

I Of the early engravers, or punch-cutters as they were formerly called, it is impossible to give any detailed information, as very meager records of their lives are extant and absolutely nothing concerning the styles or faces of type they cut.

EARLY PUNCH- CUTTERS

The work of remodeling and refitting the old foundries, with the occasional visits from fire, have probably destroyed most of their work if not all of it. The first typefoundries were no doubt supplied with matrices or drives from the English or European founders, so for a considerable time there was no demand for the cutter's services; but with the growth of printing and publishing and the consequent demand for type, it finally became necessary for the founder to have his own punches. The constant wear and the occasional accidents made it necessary to duplicate matrices, and where the original punch was on the other side of the Atlantic it became impracticable to thus depend on the original.

Probably the first person to regularly engage in punchcutting in the United States was Edwin Starr. Any cutting prior to his advent was only in the nature of emergency work, and might have been done by some person not regularly engaged in the business, as an engraver or silversmith. Mr. Starr, however, saw the opportunity to make a business for himself. He was first apprenticed to the trade of a silversmith, but his brothers having gone into a typefoundry he was easily persuaded to join them. He was first employed in the foundry of Elihu White, and he soon developed a degree of skill and accuracy that have not often been equaled and never excelled. He made the cutting of punches on steel his special study and pleasure. In after years when engaged in business in Albany he issued a circular in which it was stated that nearly all the type cast in the United States prior to 1825 was from punches cut by his own hand. This statement could not be controverted and was substantially correct. Edwin Starr was the fourth son of Timothy Starr, fifth in descent from Dr. Comfort Starr, who settled in Boston in 1635. It is not recorded where he was born, but probably in New York, and before 1790. In partnership with a brother, and under the name of Starr Brothers, he opened a typefoundry at Pittsburg about 1832, but the venture was an unfortunate one. Afterward he was employed in the typefoundry of D. & G. Bruce in New York, where he ranked as their best workman. Of a peculiar temperament, he had not the faculty of adapting himself to his associates, and his life was full of bitterness and disappointment. All his ventures in business on his own account, or associated with his brothers, proved futile. Yet his work was of the highest quality, and he was recognized as a genius. Among the many ingenious and valuable inventions introduced by him was a method of printing in two or more colors by a changeable type (patented), to prevent the counterfeiting of banknotes. He also

introduced a circular type for post-office use. After a long and eventful life Edwin Starr died January 19, 1853.

Another brother, Henry Starr, took up engraving and letter-cutting, and was very skilful. His life was spent chiefly in Baltimore and Philadelphia, and he died in the latter city, but the date is not known. He did good and capable work, but did not have the skill or ingenuity of Edwin.

Next to Edwin Starr in point of skill was William F. Hill. This gentleman was engaged in the work of cutting punches for typefounders, about 1820, or possibly before that time, and his work was in demand. He had the reputation of producing more ornamental effects than Starr or any other cutter of the period. His work was taken by the different foundries, Elihu White, D. & G. Bruce, and Binny & Ronaldson. He died on Staten Island, many years ago, of ship-fever.

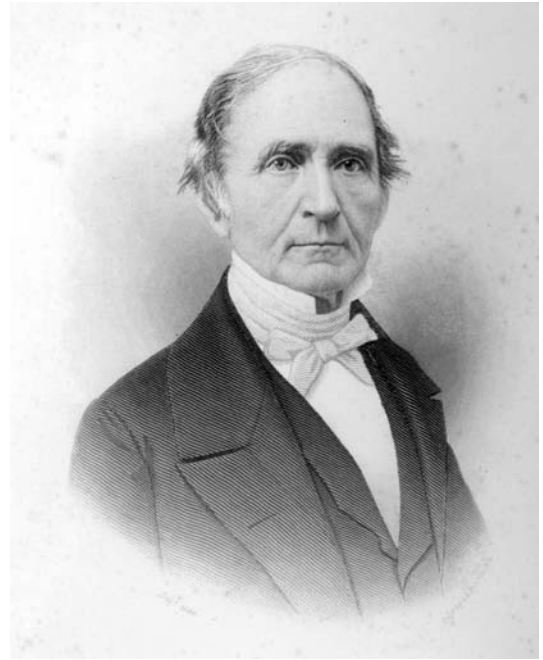
Another cutter of this period was David Bruce, Jr., who died in 1892, an account of whom has already been published in this series of sketches. George Bruce, the junior partner in the firm of D. & G. Bruce, was also a cutter, but did not work at that branch of the business very much.

George B. Lothian, son of Robert Lothian, who attempted to start a typefoundry in New York, but failed, had learned something of the business from his father and from Elihu White. He made an unsuccessful attempt to establish a typefoundry at Pittsburg, and in 1822 undertook to make type for the firm of Harper & Brothers. Mr. Lothian was a cutter of merit, and the faces of Greek cut for the Anthon Classical Series were much admired, and are still looked upon as correct models.

Thus while these early representatives of an exclusive guild left behind them some strikingly beautiful specimens of their skill, there is so little known about their lives that it is safe to say very few persons now living ever heard the names mentioned. Their work was done at a time when printers and typefounders were reaching out for something more pleasing than the current type faces in use in England and on the Continent, and there are evidences of originality of treatment of the alphabet, which was an agreeable change to both printer and reader.

[February 1900; originally no. XXV in the series]

GEORGE BRUCE



BRUCE SCRIPT NO. 2000 PAT 1 9 NOV 1842

First Patent for a design, in the United States to George Bruce for this Double S

BRUCE COPPERPLATE SCRIPT NO. 2006 PAT 851
2 DEC 1856



The Mercantile and Epistolary Character known to scribes as the Cursive, which

BRUCE COPPERPLATE SCRIPT NO. 2005 PAT 1033
10 AUG 1858



The Ancient Greeks wrote as they ploughed, alternately Reversing Lines from right to left and left to right.

BRUCE ITALIAN SCRIPT NO. 2007 PAT 985 19 JAN 1858



Arabic Writing is Read from right to left, the Arabs saying that it is more Reasonable to See where

BRUCE COPPERPLATE SCRIPT NO. 2002 PATS 863, 940 6 JAN 1857, 8 SEPT 1857



The Written Characters of the Ancient World were derived from

BRUCE COPPERPLATE SCRIPT NO. 2003 PATS 940, 1006 8 SEPT 1857, 25 MAY 1858



Chinese Characters, 1120 B.C. are written in Columns beginning at the

II

The earliest engravers of punches for the use of the typefounder were generally goldsmiths, who worked from designs furnished them.

The delicacy of manipulation necessary for the production of a steel punch, or its modern equivalent, the soft metal pattern letter, calls for all the skill of the wood engraver, with the most exact accuracy of eye to preserve the proper proportion, weight and color.

Very few engravers of type faces work from their own designs; indeed, the qualifications are so dissimilar that one would hardly expect to find them in the same individual. It is true that some engravers work out designs from the ideas or suggestions of others, or they make sketches and submit them for criticism to the type founder or printer, afterward making such changes as may be deemed advisable, then cutting the pattern letters. Then the manipulation of steel and the soft composition metal now largely used call for entirely different treatment. One only finds the skill to handle either or both in the old cutters — those who began with steel and adopted soft metal when it became possible to utilize it. One of this kind is the subject of this sketch — Mr. James A. West, of Chicago. This gentle-

man is a native of Edinburgh, Scotland, where he was born in 1830. At the age of fourteen years he was apprenticed to a diecutter, with whom he served his full time of seven years. After the termination of his apprenticeship he engaged with Andrew Stuart, one of the most celebrated cutters on steel in Edinburgh, remaining with him for seven years. During this time he cut many different faces of roman and italic for type foundries in London, and for Miller & Richard, of Edinburgh, besides the Open Anglo-Saxon series for Caslon, of London.

After closing his engagement with Andrew Stuart, Mr. West went to London, where he cut a series of roman faces for V. & J. Figgins. About this time he entered into correspondence with the late James Conner, of New York, and flattering inducements having been offered, he left London for America, arriving in New York in November, 1860. Here he was busily employed for some time, cutting romans, italics, scripts, and different job faces.

Mr. West's next engagement was with Farmer, Little & Co., and among his early productions were the series of Rimmed Roman, Rimmed Condensed, Rimmed Black, Franklin Ray Shaded, Payson Script, Heading Script, with two or more lower-cases with each size, and many other standard faces of type and borders. Later he undertook and carried to successful completion the cutting of what he considers the best work of his life, the series of Black Ray Shaded, which he did for George Bruce's Son & Co. Shortly afterward, the cutter who had begun the series of Penman Script for the same firm having died suddenly, Mr. West was sent for by Mr. Bruce and asked to complete the work, which he did, to the satisfaction of his employer and the admiration of printers everywhere.

New and aggressive foundries were now bidding for the trade of the West, and the next regular engagement was with the Cleveland Type Foundry. Here he engraved, from facsimile drawings of the handwriting of Mr. Carpenter, of R. Hoe & Co., familiar to all persons who had correspondence with that house about that time, two sizes of Carpenter Script. This was the first of the autograph scripts brought out, and had an immense sale East and West. An altogether new feature of this script was the continuation of the horizontal cross-line of the *t* over various sorts, together with ligatures and logotypes, enabling the compositor to give his work a striking resemblance to handwriting. For this same foundry he cut other autograph scripts, the Hoyt and the Cleveland, but they never attained to the popularity of the Carpenter.

Still acting on Horace Greeley's advice, Mr. West continued to "go west," and his work was next produced in Chicago, where he has ever since resided. Here he has worked for both the great foundries, cutting romans and italics for Marder, Luse & Co., scripts and other faces for Barnhart Brothers & Spindler. For the latter firm he has cut the No. 10 series of romans and italics, the West series of Old Styles, Hazel, Pantagraph, and, lastly, the series of Bank Scripts.

Mr. West makes no claim to designing and originating faces of type further than the skillful working out, with a delicacy of detail not surpassed, the suggestions and drawings placed in his hands. While he has done much creditable work in plain and ornamental styles, his reputation will probably rest with the varied and various scripts. No other engraver or cutter of type faces can point to so many. Beginning his work shortly after coming to America on ornamental faces, he gave to the printers of that time some of the most popular styles. The imitations, or in some cases drives, from the ornamental faces of the French type foundries of fifty years ago had palled on the public taste. They lacked strength and freedom, so when the Rimmed Roman and similar styles were first brought to the attention of printers they seemed to catch the popular favor at once. Although now sixty-eight years old, Mr. West's hand is still as steady and true as when a young man. Witness the series of Bank Script, cut in five sizes within the past year.

[March 1898]



JAMES WEST

OPEN ANGLO-SAXON CASLON ca 1854

Postal Directory Guide

ELONGATED ANGLO-SAXON CONDENSED ca 1854

General Revenue and Trade Repo

RIMMED BLACK FARMER, LITTLE 1 DEC 1868*

Typographical

RIMMED ROMAN FARMER, LITTLE 16 JUNE 1868*

FIRE Arm

RIMMED CONDENSED FARMER, LITTLE 15 MAY 1866*

Pacific Mail Steamship

BLACK RAY SHADED ORNAMENTED, NO. 529 BRUCE 3 JAN 1871

Chill our flushed
dreamlets

Most of James West's typeface designs were patented in the name of the proprietor of the type foundry they were made for – i.e., Andrew Little* (Farmer, Little) or H.H. Thorp† (Cleveland Type Foundry). There are only four patents in his name. Hazel Script, which Loy credits to him, was patented by another designer, W.W. Jackson, and Black Ray Shaded was patented by Julius Herriet. In these cases, it is probable that West engraved another designer's typeface. James West's son John was also a type designer, with many design patents in his name. – S.O.S.

PENMAN SCRIPT (later sizes) BRUCE

The Penman Series.

PAYSON SCRIPT FARMER, LITTLE
14 JUNE 1870*

Home Insurance
United States Bond

FRANKLIN RAY SHADED FARMER, LITTLE
1 DEC 1874*

JOB PRINTERS
October First

HEADING SCRIPT FARMER, LITTLE 8 JUNE 1875*

New Year 1879

CARPENTER SCRIPT CLEVELAND 29 AUG 1882†

Cleveland Type Foundry
No 147 St. Clair Street

HOYT SCRIPT CLEVELAND 20 FEB 1883†

As will be seen
"Hoyt" is an exact
representation of

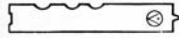
CLEVELAND SCRIPT CLEVELAND 28 OCT 1884

Mr. & Mrs. C. Rosen
At Home

NUMBER 10 Roman & Italic BB&S ca 1892

HAZEL SCRIPT BB&S [W.W. Jackson patent]

8 APR 1890



11 POINT No. 10 (Small Pica)

PRINTING is the art of producing impressions, from characters or figures, on paper or any other substance. There are several distinct branches of this important art—as the printing of books with movable types, the printing of engraved copper and steel plates, and the taking of impressions from stone, called lithographing. We have now to describe the printing of books or sheets with movable types, generally called letterpress printing, and which may undoubtedly be esteemed the greatest of all human inventions. *The art of printing is of comparative-*

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
 1234567890 Lower case, a to z, 13% ems. 1234567890

*Beautiful
 Croquet Grounds*

PANTAGRAPH BB&S PAT 23107 6 MAR 1894

*Financially Embarrassed
 Milwaukee Geographical Associations*

WEST OLD STYLE BB&S ca 1892

BANK SCRIPT BB&S 1895

STEEL RAILS
Cable or Steam

*Milwaukee
 Dancing Academy*

SCENIC COMBINATIONS UNION 28 SEPT 1886

SCENIC COMBINATIONS.

Cast on 6-point, 12-point, 18-point and 24-point bodies. Price per each Series, \$1.50

SERIES NUMBER ONE.

