PRINTING IN PRINCETON BEFORE
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

An Exhibition in the Princetoniana Room
Princeton University Library
February 15 to April 15, 1963

CATALOGUE compiled by Earle E. Coleman
PRINCETON PRINTERS

1786-1787
James Tod

1820-1829
David A. Borrenstein 1824-1828
Connolly and Madden 1828-1829
Hugh Madden 1829
Bernard Connolly 1829

1830-1839
Hugh Madden 1830
William D'Hart 1830-1831
D'Hart and Connolly 1831-1832
John T. Robinson 1833-1839
Robert E. Hornor 1833-1839
Baker and Connolly 1833
John Gray 1833
Moore Baker 1834
John Bogart 1835-1839

1840-1849
John T. Robinson 1840-1849
Robert E. Hornor 1840-1841
John Bogart 1840-1841

1850-1859
John T. Robinson 1850-1859
Howard V. Hulfish 1855-1856
Mrs. E. Hulfish 1856

1860-1869
John T. Robinson 1860-1865
John A. Robinson 1865
H.T. Blanchard 1865-1866
Charles S. Robinson 1866-1869

1870-1879
Charles S. Robinson 1870-1879

1880-1889
Charles S. Robinson 1880-1889
William C.C. Zapf 1883-1886, 1889

1890-1905
Charles S. Robinson 1890-1905
William C.C. Zapf 1890-1905

1905-
Princeton University Press

This list includes only those printers who issued separate publications under their own imprints between 1786 and 1905.
MOST NOTABLE PRINCETON NEWSPAPERS

American System and Farmers' and Mechanics' Advocate
September-December 1832
R.E. Hornor

Princeton Whig
January 1833-August 1854
R.E. Hornor 1833-1842
J.T. Robinson 1842-1854

Mercer County Mirror
April 1855-1856
H.V. [and E.?] Hulfish

Princeton Press
August 1854-December 1860
J.T. Robinson

Princeton Standard
August 1859-December 1860
J. Breist and J.R. Heiden,
Publishers; H.T. Blanchard
was apparently the printer.

Princeton Standard
January 1861-April 1870
J.T. Robinson 1861-1865
J.A. Robinson 1865
H.T. Blanchard 1865
J.A. and C.S. Robinson 1865
C.S. and H.L. Robinson 1866-1870

Princetonian
April 1870-December 1872
C.S. Robinson

Princeton Press
January 1873-February 1916
C.S. Robinson 1873-1905
The exhibition was arranged in chronological order, one case for the 18th century, and beginning with the 1820's a case for every decade of the 19th century and one case for the first decade of the 20th century. The first item shown was a copy of one of the eleven known issues of The Princeton Packet published by James Tod between June 1786 and June 1787. The other issues are in the libraries of The New Jersey Historical Society, Rutgers the State University, The Minnesota Historical Society and Princeton University. This Library has a photographic reproduction of all the issues compiled and presented by Mr. Bernard Kilgore. The issue shown was for October 5, 1786, volume 1, number 16.

Next were shown the other known publications of James Tod, the only printer who worked in Princeton before 1824. He also operated the village bookstore and advertised his wares in the Packet. Among the books he advertised was President Witherspoon's An Essay on Money as a Medium of Commerce. Although editions of it appeared in 1786 and 1787 in New York and Charleston, none has been found bearing Tod's imprint.


David A. Borrenstein, who probably learned his trade in the printing office of the London Society for Promoting Christianity, worked in Princeton from 1824 until 1828. His output consisted of at least seventy titles and several magazines, newspapers and series of tracts. The issuing of tracts in series was a device used by many publishers of the day to take advantage of the lower postal rates for periodicals.


13. Scoagal, Henry. The life of God in the soul of man... To which is prefixed a short memoir of the author; also, Rules for a Holy life, by Archbishop Leighton. Princeton Press, 1825.

14. Aeschylus. Seven before Thebes...printed from the text of Schütz, under the care of the Senior Class of Nassau Hall. Princeton Press, 1826. Printed in Greek.


20. Plain and easy catechism, suitable for children of a tender age and adapted to the use of families and Sabbath Schools; by a Lady of New Jersey. Sunday School Union, 1828.


22. Receipt from Borrenstein to the Treasurer of the Library and Philosophical Society of New Jersey.

23. Bayard, Samuel. An address delivered on Thursday, the 14th August, 1828...for the due observation of the Lord's day. Princeton Press: Published by Wm. D'Hart, Connolly & Madden, Printers, 1828.

24. Ingersoll, Joseph R. An address delivered in the Church at Princeton, the evening before the annual commencement of the College of New Jersey, September 23, 1828. Princeton Press: Printed for the Societies, by Connolly & Madden, 1828.


26. Carnahan, James. Baccalaureate. A discourse delivered to the Senior Class in the College of New Jersey...September, 1829. Published at the request of the Class, Hugh Madden, Printer, 1829.


32. Southard, Samuel L. An address delivered before the Alumni Association of Nassau Hall, on the day of the annual commencement of the College, September 26, 1832. Printed by D'Hart and Connolly, 1832.


34. Biddle, Nicholas. An address, delivered before the Alumni Association of Nassau Hall, on the day of the annual commencement of the College, September 30, 1835. Printed by Robert E. Hornor, 1835.


37. Carnahan, James. An address to the students of the College of New Jersey, at the funeral of Gerard Seymour Hooe, from Virginia, lately a member of the Junior Class. Printed by Robert E. Hornor, 1836.


40. Clarke, Daniel Edward. Travels in various countries of Europe; Asia, and Africa. New York, D. Huntington, 1814. 2 vols. The second volume containing the bookplate of Robert E. Hornor was shown.


42. Worrell, Charles Flavel. A catechism of the rudiments of music, designed for the assistance of teachers... 2d ed. enlarged. Printed by J. Bogart, 1840.

43. Wakeman, Thaddeus B. Address delivered at Trenton, before the New Jersey State Agricultural Society, Feb. 12, 1840. Printed by Robert E. Hornor, 1840.

John T. Robinson was obviously the dominant figure among printers in Princeton during the middle decades of the 19th century. He learned his trade in Hornor's shop and bought The Princeton Whig from Hornor in 1842. He invented a press which he named the Princeton Press and built a foundry to manufacture them. In addition, he was one of Princeton's foremost citizens, holding the offices of Postmaster, Mayor, and Judge of Mercer County Court of Common Pleas. He was the father of John A., Harvey L., and Charles S., all printers and publishers. Exhibited was a letter of John T. Robinson to E.N. Dickerson dated January 23, 1847 concerning the copyright of Henry's Aphorisms. Dickerson was clerk of the Federal District Court, a former student of Joseph Henry, and a future patent attorney of note. Also shown was the certificate signed by President Lincoln appointing Robinson Deputy Postmaster of Princeton.


47. Carnahan, James. The dangers of a college life; a discourse delivered in Nassau Hall. Printed by John T. Robinson, 1843.


52. Henry, Matthew. The Rev. Matthew Henry's aphorisms on the ministry, the church, and other kindred subjects. Compiled by the Rev. Colin McIver. Published by George Thomson, 1847.


60. Princeton University. Catalogue of the officers and students of the College of New Jersey for the academical year 1855-6. Printed by Howard V. Hulfish, 1856.


63. Lytle, Thomas G. Address delivered before the Young Men's Literary Association at the occasion of their annual exercises on the Fourth of July. Princeton Press Office, 1858.

64. Memorabilia sophomorum, edita et publicata a Tyrone Classe, in Collegio Neo Caesariensi. Oppidum Principis, 1859.


It was Charles S. Robinson who succeeded to John T.'s place in Princeton history. When, in 1873, he re-established his father's Princeton Press he editorialized that "A few of our kind readers have got into the habit of regularly growling about the paper," referring to its predecessor, The Princetonian. He complained that "there is not much news to be picked up in Princeton" and "if it were left to Princeton to support the paper, it would die of starvation in three months." In order to increase its value to his advertisers he reduced the subscription price one half "so that everybody can afford to take it." Whitney Darrow has reminisced that in later years Robinson was not avid to collect from either subscribers or advertisers. Like his father, Charles was a Mayor and Postmaster of Princeton, and was also Commissioner of Deeds, a Notary Public, and a benefactor of the Princeton University Library.

69. Billhead of Charles S. Robinson, Book and Job Printing Office with advertisement for The Standard, 186-.


81. Jacobus, Melancthon W. The higher education. An address delivered before the literary societies of the College of New Jersey. Printed by C.S. Robinson, 1874.


85. Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Presbytery of New Brunswick. A full copy of all the records...in the case of Rev. John Miller, together with his appeal. Press Printing Establishment, 1877.


William C.C. Zapf was another colorful figure in the Princeton book trade before the advent of the Princeton University Press. Starting as a dealer whose primary interest was music, he learned printing in the establishment of Charles S. Robinson. He became a music typographer and also spent a year at the famous press of Theodore De Vinne. He was a printer of several periodicals originating with various groups in the University. He also did job printing at 2 Nassau Street and it was his plant and that of Charles Robinson which were purchased and first used by the originators of the Princeton University Press.


88. Princeton courier, and literary register, vol. 1, no. 41, October 8, 1831.


90. Full proceedings of the inquest relative to the murder of the late James Bowand. [Princeton Standard, 1862]. Broadside.


95. Cameron, Henry C. Administrator's sale of real estate... House and lot, know as No. 25 Canal Street, in the Borough of Princeton...30th day of January, 1896. Princeton Press, Steam Print, 1896. Broadside.

96. Princeton University. Class of 1886. Know ye all men! That we the invincible class of '86...Freshie...Proclamation...forbidden...a cane, until the first day of January, 1887. 1883. Broadside.

97. Princeton University. Class of 1885. Riled! Rattled! Rushed!... In view of the utter helplessness of the timid freshmen, they will be permitted to carry canes. [1882?] Broadside.

98. Princeton University. Class of 1899. Hear ye! Hear ye! ... '99 sacra buncha triennial reunion... [1902?] Broadside.


100. Thompson, C.V. Class ode of '83. Wm. C.C. Zapf, Music Typographer [1879?].


105. Mapes, A.S. Class ode of '86. Wm. C.C. Zapf, Music Typographer [1886?].


110. Princeton business directory, 1891-1892. [Wm C.C. Zapf?]


112. Princeton University. Class of 1891. '91 class songs. The Zapf Press.


120. Princeton University. Pamphlet of information concerning the American Whig and Cliosophic societies. The Zapf Press, 1898.


The names of the men who were doing the actual printing at the end of our period are listed in the town directory; the first one, published in 1888, lists eight compositors. The 1904-05 directory names eighteen compositors and printers. Some of these men worked for themselves issuing short-lived newspapers and doing job printing. Others would break away later, like John Grogan who set up The Falcon Press in Princeton, and like John Stillwell who moved to Bradford, Vermont where he established The Opinion Press and continued to publish the Princeton directory for several years. Still others stayed on and went to work for the Princeton University Press.

In the earliest days of printing in Princeton the printer was a man who had learned his trade, bought a press, and learned to publish. At the end of the period exhibited Whitney Darrow was an editor and publisher's representative who bought a press, and then saw one for the first time. It is very doubtful that Charles Robinson did any actual work in the pressroom at 32 Nassau Street for several decades before he sold out to the Princeton University Press.