Printing Presses
in the
Graphic Arts Collection

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY

1996

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Printing Presses in the Graphic Arts Collection

PRINTING, EMBOSSING, STAMPING AND DUPLICATING DEVICES

Elizabeth M. Harris

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
WASHINGTON D.C.

1996

Copies of this catalog may be obtained from the Graphic Arts Office,

NMAH 5703, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. 20560

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Introduction

This catalog covers printing apparatus from presses to rubber stamps, as well as some documentary material relating to presses, in the Graphic Arts Collection of the National Museum of American History. Not listed here are presses outside the accessioned collections, such as two Vandercook proof presses (a Model 4T and a Universal III) that are now earning an honest living in the office printing shop. At some future time, no doubt, they too will be retired into the collections.

The Division of Graphic Arts was established in 1886 as a special kind of print collection with the purpose of representing "art as an industry." For many years collecting was centered around prints, together with the plates and tools that made them. Not until the middle of the twentieth century did the Division begin to collect printing presses systematically. Even more recently, the scope of collecting has been broadened to include printing type and type-making apparatus.

The press collection today has its greatest strength in wooden and iron hand presses of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with some unique and important specimens in this area. There are also larger, more recent machines, but not as many, because of their size. The newest comers are "boys' presses," as they were called, from the end of the nineteenth century. Supporting the press collection are some 350 patent models covering all aspects of the nineteenth-century printing trade. The patent models are cataloged in a separate publication.

In this list, each entry includes a description of the artifact together with its catalog number and source, measurement in inches, citations of published references to it, and Smithsonian photographic negative numbers. Photographs are in black and white unless noted. The term "found in the collections" is used when the immediate source of a press is obscure: it may have been transferred without records from another part of the Smithsonian, for example, or it may have resided in the Graphic Arts Division for time beyond memory. The date refers the year when a Museum record was made for the press.

Many of the presses are on long-term public exhibition in the National Museum of American History. Any presses on exhibition can be photographed freely by the public, but arrangements must be made in advance if special lighting is required. At any given time, though, some presses will be on loan to other institutions, and some will be in one of the Museum's storage facilities. A visitor wishing to see a particular press should contact the Graphic Arts office beforehand by mail or phone to find out where the press is, and whether it is accessible.

Stan Nelson provided constant support in the production of this catalog. Nancy Brooks edited the manuscript, and Alicia Cutler led me through scanning and other computer mysteries. The small sketches are my own.

Elizabeth Harris

Type presses

Wooden hand presses

We do not know what kind of press Gutenberg used because he took pains to keep it a secret. But we can guess that his press was framed in wood, and that the power was delivered by a screw operated by a long lever (the bar). These were the unchanging elements of type-printing presses for the next 350 years. For writers in the English language, the term English common press, or simply common press, originally meant that form of press traditionally used in England, as distinct from Continental styles. But after 1800, wood-framed screw presses of all kinds were known as common presses.

On earlier common presses, guide boards, or raised sides, were used to steer the press plank (bed) as it was pulled under the platen for printing. From the middle of the eighteenth century, presses were built without guide boards, presumably because of improvements in that part of the apparatus. Thus, the presence or absence of guide boards can be an indication of the age of a press.[1]

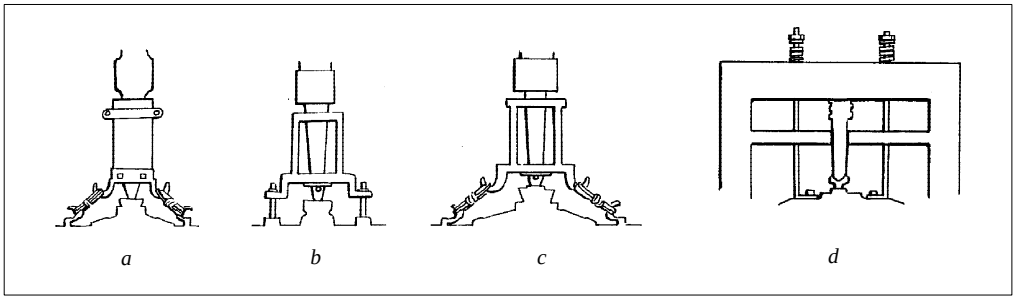
The wooden press still was not perfect. Its screw was an inefficient form of leverage, and the sogginess and elasticity of the wooden frame robbed it of power. Consequently the press could deliver only enough pressure to print one half of a full form of type (a full form covered a sheet of paper). The platen therefore was made only half the size of the typeform. The leading half of the form was turned under it and printed, and then the second half was brought under and printed. The press was known, for this reason, as a two-pull press. On a two-pull common press, two men (a beater, to ink the type, and a puller, to pull the bar) could produce up to 240 sheets printed on one side in an hour. This quantity was called a token, and was used as a unit of the men's pay.

Until 1800, most of the wooden presses used in North America were imported from England. By the middle of the eighteenth century Americans occasionally built their own

[1] Philip Gaskell, "The Decline of the Common Press" (Cambridge University Ph.D. Thesis 2902, 1956)

presses. John Goodman of Philadelphia set up the first short-lived press-building business in the 1780s. By 1800 several American press builders were established, and importation came to an end. The chief distinction between American and English presses was in simplification, particularly in the hose—the device that tied platen and screw so that the platen would rise and fall but not turn with the screw. In the New World, the elaborate wood-and-iron hose was reduced to a simple four-posted iron cage. Wooden presses were used in this country much longer than in Europe because of their ease of transportation and repair: requisites for a frontier country. They were to be found throughout the nineteenth century, sometimes alongside the newfangled iron presses and machines.

Wooden presses and their associated objects are listed in chronological order.

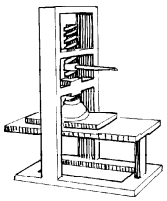


The hose on wooden presses in the collection

a. English hose (Franklin press)
b. Bolted American hose (Shield press)
c. Standard American hose (Ramage press)
d. No hose (Ramage proof press)

Gutenberg press, miniature

11015



Miniature wooden model of hypothetical press, late 19th century. Height 12

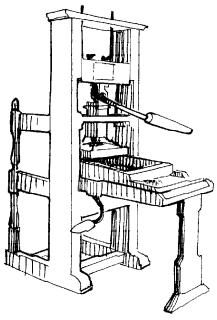
❖ There is no direct record of Gutenberg's press. This simple model is based on a popular nineteenth-century image. It has a massive wooden screw like a paper press, but no provision for moving the type smoothly into position, adjusting the impression, or holding the platen steady in its descent.

Deposited by Department of the Interior, 1906

Photograph 69460

Franklin press

14237



English common press, about 1720. English box hose, guide boards. Missing gallows, tympan and frisket, bar catch. Height 78, width at cheeks 30-1/2, length 57; platen 12x18-1/2

❖ This press allegedly was used by Benjamin Franklin in John Watts's shop in London in 1726. (Another common press, also said to be from Watts's shop, is at the Science Museum in London.) In 1841 the Franklin press was acquired by John B. Murray, an American, who shipped it to the United States. The press was put up for public lottery, and was shown at the Patent Office, the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, and the Smithsonian's U.S. National Museum before being sold to the Smithsonian in 1901.

Like any such elderly press, the Franklin Press shows evidence of wear and of numerous small changes and fixes made over the years. Overall, it is remarkably complete. It carries two brass labels. The larger, dated June 1833, describes Franklin's re-visit to the Watts shop, when he ordered a gallon of porter for the printers and toasted his old press. The second, dated November 1841, records the presentation of the press to John Murray by Harrild & Sons of London.

Felicia and Frank Tucker, the previous owners of the press, were John Murray's widow and her new husband.

Purchased from Felicia and Frank Tucker, 1901

Citations Philip Gaskell, "A Census of Wooden Presses," in *Journal of the Printing Historical Society* 6, 1970 (census no. 4, p.26); Elizabeth Harris and Clinton Sisson, *The Common Press* (Godine, Boston, 1978)

Photographs Brass plaque 17539A; early installations 9160, 28990, 58898A, B, C; later installations 17359a, b, c, d, 74.8432, 74.8433, 86.4091 (color); separated parts: till, hose, and platen 74.11485, same, another view 74.11486, garter 74.11487, spindle and garter 74.11489

Franklin press, replica

1985.717

Full-size working replica of the Franklin Press made by Clinton Sisson, 1984

❖ This press was made for the exhibition "Life in America—After the Revolution," in the National Museum of American History.

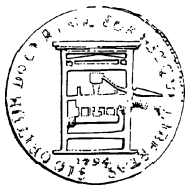
Purchased from Sisson, Foss & Co., 1985

Franklin Press copper token

23900

Copper token, 1794. On obverse, image of an unorthodox common press, date 1794, and inscription "Sic oritur doctrina surgetque libertas"; on reverse, in five lines, "Payable at the Franklin Press London." Edges plain. Diameter 1-1/10

❖ Tokens were issued by some tradesmen of the eighteenth century as units of trade, in place of ordinary coins. In the decade 1787-1797, the British coin of the realm was in a poor state, and an enormous number of tokens were struck, particularly by booksellers. The press on this token appears to have a Blaeu



(continental European) hose, and a leaf spring between cap and head somewhat like that of the Genard press (below). "Franklin Press" is, of course, the name of a shop, not of the apparatus. Longman (cited below) supposed that the shop was that of Watts, where Franklin had worked.

Given by Whitfield J. Bell, 1974

Citations W. Longman, *Tokens of the Eighteenth Century*, London 1916, p. 33; Raymond H. Williamson, "The Franklin Press Token," in *The Numismatist* vol. 69, December 1956

Photographs 75.8833, 75.8834

Franklin press, souvenir fragment

1990.127

A fragment of wood sealed in a small glass bottle and labelled "Franklin's Printing Press . . . Exposition 1893: A.B.C. 7." Height of bottle 2 inches.

❖ If this scrap of wood is indeed from a press, then it was probably the James Franklin, not the Ben Franklin press. James Franklin's press is now at the Rhode Island Historical Society in Providence, Rhode Island. It was exhibited at the World's Fair of 1893; the Ben Franklin press was not. "A.B.C." stands for the A. B. Campbell Printing Press Company, the exhibitors of the James Franklin press at the World's Fair.

Given by Thomas Lange, 1978

Citation "Notes about the World's Fair," in *Inland Printer*, August 1893, p. 403

English common press, stereo card

1985.61.31

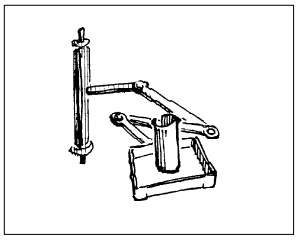
"Franklin's Old Printing Press," a photographic stereo card published by Keystone View Company, late 19th century. 3-1/2x7

❖ The press stands by an attic window, in front of two Boston banners: Bostonia condita, and Fanueil Hall. This is not the Smithsonian's Franklin press, despite the title and a description on the back of the card. It appears rather to be the press now at Old Sturbridge Village, Massachusetts—another press that has been said to have had an association with Franklin.

Collected, 1985

English common press

1987.631



English common press, about 1750. English box hose, no guide boards, iron folding candle holder mounted on off-side cheek. Height 77, width at cheeks 31, length 62; platen 13x18.

❖ This press was exhibited in the *New York Times* museum until about 1980, when the museum was dismantled. Its style, particularly its lack of guide boards, suggests a later date than that of the Franklin press. The candle holder is unusual, though not unique among common presses.

Given by the New York Times, *1983*

Citation Philip Gaskell, "A Census of Wooden Presses," in *Journal of the Printing Historical Society* 6, 1970, p.27 (census no. 7)

English common press, miniature

19630

Brass scale model of the English common press belonging to the Vermont Historical Society (known as the "Stephen Daye press"), made by Alfred T. Breitengross, 1939. Height 6-3/4, width 4-3/4, length 5-1/2, on an original wooden base 9x3-1/2

Given by Alfred T. Breitengross, 1945

Photo 37049

English common press, miniature

11013

Wood and brass scale model of an 18th-century English common press, late 19th century. Stamped "244884." Height 12, width 5-1/2, length 9.

❖ This model was made by the Patent Office for their own reference and exhibition purposes.

Deposited by the Department of the Interior, 1906

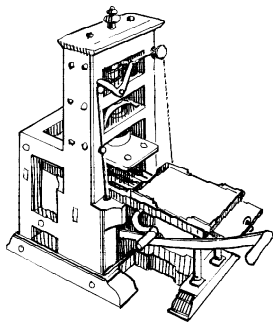
Photograph 70857

French common press, Genard

1992.160

Modified bench-top common press made by Genard, Paris, 1786. Maker's brass label. Brass tympan frame not original. Height 27, width at cheeks 11, length 24 (all excluding the lever); platen 7-3/4x5-1/2, bed 7x9-1/2.

❖ This press made its appearance at a time when the boldest of the French press-makers led the world in trying to break out of the wooden-press convention. It was built in Paris by Genard (first name unknown), who had been a mechanic working for Philippe-Denis Pierres. Pierres was printer to the king, and usually is given credit for the invention of the press. Genard may have stolen the idea, but he was a good marketer and his presses were exported to England under the name "Apollo." This is the only known surviving Genard press (a full-size Anisson press—a rival "improved" wooden press—is at the Imprimerie Nationale in Paris).



The press is bench-sized with a relatively massive wooden frame, an iron screw, and a series of levers and counterweights to lighten the pressman's work and give a one-pull impression. To lower the platen, the long hand lever is pushed down, instead of being pulled horizontally in the usual way. Thus torsion is eliminated, along with the need to brace the press in its place. A combination of coil springs, counterweight and a large leaf spring return the impression assembly and levers to their starting point.

The press carries an original brass tag recording its presentation to the French Academy in 1787:

Fait par Genard Serrurier Machiniste
Seul Invanteur des Presses a Lévier a
un Coup et sans Etansson, et Présenteé
à Mrs de Laccadèmie en 1787.

The press was in the collection of André Jammes (France), and then Colin Franklin (England), from whom it was acquired for the Museum.

Purchased in 1992

Citations Philip Gaskell, "A Census of Wooden Presses," in *Journal of the Printing Historical Society* 6, 1970 (census no. F2*, p.10); James Moran, *Printing Presses,* 1973, p.43

American common press, Shield

1987.471

American common press made by Francis Shield, about 1811. American open hose, platen attached by hose bolts and faced with iron. Original tympan and frisket. Plank repaired in Museum. Marked on the hose "F SHIELD." Height 75, width at cheeks 29-1/2, length 70; platen 12-1/2x18.

❖ This press was made by Francis Shield, a Londoner, who set up his press-building factory in New York in 1811 soon after arriving in the country. In England Shield had built iron Stanhope presses. Here, he produced a press that is typically American in style, with open hose and heavy simple timbers instead of the box hose and lighter timbers of English presses. This may be the press that he made for the *Long Island Star*—one of the first two presses that he built in the United States.

The press arrived at the Museum with an unusual "stone," or type bed, seated in plaster: a cast-iron plate measuring 20x26-1/4, one inch thick, with a raised iron box in the center. It was evidently a late addition recycled from some other apparatus that was probably not a printing press. The plate has been removed.

Given by the Friends of Long Island's Heritage, 1987

Citations Philip Gaskell, "A Census of Wooden Presses," in *Journal of the Printing Historical Society* 6, 1970 (census no. 17, p. 31); Elizabeth Harris, "The American Common Press," p. 46, in *Journal of the Printing Historical Society* no. 8, 1978

Photograph 72.9659

American common press, Ramage?

9287

American common press, about 1815. Incomplete, restored 1972. Height 75, width at cheeks 32, length 67; platen 13-1/2x19-1/2.

❖ This press has its original cheeks, spindle, plank with coffin, and bar. But it is missing all other original parts, including the nut and the hose, which often carried the maker's name. The surviving parts are typical of presses made by Adam Ramage of Philadelphia around 1815, and the press has been restored in that style. Its previous owner, John Lant, wrongly believed it to be the press used by William Bradford in New York in 1690.

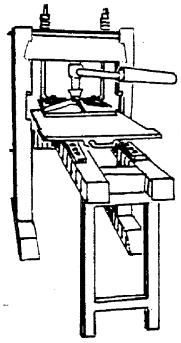
Purchased from John A. Lant, 1901

Citations Philip Gaskell, "A Census of Wooden Presses," in *Journal of the Printing Historical Society* 6, 1970 (census no. 6, p.27); Elizabeth Harris, "The American Common Press," pp. 42-52, in *Journal of the Printing Historical Society* no. 8, 1978

Photographs Old installation, 29906; re-built, new installation 73.693, 73.694, 74.8428; views of separated parts: spindle 67302, 67303; hindposts and rails 72.10476-12; cap, head, till, platen, and hose 72.10476-9, 72.10476-10; feet 72.10476-11; rails 72.10476-13.

Ramage screw press

9282



Free-standing wooden screw press made by Adam Ramage, Philadelphia, about 1820. Incomplete. Height 75, width at cheeks 32, length 68; platen 13-3/4x19-3/4.

❖ This press is said to have been used for printing Confederate money in Columbia, South Carolina, during the Civil War. Though it has no maker's identification, it is typical of the midsized "screw presses" that Ramage built after 1820. Earlier he had built full-sized common presses, and a few years later he made smaller ones that he called foolscap presses. The Ramage screw press was simpler and shorter than the traditional common press, and had no hose. It was a two-pull press with an iron bed and platen, and two coil springs for the return of the platen. This specimen has been modified, however, and it is possible that only the ironwork is entirely original. The cheeks have been shortened, or perhaps replaced. There are extra-long and massive wooden rails, and there is no rounce apparatus for moving the type under the platen.

The press was purchased by the typefounders Barnhart Brothers & Spindler from G. W. Charlotta & Son of Elkin, North Carolona, about 1890, and exhibited in the World's Fair in 1893.

This press arrived at the Smithsonian with broken coil springs, which have been replaced; the older springs are preserved.

Given by Barnhart Brothers & Spindler in 1899

Citation "Notes about the World's Fair," in *Inland Printer,* August 1893 p. 403

Photographs 38828, 38828A, 67298

Ramage foolscap press

1986.890

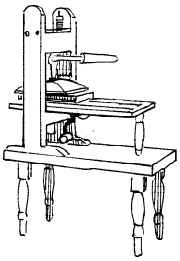


Table-top wooden press made by Adam Ramage, Philadelphia, about 1840. Missing tympan, frisket; table modern. Stamped on the original brass label: “A RAMAGE / PATENT / NO 189.” Height (without table) 38, width at cheeks 20-1/2, length 37. Platen 12-1/2x16-1/2.

❖ Ramage built wooden presses in three sizes: a full-size common press, an intermediate free-standing press which he called his “screw press,” and the smallest, the “foolscap,” so named for the size of sheet that it would print. Foolscap presses, sturdier than the screw presses, were sold in good numbers at about $65. After Ramage’s death in 1850, foolscap presses were made for some years by his successor, Frederick Bronstrup.

Given by Skip Barnhart, 1986

Ramage press plans (modern)

22304

Blueprint copy of plans drawn by Maurice Pancost, 1964, from the Ramage common press at the Ford Museum

❖ These plans were made for the construction of a replica in Hawaii.

Given by Maurice Pancost, 1964

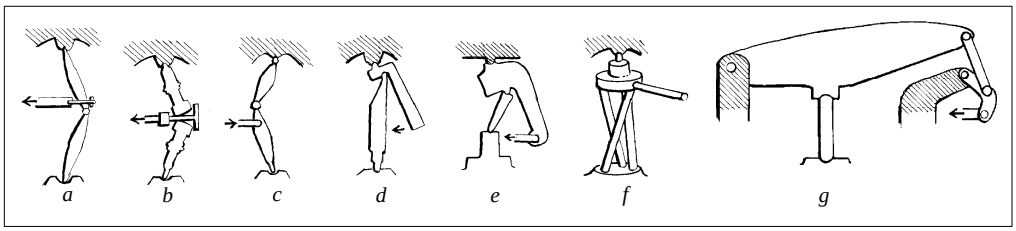
Iron hand presses

By the end of the eighteenth century, the old two-pull wooden press with iron screw could scarcely answer the needs of printers, either in Europe or in the United States. The answer was sought in iron, and in new systems of leverage. The first attempts to improve presses involved replacing or supplementing the screw with iron levers. This increased power so well that the platen could be doubled in size, for a one-pull press. But there was now too much power for the wooden frame to contain, so that, too, had to be built of iron. The earliest iron presses (such as the English Stanhope) had over-massive frames. Later frames were lighter.

The first American iron-framed hand press was the Columbian, which George Clymer introduced around 1813. Clymer failed to find much of a market here, and after a few years took his press to England where it was great success. No American-built Columbians are known to survive. But others took up what Clymer had begun, and soon a dozen Americans were building their own iron presses.

The iron hand press was the common working press in American shops from the 1820s until mid-century. Thereafter it began to give way to machines, but was used well into the twentieth century, even in large printing offices, as a quick proofing press.

Presses are listed alphabetically, by common name.

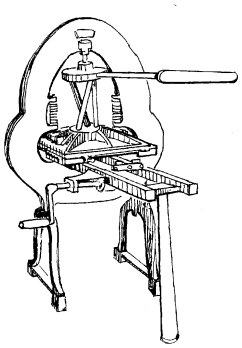


Levers on iron hand presses in the collection

a. Wells
b. Smith
c. Tufts
d. Washington
e. Albion
f. Adams's Stansbury
g. Columbian

Acorn press, Adams no. 325

1985.498.01



Acorn-framed press with Stansbury levers made by Isaac & Seth Adams, Boston, about 1830. With makers' brass label; original frisket and forestay missing. Height 58, width at cheeks 31-1/2, length 37; platen 13x16-1/2.

❖ Around 1821 Abraham Stansbury of New York invented and patented a wood-framed press with two torsion levers of iron. The press was manufactured by the Cincinnati Type Foundry from about 1827. A few years later the brothers Seth and Isaac Adams produced a modified form with three torsion levers and an all-iron acorn frame. In 1859 Isaac Adams sold his business to Hoe, who continued to build the press for another twenty years.

The brass label reads "ADAMS PRESS No. 325 Manufactured by I. & S. ADAMS & CO. Boston."

Purchased in 1985

Acorn press, probably Tufts

1980.955

Acorn-framed press, maker's plate missing but probably made by Otis Tufts, Boston, about 1835. Height 51, width at cheeks 32, length 54. Platen 16x20-1/2.

❖ Acorn-framed presses were made by a number of press builders from the early 1820s, particularly in the Boston area. Otis Tufts patented his acorn-framed hand press in 1831, and remained in the press-building business until 1837. Later he went into steam engineering. Tufts's acorn presses can be distinguished from those of other manufacturers such as Adams, Dow, Hoe, or the Cincinnati Type Foundry by the decoration and shape of the acorn and the toggle arrangement. The elbow of the Tufts toggle folds to the left, and the lower joint pierces a cross bar between the cheeks of the press.

Given by Donald J. Clifford, 1980

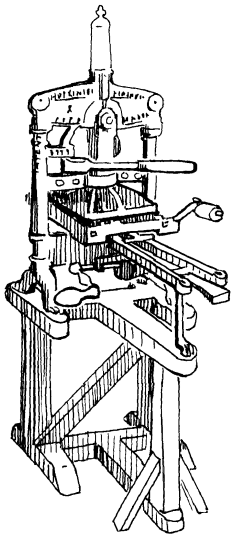
Photographs 81.2668, 81.2669, 81.2670

Albion press, Hopkinson & Cope

1991.833

Bench-top Albion no. 1930, made by Hopkinson and Cope, London, 1845. Original wooden stand. Press height 38, width at cheeks 19, length 38; stand 27 high, 33-1/2 long; platen 9-1/2x15. Marked on the frame, bar, and brass sleeve, "Hopkinson & Cope Finsbury London," "No. 1930 1845," and "Patent No 2289." Stamped in various places "Patent," with a crown.

❖ The Albion was an English press invented by Richard Whittaker Cope of London. The date of invention is not known, but the first record of the press is from 1822 when some Albions were imported into France. The Albion had a different form of toggle levers from American presses, and a large spring on top of the press for the return of the platen. Presumably the name "Albion"—a poetic name for England—was chosen in response to the Columbian, recently arrived from America. The Albion was advertised as being lighter and less bulky than rival English iron presses, such as the Stanhope. It had ample power, particularly in the smaller sizes, and became the most popular hand press in Britain, as the Washington was to be in the United States.



At Richard Cope's death, about 1830, his company was taken over by John Hopkinson working under J. & J. Barrett, trustees of Cope's estate. For ten years all three names were cast into the press, but after 1840 the style was simply "Hopkinson & Cope." Hopkinson introduced some improvements, notably modifying the form of the toggles and adding the word "Patent" (a claim apparently without foundation.) By mid century several other makers were in the field, using Hopkinson's improved toggles. Albions were made in Britain continuously until as late as 1940.

Albions were not imported into the United States in any numbers until the twentieth century, when they were brought in by collectors.

Given by Jack Murphy, 1991

Albion press, Ullmer

1988.650

Bench-top Albion press made by E. & W. Ullmer, London, 1859. Wooden base made in Museum. Height 27-1/2, width at cheeks 14, length 23. Platen 7-1/2x10-1/4.

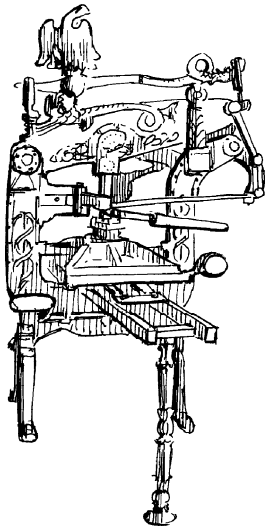
Given by Joseph Hennage, 1973

Photographs 73.5648-36A, 73.5648-38A

Columbian press

21028

Super-royal Columbian press made by Ritchie and Son, Edinburgh, about 1860. Maker's label: "RITCHIE & SON / MAKERS / EDINBURGH." Press height 89, width overall 53, length 66 overall; platen 21x29.



❖ The Columbian press was invented in 1813 by George Clymer (1754-1834), a Philadelphia mechanic. From 1800 Clymer had been building wooden presses, and then versions of the new iron presses from Europe. His Columbian was quite original, not only for its extravagant design but for its levers and counterweights. It was well received, though at $400 it cost more than twice as much as a wooden press. But Clymer was not satisfied with the market he found in the United States, perhaps because printers were not yet ready to give up their old wooden presses. In 1818 he took his business to England and found much greater success. His first English presses carried his own name; in 1825 William Dixon joined the company, and the presses showed both names. From the 1840s, they were manufactured by several dozen companies all over Europe.

Although Clymer had made and sold presses in Philadelphia, no American Columbians are known to survive. The Washington press came to occupy the place in nineteenth-century American printing offices that the Columbian and Albion were to hold in Britain. The only Columbians in the United States today were made in Europe, and brought over here some time later.

Given by Taylor & Taylor, San Francisco, 1961

Photographs 67299; 65830-C and 65830-D (with Jacob Kainen)

Columbian press, engravings

17432

Copper engraving of a Columbian press by Hugh Anderson after William Strickland. 10-1/2x8-1/4.

❖ The press shown bears a label reading "Columbian Press No. 25 invented by George Clymer Anno Domini 1813. Made in Philadelphia 1816." If it is to be believed, the label on the press gives us some idea of how many presses Clymer built before he left Philadelphia for London in 1818.

Anderson and Strickland were Philadelphia artists.

Collected, 1939

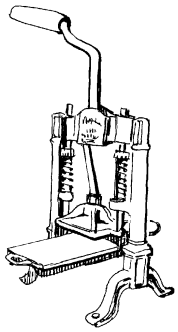
21029

Copper engraving identical to 17432, above

Given by Taylor & Taylor, 1961

Hat-tip press

23852 (1988.650)



Bench-top iron lever press, marked "Hoffman Type & Engraving Co," late 19th century. Height 39, length 28; bed 8x8.

❖ "Hat tip" was a term for the manufacturer's label pasted in the crown of a gentleman's hat. Tips were often blocked in gold leaf on fabric—a process that, by 1850, justified a specialized press, small and sturdy, with enough mass in the platen to hold the heat to melt gold size. The term came to be used for small presses with an overhead lever like this one, whether intended for hat-tip printing, card printing, or any other small job work.

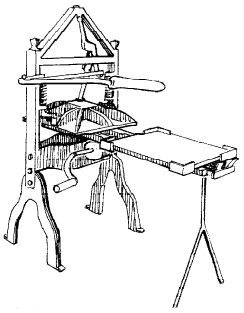
The bed and platen are reversed on this press: the type hangs face down from the bed, and the platen is under it. There is an ink disk beyond the bed. Two rollers mounted on the platen's leading edge roll across the ink disk to pick up ink, and then deposit the ink on the type on the return trip.

Given by Joseph Hennage, 1988

Photograph 73.5648-1A (press in crate)

Philadelphia press

1984.427



Philadelphia press made by Frederick Bronstrup, Philadelphia, after 1850. Top finial missing. Height 72, width at cheeks 33, length 74-1/2; platen 22-1/2x19.

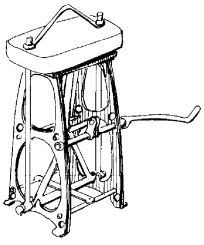
❖ The Philadelphia was designed and originally built by Adam Ramage of Philadelphia and, like Ramage's better-known wooden presses, it was sternly utilitarian in looks. The A-shaped frame was made of 1x3 wrought-iron band. The earliest Philadelphia presses had a simple elbow toggle lever, similar to that of the Wells. After 1842 Ramage changed the toggles to something closer to the Washington press. This was one of a group of presses deriving from Ramage's patent of 1834, and sharing the A-frame.

After Ramage's death in 1850, his business was taken over by Frederick Bronstrup, a German blacksmith, who made this heftier form of the Philadelphia press. Bronstrup sold the business in 1875.

Given by Wallace J. Tomasini for the University of Iowa, 1984

"Pull-down jobber"

9288



Hand lever press, late 19th century. Toggle broken, feed table missing. Height 45, width (without handle) 26, depth 23

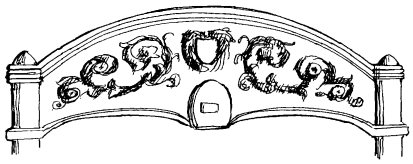
❖ This press of uncertain history and function may have been an electrotyper's moulding press for making a wax mould from a type form. It came to the Museum under the name "pull-down jobber."

Lowering the handle straightens the main toggle, which in turn pulls the thick wooden slab down against the fixed bed.

Purchased from John Lant, 1901

Smith press

17404



Smith press with Washington frame, made by R. Hoe & Co. after 1835. Missing original toggles, finials, and maker's plate. Height 68, width at cheeks 31, length 65; platen 19x25.

❖ Peter Smith, brother-in-law and partner to the more famous Robert Hoe, designed his press about 1822 in answer to John Wells's iron press, but died in 1823 just after its introduction. The first Smith presses had cast-iron acorn-shaped frames. In 1835 Hoe acquired the rights to his strongest rival, the Washington press, and thereafter built the Smith toggles into the upright frame of the Washington. The Smith press was still manufactured as late as 1880, although it was always a second-runner to the Washington.

This press resided in the Government Printing Office's branch in the U. S. National Museum for many years before its title was transferred to the Smithsonian in 1939.

Transferred from the Government Printing Office, 1939

Photograph 74.8429

Smith press label

1986.877

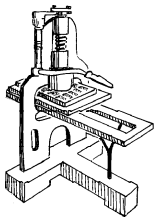
Original brass maker's plate reading "PETER SMITH'S PATENT / No. 445 / Manufactured by / ROBT. HOE & CO. / New York." 7-1/2 wide

❖ The whereabouts of the press itself are unknown, but this kidney-shaped plate is similar to plates on Hoe's acorn-framed rather than upright-framed presses, and therefore probably dates earlier than 1835.

Given by William T. Hassett, 1986

Stanhope press (miniature)

11014



Wooden model of Stanhope press, late 19th century. Height 11, width 7-1/2, length 11.

❖ The Stanhope was invented in England by Charles Earl Stanhope around 1800. It was a screw press with a stout iron frame, and the leverage of the screw was compounded by a system of levers. Very heavy and very powerful, the press was welcomed both in Britain and on the Continent as a successor to the old wooden presses. Stanhopes were even imported into the United States, though rarely, before the American iron presses of the 1820s made their appearance.

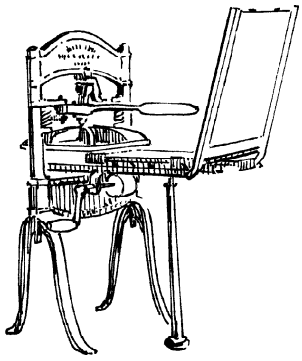
This is a much-simplified model made by the U.S. Patent Office for their own reference purposes.

Deposited by Department of the Interior, 1906

Photograph 70855

Washington press, R. Hoe & Co.

20007



Washington press no. 5465 made by R. Hoe & Co., New York, about 1865. Frisket missing. Height 63, length 50; platen 21x16.

❖ The Washington press became far the most popular iron hand press in America, a position it held from the 1820s until the end of the hand press era. The press was invented by Samuel Rust, a New York printer, during the 1820s. Rust's patent of 1821 (now lost) probably covered the toggle mechanism, a figure-4 arrangement which provided greater leverage than the simple elbow toggle of the Wells or the Smith. Rust's second patent of 1829 covered a new frame, which had cast iron hollow columns enclosing wrought-iron rods—the true tension members.

The earliest Washington presses, which had acorn frames, were manufactured by Rust and his partner Turney. Later, presses with the patent vertical frames were made by Rust alone. Around 1834 Rust's rival, R. Hoe & Co., succeeded by a ruse in getting Rust to sell out to John Colby, a Hoe employee. Colby passed the

business—with patent rights—back to the Hoe Company, who thereafter manufactured the press alongside their own Smith press. At the expiration of the patents, other American companies began producing their own versions of the Washington.

This press was used in the Government Printing Office in Washington until its transfer in 1938.

Transferred from the Government Printing Office, 1938

Photograph 74.8426

Washington press, R. Hoe & Co.

21167

Large-format Washington press made by R. Hoe & Co., late 19th century. Frame cracked, and fixed with a brace.

❖ This press has been on loan to the Government Printing Office since the 1960s, and is displayed there.

Given by Harry Wood, 1961

Washington press, A. B. Taylor

23008

Press made by A. B. Taylor, New York, about 1860. Tympan and frisket made in the Museum. Height 77, width at cheeks 38, length 88; platen 25x39 inches.

❖ Alva Burr Taylor, a blacksmith by trade, worked with the Hoe Company of New York from 1822 until 1842 when he formed his own company. He produced cylinder presses, Washington presses, and a few jobbing presses, as well as steam engines.

The oval ornament on this press, an eagle with drums and banners, is found in combination with other ornaments on presses made by various manufacturers, such as the CTF Washington press below (1978.2124).

Given by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hennage, 1969

Photographs 74.8425; 84-17820/17, 84-17820/13 (two views of the toggles)

Washington press, C.T.F.

1978.2124.1

Press made by the Cincinnati Type Foundry, about 1860. Height 68-1/2, length 78-1/2, width at cheeks 38; platen 26x42. Large painted "F" on head and platen.

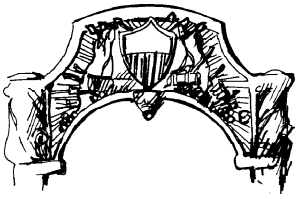
❖ This press has on the front of the frame an oval with eagle and banners similar to that on the Taylor press, and on the back an eagle with cornucopias.

Given by Wayne Opdyke, 1978

Photographs 79.17945-24, -26

Washington press, C.T.F.

1983.452



Press made by the Cincinnati Type Foundry, about 1860. Height 62-3/4, length 73-1/2, width at cheeks 37; platen 24x38.

❖ The ornament on the frame of this press shows a shield surrounded by banners, cannons, and bayonets in a blaze of glory. The plate mounted in the shield reads "Cincinnati Type Foundry & PRINTERS' WAREHOUSE." The same wording is on the back of the frame, without ornament.

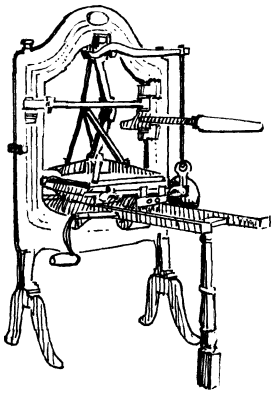
Given by Wilfred J. Jung, 1983

Wells press

10188

Press made by John I. Wells of Hartford, Connecticut, about 1819. Iron ball counterweight. Stamped on bar (perhaps by previous owner): "247." Platen extended by a 1-inch iron strip bolted to rear edge. Bracket for shelf or ink table on near side column. Tympan and frisket missing. Wooden forestay probably not original to this press. Original brass label: "John I. Wells / PATENT LEVER PRESS NO. 54 / HARTFORD CONN." Height 76, width at 38-1/2 at cheeks, length 72; platen including extension 30-1/2x21.

❖ John Wells of Hartford, Connecticut, patented his press in



1819. It had a cast-iron frame and simple toggle levers in elbow form, and was the first all-American iron lever press after Clymer left the country with his Columbian. Originally Wells hung a heavy iron ball at the side as a counterweight to the platen; later he used springs (which also replaced the spidery three-legged platen hanger). He also simplified the connection between bar and toggle levers, and patented this change in 1829. Later presses carry both modifications.

Wells's press sold well, but was not able to withstand the competition from Washingtons and Smiths that developed in the 1820s. Manufacture of the Wells press came to an end when Wells died in 1833.

Given by the American Type Founders Company, 1915

Photographs 67301; 33107, 33107a, 33107 b (views of upper half); 65830 (Jacob Kainen at the press)

John Wells: patent documents

1981.252.1-4

Original letters patent dated 15 July 1816 (a fragment), 8 February 1819 (lever press), 23 March 1824 (book binder's cutting press), and 29 June 1829 (improvements on the lever press), issued to John I. Wells

Given by Robert E. Todd, 1981

Rails and rounce, unknown iron press

1995.0214.002

Iron rails and wooden rounce (winding apparatus) from an unknown iron hand press, 19th century. Length 66-3/4.

Found in the collections

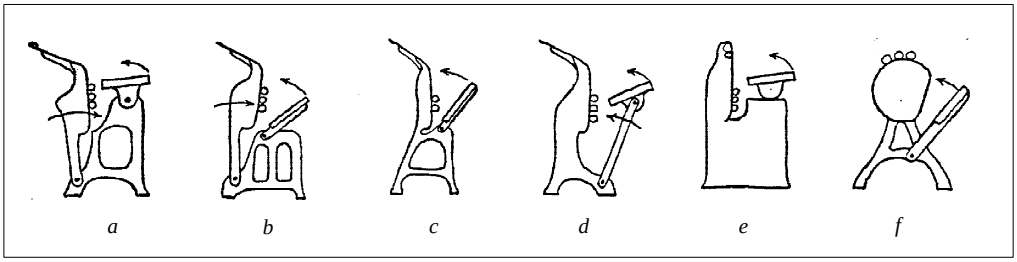
Platen jobbers

The platen jobber was the first truly American contribution to printing technology. It was devised for a specific segment of printing trade: neighborhood printers dealing in posters, local notices, tickets, newsletters, letterheads, and other short-run job work. These printers needed rather simple machines that were quick to set up. The presses should be cheap self-inkers, taking up little floor space. Speed of printing was not so important.

The American platen jobber derives from presses made by Stephen P. Ruggles of Boston in the 1840s, in which platen and bed werehinged below their lower edges to close on each other clamshell fashion. With variations and improvements, that basic form became known universally as the "platen jobber." The presses of George P. Gordon, starting from the 1850s, set a standard for the genre, and as Gordon's various patents expired, many entrepreneurs began to produce their own versions of his Franklin Jobbers.

With more than a hundred different models on the market, ranging from the gimcrack to the finely engineered, the platen jobber reached its peak near the end of the century. And the jobber held its place in printing offices until well after 1950, when offset lithography moved into the jobbing trade.

Platen jobbing presses are listed alphabetically, by common name.

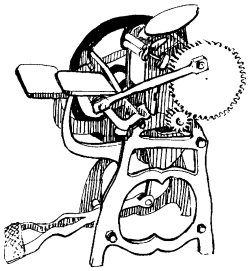


Major types of platen jobbing presses (from Ralph Green, A History of the Platen Jobber, *1953)*

a. Old style Gordon
b. New style Gordon
c. Simple clamshell press
d. Platen pivoted on long front legs
e. Parallel impression
f. Cylindrical impression

Baltimore jobber

23260



Platen jobber with clamshell mechanism, made by J. F. W. Dorman, Baltimore, about 1890. Chase (missing) 8x12.

❖ J. F. W. Dorman started out as a stencil cutter in 1866, became a supplier of rubber stamps and stationery material, carried his business up into boys' presses in the 1870s, and then briefly into full-size jobbing presses. His shop was lost in the Great Baltimore Fire of 1904, and after that disaster the company returned to its original line of office supply.

The Baltimore Jobber—the largest of Dorman's "Baltimore" name series—has a simple clamshell mechanism, and an unusually massive counterweight to the platen, swinging between the sides of the frame.

Given by Mr. and Mrs. Otto Donner, 1970

Chandler & Price New Series

23605

New series jobber made by Chandler & Price, Cleveland, about 1911. Chase 10x15.

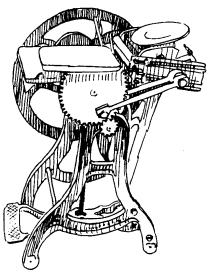
❖ In 1886, William T. Price, a mechanic, and Harrison T. Chandler, an investor, formed a company in Cleveland for the production of presses based on Gordon's old-style Franklin Jobber. C&P presses, as they are known, were strong, reliable machines, and became the standard for the industry.

In 1901 Chandler and Price bought out the old Gordon works in New Jersey and the Gordon name. In 1911 they introduced their "new series"—a heavier version of the old-style Gordon with a boxed frame (flanges projecting inwards) and straight spokes on the flywheel.

Given by W. Bradley Edelblut, 1972

Clamshell jobber

23753



Platen jobber with simple clamshell mechanism, maker unknown, made about 1880. Chase 6-1/2x10

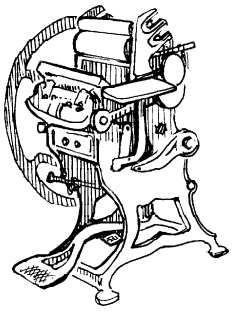
❖ Simple clamshell jobbers like this one were distributed by dealers, often with no name at all or with a name customized for the distributor. This press is similar to a press distributed by Damon & Peets of New York as the "Favorite."

Given by Frederick J. Schmidt in the name of Joachim P. E. Schmidt, 1973

Photographs 73.5648-7, -11, -14 (in storage)

Colts Armory Universal

1985.559.3



Platen jobber with parallel impression mechanism, made by Colts Patent Fire Arms Manufacturing Company, Hartford, Connecticut, about 1886. Some broken parts. Chase 7x11.

❖ The Colts press derives from a patent taken out by Merritt Gally in 1869 for a motion that gave the platen a true parallel approach to the bed. Gally's press, the original Universal, was produced for him by John Thompson at the Colts Armory plant in Hartford, Connecticut. Around 1885, Gally and Thompson separated. Thompson began producing his own version of the press, citing his patent of 1886 and naming his press the Colts Armory Universal.

This specimen, with open sides, was one of Thompson's early models. Later and larger presses had heavier frames with continuous sides. The Colts Armory presses were well designed and built, and had a reputation for excellence.

Purchased in 1985

Golding Improved Pearl No. 11

24289

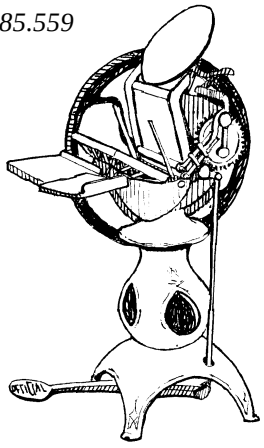
Platen jobber, clamshell mechanism, made by William Golding, Boston, 1900 or later. Chase (missing) 7x11.

❖ William Golding of Boston set up shop as a printer's supply house in 1869, and soon graduated to the manufacture of seals, then small amateur presses, and finally full-size jobbing presses. The very popular Pearl series, which had a simple clamshell mechanism, was introduced under a patent of 1871, and went through a number of models. The "Improved Pearl," with impression throw-off lever, arrived in 1895. This specimen is of the 1900 series.

Given by Melba Trilli Geckner, Guido P. Trilli, and Delmo F. Trilli, 1976

Golding Official No. 6

1985.559



Self-inking platen jobbing press made by William Golding, Boston, about 1880. Chase 10x15.

❖ This voluptuous press was the largest of Golding's Officials, a series that ranged up from a tabletop press with platen of 2x3. A heavy press in build, it is particularly light and smooth in operation.

Purchased in 1985

Gordon Franklin

1994.380.01 (22318)

Old-style platen jobber made by George P. Gordon, New York, about 1863. Recent green paint. Chase 6x10.

❖ The Gordon Franklin was the single most famous and influential jobbing press of the nineteenth century.

George Phineas Gordon (1810-1878) was a printer who started building and patenting presses for the job printer from 1850. The most celebrated of his many presses was the Franklin, so called because Gordon, a spiritualist, said that Ben Franklin had described it to him in a dream. By 1858 this press was essentially in its final form, but over the next decades Gordon continued to modify and re-patent it. On the expiration of his patents, other manufacturers moved in with their own versions of the press.

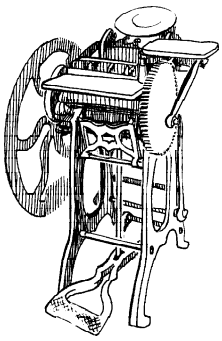
This early example of a Gordon Franklin has neither impression throw-off mechanism nor a gate to lock the platen into position at the point of impression, two features used in Gordon's later presses.

The press was lent to the Museum in 1968 under the catalog number 22318.

Given by Neal Bezoenik, 1994

Gordon Franklin

23274



Old-style platen jobber made by George P. Gordon, New York, about 1865. Chase missing; platen 7-1/2x13-1/2.

❖ This intermediate-style press has a gate, but no throw-off lever.

Given by the Wesley Krebeck family, 1973

Gordon Franklin

21747

Old-style platen jobber made by George P. Gordon, New York, about 1865. Chase missing; platen 7-1/2x13-1/2.

Given by Franklin L. Thatcher, 1963

Gordon Franklin

23751-172

Old-style platen jobber made by George P. Gordon, New York, about 1865. Chase 7x11.

Given by Bruce Saunders, 1973

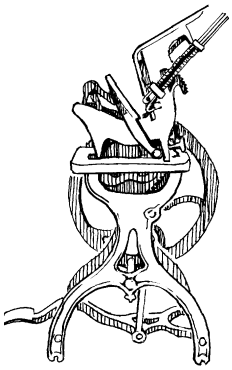
Photographs 73.5648-3, -6, -15, -19 (in storage); 74.8421

Novelty

1985.753

Clamshell jobber, made by B. O. Woods Company before 1887. Brazed repair on roller guide tracks. Chase 6-1/2x10-1/2.

❖ The Novelty—usually a table-top lever press—was invented by Benjamin Woods and William Tuttle, Boston pharmacists, for their own use in the shop. In 1867 the partners patented the press, and introduced it under the slogan, "Be your own printer." The Novelty was made in four sizes with hand or foot levers, and many thousands were sold before the company was bought out by William Kelsey in 1887. This press is one of the larger and later models with a flywheel and rotary action.



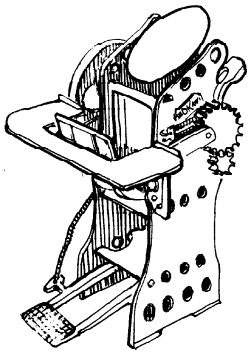
In the collection there are also seven "Novelty Type Cases" (but no cabinet) that were made and sold by Woods to go with his presses. These diminutive cases measure 13 by 16, and have 81 equal-sized boxes. Each box has a rounded bottom to make it easier to take out type.

Given by John F. Craemer, 1985

Photograph 86.1776

OK Jobber

1985.559.2



Platen jobber, clamshell mechanism, made by W. A. Kelsey, about 1891. Chase 9x13.

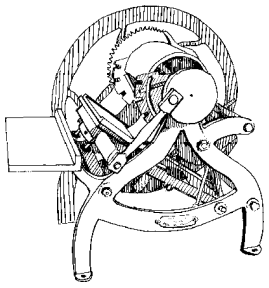
❖ William Kelsey made his fame and fortune with small presses for amateurs and children, but for a few years he tried making platen jobbers too, and even a small flatbed cylinder press. His short-lived OK Jobber, introduced in 1887, sold for only $100. The press, criticized as being flimsy and lacking power, was not a great success. But like many lightweight clamshell jobbers of the time, it filled a need and did so cheaply.

This model was brought out in 1891, with a modified frame and a wraparound feed table. The small flywheel (25-inch diameter) is tied directly to the treadle by a rod. Despite its light frame, the press is heavy in operation.

Purchased in 1985

Ruggles Card-and-Billhead press

23009



Platen jobber, clamshell mechanism (Green's “cylindrical impression”), made by S. P. Ruggles Power Press Manufacturing Company, Boston, 1854 or later. Press has original maker’s label, and some old dark green paint with red pinstriping. Original chase, inking rollers and treadle missing (replaced in Museum). Height 27 (excluding flywheel), length 38, width 26; chase 3-1/2x6-3/4.

❖ Stephen P. Ruggles (1808-1880) patented this press in 1851. It was one of a new breed of jobbing presses with the bed and platen more or less vertical, hinged together below their lower edges, the pattern followed by George Gordon and others. A few years later Ruggles added a smaller (bench-top) and a larger size to the line.

The press was to be bolted to a box, and a long treadle lever connected to its flywheel. The cylindrical back of the type bed forms an ink-distributing surface over which the rollers pass

before crossing the type itself. A short distributing roller vibrates from side to side, guided by a follower in a spiral track.

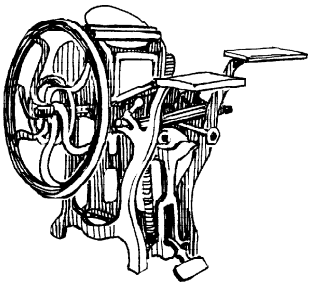
In 1854 Ruggles sold his interest in presses to the newly incorporated S. P. Ruggles Power Press Manufacturing Company, and retired a wealthy man. Some time later the Hoe Company acquired all rights to the press, and produced their own very similar model. An example is at the Ford Museum, Dearborn.

Given by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hennage, 1969

Washington Jobber

1995.0142.01

Clamshell jobber, built by John M. Jones, Palmyra, New York, about 1885. The feedboards, rod between treadle and crank, throw-off handle, and flywheel are replacements. One gripper missing. Old repairs to frame, platen base, and gripper bar. Height 48, length 45, width 33; chase 8x12, platen 8-1/2x14.



❖ John Jones of Palmyra was a successful and well-respected manufacturer of a dozen different platen jobbing presses, several of them based on Gordon's ideas. His Washington (about 1880 to 1889) was a press with the simpler clamshell action, but included Jones's patent impression-adjustment device, and—after 1884—his patent friction clutch as a throw-off mechanism. This press is unmarked except for the word PATENT on the handle of the platen clip, and "S.W." etched into the rim of the flywheel. The platen is adjusted by two bolts (the handles protrude under the feed table), working on the rod that acts as fulcrum for the platen; there are no adjustment screws behind the platen itself. The platen is thin for its size, but backed by the deep webbing that is characteristic of Jones's presses.

Given by Patricia E. Schneider, 1995

Go to next half of book