


The Pastime Printer

Number Six

FRONT ROYAL, VIRGINIA

September 1957

The First Type Used in England

 WILLIAM CAXTON, in the year 1474, published *The Game of the Chesse*, a book translated out of the French, "fynysshid the last day of Marche." This folio volume, the first printing done in England, was produced from movable type that was engraved by hand, each letter's image cut on a sliver of metal that had been cast to receive it. The metal used was probably pewter, an alloy of tin and lead, for at that time the use of antimony as a fusible hardening agent was undiscovered.

That, in short, was what Vincent Figgins said in his remarks about his 1855 reprint of Caxton's book. Mr. Figgins, a London typesetter, cut the punches and cast type resembling Caxton's with which to make a reprint edition that was sold to raise money for the Printers' Almshouses at Wood Green, Tottenham.

A few years afterward, in 1861, William Blades issued the first volume of *The Life and Typography of William Caxton, England's First Printer*. The author, in a revised edition of his work dated 1882, disparaged the Figgins assertion that Caxton used engraved instead of typecast letters.

SHOP NOTES

FRUSTRA LABORET QUI OMNIBUS
PLACERE STUDET
(You can't please 'em all)

The PASTIME PRINTER

INDEPENDENT AS A HOG ON ICE

*Handset and printed for the fun
of it by Steve L. Watts, a retiree,
Box 226, Front Royal, Virginia*

Hotel, in Washington, drove to *Back Royale* on 7 July. As a peace offering, the retiring president, Mr. Paxton, presented the NAPA 1957 printing laureate award to *Privateer Press*. Ginger performed a modern miracle of loaves and fishes, substituting *pasta romano* avec meatballs, garlic bread and watermelon. Typesetters took over, and the fifth issue of *Capital Columns*, convention daily hot flashes, went to press. This was our first direct exposure to Ajays. We rated them strictly Four O—poets, printers and politicians. The pilgrims, among others, are logged overleaf, in 6 pt, leaded 1 pt.

TIPOSIUM FOR TYPEWRANGLERS. Faces used in these four pages are 12 and 42 pt Caxton Black (lend-leased by Ralph Babcock); 6, 8, 12 pt Modern Roman No. 64, *Italic* and s. c.; 14 pt American Uncial; 24 pt Cincinnati Initial V; 18 pt Eng. O. E. Bold W; 24 pt Tuscan Floral W; 24 pt Derby (*italic*); 6 pt Authors Roman; 6 pt Gothic Cond. No. 521; 10 pt Columbia and Bold. Crisscross initial border is 10 pt S-B Eighteenth Century No. 540. "Shop Notes" is set in 36 pt Extra Condensed Title Gothic No. 12. Products represent 10 foundries.

WHAT these bedroom shops need is a staple binder for saddle-stitching a few sheets of paper, using wire no heavier than 28 gauge. Before the War there was a paper-fastener gizmo that made its own staples from brass wire. If that could be adapted to saddle stitching it would be just our ticket. We need something that costs less than a chainsaw.

AJAYS VISIT SKYLINE BEND. Nine carloads of stragglers from the 82nd annual convention of the National Amateur Press Assn. at Statler

IFANDOR'S KITCHEN PRESS

3 X 5

No longer do the chores get done,
On cooking I've been stinting;
The dust is deep and undisturbed,
I'm having fun—I'm printing!

No longer do the windows gleam,
Unironed the wash is linting;
I haven't time to shop or gad,
I'm having fun—I'm printing!

No longer for perfumes or furs
On birthdays am I hinting;
Just give me type or quads or ink,
I'm having fun—I'm printing!

Elizabeth Butt

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm
Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

CAXTON BLACK ALPHABETS, WITH CERTAIN MODERNIZED LETTERS

VINCENT FIGGINS imitated Caxton's *second* Chesse Book, the one completed 1481, as a model for his 1855 reprint. The original copy he studied was in the King's Library. Of the eight types used by Caxton for books printed at Westminster Abbey, number two (modified) was employed for this book. Figgins cut 135 characters and combinations used in the reprint edition. These did not include the 'v' and 'w' shown in the above synopsis, for the letters used in Caxton's book looked like these: **ſ** and **Ƶ**.

Body size of Figgins' Caxton type was two-line long primer (about 20 point). If he made another size it was not shown in the Figgins catalogue for 1880, at which time MacKellar, Smiths & Jordan of Philadelphia had several sizes. Their series by 1892 comprised 6, 8, 9, 12, 18, 30, 42 and 54 point. The Dickinson Foundry at Boston had a double small pica (22 point) version they called Masonic Text, about 1880. Shortly afterward they showed a slightly different cutting of Caxton Black in sizes 10, 12, 12 No. 2, 24 and 30 point.

ⓐ A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

CAXTON INITIALS, DRAWN BY FREDERIC W. GOUDY

Skyline Bend Scuttlebutt

Never a dull moment at the good old farm



¶ One day whilst Madge and Paul Bennett were with us, the cry "No water!" sent the Skipper to the springhouse, with Fra Paolo in his wake; Madge telling him to go and learn how to fix things. The light in the springhouse worked, so it wasn't a power failure. Ruling out the possibility of a blown fuse, Mr. Fixit pulled the rotor but found nothing wrong with the pump motor. Stoppage had to be in the pressure switch, a unit with which he was unfamiliar. Cautious removal of the switch housing revealed a dead spider. Herr Spinner had been caught in a hot spot.

¶ The pilot of the *Browntown & Front Royal Meatball Express* shoved off one morning on her regular run. Approaching a narrow bend in the road, visibility obscured by encroaching ailanthus and noxious weeds, she met a neighbor's car, end-on or nearly end-on so as to involve danger of collision. Being unable on short notice to sufficiently alter their courses to starboard, our ladies staged a bang-up meeting on the mountain road. But for the kindness of other neighbors, both families would have been without transportation for a fortnight. No serious injuries to personnel.

¶ Out-of-county summer visitors to Skyline Bend included:

George L & Mrs Harding, Palo Alto, Cal.
Caleb Higgins, Roselle Park, N. J.
Harry & Lane Blumenthal, Los Angeles
Jessie McFarlane, Seattle (Enr. London)
George L & Mrs McKay, Flushing, N. Y.
Charles R Young, Richmond, Virginia
Bill Schneidereith, Sr & Jr, Baltimore
Clyde & Elizabeth Butt, Arlington, Va.
Rolfe & Mrs Castleman, Jamsville, Md.
Edna Hyde McDonald, Frances H Beran
and Carla Patsuris, New York City
Alma L Weixelbaum, Springfield, Ohio
Stan Oliner, Englewood, Colorado
Alice Todaro & Mona Gaither, El Paso
Brauner & Alexia Ostergaard, Chicago
Ralph and Maud Hale, Gordonsville, Va.
Robert M Dunlap, Cincinnati, Ohio
Stanley E Coffin, Arlington, Virginia
Irma A Keehn, Glencoe, Illinois
Emerson Duerr, Elmhurst, Illinois
Joseph F Bradburn, La Plata, Maryland
Zita LeCompte, Chicago, Illinois

Roy Lindberg, Brooklyn, N. Y.
Victor & Rowena Moitoret, Washington
Thomas Whitbread, Cambridge, Mass.
Bert & Mildred Baker, Minneapolis
Dalton, Bruce, Jeffery & Rodney Bruns-
don, Suitland, Maryland
Russell Sr, Russell Jr, Eloise & Barbara
Paxton, Willametta Keffer, Roanoke
Wm & Lois Mooney, Gordonsville, Va.
Guy Miller, Springfield, Ohio
James A Lemon, Washington, D. C.
Dr HE & Mrs Davids, Naugatuck, Conn.
Ralph & Nancy Babcock, Gillette, N. J.
Fred C. Eichin, Chicago, Illinois
Don, Doris, Bruce Watts, Elizabeth, N.J.
Alice C. Daniels, Alexandria, Virginia
F Earl Bonnell, North East, Penna.
Lois Grimes, Springfield, Ohio
Emma L Thomsen, Carol Newbold, Ken
Weiser, Ed Kenny and possibly others
who came for the NAPA picnic, July 7,
and whose addresses we failed to learn.