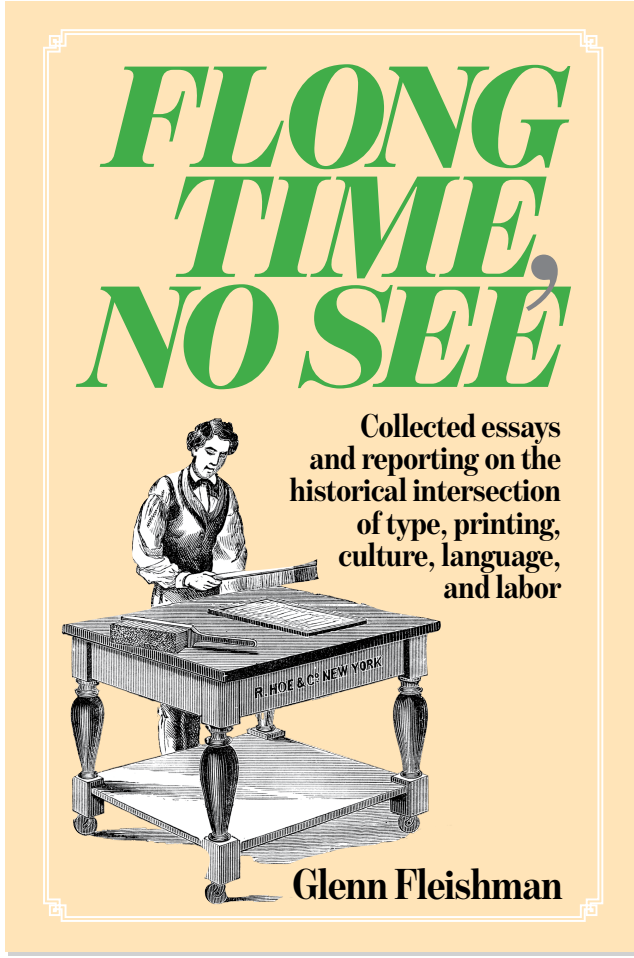


A SAMPLE FROM

Flong Time, No See

These 23 pages are excerpts from the book: the contents, the openings of eight chapters, and a few spreads of the pictures inside. Use the bookmarks to jump between them.

Get the whole book in print or as an ebook at
aperiodical.net/flong

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Fig. 19.—Pouring (showing Arrangement of Gas-jets).

Casting a mold. Wilson and Southward, *Stereotyping and Electrotyping*, 1880.

1

FLONG TIME, NO SEE

How a printing mold transformed newspapers' growth

You've heard of letterpress printing.[1] You may know about individual pieces of metal type that typesetters stacked side by side to compose lines of type—maybe at a crafts fair you inked some big wood type and pulled a print yourself? Perhaps you've even watched a film on YouTube about hot-metal composition, showing Linotype operators or Monotype casters producing endless lines of type for newspapers, magazines, and books.[2]

I would guess you've seen scenes in movies of newspaper presses in which ink is slammed onto a continuous newsprint feed moving at an absurdly high rate, and which is then cut, folded, and stacked into copies, and thrown into delivery vans. Printing presses appear in a key scene in *The Post*, the movie about *Washington Post* journalists publishing the Pentagon Papers.[3]

1 If you haven't, hold on—this book is full of details about it. Also, see Glossary.

2 A classic of the genre, "Farewell, ETAOIN SHRDLU" (David Loeb Weiss, director; Carl Schlesinger, narrator; 1978).[A]

3 Every single person I know has told me about the typesetting and printing scenes in *The Post*. They all wonder how I haven't seen the movie yet! As of this writing, I some-

LITERARY DIG

UBLIC OPINION (New York) combined with THE LITERARY DIGEST

Company (Adam W. Wagnalls, Pres.; Wilfred J. Funk, Vice-Pres.; Robert J. Cuddihy, Treas.; William Neisel, Sec'y), 354

New York, October 18, 1919 Whole

WITHOUT TYPESETTERS -- As our compositors and the compositors employed in many ot
ng a "vacation" in direct defiance of the orders of their own union chiefs to retu
to issue this number of THE DIGEST without their assistance. The anomalous print
ained in our issue of October 4th. How this number was issued without compositors
es familiar with modern typographical practise. To others it will be an interesti
as yet by explanation. There is one phase of the experiment, however, that is si
s oftentimes the mother of invention, it is possible in this age of marvels that t
cation may be revolutionized by the elimination of what has hitherto been its cos
g. The present departure will, at least, furnish a basis for many other experimen

PICS - OF - THE - D

MOB-RULE AS A NATIONAL MENACE

T THAT THEY SHARE with the Germans
rsty qualities that go with the name
es the Rochester Times-Union, "as
o our shame," Omaha following Washing-
ston and Knoxville, as race rioting
ted from country districts in Georgia
realize and admit that the unthink-
has actually come to pass." The
us living in "an atavistic period, a
when it was all a part of the day's
ding neighbor." "Are Americans be-
e?" asks the Philadelphia Inquirer.
placed under martial law after a mob
ng negro, had nearly killed the Mayor,
ew court house with most of its
a general paralysis of business.
ppening within 24 hours", says an Iowa
lkans, not in Turkey, not in Russia,
e continent over which waves the Stars
ting the free democracy of America."
confined to large cities which are
rderly element of considerable number
as the Cleveland News remarks, for
ains in the sparsely inhabited State
uced a brief reign of anarchy as
racing some of the nation's principal

Curtis (Rep. Kans.) calling for an invest
causes of, and remedies for, the race ric
which have been taking place throughout c
prepared for the use of Senatorial invest
National Association for the Advancement
reminds us that since the beginning of th
been 39 racial clashes in this country, w
period there have been more than 50 lynch
of the victims being negroes, of whom ten
stake. In 1918, 63 negroes and four whit
and no one was ever convicted for taking
formances. In the years 1889-1918, 2,472
colored women, 690 white men and 11 white
lynched. In the Washington riots of last
were killed and hundreds hurt. In the Ch
days later 36 persons met their death. T
Omaha riot caused three deaths. Less ser
are held responsible for a score of killi

No editor dares predict that a new rac
break out any day in any community, large
North, South, East, or West. Editors who
situation generally make two demands, fir
employed to assert the supremacy of law
and second, that the fundamental causes
sought and a permanent remedy found. "No
has ever been brought to justice. That

3

THE TYPEWRITER IS NOT A TYPESETTER

The 1919 Printing Strike That Wasn't

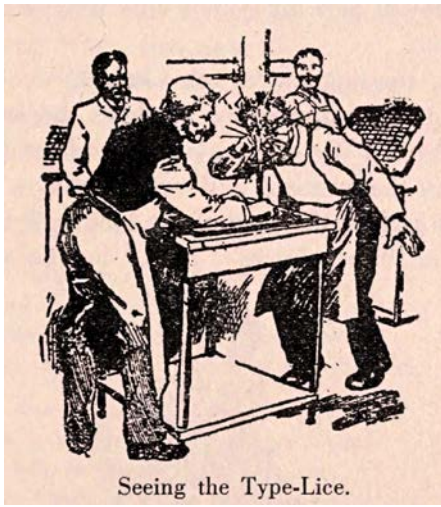
In 1919, typesetters in New York wanted better working hours and better pay at magazines, book publishers, and job shops.[1] Their powerful union, the International Typographical Union (ITU), refused to authorize a strike. (Newspaper workers had already negotiated a better deal.)

Members of these local chapters took matters into their own hands, even though they risked the ire of publishers, being fired by employers, getting expelled by the national union, and getting labeled as socialists or worse.

1 Job shops did regular "jobs," which was nearly all of printing that wasn't books and periodicals: business forms, business cards, announcements, brochures, letterhead, and other miscellaneous work.

Opposite: **Front page of *The Literary Digest*, decrying "mob-rule."** October 18, 1919.




Seeing the Type-Lice.



Cartoonist Kessler shows how Senator Carter Glass of Virginia was initiated into a printshop at an early age.—From Washington Post

A type lice warning in the German Technology Museum (top). A neophyte gets squirted (left). Kessler lampoons a senator (right). Photo by author, 2022; Allsopp, *Twenty Years in a Newspaper Office*, 1907; Kessler, May 27, 1924.

Hilarity. Well, at least you were now part of the gang—and ready to initiate the next sucker.[5]

It was a common-enough "joke" that it showed up in comic strips, too, though often referring back to older times, as in a syndicated cartoon from

5 This wasn't just an American (or UK) initiation rite. When visiting the German Technology Museum in 2022, I spotted a sign on a type case (next page) reading "Achtung / Bleiläuse"—"Danger/Type lice"! (I've also seen "Vorsicht/Bleiläuse"—"Caution…")



Skeezix gets initiated. Frank King, *Gasoline Alley*, January 29, 1934.



Ottmar, is that you (far right)? *Park Row*, 1952.

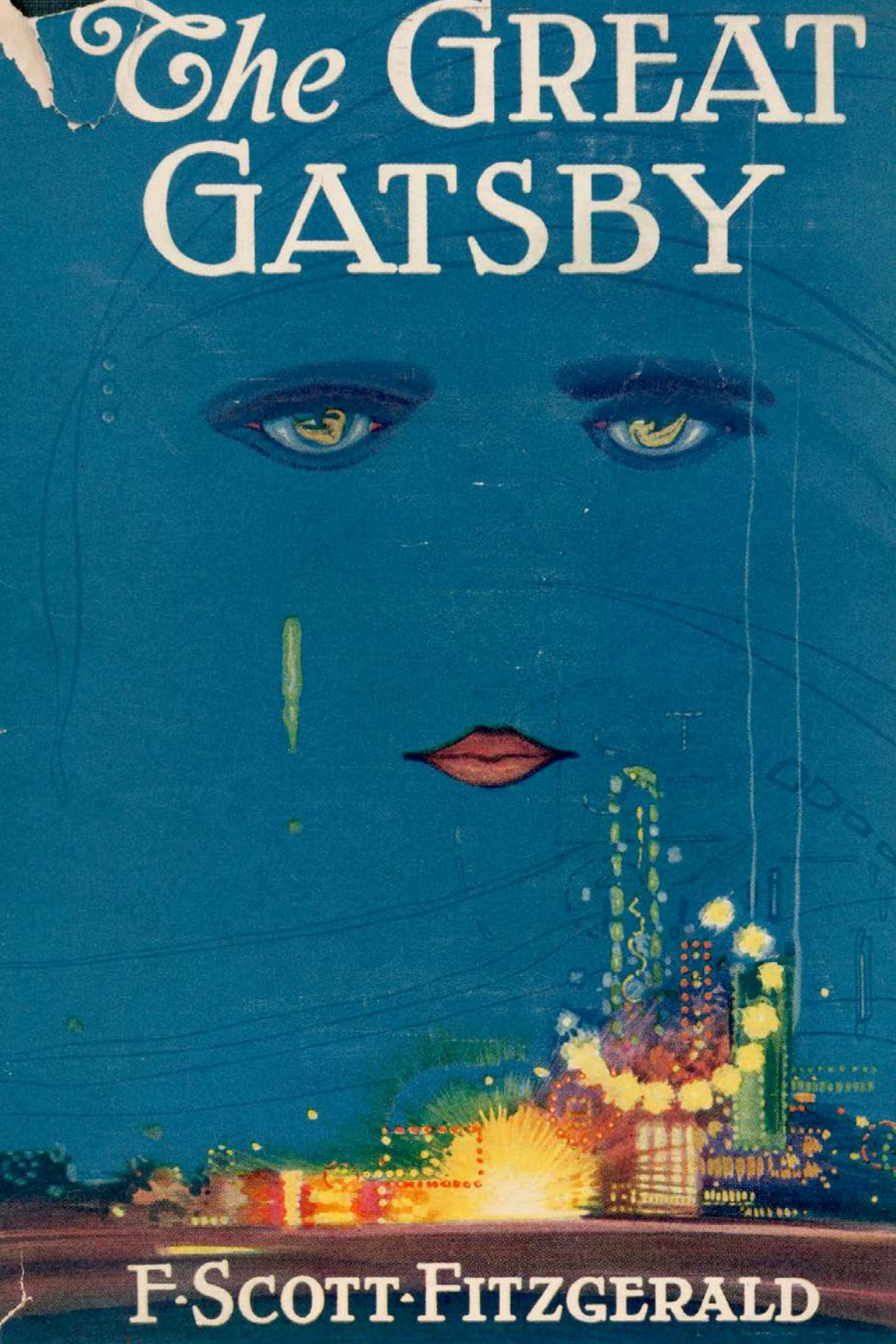
May 27, 1924, by Camillus Kessler (opposite).[6] It refers to a 1924-era senator discussing his time as a printer. Or, in a *Gasoline Alley* from January 29, 1934 (above), set in a small-town newspaper, where handsetting would have been the rule of the day.

The act is played out on screen in *Park Row* (1952), a movie whose name is derived from the street on which most newspapers in Manhattan were located for decades.[7] The movie traces a rivalry between an upstart newspa-

6 *Bridgeport Telegram*, p. 16.[BI]

7 The writer, director, and producer, Samuel Fuller, nearly bankrupted himself by spending $100,000 ($1.2 million today) on a huge set that re-created Park Row.

The GREAT GATSBY



F·SCOTT·FITZGERALD

7

READING THE REPRINTS

Finding a book in prime edition condition

Book collectors make a big deal about first editions. Often, their interest is not just the first publication of a work, but rather the first *printing* of that work – a so-called *first-first* edition. It's more accurate to call it the earliest edition.

I'm not sure why such a book is fetishized. The first edition may have the loveliest cover, the best binding, and the most care taken with it, compared with later settings and printings, which are often produced more cheaply in paperback or by publishers who license the work for reprinting.

But the first printing is the initial impression of type for that edition of work onto paper, and it takes until subsequent printings for typos and other errors to be fixed – although others are routinely introduced. A popular book might require several printings to get a perfected one.

Francis Cugat's first-edition cover of *The Great Gatsby*, for which he was paid $100 ($1,800 in 2026). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925.







Completed mats are checked on board by page, then sent down chute to the stereotype room. Marjory Collins, September 1942; via Library of Congress, LC-DIG-fsa-8d22732.



Edition times noted above proofs in the advertising end of the composing room. Marjory Collins, September 1942; via Library of Congress, LC-DIG-fsa-8d22735.



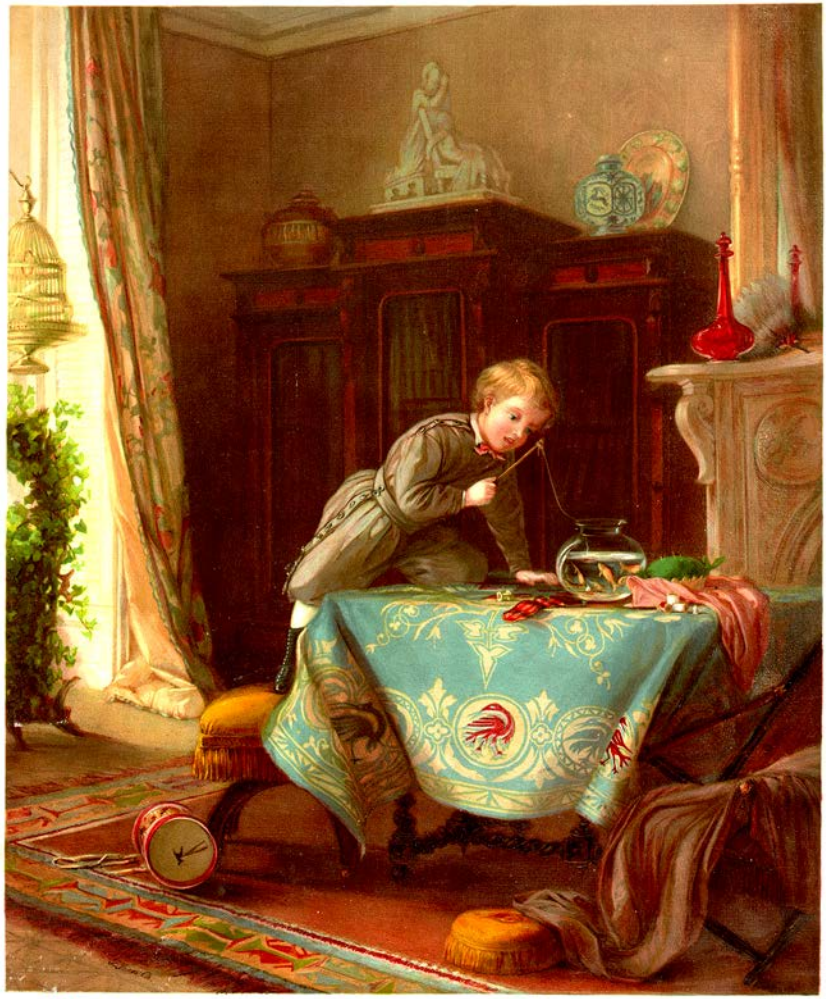
Bundles of papers are assembled before heading to trucks for distribution. Marjory Collins, September 1942; via Library of Congress, LC-DIG-fsa-8d22672.

Modern doesn't mean faster

Modern newspapers don't issue as many different editions as in previous eras. Though daily circulation in the United States is no longer at its peak of about 60 million, its low ebb is still a big number: 21 million in 2023.[5] Bigger newspapers do still change out stories and update sports and financial stories. Smaller papers don't—they may have a single press run, while mail delivery of newspapers is a tiny fraction of what it once was.[6]

5 "Newspapers Fact Sheet," State of the News Media report, 2023.

6 At one point, mail delivery within major cities could happen within the same day—sometimes within hours. But even if it took a day or two, that worked for those not close enough to get copies at newsstands.



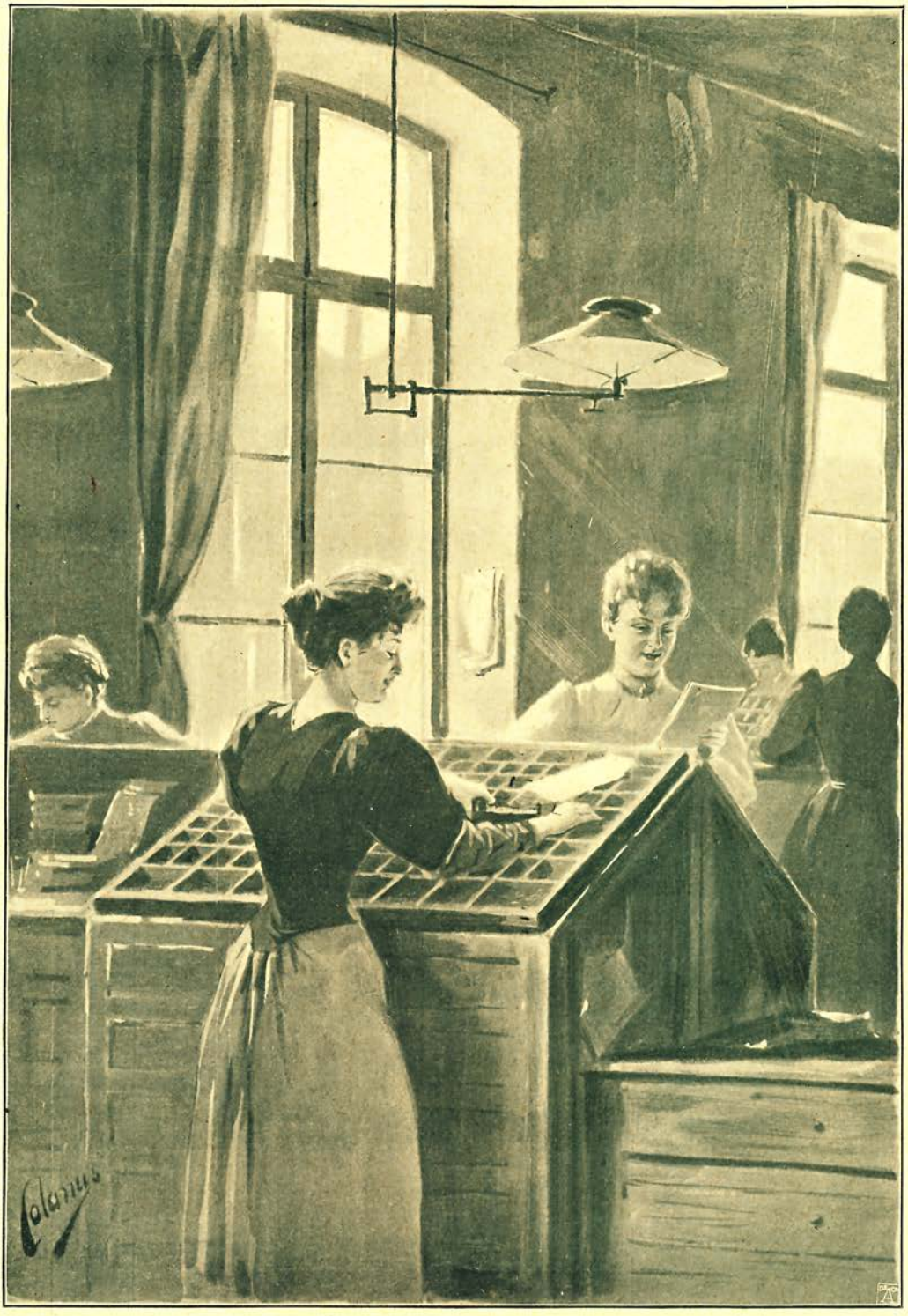
By the late 1800s, press manufacturers finally perfected multi-color printing in a single pass, a great revolution that led—perhaps was led by—the emergence of newspaper comics as a unique form of art. Color comics led, typically on Sundays; black-and-white dailies followed.[1]

1 *How Comics Are Made* extensively covers the evolution of color in newspapers relating to comic strips.



Above: **Excellent color printing of a *Gasoline Alley* comic strip in a newspaper.** Frank King, November 28, 1926. Courtesy Peter Maresca and Sunday Press.

Opposite: **"Will he bite?", a chromolithograph.** Currier & Ives (New York, c.1868). LOC LC-DIG-pga-05079.



Moderne Frauenberufe: Die Schriftsetzerin.

Originalzeichnung von Tolanus.


Central Ohio Paper Company
Copco Papers
DECEMBER


973
974
975
976
1001
1004
1007
1010
1012
1013
1027
1028
1029
1030
1031
1033
1035
1036
1063
1069
1071

15

TAKE A PEEK INSIDE LIBRARIES, MUSEUMS, & ARCHIVES

Where do you *keep your flong and stereos?*

I'm lucky to have visited several of the best collections of type and printing held by institutions and individuals in the world. In this chapter, I'll share photos from places that have the potential to last as long as society does, due to government support or endowments: three that rely on fundraising and events to persist, and three that lost their founder or owner, and aren't readily open to the public.

Opposite: **Monotype Super Caster matrices boxed for travel. Printing shops could rent them from Monotype, which delivered by train.** All photos in this chapter by author.



Above: Toshi holds a package of type hand labeled as Spectrum, "the original Types (Enschedé & Zonen) used for Type Drawings." Spectrum was designed in 1952 for the Enschedé foundry, but the production was completed by Monotype.

Below: A Monotype Super Caster matrix for Albertus. Since it's a mold, it's right-reading as a "q": when cast, the type is mirrored, and it prints correctly.



Above: A row of Monotype casters in various states of repair. Sue told me she held these in reserve in the hopes that they would someday be put back in use.

Below, left: A galley of upper-case 72 pt. Albertus, from a Super Caster.

Below, right: An early Monotype "A" model keyboard from 1897.





A cavalcade of stories spanning hundreds of years of people working at making printing – and sometimes labor conditions – better.

How the stars tell us the edition.

Why women lost out as typesetting sped up after the Linotype.

Glimpses of hard-to-see printing and type collections worldwide.

The true meaning of flong. (It's not papier-mâché!)

When boilerplate was figuratively the way syndicates spread content.

The inglorious rise of typewriter typesetting, quickly forgotten.

Why > quotes internet replies.

The elusive type louse.

And much more!

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