

Bibliographica

Issue No. 1, Winter 2005

Editorial Note: *Welcome to the first issue of Bibliographica, a quarterly newsletter devoted to private presses, fine printing, and the book arts in general. Our hope is to introduce readers to younger or lesser-known printers as well as review the works of better-known, more established presses. We encourage members of the fine printing community to submit articles for future issues - if interested, please send an e-mail to aeoluspress@yahoo.com.*

People to People Press

Some of my earliest memories are of Saturday morning Lego® construction. I would sit on the beige living room carpet at age five, spending hours on end building structures of multihued plastic parts for fictitious inhabitants. These are my first recollections of experiencing the thrill of creation--something didn't exist, now it does, and I made it happen.

More than twenty years later, my desire to create is still present is an essential part of who I am. Along my path of learning and experimentation at the University of Notre Dame and later Indiana University in Bloomington, I discovered my passion: books and printing. Today, I am proud to be a documentary book artist and designer, and an independent publisher and sole proprietor of the People to People Press.

My love of making books is derived from three great pleasures. The first is an interest in language and writing: in words and printing. The second is an intense enjoyment in working with materials and images: in ink and paper, in all things visual and tactile. The third is a delight in listening to and capturing personal memories: in conversations and oral communication. The books I make grow out of the act of engaging with people and materials, and they reflect my interest in oral history narratives and storytelling. They are documentary in nature and are about travels, experiences and encounters with distinct groups of people.

For Years to Come

I established the People to People Press in 2002

in Bloomington, Indiana. The Press is committed to facilitating the transmission of stories from people to people by creating and publishing original limited edition books of stories drawn from oral history interviews. Each publication by the Press will preserve a portion of the human environment and tradition of a specific community of people by bringing together their stories, thereby capturing memories and recollections. These stories are presented collectively, identifying the common thread which weaves their lives together, whether it be a commonality of geography, profession, or lifestyle. These books present people in their own words; they are stories for all generations to read and enjoy for many years to come.

The People to People Press works in the tradition of fine limited editions by creating books of worthwhile texts which are carefully designed, printed on a traditional letterpress, and bound by hand. The books are illustrated by a series of images that capture the sense of community with insight and imagination. The typefaces are chosen to suit the text, and the materials are thoughtful and appropriate to the subject matter. The editions are limited to fifty copies. Through respect for the form, material and technical processes used, purity within the design is preserved. Each work is created through the artist's best effort with thoughtful design and careful production in an attempt to capture and reflect the preciousness of each individual voice.

The Press Celebrates its First Publication

In December 2002 the People to People Press published its first book, *Limestone Lives: Voices*

from the Indiana Stone Belt. Indiana's limestone industry is clustered in the "Stone Belt," an area roughly two miles wide and thirty miles long. Here generations of stonecutters have plied their craft, digging huge multi-ton blocks out of the earth and shaping the stone into enduring works of art and architecture. The book is a monument to men and women who take enormous pride in the quality of their work, as well as to the role this unique industry plays in creating buildings that last.

Limestone Lives is printed on Rives BFK Heavyweight in grey and buff. All text and images are printed letterpress. The typefaces used are Centaur and Arrighi, which were cast and set by the Bixler Typefoundry. There are three line drawings, and 45 magnesium halftone photo-engravings, eleven of which are full-page portraits of the interviewees' hands. The book has exposed sewing on the spine onto linen tapes, and the front and back covers are constructed from rectangular pieces of binders' board of varying dimensions which are arranged to resemble a wall built with limestone blocks. The book has 60 pages, 48 of which are printed. It measures 10.5 by 14.5 inches in a horizontal format, and is housed in a cloth slipcase.

Looking Ahead

The Press plans to grow and expand its repertoire in the years that follow. Its second book is in production and is anticipating spring 2005 publication. It will feature the stories and reflections of prominent individuals in the renowned music community of Bloomington, Indiana. A third book is also in the works--a bilingual edition which will document the rich history and strong traditions of restorative bookbinders in Italy.

The People to People Press welcomes inquiries. If you wish to have details of past or upcoming books, please write to:

Kate Ferrucci / People to People Press / 325 East Third Street #1 / Bloomington, Indiana 47401 USA, or email kateferrucci@hotmail.com

-- Kate Ferrucci

Bibliographica is a quarterly newsletter started by Kira Homo, John Russell, and Skye Thomsen (who also serve as the editorial board). To our knowledge, no one is making any money off of this - however, if you know someone who is profiting off of our labor of love, please ask him or her to share the wealth.

Minnesota Historical Society Rare Book Room

A recent visit to the rare book room of the Minnesota Historical Society was brief but interesting: we were there all of ten minutes. With no time to lose, our guide, MHS curator of rare books Patrick Coleman, began with a row of small books that he indicated would be the row he would save first if there were a fire. The first book he opened, a journal written by Father Hennepin, the French explorer, was printed in France in 1683. He turned to a foldout with a fanciful, Bosch-like depiction of a buffalo that he believed to be the first depiction of an American buffalo.

Across the aisle, Patrick opened a slim conservation folder and pulled out a small offset printed pamphlet that he believed to be a thinly disguised guide to the brothels of late nineteenth century Saint Paul. He speculated it had been sold on the train from Chicago to a man on a business trip. It was donated to MHS by a destitute fellow who found it in a wall of the Rossmore Building, an old warehouse near downtown Saint Paul. The lucky donor had refused compensation, although he obviously could have used some money.

We next saw an even smaller book of wanted criminals, with colorful descriptions and faded photographs of the wanted. This he said was likely carried around by an enterprising police officer. Then he showed us a few famous first editions (by Minnesotans) in dust jackets: F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and the Damned* (1922), Sinclair Lewis's *Our Mr. Wren, The Romantic Adventures of a Gentle Man* (1914), and Ole Rolvog's *Giants in the Earth* (1927).

The Fitzgerald was inscribed to a friend of his, and Fitzgerald indicated that the recipient was the living person one of the characters in the novel was based upon. "This is something a scholar researching Fitzgerald would love to know, but no one has come and asked to see it", said Mr. Coleman.

Finally he took us around to the fine press section and pulled out a copy of *The Enchanted Assassin* (1991), by David Rathman, a large loose-leafed, wood-bound artist's book. He said the acquisitions committee thought that he had lost his mind when he showed it to them.

As our time expired Mr. Coleman mentioned that the most valuable piece of paper in the room was a letter written by Abraham Lincoln authorizing the hanging of 38 Indians convicted of killing white settlers in the Dakotah Conflict of 1862, and staying the execution of 300 others. We indicated interest in seeing it, but were told it would take some time to locate, as for security reasons it was filed somewhere under a different name, and we were out of time. --
Gaylord Schanilec

California Fine Printing: A Prologomena

I can define my life, so far, as having two distinct periods: one in which I saw books as vessels for stories about worlds and lives better than my own and another in which I look at a book and only want to see its guts – the typeface, the paper, the binding – to appreciate it for its beauty alone and to understand how a book is made to reflect and enhance the story inside. I don't know precisely when I moved from one period to the other but it happened a while ago when I found myself taking a student job in the special collections department of the Mills College library in Oakland, California. I wanted to know everything about how books were made and I wanted to see the finest and most breathtaking examples we had. I gravitated toward the incunables and the artist's books, about as far apart as you can get, but I was (and still am) easily seduced by the whimsical book structures, typefaces, papers, and illustrations of the artist's books.

Mills has a strong collection of fine press and artist books and I couldn't help but notice that a lot of them were created by San Francisco- or California-based book artists. Many of these printers and artists are acolytes of William Everson and many of them apprenticed at the Lime Kiln Press at University of California, Santa Cruz. There is quite a William Everson cult among some California book artists and printers but I'll get into that at another time. When I first saw William Everson's *Granite and Cypress*, I won't say it was an ecstatic experience but I was moved in a way in which I finally understood that a skilled printer can convey so much emotion through a printing press and metal type.

Through this encounter with Everson, my

obsession with printing grew and I took an internship at the California Historical Society in San Francisco in the Kemble Collection on the History of Printing and Publishing in the West. Working with the broadsides in that collection I was introduced to the Taylor & Taylor Printing Company, McKenzie & Harris Typecasting, Grabhorn Press, John Henry Nash, and others. The richness of that material combined with the commonality of place got me interested in California printing and California presses. Whether or not there is a "California printing tradition" or a "California style" I have no idea, but there is a preponderance of fine printers in California and I'd like to write about them: Saul & Lillian Marks, Ward Ritchie Press, Book Club of California keepsakes, Andrew Hoyem, Adian Wilson, Edward Bosqui, Edwin & Robert Grabhorn, Jane Grabhorn, and possibly more. In future columns I hope to convey, through the works and lives of individual printers, a sense of California printers as an important part of the history of fine printing in America. --
Skye Thomsen

The Incline Press

I first ran across the Incline Press at the 2003 Oak Knoll Fest. I was wandering through the exhibition area, surrounded by tables covered with beautiful books, when a small book about Indian toys caught my eye: *Bert and Molly Eastman: Their Book of Indian Toys*. I paused to look, picking it up and leafing through the beautiful illustrations. Neither Graham Moss nor Kathy Whalen was at the Fest that year. I have not had the pleasure of meeting Kathy, but I met Graham this year, and I am sure that if he had been at Oak Knoll 2003 I would not have been able simply to look at the *Book of Indian Toys*. Graham would have told me all about Bert and Molly Eastman and their toy collection, walking me through the book lino-cut by lino-cut, telling me the story both of the toys and of the making of the book. Had I asked, he probably also would have told me how he came to be a printer.

The Incline Press started by accident. Graham Moss was interested in book repair, and acquired a small press to print book labels and wrappers. But of course to print with a press requires type, and printing cards and stationery

is interesting, and wouldn't it be nice to have a bigger press, and now the Incline Press has printed around forty books. The first one, Oliver Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village*, was released in 1993. Since then, the Incline Press has released books on a wide variety of topics, including *Urban Birds*, *Some Birds and Beasts and Their Feasts* (an alphabet book), *A Correspondence of 1953 Concerning the Book The Seven Deadly Virtues* (by Denis Tegetmeier and Eric Gill), a version of *Who Killed Cock Robin* illustrated by Enid Marx, *An Introduction to Chapbooks*, and *The Ancient Art of Ebru* (a miniature book introducing ebru, a branch of marbling). Graham's and Kathy's latest book, *Art for Life*, is a biography of Peggy Angus. Carolyn Trant, one of Peggy's former students, wrote the book, which is illustrated with examples of Peggy's own designs and sketches. For next year Graham Moss and Kathy Whalen are planning at least two books: *A Paper Snowstorm: Toni Savage & the Leicester Broadsheds* and *James Weatherley's Story: The Autobiography of a 19th-Century Manchester Bookseller*. One of the 2002 Incline Press offerings was *Bert and Molly Eastman: Their Book of Indian Toys*.

In the 1960s, with the enthusiastic support of their children, Bert and Molly Eastman began collecting carved wooden toys from India. *Bert and Molly Eastman: Their Book of Indian Toys* tells of their collection, how they came to start it, how the toys are made, and some of the ways the toys are used. Artisans carve each toy individually, cover it in a layer of gesso, and paint it in bright colors. Almost every page of Bert and Molly's book includes a lino-cut, in color, of one of these wonderful toys, most from their own collection—lions, tigers, birds, "bandmen" with their musical instruments, and many others. It was the illustrations that particularly drew me to this book. The cuts are fantastic, and the toys themselves are incredibly fascinating. At least two of the toys pictured are from the collection of Claud Lovat Fraser, a noted artist who worked in illustration and theater design during the early twentieth century. In addition to his illustration and design work, Fraser was also interested in producing quality, affordable toys; his wife's collection of Indian toys, begun by Fraser and continued by him and his wife together, now resides in the Bethnal Green Museum of

Childhood in London. The Eastmans visited the museum often and made sketches of some of the Indian toys from Fraser's collection (and of other Indian toys in the museum).

I didn't actually buy *Bert and Molly Eastman: Their Book of Indian Toys* at the Oak Knoll Fest. However, I received it as a Christmas gift that year, and since then have acquired a number of other Incline Press books. The quality of the printing is always excellent, and the subject matter is invariably interesting. -- Kira Homo
The Incline Press is online at www.inclinepress.com

Fine Press Notes

Each issue of Bibliographica will contain a short list of new and forthcoming fine press publications. We also sponsor Fine Press News, an online source of information concerning fine presses and their productions; it can be viewed at <http://finepress.blogspot.com>. If you would like your publications to be included in our Notes or News, then please e-mail us at aeoluspress@yahoo.com

Seen and Heard at Oak Knoll Fest, Oct. 2004

Whittington Press is coming out with a leaf book featuring the big three of private presses: Kelmscott, Doves and Ashendene. They also were selling a few sets of William Nicholson prints that had originally been printed in 1980; it seems John Randle found a small stash of them tucked away somewhere and brought them to Oak Knoll Fest for sale. **Midnight Paper Sales** put together a final set of Hungry Midnight broadsides for the recently closed Ruminator Books (formerly Hungry Mind Books). Gaylord Schanilec had out another print from his forthcoming book on mayflies, hinting that it should be finished sometime next year. **Incline Press** is working on an ambitious book about Peggy Angus, artist and teacher extraordinaire – well-illustrated, it also will include a CD of Peggy telling stories & singing some gypsy songs. A pleasant surprise was my introduction to Bob Baris and his **Press on Scroll Road**. His books are a pleasure for the senses, beautifully printed and a delight to read. **Bull Thistle Press** had a fascinating book printed on cinnamon paper. The earthy smell perfectly matched the subject matter: farming.