

Ault & Wiborg of Cincinnati is a well-known to typewriter collectors as a ribbon supplier. Its larger business, however, was production of fine quality lithographic inks. European poster publishers were among their best customers, and A&W inks appeared famous designs such as this 1897 poster by H. Gerbault originally used to advertise Carpentier Chocolate in France. A&W used it to sell its inks as well. This poster ad appeared in *The Inland Printer* and is one of many such ads which were seen around the turn of the last century. Spectacular TW ephemera.

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# ETCetera

No.  
49



Dec.  
1999

Journal of the Early  
Typewriter Collectors Association

## Whose Invention is it **ANYWAY?**



## The Typewriters of Peter Mitterhofer

# ETCetera

Journal of the Early Typewriter  
Collectors Association

Dec. 1999 - No. 49

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## EDITOR'S NOTES

I am delighted to begin my last *Editor's Notes* not by bemoaning the impending extinction of ETCetera, but by passing the baton to Kevin McGowin of Raleigh, North Carolina. McGowin is an educator, an experienced editor and publisher and a typewriter collector! You'll read more about him on page 6.

Judging from the reactions I received from my various announcements about stepping down as editor, this will

be a welcome development for most people. There are those who have been disappointed, however, by the ETC. While I'll pass on dealing with petty rivalries, jealousies and whatnot, I will share a little of that disappointment. But only a little.

ETC, while founded with the best of intentions, evolved into something of a "do nothing" group that consisted only of those who wanted to read ETCetera. At our founding meeting in 1987, Richard Dickerson suggested that this might become the true nature of our group. He compared it to the National Geographic Society, which, after all, is a Society of those who subscribe to *National Geographic*.

My principal complaint was with the lack of willingness on the part of membership to do some work for the group. Suggestions were frequent: set up a spare-parts bank...form a committee to assist widows of deceased collectors in selling machines...arrange regular meetings...etc. However, no one was willing to step forward to do the work to make those happen. As editor of ETCetera, I felt my time contribution was adequate, and so other things should be left to other people.

Then, the Internet happened. Suddenly, the ETC emblem is displayed in a number of new places (and not only the home page [www.typewriter.org](http://www.typewriter.org)). Paul Robert's *Typewriter Restoration Site* is incomparable and even includes that long-desired parts bank. Jay Respler is attempting to compile an all-inclusive site with photos of every typewriter made. Richard Polt proudly signifies his

ETC membership on his first-of-its-kind *Classic Typewriter Page*.

All this interest and activity gives greater credence to the word "association." Although I've tried to encourage this kind of communication and connections among collectors from the beginning, it has taken the opening of this Information Superhighway to make it happen. Perhaps some of those other things, like arranging local meetings or (shudder) even nationwide gatherings might follow.

It would be nice if Kevin McGowin is not burdened with anything but producing ETCetera and does not have to become the de-facto "leader" of the association. I can't count the number of times that people have referred to me as the "ETC President," something which I never was, never wanted to be and never claimed to be. As things have developed, ETC doesn't need officers, bylaws or structure. What it needs is engaging collectors who like to connect rather than to hide in the wood-work.

†††

Speaking of the Internet, the typewriter e-mail list founded under the aegis of ETC has seen a remarkable spurt of activity in the past few months. Spurred by a campaign put forth by Jay Respler of Freehold, New Jersey, connected collectors have found a welcome and open forum for a wide variety of discussions. The list (officially named "TYPEWRITERS") is a fully automated thing, meaning messages are posted without having to go through the computer of a moderator. This not only removes a procedural layer, but also allows postings without anyone looking

over your shoulder. Discussions have ranged from the minutiae of differences between Imperial A&B machines to the ideal content of a proposed collection designed to display typewriter development. There was even an online auction of a Crandall typewriter, which was sold for \$7000, something with which the seller must have been very pleased. Expressed fears that indicated such a non-supervised list would be subject to "spam" and commercial pressures have not materialized. Here, again, is yet another reason for the non-connected to find a way to hitch up to the Internet. For a simple solution, see the ETCetera article on WebTV in issue No. 47.

†††

As ETC continues, might I suggest again (I've done it many times) that it be used for your own collection-building publicity? Using your membership in ETC gives you something of a cachet as a collector, and that was certainly one of the benefits envisioned by the ragged band of us who founded the group back in 1987. Why not stage your own membership campaign to encourage ("incite" might be a better word) would-be collectors to join? As a matter of course, you may attract the attention of someone not interested in collecting, but interested in getting rid of an old machine. Perhaps even a *good* old machine. Some collectors do it by advertising, others by word of mouth, others by handing out cards or leaflets at flea markets—there are a million methods. If someone contacts you and is genuinely interested in membership, pass them along to Kevin McGowin.

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The point is that you don't have to be the journal editor to be a publicist, and publicity will help you find machines that otherwise might never have been found...by anyone.

†††

If you think the online-electronic-world is entirely co-opting the Real World as a place to find old typewriters, think again. At the Rose Bowl Flea Market in Pasadena, California, I saw a very decent Odell No. 5 sold for a mere \$100 last October. Tsk! I was two minutes late to get it myself, but it does prove that these little buggers are still out there.

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## LETTERS

The car shown in the photo of Paxton's on page 18 of No. 46 caught my eye at once. With a good magnifier I examined the hood and radiator and I'm pretty sure that it's a four-cylinder Moon. I wondered about the body, which is unproportionately large, and then it struck me that it was probably originally a hearse. These were usually traded in after a few years, with low mileage and in excellent condition and at quite low prices. Practically every city had one or more body repair shops, one of which could have made the required changes in the body. Those back doors might well have been the original ones, leaving only the interior and the side to be changed. If the car was originally a hearse, the long panel over the left rear wheel probably had a panel of leaded plate glass. In this case it was necessary only to replace that left

one with a steel panel and to remove the right one for complete rebuilding of the whole interior and the right side. The Moon was made in St. Louis and in the twenties it was said that its cars were as numerous as were some of the better-known makes in the East. It was a well-made car in the medium price range and was done in by the Depression. My knowledge of Moon cars stems from the fact that Dad had a 1927 Ciana straight eight, and a 1929 Windsor straight eight, both built by Moon.

Bill Danner  
Kennerdell, PA

*e-Bay participants will know that I'm in the process of selling a large chunk of my ribbon tin collection. After getting no takers on about 600 tins as a group, my alternative was to put them up for auction at the rate of a couple per day. After one sale, this particularly charming letter came through by e-mail. -Ed.*

I am what you should describe as a very casual collector of typewriter tins. My offices have, for years, been decorated with antique and vintage office related items. The tins are, to me, the most interesting of the lot. It's amazing how one little ol' tin can calm some of the hollering, whining and frustrated staff who frequent my office. They'll be so upset over something and find themselves talking to me while holding and scrutinizing this "can." As I listen and watch, I can almost see the question and/or comment starting to form and sure enough...the conversation changes (not every time!) and the big problem the person brought into my office has been reduced in size.

I love your auctions...your pictures and descriptions are the best I've seen - and - I'll continue to watch them with hopes of finding another just-for-me item and having the opportunity of conducting more business with you. Until then...

Judy Taylor  
Garland, TX

Another terrific job [#48]! The *Best Laid Plans* piece is full of really neat information on one of my favorite topics, the Travis. As you might remember, we have a set of Philadelphia Typewriter Company documents, including a stock certificate (1897) and two letters from Travis (as Secretary of the Committee) insisting upon money from the investors because of development problems in the typewriter.

Of course, Bob's piece [on the Allen Typewriter] is a big addition to our knowledge about the Allen. And Hoke's cards are especially fun. The child on the lower left of p. 22 may be using a Chicago, but we have two others with the same little girl from the same German publisher, one tinted in color, that are fairly clearly a Munson.

The *Ornamental Typewriting* piece makes you want to try it on your computer, but we can't figure out how to print two letters at the same location.

Peter & Cornelia Weil  
Newark, DE

*Ornamental typewriter tricks are performed with the computer using a page layout program such as PageMaker. Certain draw-*

*ing programs may work as well - Ed.*

Thanks for the September ETCetera. Yet another beautiful job! Hey, I kinda like that OY! design...

Richard Polt  
Cincinnati, O

There comes a time when one considers one's overextendedness and breaks away. You've done an almost superhuman job...your contribution to T/W history will be appreciated.

Siegfried Snyder  
Paducah, KY

I write this letter to deliver a sad message: MY TYPEWRITER MUSEUM IN MALTA HAS CLOSED DOWN! I am quite disappointed as I never imagined such a poor response considering the flow of tourists and Maltese that passed by the Museum - this could be an eye-opener to others who might one day consider venturing into something similar, I tell them to beware. Some people have told me that it would have been best to have shared the Museum with other interests - which would have attracted more interests - Perhaps I was too daring.

John Pace O'Shea  
Sliema, MALTA

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## ADVERTISEMENTS

FOR SALE: Blick 5 with 3 extra type wheels, case. Joseph Hennage, 405 S. England St., Williamsburg, VA 23185

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WANTED TO BUY: I will pay \$20 each for the "S" and "Shift" keytops for a Pittsburg Visible No. 10. Please contact Bob Newton, 4735 Cape Arago Highway, Coos Bay, OR 97420. Phone: (541) 888-2257

Tips:  
Remington No. 1 portable. Helen Davenport, 325 W. Clifton Ave., Sioux City, IA 51104-2207

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## Kevin McGowin

With this issue, I take great pleasure in introducing Kevin McGowin as the new editor of ETCetera, effective with No. 50 in March 2000. Please join me in welcoming him and in offering your support.

McGowin is a 30-year-old Lecturer in the Department of English and Humanities at the University of North Carolina, recently transplanted there from Florida, where he earned his Ph.D. in 1998. Over the years, he has amassed the kind of expertise and experience making him an ideal choice for the editor's job on this journal. Aside from having collected typewriters for 10 years (many more years, I should say, than when *I* started editing ETCetera in 1987), McGowin is a highly skilled writer, editor and publisher in his own right.

This multi-talented individual came to ETCetera after my repeated public entreaties for a replacement. Express-

ing surprise that no one else would step into the position, McGowin volunteered, and we will all benefit as a result.

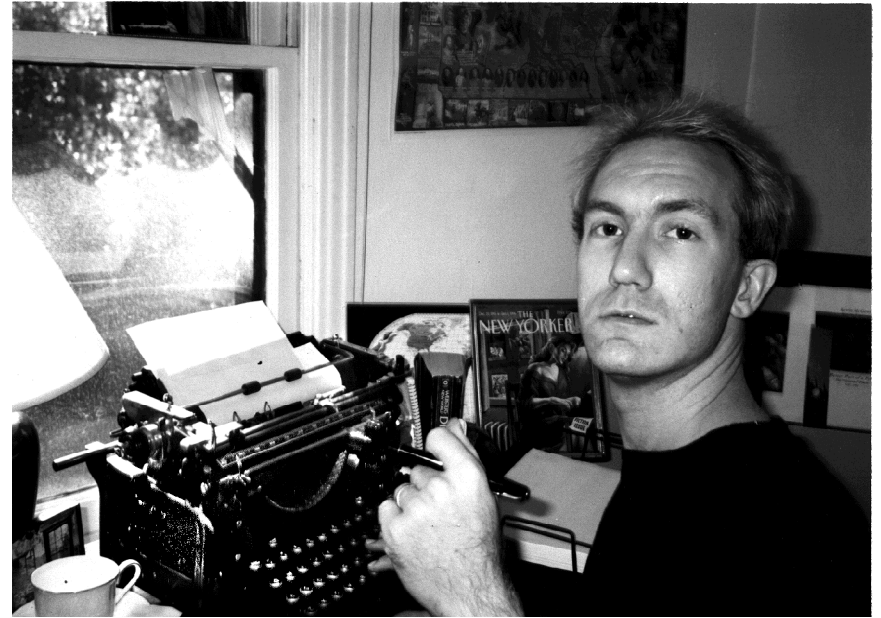
What was necessary to retain the quality established here over the past twelve years was someone who had writing, publishing, editing, aesthetic, diplomatic and managerial skills—all quite aside from any expertise in the intricacies of typewriter history. McGowin has all of these and has expressed his willingness to publish ETCetera as it has been published: with a commitment to quality in a grown-up atmosphere, good writing, an on-time delivery schedule and a tone that is intelligent without being stuffy. ETCetera, therefore, will continue uninterrupted after this issue, maintaining the consistency established since its beginning.

On his academic Curriculum Vitae, Kevin McGowin lists "interests" ranging from William Blake to American Film Noir. A brief scratching of the surface, however, will also reveal the existence of a rabid basketball fan with a nasty sense of humor, as well as a healthy interest in these old machines we call "typewriters."

While many of you may well be interested in his other writings (they consist of fiction, poems, reviews, articles and plays), the appropriate piece to publish here is his *Why I Use a Manual Typewriter*, originally seen on *The Classic Typewriter Page* of Richard Polt. Read it on the following pages, and use it to get to know Kevin McGowin.

Welcome aboard.

—Darryl Rehr



Kevin McGowin in an enigmatic pose at his Underwood. Notice the similarity to a painting by Modigliani (one of McGowin's favorite artists). Photo by Bonnie McGowin

## Why I Use a MANUAL TYPEWRITER by Kevin McGowin

I am a professional fiction writer and literature instructor living in North Carolina. I work every day at the fiction, writing at least 750 words on whatever my current project is. I've published eleven stories the past two years, written a novel and a novella: and I did it all on "antique" manual typewriters. I didn't always do it this way; I used to use word processors and computers exclusively, for everything I wrote. I am thirty years old, and by the time I was typing my own papers in high school, the typewriter was already a thing of the past.

It's not a matter of some hazy principle, then, or because I'm set in my ways; I'm by no means a "Luddite," nor do I (so far as I know) try to live in the past, affecting nostalgia for a time I never knew. I have two computers, with most of the usual up-to-date features and programs—doubtless already outdated, but I upgrade every year or so. I use e-mail frequently and maintain two web sites, both related to my teaching. And of the eleven stories I mentioned having published in the last two years, nine first appeared in online journals, a decision

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which offered me a bit more exposure than the dusty hard copy on a library shelf which, when its quarter is up, is relegated to the bindery and the even dustier and less-frequented anonymous stacks. Now this matters less, as even the most time-honored and prestigious of magazines and journals that publish literature often maintain web sites and archive their back issues there, online.

So if you do an internet search under my name, you'll probably come up with quite a few hits, of which a large percentage are pieces of fiction. You can access them with the click of a mouse, right there on your screen. And I wrote them all on my old manuals. I began this process in 1993, and by the next year had moved to typewriters almost exclusively—because I'm convinced it improves my writing, or at least makes it more like the platonic ideal of the writing I see in my mind's eye that I would like to produce. And since I've made the shift back to the typewriter, I've written more and with more discipline, been less hasty and sloppy, and have seen improvement and now feel more confident.

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**" I've written more and with more discipline... and now feel more confident."**

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I rarely encourage my students to write this way (as if they would anyway), and indeed I've noticed a significant improvement in freshman writing since I first taught composition at the college level, in 1992: fewer misspelled words, for one thing, (which may be the result of the spell-checkers in the word processing programs), and better diction, probably the result of their having a built-in and easy-to-use thesaurus and dictionary at the touch of a button. And I'm not bothered by this in the least—on the contrary, as is evidenced by their in-class writings, students have gradually learned from these devices, which many instructors saw as a sort of collusion or even “cheating” when they were first introduced. And regardless of the arguments against computers and Internet publishing, etc., the fact is this: somebody's gotta write it, and somebody's gotta read it, just like it always was. At least for the foreseeable future, that is.

When I first undertook serious creative writing, I wrote mostly poetry, which I usually wrote longhand on yellow legal pads, which (with variations) many poets still do. I then typed the revised poem out on an electric typewriter that had seen better days. When I later bought a word processor, I composed the poems the same way but typed them into the word processor, which of course saved them in its memory—and I found this, coupled with the word processor's monitor and spell-check device, very helpful in terms of revisions, which I now did more often, probably to the overall betterment of the poetry. Before long, I even composed a few at the word processor keyboard.

I did the same with the fiction I was beginning to write more and more often. I hadn't written much fiction during the younger, “poetry” years, and I never could

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get the hang of writing prose longhand—it took too much time, and I lost too much, as I thought faster than I could legibly write. Most of my “prose” then consisted of the papers I had to write for various college classes, and I wrote them all at the electric typewriter, getting blasted for errors of manuscript format and spelling until the word processor came along. Then the composition went reasonably well (well enough for me to hold my own in a competitive graduate program in English), at least in “academic” writing, which for me then as now is a much more technical and rigid form of writing than creative work, and for which the computer, when I finally got one, worked very well. I could ramble on and on with few misspelled words and correct manuscript format, and could move around large blocks of text and cut and paste from other documents, always recycling, always cutting corners wherever I could. For me in that particular realm, the word-processing computer was the greatest invention ever: It almost seemed to do the work for me. And that's why it didn't work for fiction, for me. I became careless, sloppy, hasty and complacent. I speak only for myself, but I am personally acquainted with three very well-known American novelists who are by no means elderly who use typewriters for composing their creative work for this very reason.

I came back to typewriters the long way around, then, and when I did it was to the classic manual that I went—the electric seemed just like a substandard word processor to me, and I always felt that if I was going to compose on an electric typewriter I may as well just keep going at it on the computer. But my reasons were aesthetic, too, and when creating an art form this makes sense: I found that I loved the lack of electricity, of not being “plugged in” to the wall, the feel of the hammers sculpting their shapes onto the paper.

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**"I loved... the feel of the hammers sculpting their shapes onto the paper."**

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Manual typewriters seem to me to have their own personalities, unlike electric machines or especially computers—they have different feels, different sounds, and different looks. One has to find the appropriate rhythm to work on such “instruments,” and that rhythm to a large degree dictates the tone and flavor of the writing, and, at least in my head (where the work gets done anyway, or not), seems more unique than if I were to attempt the pieces at the same generic computer keyboard. I find my concentration enhanced, my sentences more taut, and by not being able to move around huge blocks of text I find myself more in tune with the narrative flow of the piece. In fact I came to these conclusions soon after I first used a manual for my serious creative work, typing a couple of short pieces just to see how it would feel; I now use manuals in my creative (and sometimes even my “academic”) writing exclusively.

I own about ten typewriters, nine of which are manuals in good repair and several of which are “antique.” I use different machines for different kinds of

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writing—I'm writing this "personal essay" on my aforementioned first antique manual, a black 1940s Royal KM (like my initials—a famous novelist who admired my poetry gave it to me in 1993). It types small and works well for essay-type writing. For correspondence, including cover and query letters to editors and publishers, I use a 1935 L.C. Smith upright—I love the way it forms numerals, and the click, the brisk action with which it forms its letters, which are larger than those of the Royal. People like to get letters typed on the Smith, I think—it's personal, in this age of laser printed mass mailings, and the letters are so clear. It types a little slow, which makes it perfect for letter writing, although you might not want to try a novel on it.

For that I use the centerpiece of my collection, a beautiful and fast Underwood 11 that has a sound that reminds me of rain. For me, as for many other writers who used (or still use) one, the Underwood (beginning with the classic #5) remains the professional writer's machine. And for me, it will continue to remain so.

Many novelists have preferred portables, often Royals or Underwoods in the 20s through the 40s or so—but when I'm on the road I use my 1950s Olympia Deluxe. It's heavy for a portable, but it's fast and it's accurate, a truly great writer's machine—the noted novelist Don DeLillo told me recently that save for his first novel, which he typed on a Royal portable, all his other writing, including ten novels (most recently the monumental 800+ page Underworld) has been typed on this machine, and, unlike myself, he does all drafts on the typewriter. I mark up the typescript of the first draft in pen and then type the revision into the computer, where I can later revise it again if need be; but the composition itself is done on the manuals.

Among my other machines is a Remington Noiseless #7, the most recent addition to my collection, which I keep by the bed or take with me on the road and use to type out extended thoughts and ideas, a sort of "notebook," as it were. I also own a later Remington portable and a 1960s Royal portable that belonged to my mother, in addition to a huge and rather ugly Underwood from the 50s with a 19-inch carriage I'm perpetually in the process of restoring, and though I don't yet use it, I love it. My wife and I presently live in an old apartment. We hope one day to have a Queen Anne- style house with hardwood floors and a working typewriter in every room, all of which will see some use, I promise you.

But until then and even then, the aesthetics of my small collection and of my fiction writing are intertwined, and though I remain convinced that certain kinds of writing are by nature appropriate to the typewriter or that certain typewriters are better than others for certain modes, the central fact remains that I do it because it works for me in a world of aesthetics—I enjoy manual typewriters, and I enjoy writing. So what I enjoy the most is writing on a manual typewriter. The results are whatever they are, and they're forever changing—but if you ever see them, well, I hope you like those, too.

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*This article originally appeared on The Classic Typewriter Page.*

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# Gallery Notes

**1) Austin Adding Machine** - This fascinating and seldom seen glass-sided adder was introduced in 1912 by the Austin Adding Machine Corp. of Baltimore, Maryland. It is a delight to see the wheels and sliding registers doing their work when operating the machine. It sports an unusual linear 10-key keyboard, and it is shown here in both front and top views. The latter reveals its array of inner wheels that spin into action when the lever is pulled. Editor's collection.

**2) Diamond** - One of three "mystery" machines from the Milwaukee Public Museum in this issue's Gallery. This four-row frontstrike is attributed to Fred Sholes, one of Christopher Latham Sholes' progeny. He's the same fellow who patented a strange backstroke machine whose patent model appeared on the cover of *ETCetera* No. 27 (June 1994). The Milwaukee Dietz collection catalog dates it at 1923.

**3) Hanson-Lee** - Apparently, this is the predecessor to the Nickerson machine displayed in the Color Gallery of *ETCetera* No. 40 (Sept. 1997). It is said to be the invention of Walter Hanson of Milwaukee with a "Rev. Lee," apparently the silent partner in the enterprise. The Dietz catalog says Hanson died at age 21. Lee apparently turned it over to a Rev. Nickerson, for whom the later machine is named. Vertical-platen machines, needless to say, are rare as hens' teeth.

**4) "Horton"** - an odd index machine given the name "Horton" by the Dietz catalog, but based only on the fact that it has an "H" on the base! From an examination of the photo, it looks like the type assembly consists of little kickup levers. The Dietz catalog says the type levers "perform a very remarkable revolution when striking the platen."

**5) Red Mignon No. 2** - From the collection of Fernando Costa of Brazil. The No. 2 was the first of the line produced in any real quantity. Most of them are in black. Red ones are highly desirable. A lot more fun to look at, too. Serial number 757.

**6) Toshiba Typewriter** - Another item from Fernando Costa. The Toshiba is a Japanese-language typewriter with 1440 types arranged in a drum that rotates as well as moving from side to side. When a character is selected, a press on the printing key brings the blade containing the selected type up in front of the platen (being inked by a roller in this process), and a hammer strikes the type against the platen before the blade goes back to the drum. It all happens in a flash and is fascinating to watch.



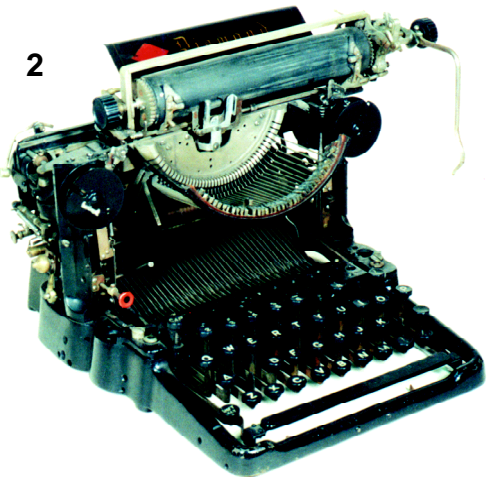
# ET Cetera Color Gallery



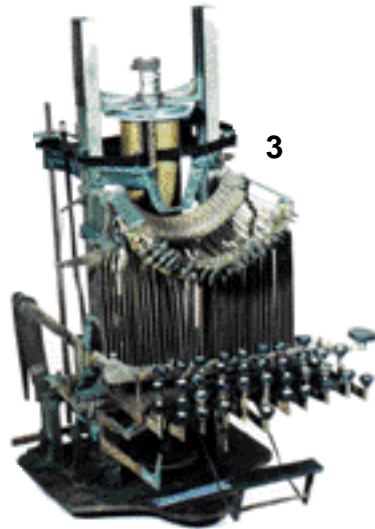
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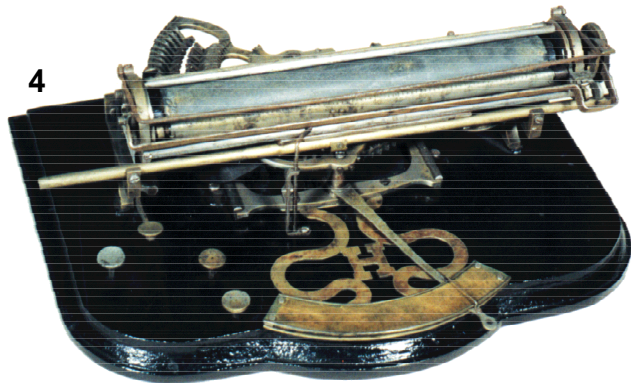
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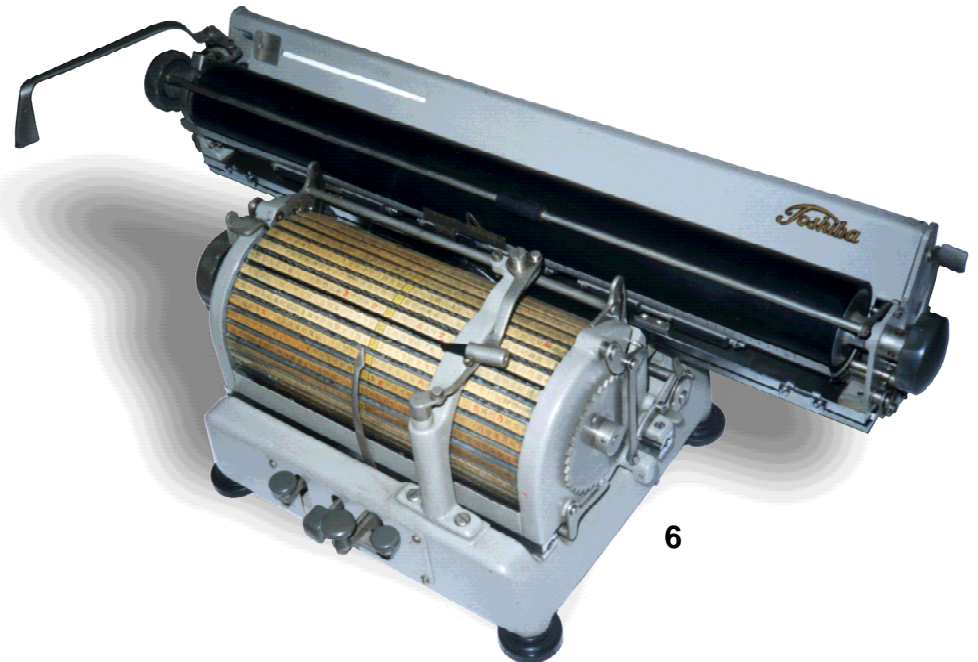
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# The Typewriters of Peter Mitterhofer

*This article is reprinted with permission of "Austrian Information," a magazine published by the Austrian Press and Information Service.*



*"In Merano, Eighteen-Hundred and Sixty-Four / Did a Carpenter The Typewriter First Draw..."* It was with these poetic words in his autobiography that Peter Mitterhofer poignantly referred to the same fate which happened to so many Austrian inventors before and after him who did not receive the recognition they deserved. The ingenious spirit of innovation, hard work, and a creative gift for inventing were matched against a suffocating bureaucracy, a complete lack of imagination from the official experts, and the significance of some of the most important political events of that century (the 1866 defeat at the Battle of Sadowa and the 1867 Austro-Hungarian agreement). In addition, the simple carpenter from the South Tyrol lacked the financial resources as well as the necessary business acumen to be able to derive any commercial benefit from his invention. As a result, Mitterhofer's name is scarcely to be found in German, let alone in English or American literature. The Americans Christopher Latham Sholes, Samuel W. Soule and Carlos Glidden are recognized throughout the world as the creators of the modern typewriter. Their patent (July 14, 1868) was bought by Remington. Serial production began in 1873.

## Carpenter, Musician and Ventriloquist

Peter Mitterhofer was born on September 20, 1822, he son of a carpenter in Patschins near Meran. After successfully completing his grade school education, he learned the carpenter's trade in his father's workshop. It was not very long, however, before he exhibited a strong fascination with the extraordinary. Peter Mitterhofer developed to a "guy around town" and with his weird turns would occasionally cause havoc in Paryschins. He staged many a fun-filled event as musician, ventriloquist and expert whistler using instruments which he had either invented or modified.

On completing his apprenticeship, Mitterhofer began a journey in 1849 which was to take him through the Balkans and "on his own two feet" through Germany, France, and Switzerland. On his return he married Marie Steidl, the daughter of

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*ON THE COVER: Mitterhofer's first model, now on display in Vienna (platen missing). Photo provided by Peter Muckermann*

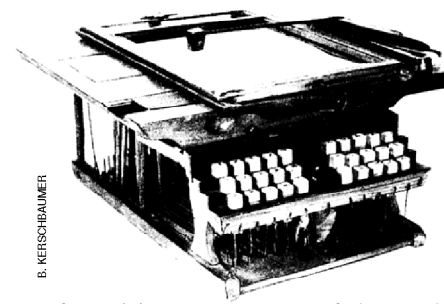
a carpenter. She was almost ten years older and owned a small farm where the couple was to live.

## "The Vienna Model 1864"—The So-Called "Failure"

From that point on, Mitterhofer began constructing a typewriter. The close similarity between typewriters and musical instruments with keys is quite obvious and Mitterhofer had already invented the so-called "Wooden Glachter" in which small hammers, guided by piano-like keys, struck small, pretuned blocks. It is possible that the chance news of a "cembalo scrivano" ("writing piano"), the production of which had been the object of attention of an Italian lawyer since 1836, gave him the idea of putting together a mechanical writing instrument according to the same principles.

Between 1864 and 1869, Mitterhofer produced at least four, perhaps even five, versions of the typewriter, four of which are still intact today and preserved in Vienna, Meran and Dresden. The founder and first curator of the Meran museum, Franz Innerhofer, was responsible for documenting the history of the typewriter.

According to Mitterhofer himself, "The Vienna Model of 1864," named after its place of origin and now to be found in the Technical Museum of Vienna, was a "failure"; nevertheless, it incorporated all the basic mechanical principles. With the exception of the character levers this initial model is made entirely of wood. Suspended rocker levers with letters formed from needles (similar to Braille) strike from the bottom to the central point of the character levers. The keyboard consists of 30 keys in three rows, one above the other (letters, three punctuation marks, two shift keys). This "Mitterhofer" version did not, however, have a drum; instead there was a wooden writing plate which was transported from one letter or line to the next by a carriage controlled by two mobile frames. An irregular print as well as an uneven distance between the typed letters probably caused Mitterhofer to describe his first model as a "failure."



## "The Dresden Model 1864" with Visible Print

The second model is of more cultural and historical interest. This model, described as "more hopeful," was discovered by chance in a secret drawer in Mitterhofer's house and eventually found its way into the typewriter collection of the Institute

of Precision Instruments of the Technical University of Dresden.

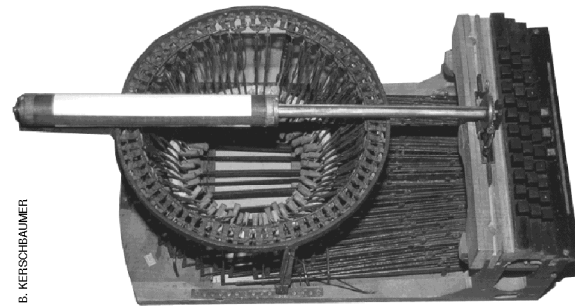
The original of this first successful model is fully intact, the changes point the way to the future. Mitterhofer was able to produce an even touch by regrouping the intermediate and character levers. Stronger, blunter points on the characters produced a more legible lettering. The adjustable touch produced a short bell-like sound at the end of a line. A new line was created when the carriage was

automatically sent back. The paper support was attached to a counter support (an anvil the size of the letters) over the center of the set of levers. As soon as a key was pressed, the typed character was immediately visible. In this process alone, the “Tyrolean countryman” was ahead of his time, it was not until decades later that this mechanical process was to be reproduced as a standard version.

“With typewriter on his back” Mitterhofer set off on foot for Vienna, his financial resources at an end. He arrived in Vienna in December, 1866, and paid the Emperor a visit with the plea “to graciously view his new inventions, the writing machine, and to gratify with a small token of state funds.” Mitterhofer pointed out essential benefits of his inventions such as the saving of time and paper, a uniform type and “by no means a strain for eye or chest.”

### The Meran Model 1864 with Shift Key and Drum

This version, to be found in the Meran Museum, was equipped with the most advanced ideas of its time. It may well, however, not be identical to the model presented to the Emperor in Vienna and shown to the Poly-



technic for examination. Research papers published to mark the 150th birthday of Mitterhofer in 1973 supported their supposition with clear contradictions between measurements, weight, and those of the specifications presented to the Emperor by Mitterhofer during his visit. The existence of a fifth, although missing, version can therefore not be ruled out.

In any case, the principles of construction may well have been the same: 72 character levers are set in motion alternately with 35 keys. The drum which lies vertical to the keyboard and which transports the paper, turns on a thread axle. In this way, the letter is printed by pressing the key and through one turn of the spiral shaped movement of the drum the next line is automatically created without the carriage having to be propelled back as was previously the case.

The emperor’s office, via the Royal Ministry of Trade, ordered an assessment of Mitterhofer’s invention by the head of the Polytechnic Institute. The expert opinion of the Institute acknowledged the mechanical precision of the machine and indeed recommended the requested subsidy; however, it noted at the same time that “it was not expected that his machine could actually be put to use,” since a machine that wrote quicker than the hand was unthinkable. Nevertheless, Mitterhofer was given 200 guilders to improve and continue work on his invention.



### “The Vienna Model 1869” The So-Called “Finished” Version

“Seeing that machines which simply showed writing were unfit for practical use, he strove to improve his invention.” Here, in the seventh verse of his autobiographical writings, Mitterhofer revealed his continuing

dissatisfaction with the shift function of the previous model and decided to produce a comprehensive keyboard. 82 keys are directly connected to the same number of character levers. The characters consist of lead and steel letters and are covered by a blackened ring of bristles for the print.

Early in Jan. 1870, Mitterhofer again went to Vienna with his now finished model and, somewhat disillusioned and resigned, asked for another “small token” or for the purchase of his “character-writing machine” for a collection of models. Mitterhofer did receive 150 guilders, returned home to Partchins and dedicated the rest of his life to his farm. He died of pneumonia on August 26, 1899, at the age of 71.

His last “finished” typewriter was given as a present by the police force to the collection of the Vienna Polytechnic Institute. It was completely forgotten and not rediscovered (i.e., identified as Mitterhofer’s “last model” of 1869) until June, 1910. The fact that Mitterhofer in the end apparently watched his “writing machine” being reduced to nothing more than a museum piece may well have many different reasons, but these should not obscure the importance of the ingenious Austrian inventor nor should they do harm to the undisputed originality of his invention. In January, 1870, he had assured the Emperor: “I can proudly say that this machine is my invention as I am a simple Tyrolean countryman from Partschins near Meran and have not witnessed anything which has served in any way as a model for my invention.”

*The above, taken unedited from its original source, deserves some further comments. It is amazing that Mitterhofer and Sholes followed such similar paths. It is hard to believe Sholes (who did his work later) did not copy from Mitterhofer. Bert Kerschbaumer tells us Ernst Martin, author of “Die Schreibmaschine,” claimed to have been in contact with Sholes’ widow who told him Sholes had never seen Mitterhofer’s work. Kerschbaumer cites additional literature indicating there were indeed five Mitterhofer models. A Mitterhofer museum is now open in his home town of Partschins. Its website is found at:*

*<http://www.schule.provinz.bz.it/hob-meran/projekt/peter/index.html>*

*Collectors Bernd Bertsch and Franz Pehmer each made a number of Mitterhofer 1 reconstructions over the past decade, and Austria issued a postage stamp honoring the inventor in 1993.*

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# Typewriter Fonts for the COMPUTER

by Darryl C. Rehr

Five years ago, in ETCetera No. 29 (Dec. 1994), we presented our first small survey of “typewriter” fonts made for the computer. At that time, there were a dozen such fonts worthy of mention, and there were a few others that became available “too close to press time” to make it into that issue. Well, the fontmeisters have been *very* busy over the last five years, and there are now more than a *hundred* typewriter fonts (probably *many* more than a hundred—it is very difficult to keep count) circulating in Cyberspace.

Although there are many commercial fonts on the market, we’ll concentrate here on those that can be downloaded from the Internet either free or at low cost via *shareware*. Most of these can be found at either of two major typewriter font Websites.

The *Free Typewriter Fonts* website may be reached at this address:

<http://typewriter.homepage.com/>

It is operated by Johan Holmdahl, a Swedish hobbyist who was a typography professional but changed careers *before* the computer made it so much fun. Holmdahl posts 70 different fonts on his website, a few of them his own creations.

The *Old Typewriter Fonts* website is located at this address:

<http://oldtype.homepage.com/fonts.htm>

This one is operated by Richard L. Gallagher, who says he has spent much time surfing the Internet in search of typewriter fonts. His interest was in finding fonts that worked well when displayed on Internet Web pages. He says, “after downloading hundreds of weird fonts that were basically useless, I found that the old typewriter fonts really work well.” You’ll find over 100 fonts posted on his site.

The two typewriter font sites are part of an Internet-wide subculture of font fanatics. Thousands and thousands of creative (and not so creative) typestyles are created, distributed (many for free) and *collected* in a phenomenon that seems to know no bounds. For typewriter collectors, this means that the look of the old machines can be simulated on the new machines in more ways all the time.

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There are several approaches that font creators take to make a new old typewriter font. One of the most popular points of attack is to simulate the look of an old, used typewriter complete with ribbon texture, misalignments and other defects that result from its age. Here are some samples:

Adler

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstu vwxyz I234567890

VT Smith Upright

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstu vwxyz 1234567890

Hermes

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstu vwxyz 1234567890

Harting

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstu vwxyz 1234567890

Dangerous Typo Writer

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstu vwxyz 1234567890

All samples are shown at the 12-point size. Despite the nominal similarity, 12-points give a different appearance for each font, so that the user must decide which size will work best for him.

Harting appears to be the “original” old typewriter font. It was created in 1992 by David Rakowski, a music professor now at Brandeis, who tells ETCetera its shareware fees have earned \$30,000 for his old academic home, Columbia University. Harting still looks good, but lots of fontmakers have now joined in to offer a whole slew of alternatives.

I find VT Smith Upright to be the best of the simulated-old-typewriter fonts. It is part of a collection of fonts created by Susan Townsend of Goleta, California. She is a commercial font designer and has produced a broad collection of old typewriter fonts. Of particular interest are historical fonts taken from type samples I provided. Two are from Blickensderfer typewheels (note that Townsend named the standard font “Blick Electric” on her own initiative—it is not taken from a Blick Electric). The other is Remington Perfected, taken from Remington No. 4, serial

number 33, and it duplicates a typestyle that was found on the original Sholes & Glidden machines.

REMINGTON PERFECTED  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ  
1234567890

Some of these can be downloaded from the Internet without prior payment (shareware), most must be ordered from her *Vintage Type* website [ <http://www.vintagetype.com> ]. On this site you will also find a collection of “professional” typewriter fonts which, rather than attempting to simulate an old, used typewriter, takes fonts from these machines as a basis for clean, modern laser typography. Included in this collection are fonts from Oliver, Remington, Royal and Underwood typewriters. A sample of the Oliver font is shown below:

### Screenplay-Oliver



abcdefghijklm  
nopqrstuvwxyz  
ABCDEFGHIJKLM  
NOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
1234567890-!  
\$&();: ?@

These professional fonts have the same “metrics” (i.e., spacing characteristics) as the almost-universally-standard Courier and are intended for use by script writers and such. The metrics are important, since the length of film and TV scripts are judged by pages, and if changing a font would change page count, that would throw *everybody* off.

If one were to give a name to fonts that simulate the behavior of typewriters but aim for clean copy...well I suppose it would be “Clean” fonts. Many of these fonts are only subtly different from Courier, but others are distinctive. Samples are shown on the next page.

### Courier

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

### Adjutant

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
1234567890

### LarabieFont

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

American Typewriter is a commercial font which ETCetera has used for its masthead since 1993. Proportional rather than monospaced, it has an old-typewriter “look.” There are a number of similar fonts available either free or by shareware. They include:

### Domestic Typewriter

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

### Corona Light Regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

### Teletype

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

There are also a number of very interesting fonts that come not from typewriters per se, but other typing machines. Here are two that are particularly good:

### Teletype

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

### TELEPRINTER

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ 1234567890

Finally, there are the “grunge” fonts. These are pure fun. Font hobbyists dash these out so that you can fill your page with some of the loveliest ugliness you can imagine. Two of these, *Mailbomb* and *Hootie* (each shown at 24 points), remind me of the big-print machines I used for typing hard copies of news stories for TV, the kind that required large fonts for teleprompters. You’ll also get a kick out of some of the names for these fonts. Who’d have thought we’d ever be writing in typefaces with names like *Gutter Vomit*, *Metalic Avocado* or *Nosebleed*?

**MAILBOMB**  
**ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ**

**HOOTIE**  
**ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ**  
**1234567890**

**Gutter Vomit**  
**ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ**  
**abcdefghijklm nopqrstuvwxyz**  
**1234567890**

**Metalic Avocado**  
**ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ**  
**abcdefghijklm nopqrstuvwxyz**

**Nosebleed**  
**ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ**  
**abcdefghijklm nopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890**

**Really Screamed up Typewriter**  
**ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ**  
**abcdefghijklm nopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890**

## The @ Sign

by Karl-Erik Tallmo

*The bulk of the following article originally appeared in the Spectrum Newsletter, from Spectrum Multilanguage Communications, a translation firm in New York. Additional comments from various sources.*

All of a sudden, you see that little sign everywhere—from computers to correspondence. But what is it called, and how did it originate?

In Sweden it is popularly known as *cinnamon bun*, *a-hose*, *elephant’s ear*, etc. In France it is called *arrobe* (taken from the Spanish) or *petit escargot* (little snail). In Holland *apestaart* or a shortened form, *api* (monkey tail) In Italy *chiocciola* (snail), and in Israel *shtrudel*. The Spanish call it *arroba*, which also signifies a unit of measure particularly used in the wine trade.

[Fernando Costa of Brazil adds: the @ in my country (Brazil) means “arroba” which is a weight measure of approximately 15kg, used mainly to weigh cattle; for instance, cattle price is usually expressed in currency/@.]

In Finland @ is a cat’s tail (*miau*); in Norway it’s the *kanel-bolle*, a spiral cinnamon cake. In Denmark, you’d hear it called a *snabel* (an *a* with a trunk); and to Germans it’s a *klammeraffe* — or spider monkey.

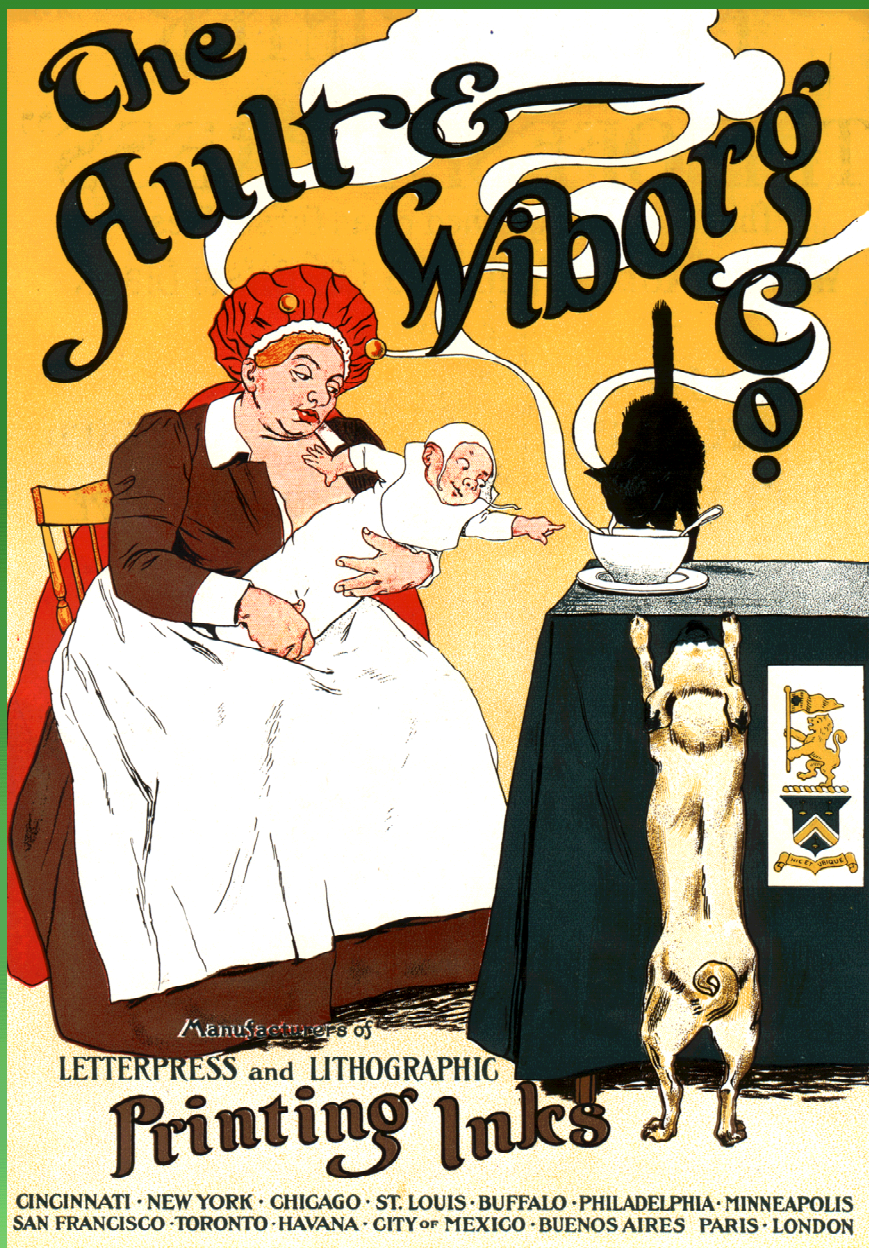
In English it is formally called *commercial at* or *at sign* and has been used for a long time in the sense of *at a price of ... (each)—3 barrels @ \$200*. Eventually it also took on the locative sense of the word *at*.

The @-sign is definitely not a child of the computer age—its history goes far back. Berthold Louis Ullman, American professor of Latin and paleography, claims in his book *Ancient Writing and Its Influence* that the at-sign is a ligature, that is, two letters tied together. The Latin preposition *ad*, meaning *at, to, toward*, was simplified, according to Ullman, into something like the @-sign we know. The bowl of the *a* and the *d* merged and the upstroke of the *d* was exaggerated and curved to the left.

The @-ligature might date from as early as the 6th century or as late as the 13th century—a product of scribes seeking shortcuts for their tedious hand labor.

Through the centuries, the at-sign has long had a place on the typewriter keyboard. [Collector Jim Dax informs *ETCetera* the “@” appeared on the *Caligraph No.3 Commercial* of 1883—apparently its first use on typewriters.]

The at-sign was probably adopted into the computer world around 1970 under the operating system Tenex, and used for e-mail on the early Internet as well as for programming. [An Internet posting claims “@” was introduced to the Internet by Ray Tomlinson, an engineer at Bolt Beranek and Newman, chief contractor on ARPANET, the precursor of the Internet. Tomlinson was looking for an e-mail separator that would never appear in anyone’s name. According to Tomlinson, “I got there first, so I got to choose any punctuation I wanted,” Tomlinson said. “I chose the @ sign.”



Ault & Wiborg of Cincinnati is a well-known to typewriter collectors as a ribbon supplier. Its larger business, however was production of fine quality lithographic inks. European poster publishers were among their best customers, and A&W inks appeared famous designs such as this 1897 poster by H. Gerbault originally used to advertise Carpentier Chocolate in France. A&W used it to sell its inks as well. This poster ad appeared in *The Inland Printer* and is one of many such ads which were seen around the turn of the last century. Spectacular TW ephemera.

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## Whose Invention is it ANYWAY?



## The Typewriters of Peter Mitterhofer