place of manufacture, with a patent "pending." Yet to be found is an Odell seen in an early engraving, known as the "dogbone" model, because its base is in the shape of a dogbone, without the seal "feet."

Next in line is a machine known as the "1b." This is a caps-only Odell printing 42 characters. It has a round base with decoration having a vague American Indian appearance and looking as if it were etched into the mold with a pencil tip. The top surface of the

BARBIAN COLLECTION



CUT OF OUR DOUBLE CASE MACHINE.



Clockwise from UL: Odell #1a ("seal" model), cut of double-case Odell with Indian base design (from brochure recently found by Larry Wilhelm), Odell #2, Odell #4.

base is painted gold. There are a number of variations of the "1b." First is one with the Lake Geneva/patent pending nameplate. Another is one showing a patent date of 1889, and a third with same date, but a Chicago, Illinois location. Almost all Odell 1b's have a "lip" on the outside edge of the base, but we have seen at least one with no lip, though its unclear whether this is original or whether someone ground the edge after manufacture.

Odells later than the No. 1's all type upper and lower case. All known examples also have fully nickeled, beautifully ornate bases inscribed "Odell Typewriter, Chicago, Ill. in luxurious art-nouveau letters. Model No.2 (and afterward) has a line-end bell, though No. 1's made after March, 1890 have bells as well. No.2 prints 78 characters. Larry Wilhelm, of Wichita Falls, TX recently found an early Odell brochure which includes a cut of a double-case machine with the early Indian-design base. No examples are known.

The No. 3 Odell is the first to have the enlarged semicircular nameplate section on the printing arm assembly of the machine. The successive models 4 and 5 have the same profile and each has the model number prominently shown in the casting.

The most common of the Odells is the No. 4. Most of these machines

appear to have been made by a firm called "Farquar & Albrecht," and often come in a wooden box with a sliding lid. There is also a No. 5, which appears to be very rare. The print arm casting shows Menominee, Illinois as its home. There is an Odell No. 5 in the Clark Collection in Kansas City, and Jos Legrand tells us he has seen some others in Europe. Another Odell variation is a check-writing type-slider, which protects checks by perforating them.

Anyone latching onto a tip about an Odell should always ask the buyer if the type slider is still there. The slider slips out of the machine easily, and an uninformed seller might not miss it. Also ask if the ink roller is present. It should be if the machine is to be considered complete.

A lot of Odells (principally No. 4's) were made around the turn of the century, selling at the bargain price of \$5 (down from \$15 when the machine was first introduced, and \$20 for the first double-case model). Among collectors, most Odells in good condition today sell in the \$500-1000 range (No. 1b's often higher, 1a's much higher). They are not terribly uncommon, and while not cheap, they are well within reach of most who are bitten by their attractive appearance and appealing design.

J.Q. Vandz struck my big fox
whelp. J.Q. Vandz struck my big
fox whelp. J.Q. Vandz struck my big
fox whelp. J.Q. Vandz struck my
big fox whelp. J.Q. Vandz struck my
struck my big fox whelp. J.Q. V

Typewriter Computer Fonts

Just about every computer you can find these days bears that 121-year-old reminder of its lineage: the QWERTY keyboard. So, isn't it fitting that such machines, now that they've gotten all those nice proportional designer fonts out of their systems, should emulate old typewriters in other ways, too?

A while back, we mentioned "Harting," a computer font that looks like print from an old typewriter:

Harting looks like this.

Well, Harting is getting more and more company all the time. "American Typewriter" (Adobe) and "Domestic Typer" (FontBank) are two commercial typewriter fonts that give the typewriter look with proportional spacing:

American Typewriter is used for the "ETCetera" masthead...

...but the similar Domestic Typer is not.

The L.A. Macintosh Users Group electronic bulletin board recently offered a font called "ScreenPlay," yet another computer font made to look like a typewriter. Here's how it was described: "This is a slightly-sloppier-than-Courier font that will make your laser printed script look like it came off of a daisy wheel—cool, huh? A little bolder, harsher, heavier than standard Courier, a tad more ragged; a welcome advance in the increasingly slick, uptight world of movie industry trivial pursuit. A pretty good item until someone comes up with a font that looks like it came from an old Royal portable—so your script can look like it came out of a cubicle at Universal c.1933. "

"ScreenPlay," by the way, looks like this.

It is quite similar to the ubiquitous "Courier."

Of course, as soon as the writer describing "Screenplay" mentioned a font looking like an old Royal, someone came up with one:

It's called "Vintage Typewriter-Royal."

It was created by Susan Townsend, of Goleta, CA, a computer nut who's been scouring old junk shops, typing out samples on old machines, and converting them into computer fonts. She has five others:

**Vintage Typewriter-Corona
Vintage Typewriter-
Remington Portable
Vintage Typewriter-
Remington Premier
Vintage Typewriter-Royal Deluxe
Vintage Typewriter-Royal Elite**

If you're interested in these, send \$20 to Susan Townsend, 5662 Calle Real, Goleta, CA 93117. Fonts are available for Mac or PC's.

Finally, one more font to mention. It's called "Crud" and it's based on a modern IBM Selectric font from a type element that has been dropped down the kitchen sink.

**You really think this is cruddy?
Take a trip through the garbage
disposal yourself and see how you
feel!**

A few other TW fonts have surfaced too close to press time for this article. More about those later. Meanwhile, if anyone else knows of any typewriter computer fonts out there, please let us know. If you can make them available on disk for Macintosh, we can print samples in future issues of ETCetera.

Condition Revisited

We haven't discussed condition in old typewriters since way back in *ETCetera* No. 10 (March, 1990). So, perhaps it's time to revisit the subject.

For some time, most of us have been using the German 6-point system with 1 being the best, 6 the worst. Though workable, this system has its limitations. Many people have had problems attaching the right *word* to each level. Thus far, the Germans have given us the following:

- 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-defective; small parts missing
- 6-completely defective; important parts missing; irreparable

Each machine is given a double rating, with the first number indicating appearance, the second number indicating function.

Since the beginning of this discussion, *ETCetera* has advocated using a *single descriptive word* for each level. The problem has been in coming up with those words. Many of us feel that a machine of condition 1, for instance, should certainly be called *excellent* rather than *very good*. If so, where does that leave us? Something like this?

- 1-excellent
- 2-very good
- 3-good
- 4-fair
- 5-poor
- 6-parts

Perhaps this fits. However, can we really call a "3" machine, halfway down the scale, *good*? And if our German colleagues think *good* belongs to condition "2," what do we call "3," *fair*

perhaps? What happens to condition "4" then?

Americans tend to rate things on the familiar "scale of 1 to 10," an interesting habit considering the fact that we still use feet, inches and miles while the rest of the world uses the metric system. But, maybe we should give in to our inclinations and use a 10 point condition scale, with 10 being best. Here's a suggested list of adjectives to go with it:

- 10-near-mint
- 9-excellent
- 8-very good
- 7-good
- 6-decent
- 5-fair
- 4-rough
- 3-poor
- 2-parts
- 1-hopeless

Does this work for you? It certainly gives some more descriptive territory to those thousands of machines which may not be very good, but only good... those that aren't good but are better than fair, etc., etc., etc.

As always, *ETCetera* invites comment. What do *you* think?

Name Those Typewriter Parts!

Sorry, folks. No one came up with *Remington Notes*, Vo. 4, No. 2, so the official Remington answers to the quiz appearing on page 3 of our last issue aren't available.

In fact, No. 2 remains a stumper... even everyone's favorite expert Paul Lippman was unable to come up with an answer. One reader suggested "platen" for the picture of the serving woman stacking plates on the table, but considering the very literal nature of all the other images, that answer is unlikely.

OK, here are the answers:

1. **Loose Dog** - a likely guess might have been *escapement* dog, which, while sounding

correct, is not literal. The picture shows an *escaped*, or **loose** dog, which is the correct name of one of Remington's escapement parts.

2. **(still unknown)**
3. **Type Faces** - the picture shows the faces five men of various races, or *types*.
4. **Paper Table** - an easy one. Picture shows newspapers on a table.
5. **Column Selector** - we're so used to calling these "tab keys," we may be unaware of Remington's official name for the set of keys above the number row. The picture shows a gentleman perusing architectural columns for his home, and making a choice. He is, therefore, a *column selector*.
6. **Cap Lock Key** - picture shows a cap on a key, which is labeled "Yale." Yale, of course, is the well known manufacturer of all kinds of locks.
7. **Wahl Adder** - a tough one, especially for those unfamiliar with this attachment for doing addition on a Remington machine. The picture shows a young boy writing "2+2=4" on a wall. For an interesting alternate interpretation, see *Letters*.
8. **Paper Feed** - a goat eating paper. If you didn't get this one, start reading some typewriter instruction manuals. Just about every typewriter ever made, even modern ones, have a "paper feed."

Now, who has the answer to Number 2? We might find it by looking through an original instruction booklet for the Remington 10. Does anybody have one???

International News

Connecticut

September's *Ribbon Tin News* devoted most of its issue to ribbon tin "go-withs" such as erasing shields, blotters and other ephemera. *RTN* editor Hoby Van Deusen noted that the "ultimate" ribbon tin go-withs are typewriters. An interesting perspective. Typewriter collectors, of course, consider *ribbon tins* to be the "go-withs." In any case, the 7 color pages in this particular issue honor the subject well.

In the same issue the editor announces that he hopes to publish his "master list" of 3,000 tins next year. This is, of course, welcome news for collectors who have been seeking a comprehensive reference for some time. Van Deusen says the initial publication may be available to *RTN* subscribers only, so if you want to be included, better get on the subscriber list (cost: \$30/yr). Contact: Hoby Van Deusen, 28 The Green, Watertown, CT 06795.

Germany

Although prices from the well-known Auktion Team Köln auctions are readily available in compiled form (see box at right), a little *extra* price information from overseas regularly comes from *Typenkorb & Typenhebel*, published monthly by Peter Muckermann of Rheda-Wiedenbrück, Germany. Besides reports from many European auctions, *T&T* makes an effort to report *private* sales and flea markets as well (something once, but no longer, done by the other German-language magazine, *Historische Bürowelt*). The last page in each *T&T* features the "Marktfenster," devoted to prices reported by readers, but specifically excluding auction results.

T&T is available to ETC members at \$40 per year. Like ETCetera, *T&T* distinguishes itself with regular on-schedule publication, which other European journals cannot match.

Collector's Insurance

An interesting insurance program is available from American Collectors Insurance, Inc. of Cherry Hill, NJ. ACI offers insurance at \$75 per \$10,000 valuation per year, and you don't have to have a professional "appraiser" appraise your collection. That's good, since most professional appraisers don't know what they're doing when it comes to typewriters.

You do need to photograph your entire collection for the company, and

provide individual photos for high-cost items. We don't have any specific information on the kind of experience collectors have had with this outfit. The information is provided to ETCetera from the company itself.

To find out more, contact American Collectors Insurance, Inc., 385 N. Kings Hwy., P.O. Box 8343, Cherry Hill, NJ 08002-0343. Tel. 609-779-7212.

Super BOOKS from ETCetera

The Writing Machine: a history of the typewriter by Michael Adler—this classic reference, published in 1973 (50th anniversary of the typewriter), remains the *best* typewriter history in the English language. This is a *must have* for every typewriter collector. Hardbound, 380 pages, profusely illustrated and *only* \$52 (postage: \$3/US, \$5/Mex, Can, \$14/overseas). Very limited supply, and this offer may not be repeated, so grab yours now!

Auktion Team Köln Price Lists—anyone interested in tracking world typewriter and calculator prices knows to watch the action at Germany's Auktion Team Köln. The very best way to watch the prices is to purchase Peter Mazlowski's compiled price booklets. Books available put all prices from 1987 to 1993 right in front of your eyes for easy reference. No more searching for back issues of auction catalogs that you probably don't have anyway. Price \$15 (+\$1 postage) each for the Typewriter Price List and the Calculator Price List. Available to U.S. members only.

History of the Lambert—by Peter Muckermann. The result of an exhaustive research project, Muckermann tells us how to distinguish between the different models of this one-of-a-kind machine. Includes an international census of known Lamberts and extensive *color* photographs. \$20 ppd in US, \$23 Canada & Mexico, \$26 overseas.

The Wonderful Writing Machine by Bruce Bliven—this popular volume is a collectors item in itself. Commissioned in the 1950's by the Royal Typewriter Co., this is one of the most *readable* typewriter histories ever written. Enjoy this look at Typewriter Past as told by a professional journalist who knew well how to tell stories so that they were engaging and entertaining. Only 2 copies left. New condition, but without dust cover. \$75 postpaid.

Make checks payable to Darryl Rehr and send to 2591 Military Ave., L.A., CA 90064.

ADVERTISEMENTS

FOR SALE: Caligraph (possibly a 4). Appears complete, but in mediocre condition. \$50 + shipping. Sam Pector, 14 Brookfall Rd., Edison, NH 08817. Tel 908-985-5308.

FOR SALE: Smith Premier #2, Victor Std. #3, Remington Std. #7, Bing #2, Nat'l #5. Rizzo & Ricotta Office Products., 31 Main St., Tonawanda, NY 14150. Tel 716-694-1169. Fax. 716-694-0697.

WANTED: Dennis Duplex, Underwood 1 (must say "Wagner" on machine). Bill Kortsch, 6629 Sunset Cir., Riverside, CA 92505. Tel. 909-687-1155.

WANTED: Mechanical calculators (Friden, Marchant, Monroe, etc.) and/or associated manuals. Am willing to pay cash for machines/manuals in good condition. Milt Ferguson, 1500 El Paso, Fullerton, CA 92633. Tel. 714-870-6996

FOR SALE: 1946 Olympia with case. German keyboard. Mint cond. Best offer. Rudi Trunk. 646-941-89212.

WANTED: Odell check protector - Larry Wilhelm, Box 1922, Wichita Falls, TX 76307

TIPS:

"REMINGTON" (looks like a Smith Premier 10)-Working condition. Elizabeth Scott, 648 Ashland Ave., Niagara Falls, NY 14301.

MW-with base & cover. Mildred Atchison, 1377 Camino Teresa, Solana Beach, CA 92075.

FOLDING CORONAS:

•w/ "Hawaiian News Co." label. Charlene Davis, 1164 Beverly Dr., Vista, CA 92084

•w/ case, tools & soft cover. Barbara Thurston, 1621 Calmin Dr., Fallbrook CA 92028

•ser # 597788. "Works perfectly." RW Hessler, 206 Spring Lane, Delavan, WI 53115

OLIVERS:

•No. 9. Robert Groth, 1712 E. Hyacinth, St. Paul, MN 55106.

•No. 5. William Bennett, Sr. 624A Soders Rd., Carneys Point, NJ08069

•No. 3. "excellent condition" Kathy, Lindel, Rt. 1, Box 144, Cabool, MO 65689. Tel. 417-962-3442

•No. 3. cover, no base. "seems to be usable with maintenance." C.E. Dinkler, 7310 Timber Ridge Dr., Mint Hill, NC 28227. Tel. 704-545-5261

SOUNDCRIBER, wooden case. Paul Baron, 27 Halls Point Rd., Stony Creek, CT 06405. Tel 203-481-0888

SMITH PREMIER #4 - Goldie Amos, 4929 Amos Mill Rd., White Hall, MD 21161

REMINGTON SMITH PREMIER (same as SP 10) - working condition. Floyd Olson, 9171 Grossmont Blvd., La Mesa, CA 91941-4141.

SMITH PREMIER #4 - sounds like it has base & cover. Mrs. Thomas Scott, Benn Farms, Devec, N.B., CANADA EOJ IJO

MARCHANT-electric, 9-key rows. Works. Deborah Dalton, PO Box 171, Hinkley, CA 92347. Tel. 619-253-2207

LETTERS

My guesses for the Remington quiz are: 1. Escapement 2. Platen 3. Types 4. Paper Table 5. Columnar Tab 6. Shift Key (sometimes labeled "CAPS".) 7. Backspace 8. Paper Feed. #7 puzzled me the longest, until I noted the very expressive *back* of the little boy, and then that he's pointing at blank *space* ahead of the second "2".

William Danner
Kennerdell, PA

[Bill Danner wins for "Best Alternative Interpretation" for his stab at #7-Ed..]

I have recently managed to make contact with Prof. Michael Williams (among other things he translated with Dr. Peggy Kidwell Ernst Martin's "Calculating Machines"). He writes:

"Peggy Kidwell and I had tried our best to find some information about the author (Ernst Martin), but we were unable to locate anything at all. After the book was in print we heard from a man who told us that Ernst Martin had never even existed - it was simply a name made up by the publisher

(Johannes Meyer) who did the work himself. We even received several photocopies of letters from Myer (who is long dead) admitting to this. No wonder we couldn't find out anything about E. Martin!"

Erez Kaplan
Israel

I've posted notices recently on some Internet newsgroups, fishing for old typewriters. I got some responses -- some casual and not-so-casual collectors wrote back, and some people wrote back to say that they had things in their attics. The only potential "find" so far is a Multiplex, but I'm pleased with the results of this experiment and will repeat it sometime. I've recommended ETC and passed on your e-mail address to a few people who may contact you.

Richard Polt
Cincinnati, OH
POLT@xavier.xu.edu,Internet

[Richard is among the few collectors now regularly communicating with *ETCetera* on the computer world's Internet. This really works great, folks--so, join in!]

Tomorrow I'm off to see an old lady who says she has a "Hamilton." The only Hamilton I know is the Automatic invented by E.M. Hamilton. I asked her to spell the name, and she did spell "Hamilton." What makes me dubious, though is that every drawing or photo of an Automatic has "Automatic" on the faceplate and nothing that says "Hamilton." We'll see...

I'm afraid "That Hamilton Woman" gave me the *Royal* runaround (Lord Nelson would have been proud). The woman actually stood me up twice when I went to her house to get a look at the machine. Then on the third try came the ultimate disappointment. Yup, you guessed it, the Hamilton turned out to be a HAMMOND--and a Multiplex at that. Grrr!

Ken Gladstone
Jacksonville, FL