

Database of American Typeface Design Patents, 1842 - 1899

by Jane W. Roberts and Stephen O. Saxe

The information that forms the basis of this database was compiled several years ago by the late Jane W. Roberts of Fitzwilliam, NH. She did this long before there was an internet, or even computers, to facilitate the search for data. To this day I'm not sure what her sources were; I assume she obtained the basic information from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, but I don't know what form the information took. In any case the result was 32 pages of very neat, hand-printed entries, starting with the first design patent (a typeface design, 1842) and ending in 1899.

	9665	Dec. 5-76	Richard Smith	Phila	14	MS+J	Interline
	9688	Jan. 2-77	Andrew Little	New York	7	-	ITALIC
	9734	Feb. 6-77	Julius Herriet	New York	14	D.W. Bruce	
	9735	Feb. 6-77	Herman Ihlenburg	Phila	14	MS+J	Copperplate (shaded caps) ITALIC NO. 2 #3
	9811	March 6-77	Julius Herriet	New York	14	D.W. Bruce	Orn. No. 1527 ^{check} _{no card in file}
	9857	March 20-77	David Wolfe Bruce	New York	14	-	Black Orn. No. 539 (no card)
	9878	Apr. 3-77	James M. Conner	Greenville, N.J.	7	-	
	9992	May 22-77	Wm. F. Capitain	Chicago	7	Marder, Luse	
orn	10022	May 29-77	Julius Herriet	New York	14	D.W. Bruce	BLACK ORN. NO. 538 (no card)
orn	10257	Sep. 18-77	Julius Herriet	New York	14	D.W. Bruce	ORN. 1525
orn	10290	Nov. 6-77	David Wolfe Bruce	New York	14	-	ORN. NO. 1059
orn	10291	Nov. 6-77	Henry Brehmer	Stapleton, N.Y.	14	D.W. Bruce	ORN. NO. 1057
orn	10292	Nov. 6-77	Julius Herriet	New York	14	D.W. Bruce	ORN. NO. 1056
orn	10311	Nov. 13-77	Julius Herriet	New York	14	D.W. Bruce	ORN. NO. 1058
	10352	Dec. 18-77	Andrew Little	New York	7	-	Gravers Shade
	10408	Jan. 22-78	Herman Ihlenburg	Phila	14	MS+J	
	10417	Jan. 29-78	Herman Ihlenburg	Phila	14	MS+J	also ITALIC Copperplate
	10446	Feb. 12-78	Herman Ihlenburg	Phila	14	MS+J	FILIGREE
	10447	Feb. 12-78	Herman Ihlenburg	Phila	14	MS+J	TROJAN
	10450	Feb. 19-78	James M. Conner	Greenville, N.J.	7	-	Linear Shaded
	10489	Feb. 19-78	Edwin C. Ruthven	Phila	14	MS+J	HOEBOUW ^{monumental} (check again)
	10517	March 12-78	Herman Ihlenburg	Phila	14	MS+J	Glyptic, Glyptic No. 2, Glyptic Shade
	10518	March 12-78	Herman Ihlenburg	Phila	14	MS+J	RELIEVO

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A page from Jane Roberts' original handwritten compilation.

About 30 years ago Jane gave me a photocopy of her compilation, and I have

been using it, and augmenting it, since then. Design patents include certain basic information: patent number, date, designer, assignee (usually a type foundry), and the image of a complete font. One thing that is almost never included is the name of the typeface. That was a marketing decision that came some time after the patent had been obtained, and before the typeface was offered to printers.

Jane filled in the name of a great many of the faces, and through the years I have added others. A few years ago I decided to convert Jane's 32-page handwritten compilation to a searchable database. It remained on my computer in a half-finished state until one day the computer crashed and (as far as I know) the database was irretrievable. But luckily I had printed it out, and was able to convert the printout to a new, workable database.

I have now got the database in a usable, though not complete, form. I will continue to try to name the typefaces that are presently unnamed, and add them. If anyone using the list knows of one I have missed, I would greatly appreciate hearing about it.

I want to thank Dr. David M. MacMillan for generously giving me space online to post it on his admirable website. I feel that even in this not-quite-complete form, posting the database online is a fitting tribute to its originator, my friend Jane Roberts.

-Stephen O. Saxe
February 17, 2015