

A Border Story

Many years ago I came across this border in the printing shop of the high school I attended. I was attracted to it and searched all of my catalogues with hopes of finding a source for acquiring a font of my own, but to no avail. A letter to the American Type Founders Company proved to be fruitless, so a reproduction proof was sent to the late Charlie Broad of Typefounders, Inc. in Phoenix. He replied that the cost for making photoengraved matrices to cast some would be prohibitive, but if I could send a good one of each he would procure electrotyped mats and send me a small font for my trouble.

The powers in charge of the school said they didn't want anyone copying "our special design" and refused to give me the required pieces.

A year or so went by, and the border was facing imminent extinction as the other students used it for decoration on raffle tickets, flyers, posters, and even business forms; not to mention throwing the pieces at each other when the instructor wasn't around. As gauge pins and grippers claimed their fair share and the supply was rapidly dwindling, I made my mind up and grabbed the best corner and straight piece in the place. That was the day somebody picked to steal the cleaning woman's Rosary, so as we lined up to board the bus the principal came rushing over and he personally made each of my schoolmates turn out their pockets and be searched. As the guy in front of me was being searched I could sense that I was sweating

blood, and thoughts of hopeless excuses raced through my mind! What was I going to say when those two shiny pieces of type crashed to the ground at the feet of the very person who had refused them to me a year prior? As he finished and looked at me I smiled at him. He recognized me and said, "you're Protestant, go get on the bus."

Divine intervention or just plain luck saved the day and the border . . . and my neck!

After receiving them, Charlie wrote that they would be sent out with his next matrix order. My job duties and other interests caused me to forget all about the events and I finally learned that he had died and his matrices and equipment were sold to Los Angeles Type Founders.

Several years ago I decided to rejoin the National Amateur Press Association and become active again. Somewhere amongst the ephemera in the bundle was a printed piece utilizing the beloved border! I ran to my desk and dug out a fairly current catalogue from Los Angeles and searched in vain from cover to cover but they didn't offer it, so I wrote them a letter of inquiry, but never received a reply, so I assumed the mats had been lost or junked.

We traveled to Los Angeles recently so we stopped in at the Foundry and presented my case.

Lo and behold! The man remembered answering my letter and produced his carbon copy. Then he led us to a galley rack and showed us an abundant supply of corners, but only a few straight pieces, so we had a good-sized font cast.

At long last I have the old border, and it is still available to the world, saved from oblivion!