LOS ANGELES TYPE FOUNDERS, INC.

Don Winter

Interviewed by Nancy Sue Skipper

Completed under the auspices
of the
Oral History Program
University of California
Los Angeles

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BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

PERSONAL HISTORY:

Full Name: Donald David Winter

Born: 1920 in Springfield, Massachusetts; family moved to Pasadena, California, in 1926.

Education: public schools in Pasadena and Los Angeles.

Spouse: Beverly Winter; three children.

Residence: has lived in Downey, California, since 1956.

Special interests: hunting and fishing; model engineering.

CAREER HISTORY:

Mr. Winter has worked for Los Angeles Type Founders, Inc., from 1937 to the present. He first went to work at the company five months before graduating from John H. Francis Polytechnic High School in Los Angeles. He worked as a machine operator from 1937 to 1962, with a brief break for military service during the Second World War. Following the death of the owner, Walter Gebhard, Mr. Winter became General Manager of the firm; he continues to hold that position.

From 1943 to 1946, Mr. Winter was an electrician in the United States Navy and served in the South Pacific.

PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL MEMBERSHIPS:

Society of Printing House Craftsmen of Los Angeles (the Craftsman Club).

Young Men's Christian Association, fundraising and participation in the Indian Guides program (no longer active).

INTERVIEW HISTORY

INTERVIEWER:

Nancy Sue Skipper, interviewer, Oral History Program. B.A., Anthropology, University of California, Santa Barbara; M.L.S. candidate, UCLA.

TIME AND SETTING OF INTERVIEW:

Place: Winter's office at Los Angeles Type Founders, Inc., in Los Angeles.

Dates: January 27, February 2, 12, and 16, 1979.

Length of sessions and total number of recording hours: Interview sessions averaged ninety minutes. A total of six hours of conversation was recorded.

Persons present during interview: Winter and Skipper.

CONDUCT OF INTERVIEW:

Skipper prepared for the interview by researching the history of Los Angeles Type Founders, Inc. Skipper's research focused on the history of type founding and changes in the mechanical processes of the industry. She supplemented her research with a survey of current trade literature.

The interview begins with a brief discussion of Winter's family background and early technical education. The remaining sections of the interview follow the chronology of Winter's life and his long involvement with Los Angeles Type Founders, Inc. Considerable attention was given to technical details of the type founding industry, as well as matters pertaining to the business and management of Winter's firm. The future of conventional printing and typesetting, challenged by the emergence of photocomposition and other new technologies, receives extensive discussion.

EDITING:

Sylvia Tidwell edited the interview. She checked the verbatim transcript of the interview against the original tape recordings and edited for spelling, punctuation and paragraphing, and the verification of proper nouns. Words and phrases inserted for clarity by the editor have been bracketed.

Winter reviewed and approved the edited transcript.

Sylvia Tidwell prepared the table of contents. George Hodak, editorial assistant, prepared the index and interview history.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

The original tape recordings of the interview are in the university archives and are available under the regulations governing the use of permanent noncurrent records of the university. Records relating to the interview are located in the office of the UCLA Oral History Program.

TAPE NUMBER: I, SIDE ONE

JANUARY 27, 1979

SKIPPER: I would really like to know, first of all, a little bit about your personal background: when and where you were born and a little bit about your family.

WINTER: Well, I was born in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1920. And I don't remember too much about it because we moved out here when I was about six. My parents became divorced when I was rather young. And then about 1932, my cousin came from the East to live with us. We went to school [and] he used our name; everyone thought we were brothers. He still works in the foundry, by the way.

SKIPPER: What's his name?

WINTER: Wilfred Neelans.

SKIPPER: Is that Will?

WINTER: Yes. So we really grew up together. Went to school in Pasadena and finished our last year at John H. Francis Polytechnic [High School], which is Trade-Tech [Los Angeles Trade-Technical College] now. You know, they moved the school out to the [San Fernando] Valley some years ago. And that's where I became interested in this business--got started on the Monotype machines there. Teacher was Pop Pearson. I've kind of lost track of him in recent years. Don't know whether he's still alive.

SKIPPER: When you moved out to Pasadena, did you have any brothers and sisters?

WINTER: No, I'm really an only child.

SKIPPER: Did you move out with your father?

WINTER: Yes, father and mother. I can't remember when they separated. It was about the time I was eleven or twelve, somewhere in there.

SKIPPER: Did you move right to Pasadena?

WINTER: Lived in Pasadena. We lived in maybe eight or ten different places in Pasadena during those years. My mother loved to move. She'd get tired of a place (we didn't own, you know, just rented). There were always places available in those days.

SKIPPER: Not like today. [laughter]

WINTER: No. Like I say, we had to finish our last year in Los Angeles. My mother remarried and we came here. Otherwise I probably would have gone into another business: I'd have been a printer, because I studied printing from the seventh grade on.

SKIPPER: How were you studying printing? Was that part of a shop course in school?

WINTER: Yes, part of the shop course in school. In Pasadena, in the eleventh year, they had a Smith Hughes course (if I remember the name right) that was four hours a day of printing. And the only other required subjects were English

and physical education. My cousin was in it too--you know, Willy--had we stayed there, we'd have finished that course and had two years towards our apprenticeship with the union . . . had we joined the union.

SKIPPER: What kinds of things did they teach you in that course?

WINTER: Well, they started with hand-setting of type and making up the pages, locking them up, press work, bindery work and related layout. We had an hour a day of layout, proportion, and other things that typographers in those years were supposed to know. Not anymore, of course; the art agency has taken over all of that. So all you'll find, you know, of an all-around printer--I don't think they are anymore. Like every other business, they have become highly specialized. But it was an interesting course, and I was sorry we didn't get to finish it. The only thing I didn't get to work on was the large press that they had.

SKIPPER: What kind of press was it?

WINTER: It was a large, sheet-fed press is all I remember, probably a large Miehle. I don't know too much about it.

SKIPPER: Like a proof press?

WINTER: No, it was a regular production printing press about half the size of this room area here. We printed the school paper on it. We printed our own annual there. Did

everything but the final binding. So it was a rather complete shop. They even had Monotype machinery there, but I didn't work on it--wasn't really interested in it. My interest came later at Polytechnic High. Since we had already covered everything that the course offered at Poly in the twelfth year, we gravitated toward something new.

SKIPPER: Now, this would be the equivalent of the senior year in high school? But you said that you started in the seventh grade. What were you doing at that point?

WINTER: Well, they had a one-hour shop course in printing in what was then McKinley Junior High School, and had at least one hour a day all through junior high and high school, of course, with the eleventh grade even more.

SKIPPER: So you stayed with printing right on through the years. What kind of things did you start doing in the seventh grade in printing?

WINTER: Once again, we were back to the hand-setting type. We printed our own school paper. It was set in Linotype by a commercial Linotype shop in Pasadena, but we did the lock-up and the correcting. And, oh, we made some small booklets, as I remember; did a little binding. I remember mixing up the glue, although how it's all done I can't remember now.

SKIPPER: Was that your first exposure to printing or type-setting, or any of that?

WINTER: Yes. None of our family that I know of had ever

been in the business. Fact is, most of my immediate family is in England. I don't even know who they are. Never had any contact with them.

SKIPPER: What did your father do?

WINTER: Well, actually, he was a machinist, but he got tired of working indoors and he quit. And, oh, he drove a truck for a while, and the last years that he was here in the States, he drove a taxi. He preferred this. He was out in the open, got to talk to people. About the time I went in the service, he left for England and passed away over there.

SKIPPER: How old were you when he stopped being a machinist and went into . . . ?

WINTER: Oh, I suppose I was about thirteen, fourteen, somewhere in there. He'd worked as a machinist in the East and came out here. He just had a short spell as a machinist, I guess, before he decided to get out of it.

SKIPPER: Were you exposed to working with machines and technical things at all?

WINTER: No.

SKIPPER: So that's not what led you in the direction.

WINTER: No, he never talked about it. I've always been interested in mechanics, electricity, electronics, oh, since I was ten years old. Willy and I used to find old radios, parts, and try and get them working, or make

something. You know, you could get all the books you wanted at the library--electronics was very crude in those days.

SKIPPER: What other kinds of things did you play around with when you were first getting involved in electronics and mechanical things?

WINTER: You know, I can't really remember. We studied the occult sciences when we were about seventeen. Had seances and, you know, table-lifting and all, and nobody would ever admit which one started doing it. But we liked to hike and fish, and from Pasadena, of course, we could hike up into the mountains. We used to do that fairly often in the summertime. Not too involved in organized sports at all. We played baseball and football, just with the neighborhood kids. Our main interest--oh, we used to build model airplanes, too. That was another big thing. There was a big area around the Rose Bowl (probably still just as large) that was ideal for flying models, because there was plenty of room, not many trees to get caught in.

SKIPPER: So you and Will were pretty good friends, too?

WINTER: Oh, yes. Still are. Yes, I guess you might say he's still my best friend. Our families see a lot of each other.

SKIPPER: So he has family in this area now, too?

WINTER: Yes, his wife used to work here too, a few years

ago. He has three children and two of them are married. One is temporarily at home with them; she moves out for a while, then she comes back.

SKIPPER: What is Will's wife's name?

WINTER: Margaret.

SKIPPER: Margaret. Was he in the printing class with you starting right in seventh grade?

WINTER: Yes.

SKIPPER: And did he have the same interests?

WINTER: We seemed to have. You know, we never seemed to drift apart. We had other friends, but we did most things together, right until we graduated.

SKIPPER: What made you decide to start taking the printing course? Was it something everybody was doing at that time, or did you have a special interest?

WINTER: Back then it was required to take three shop subjects. It's a little bit like--well, they used to do it with languages. I think you took six weeks each of three different ones, and we took woodshop, and printshop, and what they used to call mechanical drawing in those days--drafting--and we both liked the printing, so we stayed with that.

SKIPPER: What part of it did you like the most? What did you enjoy doing?

WINTER: Well, I guess the actual printing on the press was

the more interesting.

SKIPPER: More than setting the type?

WINTER: Yes. Setting type became kind of a bore after a while. Especially in the eleventh grade. We set up a great deal. We set up that whole annual almost all hand-set; a little bit was done on the Monotype, but most of it was hand-set.

SKIPPER: Is that the annual yearbook for the school?

WINTER: Yes, well, there were maybe twenty kids in a class, and each one did a section and set for one or two hours a day for a few weeks. You can set a lot of type.

SKIPPER: Yes, get the whole class working. What kind of equipment and machinery did they have--this is at McKinley. where you did the yearbook?

WINTER: No, that was at John Muir Technical High School. That was the eleventh year. [In grades] seven, eight, nine, and ten in McKinley they had two hand-fed presses and a paper cutter and the small hand tools, and that was the extent of their equipment.

SKIPPER: What kind of type supply did they have at McKinley for you to start working with?

WINTER: Well, each student had a case to work out of. Now, I suppose that since there were a number of classes, the next class might work on the same case that you did, but they seemed to have plenty of type. I don't know where

they got it. Maybe they made it themselves since they had the Monotype equipment up there at John Muir.

SKIPPER: Was it a particular typeface you were working with? Or were you not really concerned with that at that point?

WINTER: Most of it, of course, is the body type that the kids still set today, ten point or twelve [point]--small size. I don't know what face we used back in those days. I doubt if it was the one they use now. We probably used Caslon. And I remember we got a shipment of fonts of Cheltenham in, and we thought, "Oh great, look at all this brand-new type." That was for . . . we set the headlines of the paper and the subheads, and it was, as I remember, one of the very condensed versions, so you'd get a lot of words in.

SKIPPER: Did you get involved in those early years in doing layout and composition, and that type of thing?

WINTER: No, not until the eleventh grade. During the junior-high years it was mostly just production and learning the basics. Oh, I suppose there was probably a little said about it, but I don't think any of it stayed with me.

SKIPPER: Was it a large class of people working?

WINTER: Classes always seemed to be large in those days. I would say the averages were between twenty and thirty in any class.

SKIPPER: Oh, that seems pretty large. Who was teaching in the early years, like the seventh through the tenth?

WINTER: Well, his name was John McNary, and he taught other shops besides. A lot of shop teachers do that even today. I don't know what other shops he taught; but, as I remember, he was a very good printing teacher, and he became a friend, too. Willy and I once went on summer vacation with him and a group of scouts that he had. We went out to Hoover Dam while they were still building it--went in a big bus, as I remember--and we camped out each night. Very primitive; nobody had a sleeping bag. You know, in those days everyone was exceedingly poor, and an old blanket was all you had. But at that age you don't mind. Everything's fine.

SKIPPER: It's all an adventure.

WINTER: Yes, we got to explore some old mines on the way. I don't know just where they were.

SKIPPER: Were you a boy scout, actually, in the troop?

WINTER: No.

SKIPPER: You just went out with his group.

WINTER: No, I never joined the scouts until my boy became a scout a few years ago. Then I went with them a few times, you know; I became involved for a couple of years. He didn't like it, and he gave it up. I finally gave up and let him quit.

SKIPPER: Did Mr. McNary do any printing himself, or was he just more involved in teaching shop to the classes?

WINTER: As far as I know, he didn't do any printing other than demonstration. He'd show you how to start the press and how to do makeready on it, and then you took over and did the printing. Well, when you have that many students, you kind of spread yourself thin. I suppose they must do the same way today, except a lot of teachers nowadays seem to take in printing on the side. The principal wants some job, so they'll come in on the week-end and do it. Of course, that helps when they want a little more money for paper and supplies, because the principal seems to control the purse strings in most schools.

SKIPPER: Did Mr. McNary continue teaching printing for a long, long time, or were you able to keep track of his career?

WINTER: No, after we left school, we didn't see him much. I think we were over to his house a couple of times, or we went up in the local mountains with him once. And we probably visited the shop a time or two since we lived only a few blocks [away]. We were about three and one-half miles from the high school, but only maybe four blocks from the junior high. But after we left Pasadena, we lost touch completely.

SKIPPER: When you got to the Trade-Tech school, that was in your eleventh year? Is that right?

WINTER: No, that was the beginning of the twelfth.

SKIPPER: Did they have a lot more equipment and supplies available for you to work with there?

WINTER: Yes, they had I can't remember how many handpresses, but they had one big power press, which was approximately the size of the one we had in John Muir in Pasadena. I think they printed the school paper on that, too. The annual was printed out commercially. And they had two Monotype machines there. I can't really remember what else. They're not nearly as well equipped as Trade-Tech is now; it's a tremendous shop. But for that day and age, I guess it was pretty good. That was long before the days of offset.

SKIPPER: At what point did you feel that this might be the direction you'd go in for a career? Was it something you enjoyed doing all the way along the line?

WINTER: Well, I enjoyed all phases of the printing. And the reason I got into this was there was a job that was offered and I took it. Our late employer (whose picture is right behind you) came to the school looking for someone, and the teacher suggested Willy and I. So we went out and talked to him. I don't know how it came about but I started with him.

SKIPPER: Is that Walter Gebhard?

WINTER: Yes. Walt Gebhard. So I don't remember exactly when I started. It was maybe, oh, February or March of the year before I graduated. I can't even remember if I went there directly after school or if I went home for dinner, but it was located . . . they had a machine in the Page Military Academy in the basement and . . . .

SKIPPER: Before we get to that portion of your work, I wanted to find out more about, for example, at John Muir, how involved in the printed processes you were there, and if you got involved and concerned with type founding at that point.

WINTER: No, it was all strictly printing--you know, hand typesetting and preparatory work, say, handpress work. Never got on the big cylinder press. And a little bit of binding. Pretty much the same thing we had had in junior high school, to be truthful, but just had more hours of the day to do it.

SKIPPER: Were you doing more complicated layouts and more work with the handpress at that point?

WINTER: As I remember it, yes. Making up the annual itself, with all the cuts and the headings and the little runarounds, was a little more advanced than we'd had before.

SKIPPER: What are runarounds?

WINTER: Say, you have a picture with a caption or text

that reads alongside of the picture on a short measure bottom of the picture, and then it continues the tall width of the picture, plus the short measure, to the end of the copy.

SKIPPER: At Trade-Tech, were people who were studying printing there pretty much involved in developing a job or profession they were going into, or was it more people who were interested . . . ?

WINTER: I think so. You had to be pretty interested to give up all the rest of your classes just for that, and I think in most cases in those days, young fellows, anyway, were headed to a career in what they were doing in high school. Nowadays, they get out of high school--they still have no idea of what they are going to do.

SKIPPER: Even in college. [laughter]

WINTER: Like my daughter. She really doesn't know what she's going to do. She is starting her second semester there in junior college, and she's switching subjects. But there's a lot of subjects that will be required later on when she decides on a particular course, and I think she's getting a lot of those out of the way.

SKIPPER: At Trade-Tech, how many other courses were you taking, or was it all oriented toward the printing?

WINTER: It was all, like I say, four hours of printing, physical education, and English--no math, no social studies--

and it would have been the same in the twelfth year. It allowed you to graduate with all the credits you would need, I guess.

SKIPPER: How did they go about teaching and training you there at Trade-Tech?

WINTER: You mean at John Muir?

SKIPPER: Fine. Whatever.

WINTER: Yes, it was Muir Technical High School, right.

SKIPPER: Have I confused the names? It was Muir Technical High School, and it changed the name later to Trade-Tech?

WINTER: No, Francis Polytechnic changed to Trade-Tech. They didn't move the physical assets of the school, but they built a school in the Valley that they called John Francis Polytechnic, and I guess some of the teaching staff probably moved over there.

SKIPPER: Got it. Were there any special aspects to the way they were teaching there?

WINTER: No, it was just sort of a general course in printing. We had just the one teacher, name was Eugene Memmler. (I don't know how I remember some of these things; I haven't thought about them for ages.) We used to do a lot of typesetting there we probably shouldn't [have]. His wife was a doctor, and we used to set up a lot of odds and ends for her, and fact is, we did a couple of booklets for her. I guess she was doing some sort of experimental work,

you know, a little research, so her husband printed them for her. Got all the kids to set it up.

SKIPPER: Would you have been working mostly with cases of foundry type and setting them by hand at that point, or were you working with Monotype composition?

WINTER: I wasn't working with Monotype at all, then, although they had them there, and they had a couple of fellows working on them. But I was concerned mostly with handsetting and proofreading, quite a bit of proofreading, and then the small hand-fed presses. There were probably a number of other things we were doing that I don't remember now because, you know, being a recognized course, it very likely had to cover everything quite fully. Because back in the early days, if you joined the printers union--I don't know what it was called then, couldn't have been the typographical union; I don't know which one it was--you had to show that you were qualified, pass a test, so to speak. I guess because [with the] typographical union, if you go through their apprenticeship program, there is a course of study that you have to take along with it--like a correspondence course, in a way. They've got books. You have to fill out the test papers. You have to do certain things on the job that your employer allows you the time to do. Even in the typo union, part of the training is figuring lockup for a press, estimating paper

requirements and paying out pages. So it wasn't concerned strictly with typography itself. [It] covered a broad range. We haven't had an apprentice in the shop for so long, I rather feel the program has been dropped now.

SKIPPER: Well, at the time, once you finished the course in school, did that qualify you to join the union, or did you have to go through the union's additional testing or courses?

WINTER: You would have had to do some, but I think you would have had most of it behind you. Thing is, it was a six-year apprenticeship. But, with the course, in four years you became a journeyman. Of course, we never got to take advantage of that. [gets a glass of water] I usually don't talk much, I listen.

SKIPPER: Feel free to get a glass of water anytime you need. When you finished there, were you going to become involved in joining a union, or was that when you first met Mr. Gebhard?

WINTER: Hadn't particularly thought about the union per se, you know. I don't know how strong the printing union was in those days, but it was a great deal stronger than it is now, I'm sure. Stronger, in that it had a larger membership--that is, there was a greater percentage of union shops than there is today. But I suppose we were just interested in going out and getting a job--either a union shop or nonunion

shop, it didn't really matter. Because when I finally went to work, this place wasn't a union shop either.

SKIPPER: When you graduated, did you want to go into printing, or had you thought about working in type founding? Or what was your feeling at the time?

WINTER: Well, all during the school years, I knew I was going to be a printer. I didn't know exactly what phase it would be--probably thinking pressman more than anything else--but once I got on the Monotype machine, I was kind of entranced by it. And then, when the odd-job opportunity came along, I just sort of fell right in.

SKIPPER: Had you done a great deal of work on the Monotype machine in school?

WINTER: No, very little. I could run the machine--start it and stop it and do a few things--but it's a rather complicated machine, and most of it was learned on the job. I had a pretty good teacher. Walt had a partner who was a Monotype operator, one of the better ones in town.

SKIPPER: What was his name?

WINTER: His name was Arthur Neilsen. And in those days, Walt was a musician. He played music at night--that's how he made his living--and then sold type in the daytime. His partner, of course, worked in a place, Kellaway-Ide, a big printing establishment in town at that time, and they had two or three Monotype machines. He would come over to

the Page Military Academy after he got off work, and, if the machine was shut down because I didn't know what was wrong with it, he'd fix it, show me what he did--you know, work with me for a few hours.

SKIPPER: What kind of background did Mr. Gebhard have?

WINTER: Strictly music.

SKIPPER: How did he get involved in the foundry?

WINTER: Well, his partner was his father-in-law.

SKIPPER: Was that Arthur Neilsen?

WINTER: Yes. And I guess the music business wasn't paying a great deal in those days.

SKIPPER: What kind of music was he involved in?

WINTER: Well, he was an excellent pianist, but he played the drums in a band. Drums . . . oh, what else did he have . . . oh, xylophone he played, chimes. He had all these things in his home because . . . . I don't think the band work was that steady, a week or two engagement at a hotel here, and then somewhere else. And I think that was the reason for going into business with his father-in-law, you know, to get into a business of his own somewhere where he could make a better living.

SKIPPER: What kind of background did his father-in-law have?

WINTER: I don't know.

SKIPPER: I think I read somewhere that he was a really

good Monotype man--do you know anything about that?

WINTER: Yes, he had the reputation of being a good Monotype man. I don't know how many years he'd been working at it, or what he'd done in his early life, but apparently he'd been with Monotype for a number of years already, because he knew them forwards and backwards.

SKIPPER: Were they both from this area?

WINTER: Yes. I think Walt and his family lived right down in this area, maybe a couple miles south of here and . . . .

SKIPPER: What area of town is that?

WINTER: It was around Adams and Maple, which is not far. They lived on Trinity Street, and his mother lived there for many, many years after I came to work for them. And Art came from Hollywood, had a home in Hollywood. But at that time, when I met them, Art was divorced from his first wife, and he subsequently married a younger woman, oh, just a year or two after I started. I can't remember when Walt bought him out. As with a lot of partnerships, there was a lot of argument, and each one thought the other one wasn't holding up his end, I guess. So it came to the parting of the ways. It must have been around 1944, something like that.

SKIPPER: What year did you start working for Walt?

WINTER: I started in 1937.

SKIPPER: And what was the situation with the foundry then?

WINTER: At that time, they didn't own anything; they were just renting this one Monotype machine at the Page Military Academy.

SKIPPER: Why was it at the Page Military Academy?

WINTER: Well, I don't know. They had a printshop down in the basement, a big printshop. I think it was a commercial shop. They probably leased out the space--I really couldn't say. And for using the machine, they supplied the printshop with whatever materials and type they needed. [knock at door--tape recorder turned off]

SKIPPER: We were talking about the Page Military Academy, and how they had one Monotype caster. Was that connected with the military academy, or [do] you think they were just leasing out the space?

WINTER: I think it was just leasing out the space; I don't think they were connected at all. Of course, when I started, most of the time that I worked out there was in the evenings, and there were no students around. Then, or in the summertime, the school was closed. We used to use the swimming pool until it got too green. [laughter] They didn't keep it up too well in the summer. And I can't remember exactly when we left there--probably August or September of '37. They bought . . . .

SKIPPER: Well, when you were there, what kinds of production were they doing?

WINTER: Well, they were making display type or hand-set type. They were making small fonts of type, you know, where the machine runs off a ribbon. Because the Monotype can be changed over to run a number of things. We would change it over, and we would run rules and spacing-material leads and slugs, and so on. Each time you changed the machine over, you would spend maybe half an hour taking certain parts off and putting other parts on. So it wasn't highly productive, but of course they were paying me very little--I think twenty-five cents an hour, when I could get it. We worked seven days a week for the first few months.

SKIPPER: How many hours a day?

WINTER: Well, like I say, when we'd get off [from] school, we'd work until about one o'clock in the morning, and then they'd take me home. And then I'd take the streetcar out there to the end of the line, and it was maybe about a twenty-minute walk beyond that. And once again, we'd work all day and clean up past midnight.

SKIPPER: Where was the academy located at that time?

WINTER: It was on San Vicente Boulevard. I think it has moved from there many years ago. But it was a rather large establishment. It was about three or four blocks the other side of . . . what do they call that? Redondo Beach Boulevard? The streetcars used to go to Rimpau Boulevard,

and it was maybe a mile beyond that out San Vicente.

SKIPPER: What kind of customers did they have mostly, in that early year when they were still at the Page Military Academy?

WINTER: Those days they were all printers.

SKIPPER: Commercial printers? Any private printers at that time?

WINTER: Large, small--all printers used type in those days and, you know, the other materials that we produced. There was competition, but printing was such a growth industry that there seemed to be more business than we could handle, and that's why they were able to grow so rapidly in the first few years.

SKIPPER: In that first year you were casting type on the Monotype caster, was there Monotype composition going on with the keyboard or . . . ?

WINTER: Yes, we would get some jobs in. We got a catalog in--I remember the one: had to do with pipe fittings. Extremely complicated because it was all tables and lots of fractions in there, and I really learned the hard way how to run a Monotype keyboard. It takes a lot of training, really, to do that well. Of course, modern composition bypasses all of that. All the decisions are entered into the computer, a portion of the typesetting. You can really just go through and set the figures, and it will automatically

line them up in columns. It's amazing. I wish we'd had it then because after we set it, then we had to make it up. You know, all the down rules between the columns, and normally the headings would be in a different size of type. The headings might be six point and the body of the table in eight point, and it was rather slow, time-consuming work putting all of that together.

SKIPPER: Did you just have one keyboard at that time?

WINTER: One keyboard and one caster was all we had.

SKIPPER: If you had to use different sizes of type in one layout that you were doing, did you have to change the mechanism in the caster to go from one size to the other?

WINTER: What we would do (and what you would still do on a Monotype with any sort of a large job), you would go through and pick out all the type of one size--take all the six point, for instance--and set all of that up, run it all off, then do the same with whatever other size. Then you would collate them, put them together later on. And a lot of that work was done at their home. They rented a big home on Normandy Avenue in those days--big two-story affair, a dozen or so rooms.

SKIPPER: That was Mr. Gebhard? And his father-in-law?

WINTER: And his father-in-law and, of course, Mr. Gebhard's wife: the three of them lived there. That's where the

type was fonted and wrapped, and that's where everything was kept.

SKIPPER: What was Mrs. Gebhard's name?

WINTER: Her name is Eleanore. By a strange coincidence, I had lunch with her last week. Kept in touch over the years. This was the first time I had seen her in about maybe four years or so.

SKIPPER: Was she involved in the business back then in the early years?

WINTER: Oh, yes. She used to font the type, and she kept the books and did whatever was necessary, you know, other than . . . . She never got involved in the machinery herself. And she answered the phone.

SKIPPER: When you were still located at the academy, who was working there? There was Mr. and Mrs. Gebhard, and you, and his father-in-law--who else was involved? And what did they do at the time?

WINTER: That was all.

SKIPPER: That was all.

WINTER: I think maybe Willy got involved in making up some of the pages now and again, but it wasn't a steady thing. Willy eventually went to work as a printer, until he joined the army. Then, when he got back out of the army, he came over here. Been here ever since.

SKIPPER: When you were located at the academy, what kind

of mats did you have mostly, and typefaces?

WINTER: Well, originally, we didn't have anything. Just borrowed them. In those days there were maybe a dozen Monotype installations around town, and everybody borrowed mats from everyone else. You know, if you got something, I'll borrow it; and then you can have something that I have. And this was carried on by almost all of them. Everybody knew what everyone else had, and they just traded. In those days, if it was something you didn't have, you could rent it from Monotype. We did a great deal of that.

SKIPPER: I read something about a Lanston Monotype company rental library. Were most of the people in town who were doing type founding involved in that?

WINTER: Oh yes. Even though mats were comparatively cheap in those days, it was still much less expensive to rent something if you thought you weren't going to be using it constantly. And it was a very nice service. You could decide to put in a typeface with a very moderate investment. I don't know what they charged. I think they charged two dollars a day to rent their mats. And before the library closed, I can't remember--I think it had gone to twelve dollars a day. There are still a few places that rent mats. We rented some, oh, middle of last year.

SKIPPER: From a local place?

WINTER: From a typesetting company in Cincinnati. Basically, we had most of what they had available, except for the one face, and it was only on a special order that we rented those because normally it's a face that doesn't sell much.

SKIPPER: Back in '37, what was the variety of mats that were available from these libraries, and the kinds of faces?

WINTER: Mostly they were old typefaces--the Caslon family, the Cheltenham . . . let's see . . . Clearface, DeVinne, Cochin--a lot of things that you don't even see these days. We got involved, of course, in purchasing mats when they would bring out a new typeface, and it wouldn't be available on the rental library right away. (Naturally they wanted to sell what they could first.) I don't know what the period of time was, but once it had been on the market for a little while, then you could rent them. You can still rent mats from the British company.

SKIPPER: British Monotype Corporation?

WINTER: Through an agency here in the States, in Philadelphia--Hartzell Machine Works. But it's sort of a group thing. If you want to rent something, you write back there; and when they accumulate enough requests, then they'll have the mats shipped over here.

SKIPPER: Must take a long time.

WINTER: And it's rather expensive, too. You would have to cast a great deal of type in order to make it economically feasible. Thank goodness we got almost everything they got over there, anyway. We bought all the good mats. Very few that they have we'd even be interested in renting.

SKIPPER: In the early years, when you rented the font, did you get a whole spectrum--uppercase and lowercase, any figures?

WINTER: A font of mats is the same thing you'd find in a font of type: usually an average of seventy-eight different characters. You cast up as many as you thought you could sell in a reasonable length of time, shipped the mats back, and if you were putting in a whole series, then you ordered the next size. It was a slow process, building up a good inventory. But we eventually reached a point like we have today when we got more than we know what to do with.

SKIPPER: [laughter] I'm really fascinated with the way that people are exchanging mats, too, in L.A. How many different foundries were there in '37?

WINTER: Well, besides foundries there were private plants, type shops, who didn't sell type--they just made type for their own use. But they had their own mats. They would rent. Sometimes you would want a font that you didn't think is going to sell too great; so you'd get together

with somebody else and you'd share the rental. Because even in those days, they had a minimum of--I don't know what it was--three or four days you would have to keep it. So you split the cost. Each of you used the mats. We did that quite a bit, too. [tape recorder turned off]

SKIPPER: Anyway, we were talking about the exchange of mats among all the different people in L.A. in those early years. How many were there, about? I think I asked you that before, but I don't know if we answered it.

WINTER: Well, I think there were about four type foundries. There was ourself. There was Bell Type and Rule Company, who's still in existence. There was Ben Straube. There was Franklin [Payne] . . . let's see . . . I think Mann-O-Type had closed just about that time; just about the time I came to work, they closed up. There might have been another one, but I can remember the four.

SKIPPER: Did the American Type Foundry have a factory office in town then, or was that later?

WINTER: At that time they had no factory; but they had offices on Los Angeles Street, around Sixth or Seventh in Los Angeles. And Mr. Gebhard made a deal with them to buy all the scrap metal that was turned in--because they accepted scrap, but they didn't want to ship it all back east to their foundry. And of course they were doing the big type business in those days. They, of course, were already

involved in presses and equipment. I can't remember when that particular one closed, and then they had one over near here on Twelfth Street. They no longer handled the sale of type, but had a representative, the Steward Company, to inventory and market the type--a position that Steward Company still holds, although type sales must now be a very minor contribution to their business.

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SKIPPER: Now, you were [saying that] there were about four or five other foundries, including the American Type Foundry office, in L.A., and there were other printers who were renting the mats, too, and casting their own type. Would they have a Monotype caster, or what was the nature of their business usually?

WINTER: They had Monotype that they used for composition, mostly, but they would make a little hand-set type for their own cases. Franklin had them. There were two Franklins. There was a foundry and there was a typesetting [or] typographic service, Service Typesetting. They have been out of business for a long time. And the Plantin Press still has a machine. There are numerous others, but I can't recall them.

SKIPPER: It sounds like there was a lot of cooperation and camaraderie about it at the time.

WINTER: There was. It was friendly cooperation. At one time, the three or four major founders got together. They had been knocking each other's head in bidding for the L.A. School's business, [who] used to buy a lot of type. So they all got together and decided that one man would put in the only bid, or he would bid a certain price and everybody

[else] would be way up, so he'd get it--and then they'd divide it all up. This was Mr. Straube who got the bid. Well, he got it. And I guess he was kind of shaky then, and he kept it. He didn't pass it around. So, it started one mad round of price-cutting again. The schools were getting their type for such a bargain, it was unbelievable. But they used to buy a tremendous amount. They would order, say, six hundred or a thousand fonts at any one time. But it was nice business to have. It's a little different from today. If they do order any at all, it may be ten.

SKIPPER: It's quite different. Were people, like from the Plantin Press, borrowing mats from you at the academy back in those early years?

WINTER: I can't remember when we started. You know, Saul Marks was the late owner. But about as far back as I can remember, we traded mats with them. They had very little that we wanted. There were a few things they had--probably more in the earlier days--until we acquired them all ourselves. Plantin Press today still borrows our Bembo and Perpetua and Joanna.

SKIPPER: Were they actually buying foundry type from you back then?

WINTER: Oh, yes. I think almost all of the typesetters and printers, even the ones that were making their own type, still bought from us because our selection was getting

larger and larger. And in most cases, a single font or two of any one size was all they wanted. It wouldn't pay, even in those days, to rent the mats and have somebody make that small an amount.

SKIPPER: How was it--working for Mr. Gebhard in those early years?

WINTER: He was a hard taskmaster. Kept your nose to the grindstone. Always wanted you to get another machine going, no matter how busy you were.

I remember one day. Five or six machines were going, and [his] partner came in, said, "These machines are getting awful dirty." He said, "I want you to clean these machines."

I said, "I don't really have time."

"You got to clean them up."

So I started cleaning them while they were running, and I smashed my finger. So that was the end of that. Luckily, it healed up pretty good. There's nothing but a scar left. But from then on, [I] cleaned the machines while they were stopped. But production in those days was the name of the game, because we could never get caught up to the amount of orders that Walt would get.

SKIPPER: So business was that good in those early years?

WINTER: Oh, yes. Of course, he put everything back in. What money he made went into mats or more machinery or a larger building. Because when they left Page Military

Academy, they rented space in a printshop on Vermont Avenue, around Thirty-Seventh [Street] and after a short while they built an addition on.

SKIPPER: This was--what--the end of 1937 or thereabouts?

WINTER: This would have to be later in 1937. And they bought two machines from an auctioneer, if I remember right, in the beginning. And a few months later, [they] purchased a third machine. I think we had three machines when we were on Vermont.

SKIPPER: What kind were they?

WINTER: Well, there were two Monotype machines and a Monotype material-making machine. They were all three Monotypes, but [a] material maker [is] specialized, in that that's all it will make--rules, borders, leads, and slugs. Of course it outproduced the Monotype by twice, at least--which was what they needed. Although for certain things, we still went back to the Monotype, because we didn't have the full range of mats necessary on the material maker. They were eventually acquired, and the other machine was put out to pasture, turned into making type or something. And I don't know how many years . . . it didn't seem like we were there too many years on Vermont--year and a half, two years, I would estimate, before we moved again.

SKIPPER: Yes--I read about a location on Venice Boulevard in '39.

WINTER: Yes, it was 804 Venice. The freeway goes right over that spot now. And by the time we moved out of Venice, I think we had about eight or nine machines.

SKIPPER: What part of the business was increasing the most?

WINTER: Well, the only things we made were type and rule, and they were both growing together.

SKIPPER: Were you doing very much Monotype composition?

WINTER: Yes. The Monotype composition always ran second to the type and rule sales. And the only time we really did a large amount of it [was] during World War II, when I wasn't here. They had a number of people involved in it then. They were doing all of Caltech's work. You know, [and] they were turning out all sorts of technical manuals for the armed services. They had about, oh, I would say maybe eight people involved in that. By the time I got out of the service, they had just about the end of it then. That part really dropped off, down to about four people. In the early days, of course, I did all the composition, too. I can't remember how I arranged it. I suppose I'd work part time on one and part time on another. While I was keyboarding, I'd have a couple of machines going.

SKIPPER: All at one time. [laughter]

WINTER: Don't want to waste time.

SKIPPER: When you were living--working, on Vermont, or on

Venice Boulevard, how many people at that time were employed at the foundry? [I'm] trying to get a picture of how it was growing.

WINTER: Well, on Vermont Avenue there was still just the four of us. And on Venice Boulevard still just the four of us, with an occasional part-time[r] who didn't seem to be there very often.

SKIPPER: What kind of duties would they have, part-time workers?

WINTER: Running the same machinery. We had more machines than I can handle all at one time. And they hadn't started training anyone else, but they had this other Monotype operator who would come in now and again--I can't remember how often; didn't seem like he was there too often. Without a note, I didn't remember that even today, I suppose because it seemed I did all the work. And when we moved to this location, [there were] still just the four of us. But very shortly after we moved here, we hired another full-time man.

SKIPPER: When there was just the four of you, were all of you equally competent on all of the machinery?

WINTER: No. Just Art and I. Walt never did run the machinery. Oh, he might stack type, but he never did learn the machinery--didn't really want to. And of course his wife didn't run the machines either.

SKIPPER: What did Walt do primarily?

WINTER: Selling.

SKIPPER: Mostly selling.

WINTER: Selling and general operation of the business. His partner never got involved too much in that. He stayed with the mechanical end of it. And, of course, between the two of them, I guess, they made the decisions on what type-faces to buy. But mainly it was, I'm sure, Walt's decision, because he was out in the trade all day, and he knew what was in demand. Whereas, you know, Art was in his "ivory tower"; so he had to take Walt's recommendations most of the time.

SKIPPER: Were you involved in recommending any changes in the business? What was your role?

WINTER: Not in those days, no. No, I was strictly a hard worker.

SKIPPER: Nose to the grindstone.

WINTER: Oh, I'd occasionally get involved in feeding their chickens over on Normandy. They had a whole bunch of chickens. If I would go home to dinner and they were going to work through, why, I'd run over and feed the chickens. [laughter]

SKIPPER: In that sense, were you sort of part of the family, or was it more a working relationship?

WINTER: With Walt and his wife, yes, we were kind of a

happy family. When we finally slowed down and started taking Sundays off, we'd go fishing together. Those days they had a lot of barges anchored along the coast, and for fifty cents you could go out. And what we would do after work Saturday [was] go out on the barge, fish all night long till maybe noon on Sunday, then come home and rest up.

SKIPPER: So you were working--what--a six day week?

WINTER: Yes. And they were twelve-, fourteen-hour days, for the most part.

SKIPPER: What kind of wages were being paid then? Do you recall?

WINTER: Like I say, I started at twenty-five cents an hour --and no time and a half--for maybe six months or so. And then I guess Walt and Art got to discussing it. Then I began getting time and a half--thirty-seven and a half cents an hour--for all the extra. And they weren't good wages even then. You know, this was the bottom of the scale. But Depression years, and jobs were few and far between. And I had my mother to support, because she and my stepfather had split up by then.

SKIPPER: Where were they living at the time?

WINTER: Living on Twenty-Fourth Street, near Vermont, also. Fact is, I think I mentioned, I think I got one of those old checks in my desk drawer: one of my paychecks and one

of the first payments made for the first machines they bought.

SKIPPER: That's the kind of thing you should really hang on to.

WINTER: Well, if you want them for your archives, you can have them, because I wouldn't throw them away, but I don't place any particularly high value on them.

SKIPPER: That is the kind of thing that can be really valuable, when kept all together with the whole collection of papers.

wINTER: I haven't found the time yet, or made the time yet, to dig through and see what old books and records we have from the early days--or if in truth they have all been lost.

SKIPPER: Well, anytime that you can get to that, I'm certainly interested, and I know that the Special Collections Department would be.

WINTER: Anything we'd have would either be in the safe or downstairs. That's the only storage areas we have.

SKIPPER: That would be great. We will have to talk about that.

WINTER: I'll look through, and, if I come up with anything, you can look at it. If you're interested, fine; if not, it doesn't matter.

SKIPPER: I'm sure we will be. Well, when you finally

moved to Pico Boulevard, was that right here in this location, as you are now? Did you have the same physical area at the time? What was the situation?

WINTER: No, We had what is now the back shop. We didn't have these two spaces up front. This was a photography shop, and, of course, we didn't need it. We rattled around in there. We drove our cars and parked them inside. [We] had all kinds of room. Well, when we moved in here, we had eight machines, and we had probably fifteen or sixteen single-type cabinets. Now we have some sixty left, I think. We had more at one time. And all of the type storage in the cans we didn't have. Our stock room where we keep the fonts was quite small.

SKIPPER: How many presses did you have, and what kinds, at that time?

WINTER: We didn't have any presses.

SKIPPER: None at all?

WINTER: All we had was--as I remember, we had a real old proof press: It was real old <u>then</u>, not like the proof presses that we still use, now obsolete, too. They had no grippers. You'd hand-ink the thing, and you laid the paper on it and turned a roller over it. So all we were interested in, in those days, was something for reading proof, anyway, and correcting, because offset still hadn't touched us. We weren't doing anything for the lithographers at that point.

SKIPPER: When you were first here at Pico, did you have a much greater variety of mats that you were working with? Had you purchased a great deal more?

WINTER: Oh, yes. They bought additional machines. Some of them--used mats would come with them. You know, you'd buy a whole package. Some we didn't have, some were duplicates. But it was really about the time we moved here when they started buying mats in wholesale lots, so to speak. Business was going pretty well, and whenever they brought out a new typeface, they'd buy it.

SKIPPER: Who were you buying from, primarily?

WINTER: That was Lanston.

SKIPPER: Where are they located?

WINTER: Philadelphia. We still hadn't become involved in casting from the other types of mats yet. We were staying strictly with the Monotype mats. We had bought our first Thompson just before we moved here.

SKIPPER: The Thompson typecaster?

WINTER: And I guess it was maybe a year or two after we moved, they started using Linotype mats and Ludlow mats to cast type form.

SKIPPER: Do the Monotype mats fit on the Thompson typecaster? Takes all the different kinds?

WINTER: Yes, a Thompson mat and a Monotype mat are really

about the same thing. The only Thompson mats we have are forty-two point and forty-eight point, and the Monotype has a maximum size of thirty-six. So all of the Monotype fit on the Thompson, but you couldn't--even if you had a forty-eight mold for a Monotype (which was never made), you couldn't have fit the mat on--different configuration. By the time we bought our first machine, the Monotype was making it. It was, oh, some years later that we acquired a couple of original Thompsons. They weren't nearly as good, and we eventually replaced them with newer machinery.

SKIPPER: What was the problem you had with them?

WINTER: Well, slowness on all of the Thompsons. They have a micrometer-set adjusting device to set the width of the character. You just set it, then turn it, and you're within one- or two-thousandths from being correct, at the most (usually much closer than that). But the Thompson had blocks, and you would have to take a combination of blocks and set them in there to get the width. That was quite slow.

SKIPPER: When you first moved here to Pico, were you buying used machinery at all?

WINTER: Oh, yes. I think most of the machinery we bought was used. There always seemed to be more on the market. A lot was bought at auction. We bought some from newspapers.

We bought those two older Thompsons that we acquired from Phoenix, and the other Thompsons were, by and large, I think they were all purchased new. Thompsons weren't getting on to the used market yet. So, one by one, they'd pick them up. The only used one we bought was in the later years, after Walt had already passed away. The typographer had one that had seen practically no use; so we bought it. Well, we made a deal. We gave him a certain amount of credit on the books, and he just bought type and supplies against that until it was paid up. So we didn't put any cash out for it.

SKIPPER: Around that time--I guess in the early forties--who was doing most of the buying from you? [Who were] the customers?

WINTER: They were still printers. We hadn't heard of rubber-stamp people or hot stampers or the sign business at all yet. So we were--like I say, we were doing nothing with the lithographer, who really hadn't come into his own yet either. So we were still with the printer until, I would say, after World War II.

SKIPPER: Before that, again, was there any particular style of faces that they were wanting to buy?

WINTER: Anything new.

SKIPPER: Anything new. So they weren't just sticking with the old Caslon face?

WINTER: No. Although the older types still sold fairly well, it was the new ones. The big thing, of course, was when Monotype put out Futura under the name of Twentieth Century. Now, that was the big typeface. That was the bread-and-butter typeface. It had so many versions and was the Helvetica of its day. Everybody was specifying Futura--that and the novelty faces; A lot of the novelty faces went very well. The old standards just kind of--bit by bit, they dropped off. And Caslon itself was never a very big seller. Even from the beginning, it had already lost favor. After all, the typeface was a few hundred years old already. But like I say, anytime one of these novelty faces would come out, we'd get that and we'd cast a whole bunch of it, put a little flyer out on it, and it wasn't too long before that set of mats was paid for.

SKIPPER: How did you advertise mostly in those earlier years?

WINTER: I think when we sent out statements to the customers we put a little flyer in it. Most of it went out that way.

SKIPPER: To your specific customers, then?

WINTER: Yes. Because by that time we did a little bit of business with most every printer. So that was the best way to reach them. Well, it's remained the least expensive way. Just put it in with your statements or anything else you are sending to them. Everybody does it. It doesn't cost

you anything for postage extra. Then you know this is something he's going to look at.

SKIPPER: Do you recall in those early years, before World War II, any other private printers in the area that you were doing a lot of business with at all?

WINTER: I really can't remember. Let's see, there was Bookman Press, who was one of our big customers back then.

SKIPPER: And there was still Saul Marks.

WINTER: Well, he was never really a big customer because he was too small a printer. He has always been a one-, two-man shop. Let's see, there was Trade Press--did quite a bit for them. I think they are long gone, too. They were all letterpress. Eureka Press--one of our much better customers--no longer. Eureka press is still doing well, but they're all lithography, most of them. George Rice and Sons were tremendous customers. But there was a wide spectrum. The reason we moved here was that a big percentage of the printers in town were located in these two buildings down on Maple. One's called the Printing Center Building; the other's the Bendix Building. And there were maybe a hundred or more printers in there. So we didn't have to go far to deliver; they didn't have far to come to pick up.

SKIPPER: Very convenient. So you knew about that specific location when you chose the Pico address?

WINTER: Yes. Of course, I wasn't involved in it at that

time, but that was why they moved into this area. And Bell Type and Rule was only a block away, or two blocks away, at the time. Mann-O-Type had been right in the same area.

SKIPPER: So business was good enough to make it worth moving here, even though there were two or three other establishments right in the local area?

WINTER: Yes, the quick and easy delivery was it. Not like today, when they are scattered over such a wide area.

SKIPPER: What kind of work were most of the printers doing in that building?

WINTER: I guess they were doing the whole range of printing. Everything: books, pamphlets, invoices, letterheads, business cards. They had not become so specialized yet. Every printer, more or less, was doing everything, and they were doing it all with type.

SKIPPER: When did L.A. Type start that merchandising pattern of letting people come in and just buy the individual pieces of type?

WINTER: Right from the very beginning, from the time we moved to Vermont Avenue. That was the reason for the building extension on there, to have some room to put typecases so the customers could come in. Because, at that time, Bell Type and Rule had the service, Straube had the service, Franklin . . . you could go in any of them, just as you can in our place today. Of course, now [Harley] Bell

who's. . . Well, of course it's a one-man operation now. I don't think he lets anyone come in anymore. If they want a line of type, he'll set it for them.

SKIPPER: So that was the usual way of doing business.

WINTER: Not that we wanted to; [it was] not really best way. It was a large investment with a small return, but you had to do what everybody else was doing. Because by the time you cast enough type to put in a case--you put sixty or seventy pounds of type in a case--in a year's period you might not sell ten or twelve pounds out of that particular case. Whereas with fonts, you have a much better turnover. You know you're going to sell. Well, in those days we knew we were going to sell so many in a period of time, because we started dating them, the date of their manufacture. So when you get low, you can say, "Well, we made twenty fonts a year. Well, we'll make another twenty." Although we still date the fonts today, you can't figure it that way anymore. Sold ten fonts last year, and you make ten again--you may have all ten three years from now. And, by the same token, something that you think, "Well, we'll only make six." I don't think we ever make anything less than six; next week somebody may come in and order them all. The pattern's no longer established because there's too many specialty buyers. The orders that we get from Central America, they buy different

typefaces than we sell here sometimes. So when we have to fill one of their orders, we may have to put a lot of it on the machines or set it out of the case because it's something we hadn't figured on selling.

SKIPPER: In the earlier years, when people were coming and just buying it in the cafeteria style (I think they referred to it once), did that leave you with remnants and odds and ends in different fonts, and you'd have to recast small parts of it?

WINTER: Oh, yes. We would keep the cases filled. But more often than not, by the time the case needed replenishing, so did the fonts. So we'd do them both at once. We still do that. Only now we would never fill a case unless we were making fonts. Unless it was one that we didn't have any fonts, and we didn't want to go to that much trouble. We'd put enough in the case so we could set one, should we get an order.

SKIPPER: In those early years, also, did you have much contact with the customers who came in?

WINTER: No, I was still involved in production, still nose-to-the-grindstone. Well, I got involved in other areas even before World War II--you know, helped design and produce our catalogs each time. And by the time I got back out of the service, why, from then on, I did it all.

SKIPPER: Did you enjoy doing the catalog designing?

WINTER: Yes. You know I'm no designer, but it was enjoyable putting it together, and most of the Hand-i-fonts you see in the back of the book I worked up. Some of them I had help on, and Walt would suggest various things too. Because in the beginning, we cast up all these ornaments, but we didn't have them in sets at all. They were just loose.

SKIPPER: Do particular ornaments come with a particular set of mats?

WINTER: Not usually. There are very few ornaments that come with type fonts. They are usually designed just as ornamental pieces, some singly and some in sets of half a dozen mats that all work together.

SKIPPER: Back when you first moved here, did you have as large a holding in the ornaments? I recall those banks and banks of drawers.

WINTER: No, we had very little. Like I say, we didn't have any of those sorts cans at all when we moved here. I don't know how we kept it. We probably kept them on galleys because we never had them in cases of any kind. But it was about the only way we could have, because we had cast up quite a lot of them at that time. But then in those days, ornaments went well, as well as type. And a man might say, "Well, I'd like five pounds or ten pounds of this particular ornament, a lot cast to order that way." But the orders were always worthwhile. And it was just some

while later that we put them all together in the little sets to try and help the sales. Because on some of our border Hand-i-fonts, you can't really set much out of one--a six-by-eight border, perhaps.

SKIPPER: You had another part-time worker coming in? This was before World War II.

WINTER: We moved here, I think, in 1940. Like I said, we hired Joe Theiss shortly after that.

SKIPPER: Was that full time?

WINTER: That was full time. And between the two of us, we ran all the machinery, round and round. We had by then a great deal more machinery, and we kept a good portion of it going between the two of us. We might have [had] ten, twelve machines going most of the time.

SKIPPER: What kind of training and background did he have before he started working here?

WINTER: He had worked in the business some years before. He had never learned the Monotype composing machine though, and he hadn't seen a Thompson. But he know the Monotype material maker, and he could handle a composition casting machine well enough. And of course, between the two of us, we waited on all of the customers, too, that dropped in. In those days [there was] very little cash business. Everybody had an account with us. So neither one of us had to handle any cash.

SKIPPER: Were people usually pretty good about eventually catching up on their accounts?

WINTER: Like I say, in those days I'm not so sure. I'd hear Walt holler a lot about all the money owed to him but he would take a chance. Somebody opening up, he'd just open the door and say, "Take whatever you want, you know. Outfit your shop, and then pay me so much a month." Because nobody had a very good credit rating.

SKIPPER: Not in those years. Did Walt have fairly good rapport with the customers who came in?

WINTER: Oh yes. He was an excellent salesman--you know--hail fellow, well met. He was a good talker. He could sell iceboxes up in Alaska with no problem. I was with him a few times, because I used to go around with him once in a while when things got slow, and we were always looking for scrap metal and sales of type. So more than once, I'd been with him, and he'd go in and talk to the owner of a shop. He'd pull out the cases and say, "Your type is worn out, you know. You need some new faces, fresh faces, and have some good crisp printing."

And he'd talk them into dumping it all and buying new type from us--or at least a good portion of what they had.

SKIPPER: Did Walt have a very good eye for new faces? Was he involved in those trends?

WINTER: Yes, he kept up pretty well. How he did it, I

don't know--whether it was through trade journals, or what--but he seemed pretty well to know what was wanted. But more than that, he was willing to speculate on something before it had been seen. Monotype would come out with a leaflet; they were going to produce this typeface which would be ready by February, or some projected date. He'd buy them right there. Fact is, he used to insist that he get the first ones made, so he'd get the jump on everybody. I don't know how successful he was, but we seemed to be first with a whole lot of things. And he was the one that started buying English mats. He bought the Times Roman series. We were the first ones in the country to have that. As soon as they became available, we got them. It had been the private property of the London Times, I guess. The typeface had been designed specifically for them, and I think they used it for a period of years-- I don't know, say, five or six years. And the agreement with Monotype was that they could then sell the face. So we bought it all, and that was one of our big successes.

SKIPPER: People started buying it immediately from you?

WINTER: Oh, yes--as soon as we had it. Well, of course Walt would be around telling everybody, "I got this coming. I'll have it ready." So a lot of orders he would have ahead of time. But he made some bad guesses, too. We probably got $50,000 worth of mats and equipment that we've never

made a nickel back on. Take the bad with the good. But he made a lot more good guesses than bad guesses. One thing I don't have to worry about--there's nothing available. [laughter]

SKIPPER: Well, once you moved here to Pico, was the business in the Monotype composition picking up at all?

WINTER: The Monotype composition was still in the background up until when I went into the service in early '44. We'd do an occasional big job. Once a year we did the Automobile Club's travel booklet that they had. They used to list all the motels--they'd call them something else in those days--motor courts, I think. But they listed the facilities and a price of everything in the country. That was our biggest job.

SKIPPER: So they would come to you for the whole process rather than go to a printer?

WINTER: Well, they went to the printer. We were working for the printer rather than [for] the Auto Club. But the printer didn't have the facilities for setting it because this was a period of time when printers were getting rid of their composing rooms. The trade typesetting houses were starting. From--oh, I don't know--say, 1945 on, for the next fifteen or twenty years, it was great for the trade typesetting house. Now I understand it is slipping back again the other way, a

lot of in-plant typesetting done now. Why not? Lease a machine and take a fairly intelligent girl and put it on her, and she can set all the type you need. [laughter]

SKIPPER: Would they have considered hiring any women in those days?

WINTER: Yes, we had a woman operator.

SKIPPER: In the early forties?

WINTER: Yes. Oh, let's see. . . yes, it was. It was before I went into the service. Her name was Glassman, Lucille Glassman. She was Ben Straube's daughter. Ben Straube was one that had one of the earlier type foundries. She worked as a Monotype keyboard operator for us for--I don't know--I think it was probably less than a year. She was extremely good at it. She was one of the boys.

SKIPPER: How had she learned?

WINTER: I guess she learned at her father's plant. Glassman was her married name. Why she didn't work for her father, I don't know. I guess they must have had a falling out of some kind. We used to call her Sis. She later on started her own typesetting, and until a year or so ago, she operated a cold-type plant here in town. I understand she sold it. Well, she was getting up past retirement age, because she was a good many years older than I am. But that was the only. . . oh, no, we had another woman who used to work in the makeup department, handset

makeup pages. She was an older lady: it seemed to me she was about sixty then. But once again, she was very good at it.

SKIPPER: Do you know anything about her background?

WINTER: No. She was still working here when I got home from the service.

SKIPPER: Do you recall her name at all?

WINTER: No, I don't. But she wasn't here that long after I got home, because after the war all this so-called defense work dropped off to nothing. During that time--right after I got home--we had guards in here twenty-four hours a day. Anytime we took a proof and it was a bad proof, you didn't throw it in the trash, they took it and disposed of it because it was supposedly highly sensitive work. I don't really think it was. I don't know what they would call it--classified. I'm certain it wasn't secret or confidential. Some of these books were probably on the operation of the new aircraft, for instance, or something like that. The work was being done for Douglas Aircraft, and it was their guards that were here.

SKIPPER: When you left in 1944 to go into the service, had the nature of the production here, the business and materials you were getting, changed at all in the first couple of years of the war?

WINTER: No. It changed after I left. That's when they got the contract with Caltech, plus whatever else they

were doing, and the competition built up during that time. When I left, we had two and a half of us in production. We had Joe, who we had hired in 1940, and then hired another man--oh, I guess it was maybe a year, less than a year, before I left--a man named Ernie Titus, who was an alcoholic. More often than not, he wouldn't show up for work, and we'd go up to the corner bar and find him there passed out. We'd bring him down here, finally bring him around, put him to work.

SKIPPER: What kind of work was he supposed to be doing?

WINTER: He only ran one machine, the Giant caster. He knew the Giant caster. We had put one in and none of us knew how to run it. So that's what he did.

SKIPPER: Were you responsible for the repairs you were doing on the machines?

WINTER: Yes. Monotype never maintained any repair service. Unless you were willing to pay to have a man come from Philadelphia and pay all of his expenses. As a result all Monotype operators learned to do their own repair work. Survival. [Laughter] Got to be difficult sometimes, too, you know, because we didn't know every machine inside and out, the way a factory man would, and we couldn't go to the heart of the problem right away. You work with a machine long enough, you do. I got to the point on the Monotype composition casters, I could just about fix

anything that went wrong or pinpoint what the trouble was--which I couldn't do today, I've been away from it for so long. I could never take the keyboard apart. I helped once take one apart and put it back together, but there's so many adjustments, and you can't learn too much by doing them once. Whereas Robert Day, who worked for us here from about 1945 on, he was very good on the machines, both the keyboard and caster. You know, he could fix [them] whenever there was a problem.

TAPE NUMBER: II, SIDE ONE

FEBRUARY 2, 1979

SKIPPER: In our last session we talked about your background, experiences in printing in school prior to working at the foundry, early years at the foundry with Mr. Gebhard, and its establishment here on Pico Boulevard. And before we move on, I want to go back and elaborate on a couple of points that we talked about in the first session. One point was that you mentioned moving from Pasadena to Los Angeles, and I want to ask more about the circumstances of that move.

WINTER: Well, that was brought about by my mother's marriage to . . . call him my stepfather. [I was] sixteen at the time, and he had a job in Los Angeles. He worked at the Van de Kamp's Bakery and at-- I think it was Ralph's, which also had a bakery at that time. So that was the reason for the move.

SKIPPER: After our last session, you mentioned something about being interested in going to the Frank Wiggins Trade School? Was that the name?

WINTER: Right. Yes, I think I mentioned that I was talked out of it by my printing teacher at that time. And that's why the decision to go [to] Francis Poly High School.

SKIPPER: Why'd he talk you out of going there?

WINTER: He said I would only be covering ground that we had already covered. And it would, you know--as far as learning anything more about the trade--it would be a waste of time.

SKIPPER: Was the Wiggins Trade School fairly reputable at that time?

WINTER: Oh, yes. I had a couple of friends who went there for a year or two. Both of them ended up in the printing trade. Whether they found their eventual jobs by means of going there or not, I don't know, but certainly it must have helped. They had some good instructors there, one whose name I remember: Stanley Goodson who worked for L.A. Type part time for a short while many years ago. I had met the other instructor, but I can't remember his name.

SKIPPER: What did Mr. Goodson do here at L.A. Type?

WINTER: He ran the Monotype machines. Yes, he was experienced on those, as well as bank work--what would you call it--just general composition.

SKIPPER: So at Francis Poly Tech, you got more advanced training than you would have ever been able to get at Frank Wiggins?

WINTER: Well, that's what we had hoped for. And the way it turned out, it was not exactly more advanced, but it was in a different direction. We got into the Monotype almost as soon as we got into Poly, which hadn't been our plan. I don't think we even knew they had the machinery there.

SKIPPER: What had you planned?

WINTER: Well, more work on the large presses. Poly had one large press. And maybe a little additional bindery work or layout work. Layout didn't seem to be part of the teaching, though. And how I got on a Monotype, I don't know; maybe just asked if I could. And I learned a great deal, not from the teacher, Pop Pearson, but from another man . . . can't think of his first name; his last name was Allen. [He] was also a Monotype operator and was working for the L.A. School District, I guess, as a part-time teacher or something. I really can't remember now, but he was excellent on the machines. I learned more from him than I did from the assigned teacher.

SKIPPER: Did you enjoy working on the Monotype right from the very start?

WINTER: Oh, yes. It fascinated me--a lot of things moving. I've always enjoyed machinery, so this was sort of a natural progression.

SKIPPER: Is it very difficult to learn?

WINTER: Somewhat, yes. You can learn to operate the machine simply by putting on the perforated tape and setting the measure, sizing it, and lining up. But the maintenance of the machine and fixing them when something goes wrong, as it quite often does: this entails a lot of experience. Even if you had an instruction book covering everything, it's only

a basis. A lot of the machines don't run on the factory adjustments as well as they do if you set them a little off to one side or another. I suppose any automobile mechanic would probably tell you the same thing.

SKIPPER: You mentioned that when you were at John Francis Poly Tech, Mr. Gebhard came there looking for someone to work for him.

WINTER: That's right.

SKIPPER: And your teacher mentioned that you and Will might do that. Why were you and Will particularly chosen for that?

WINTER: I don't know whether we were the only two working on that machine or not. Chances are we were.

SKIPPER: So he was specifically interested in somebody who could do the Monotype.

WINTER: Yes, he didn't want to start with someone who hadn't even seen the thing, you know, because we had to be necessarily left alone all day. Even though the machine was quite possibly set up the previous night, we still had to have a working knowledge to get anything done the next day.

SKIPPER: When did you finish school, in relation to when you started working for Walt?

WINTER: I really can't remember exactly when I started to work. I would say probably February or March. I graduated in June.

SKIPPER: So there was some overlap in time, when you were going up there after school, and working till late at night.

WINTER: Yes. Even though it was a part-time job, we put in eight hours many nights.

SKIPPER: Was your job considered to be an apprenticeship, as it were, when you first started, or how did they consider early employment?

WINTER: Well, since it was such a small outfit, there was really nothing discussed at all. It was a small nonunion affair, and the union actually never cropped up until sometime after I had gone in the navy during the war years, and help was hard to get. So the company then went union during that time--probably sometime mid- to late 1944. And as far as I know (least the way I heard it), that was really the only reason for going union, because Mr. Gebhard never had any love for the union. It was just a necessary evil.

SKIPPER: So it made it easier to get people to employ, as a result of the union?

WINTER: That's right. In those days, they had had people available. There was always someone coming into town, and they could reach operators for us. Possibly even some from the East; call another union, someone who would like to move out here. Because when I got back, there were, oh, let's see, there were about six additional people here that weren't here when I left.

SKIPPER: When you left, there were about three people employed here?

WINTER: On the machinery, there was only two full time; one of them I think started full-time work just weeks before I left. Ernie Cruz was his name. He later on became one of the officers of [the] typographical union here in town.

SKIPPER: You mentioned someone named Ernie Titus before; is that who you are referring to?

WINTER: [No.] Ernie Cruz started working at L.A. Type about March 1944. He later became a union official. Ernie Titus was a Monotype operator who worked for us, when sober. (He was an alcoholic.) He started probably late in 1943, and worked during the time I was in the navy. He had already left when I returned in 1946.

SKIPPER: What were the circumstances of your going into the army?

WINTER: I was drafted. They gave me my choice, you know: army, navy, or marines; so I took the navy. Luckily, I was able to get into the navy. The only thing wrong with me was defective color vision. But at that time, there was a short period of time when they needed men, and they decided they would let me in along with a number of others. We were ineligible for sea duty at the time, but a year later the order was rescinded; so we most of us then moved out into sea duty of some kind or overseas duty.

SKIPPER: Was the lack of color vision any difficulty at any time?

WINTER: Not to me. But if you're standing watch on a ship, you should be able to recognize a red light from a green light from something else, to recognize the direction of the ships approaching; and so on.

SKIPPER: So how many years were you in the navy, then?

WINTER: Just two.

SKIPPER: Just the two?

WINTER: Yes, as soon as I was able to get out, I got out. You know, they offer you all sorts of inducements to stay in--or they did at that time--but I was a civilian at heart.

SKIPPER: Where did you end up spending most of your time while you were in the navy?

WINTER: It was sort of scattered, really. After boot camp in San Diego, I went to electrical school in St. Louis for four months.

SKIPPER: Is that something you had said you were interested in?

WINTER: Yes, I had been interested. I tried to get in radio-tech school, but having been out of school for so long, I fell down on my algebra and didn't make it. And from the school, I went to Ottumwa, Iowa, and spent possibly two months there. From Iowa went to Oklahoma--Norman, Oklahoma, which was another primary airflight place (Ottumwa was also)--spent a few months there. I think it was until May of '45; then I was shipped out to the base just outside of

San Francisco. It was sort of a transfer point; from there you were assigned somewhere. I was assigned temporary duty in San Francisco for about six weeks and from there went over to, and eventually ended up at, Kwajalein atoll, Kwajalein island. I was there until I was ready to be discharged.

SKIPPER: Did you have much opportunity to learn more about the electronics that you were working on?

WINTER: Not really. I became an electrician's mate third class while I was over there, but that was merely maintaining the electrical equipment on the ship--which was a concrete barge--actually [a] gasoline barge [that] had no propulsion motors, only steering motors. They were built in National City. And where we were we accepted aviation gasoline from the big tankers and then pumped it into a smaller tanker, who then took it to shore.

SKIPPER: Were any of the things you learned useful to working in typefounding at all, or was it more of a sideline?

WINTER: Not really, no, It was just a passage of time, until I could get back again.

SKIPPER: Who was helping out Walt while you were gone? Did he have to hire new people right away?

WINTER: Well, like I say, we had two people: we had Joseph Theiss, Ernest Cruz and then Ernie Titus part time. And I don't know just when it started, but they got this

contract for work with Caltech for their tech manuals, and that's when most of the people were put on.

SKIPPER: That's while you were still gone.

WINTER: [Yes.] One young fellow was hired. I don't think he did any Monotype work until he got here. He came from Maine, and he was running some of the machinery when I got back--basically the machines that I had operated before I left. So he was working days, and I agreed (since I was single) to work nights when I got back. And I worked nights for a year and then told Mr. Gebhard, "I've had it being a good guy," because I could have bumped him off of the day shift anytime. So I said, "I want days." So that's when I went on days.

SKIPPER: Was he very amenable to that, or was he really pushing it to have maximum production at the time?

WINTER: Well, he was always pushing, but I didn't have any trouble with him; we didn't have any big argument about it. I can't remember. Probably all three of us had a discussion, and Don Barrett said, okay, he would go on the night shift.

SKIPPER: Was Mr. Gebhard willing to have people join the foundry who would need some real serious on-the-job training, or did he expect people to come pretty much already skilled?

WINTER: He would have liked to have them come skilled,

but after World War II, there didn't seem to be that many available. Then again, to hire an apprentice at a reduced salary was kind of attractive to him, too, as long as he had someone he could depend on to direct their work. We had a number of apprentices after 1946. Some stayed a little while, some a little longer. But I think that only two completed an apprenticeship-training period of time and became journeymen.

SKIPPER: So was that a formal apprenticeship with the foundry?

WINTER: Yes. Since we were union then, it had to be a regular six-year apprenticeship. At that time, six years was mandatory. Some years later, the employer could upgrade someone in the six year period if he thought their progress warranted it. And this may or may not have happened--I really don't know. But since almost all of my apprenticeship was served as a nonunion status, I know when I did join, when I got back, I had to have a regular meeting with . . . I forget what they called it . . . the apprenticeship board, I guess, of the union. And they asked any number of questions, but none of them were familiar enough with what I was doing to really intelligently say that I was qualified or I wasn't qualified. The union consisted mostly of people in the printing industry, not specifically Monotype operators. Out of two thousand members, probably no more than fifty or so were connected with Monotype--[mostly with] various other

phases of typography, including printing.

SKIPPER: Did you have to continue communicating with them about your job capabilities to become a member of the union at that point?

WINTER: No, after the one meeting, the next meeting I was sworn in. I think that as long as the employer was willing to accept someone as a journeyman, they were, too. After all, they get full dues then, too.

SKIPPER: Well, within this six-year apprenticeship to become a journeyman, would the workers become knowledgeable of all aspects of the foundry?

WINTER: They were supposed to have, yes--on the machinery available. Now, we had Linotype machines available, and they were supposed to work a certain period of time with the Linotype machines. But we practically only had one man that did that. And he forced it. He didn't last long. Mr. Gebhard found a reason to get rid of him shortly thereafter.

SKIPPER: Was he fairly strict with people, in that if they weren't really pulling their weight, he would let them go fairly quickly?

WINTER: Oh, yes. He pretty well knew what was going on. Of course, he was lucky in that almost all the production people that he had were good workers. Some were let go when business got slack--as it did. You know,

it might be running well for a year and then have three or four very bad months, and he would let someone go. Then when things got better again and he had to hire someone, they were no longer available. So then he would start a new apprentice, perhaps. I remember one little fellow called Frenchie who worked with us for four or five months, and then he moved on his own accord. He got a job he liked better. He was working on the Thompson casters, but he was really more experienced on the Monotype keyboards, that's what he liked. So when the opportunity presented itself, that's where he went.

SKIPPER: Were all the other foundries becoming unionized in those particular years?

WINTER: That I don't know. Bell Type and Rule, I'm sure, was union; they never had more than a few employees. I don't think Ben Straube ever reached union status. And the others, I really don't know.

SKIPPER: You mentioned that during the war years, they had that big contract with Caltech. What was it they were working on for them?

WINTER: They were technical manuals of some kind. Whatever work Caltech was doing for the government at that time, probably relating to aircraft or ordnance, or something of that nature. I don't think they'd gotten into missile work at that time. When the Caltech work ran out, which was

probably around late '46, '47, then they got work from Douglas. Now, with Caltech, I think it was pretty much of an exclusive. With Douglas, we were only one of many doing the work.

SKIPPER: When the foundry was working for Caltech, were there any other projects ongoing, or would a large contract like that preclude doing work for other people at the [same] time?

WINTER: No, I think this was just in addition to the regular business. This all happened during a period of time when I was gone. But I know that, oh, I guess it was possibly a year after I got back, so this would make it, say, early 1947. The Caltech work had stopped, and we had many tons of metal that belonged to Caltech. We did the work; they purchased the metal, and so on. And it's my understanding we purchased it from them, because we're always buying metal. As long as I can remember, almost all the metal that was ever offered we bought, provided we reached an agreement on the price with the owner. Still today, [we] never turn anything down unless they want more than market value, because a lot of our metal goes out and never comes back. Type, for instance, a lot more type goes out than scrap type is returned. And Linotype metal, which we use in our stripcasting machines for the rules, the leads, and the slugs, there are times when we buy a lot more than goes out. Which gives us a big inventory for a while, but

gradually we'll get to the point where we'll have to buy again.

We used to have a pretty good deal with a metal smelter. Dross, which is the scrapings from the top of the pot, oxides, a little dirt, what we generated ourself and what we picked up from customers, was traded into the smelter for new metal at a very reasonable price. I guess it's been a year or two, now, that program was halted. The smelter was doing a great business, mostly with newspapers. That's where the big business was. All newspapers are now photographic. None of them use metal. So the volume of business wasn't economical for them to do the trading anymore--That and the fact that the Air Pollution Control District had shut them down as far as operating their reverberatory. So now when we buy new metal, we buy it outright. We get some discount on it. Dross that we generate, we sell. We had been selling it to them and didn't think their price was good enough, so we made a deal with an eastern buyer. I don't know just when he's going to be here; he's going to come and pick it all up. It will be nice to have our driveway clear again. [tape recorder turned off]

SKIPPER: When you do, for example, Monotype composition that would go off to a printer, would they return that type to you, or would they return the metal to you? How did that work?

WINTER: Yes. Yes, they would return the metal after the job was printed--dump it all in the barrel and send it back. We make no charge for the use of the metal. We just had a memo. We would bill the job out for the labor charge only, make a note of how much metal it was. We kept a running record. We still keep that today, although it doesn't really relate to composition anymore. It's what we call recasting strip material. We theoretically take their metal and cast it into a product, charging them only for the service. That file you can see behind the bookkeeping machine is full of the metal records, so we know how much they owe us or how much we owe them. I say it's like a rubber band, stretches one way and then the other. There's some customers still today that have a credit of maybe five tons, as they have gone more and more into offset and dumped the metal and given it to us. Eventually we buy from them when they finally decide that they're not going to use metal anymore, and they get this big credit. Then we buy it from them.

SKIPPER: What kind of machine is that that you're keeping you records in?

WINTER: Oh, the machine? Oh, that's just a posting machine. Accounts receivable. I think that's all that they do on that--accounts receivable. It's a very old machine.

SKIPPER: Back to when you returned after the war. I think you mentioned that Mr. Gebhard's father-in-law, Art, had left at some point. Was that then, or before then? Do you recall?

WINTER: Apparently, if the place was incorporated in 1950, allowing time for it to go through, I guess Mr. Neilsen must have been here until sometime in '49 or maybe early '50. Our records might reflect that. I thought he had left before, but that's probably correct.

SKIPPER: What was the establishment called before they were incorporated, exactly?

WINTER: It was just Los Angeles Type Founders. Just added the "Inc." that's all--Oh, wait a minute now, I'm wrong. No, it was originally called Los Angeles Type and Rule Company.

SKIPPER: Do you recollect about how long it had that particular name?

WINTER: Until they were incorporated. Fact is, I think you will find that name, still--probably in the phone books or some of the trade journals. I noticed in the union paper, a little house organ, that they list the union establishments, and they still list it as L.A. Type and Rule. [laughter] Not that we care.

SKIPPER: Well, when you became incorporated, then, who exactly was involved in the incorporation?

WINTER: Well, like I say, Mr. Neilsen sold out to Mr. Gebhard with the stipulation that 50 percent of the stock would be assigned to Mrs. Gebhard, who was Mr. Neilsen's daughter. He felt he wanted to protect her. So husband and wife were fifty-fifty owners of the business as far as the stock was concerned. And Mr. Gebhard bought out this. They were divorced, and some years later, he bought her out, so that he was then the only stockholder.

SKIPPER: Do you recall about when this happened?

WINTER: Hmm, not really. I would say probably around . . .

SKIPPER: Just a real rough estimate.

WINTER: Around 1960, perhaps. Although we didn't finish paying off that debt until, well, must have been before that, say, probably '57. In 1962 we made the final payment to Mrs. Gebhard, although her name was by then Mrs. Musick. And the agreed price (although I've never seen it anywhere) I think was $60,000 for her share. Our auditor could tell you. It's all listed as treasury stock now.

SKIPPER: Was this Eleanor?

WINTER: That's right.

SKIPPER: Is this the same [woman] as Betty Gebhard?

WINTER: No, Betty Gebhard is his second wife.

SKIPPER: Oh, I see.

WINTER: She is the one who is now nominal owner of the

business. [The] business is still an estate, but she is sole beneficiary during her lifetime.

SKIPPER: After you returned and they were doing the contract with Douglas Aircraft [that] you mentioned previously, was that a major contract that took a long period of time?

WINTER: I don't think so. I don't think that lasted more than a year, if that long. And, like I say, it was just as an adjunct to the regular business.

SKIPPER: But you mentioned that they had guards here disposing of all the extra proofs. Tell me more about that situation.

WINTER: Well, since I worked nights, I wasn't really involved in the production of any of this material. I just knew that the guards were here. And it was twenty-four hours around the clock [that] one of them was here. I suppose they had three shifts. Only one [guard per shift]. And of course during the night shift--I was the only one on the shift for a while--there was really nothing for them to do but sit around and wait for their shift to end, because none of the actual work for Douglas was going on at that time. I suppose that they handled all of the proofs off of the machines, maybe kept their eye on the galley racks where the type was stored.

SKIPPER: Would that have interfered with business in any way?

WINTER: No, their presence didn't seem to bother anything. A great deal of our business is--in those days, anyway--was delivered orders. Oh, we did have a number of people dropping in, a lot more than we have today. But they kept a low profile.

SKIPPER: When you delivered orders, would you have tied up forms of the cast type to deliver in the galleys? How did that work?

WINTER: Oh, yes, a lot of it was. Of course, the main deliveries have always been the strip material in wrapped packages. They weigh about twenty-five pounds apiece and [are] not easily spilled or ruined; whereas forms of type, you have to handle with a little more care. But in the days of letterpress printing, a lot of [forms] did go out on a truck [for delivery to a printer]. They were locked up on the galley somehow, with maybe spring galley locks, and then of course paper wrapped around the type to keep it from bouncing out while the truck was driving. But none of them would be considered large jobs. Six or eight galleys at a time probably were the most we ever took, except for our own catalog.

SKIPPER: What types of things would people have printed up in that form, letterpress, that would have to be delivered in that way?

WINTER: I really don't know. I suppose small booklets

and brochures, things of that nature. There was no large work, like novels or magazines. At one time in our Linotype department, we did have about eight or ten house organs that we did, and the metal did go out on those, but they're usually four to six pages.

SKIPPER: When did you have the Monotype machine first?

WINTER: When did we first have it? Well, actually, the very first machine we got was the Monotype, composition.

SKIPPER: I was thinking of the Linotype.

WINTER: The Linotypes came about, probably, 1951, '52. Walt had sort of resisted getting Linotypes because he thought he might be going into competition with a lot of his customers and was wondering, you know, just how they would accept it. But during all this time, of course, he could see all the work that was available, because this was really the heyday of composition. So he finally decided to throw caution to the wind, so to speak, whether the customers liked it or not. He put in and bought two brand new Intertype machines, and operated at a loss for at least five or six years. Just couldn't get enough work in, couldn't get enough production out of the people he had. Finally he hired a man named Joseph Beiderman, who had been a foreman at one of the big stationery houses years ago, and he was, I guess, in his late forties or early fifties then.

He had sort of a following. He brought a lot of work with him and sort of whipped it into shape and put it on a paying basis. I think we had, during the best years, probably eight people in the Linotype department--on the machines, makeup, proofing, proofreading, delivery, et cetera.

SKIPPER: What would you say were the best years?

WINTER: Oh, I would say the mid-fifties to mid-sixties were probably very best. That's when most of the typographic houses here in town grew and expanded--and started. An awful lot of them left an employer and started their own. Probably half or more started that way.

SKIPPER: Well, you mentioned that he was concerned about competing with his customers. Would these be commercial printers?

WINTER: A lot of the customers were typesetters, yes. Trade typesetters were a good portion of our customers in those days. Those days a trade typesetter used a lot of hand-set type, for one thing, and we did Monotype composition for a number of them. And they bought just oodles of strip materials, spacing, and so on. How it really affected our relationship with them, I don't know. I wasn't really involved in management at that time either. But in the foundry we always seemed

to be very busy, not able to catch up, regardless; and I don't think things started to slow down until, well, just before Walt died in 1962, it had started to turn down a little.

SKIPPER: Does operating the Monotype require special skills that people didn't have?

WINTER: Well, there's always been a lot of Linotype operators because in those days, all of the newspapers were set on Linotypes. To work in a trade composition house did require special skills. When he [Walt] started the department, that was one of his problems. He picked up two men from the defunct Daily News who were operators, you know, and all they had set, practically, was straight matter and ads. When you're setting in a typographic house, the setting is a lot more complicated and requirements are finer. They want spacing just so, so a man has to know a little more. Actually, the two men we had more or less had to relearn their job, which was probably one of the reasons for the lack of production. Now, on the Monotype keyboard when I was growing up, a good man could produce in excess of ten thousand ems an hour. Translated into words per minute, I don't know what that would be--probably between sixty and seventy. Linotype operators, most of them, never seemed to reach that. If they could do five or six [thousand]

that seemed to be all you could get out of them as an average. Of course, the one advantage on the Linotype machine [is that] when you get through, the job is finished, too. On the Monotype, all you've got is a paper spool, and then it still has to be run off the machine.

SKIPPER: What kinds of things, mostly, were being printed on the Linotype here when it was first established?

WINTER: Oh, I would say just the whole spectrum of printing. Never specialized. That is, we didn't go into advertising typography, ever. The customers were too demanding . . .

SKIPPER: In what way?

WINTER: Well, it requires, even today, pretty much twenty-four-hour operation, and you have to have almost every typeface that's available at hand. Of course, that's a substantial investment.

SKIPPER: L.A. Type had a pretty good base of typefaces at that time, didn't they, compared to other foundries, for example?

WINTER: Yes, but there were still a great many more from other founders that you had to have. The German founders produced some beautiful types, and you would have to have all of those and a whole range of sizes

--and this was before the days of phototypesetting. Now, [phone rings] especially in display, you buy a film font [for] anywheres from thirty to eighty dollars average, and you automatically have the full range of sizes because they're exposed on a machine that's very much like an enlarger.

SKIPPER: Back in the fifties, were there other foundries in L.A. that had a larger selection of typefaces?

WINTER: No, in this area we always had the most, because the other foundries were small in comparison, [which is] probably why they fell by the wayside. They didn't keep up--they didn't buy all the latest faces. And we'd always tried to keep on top of the trends, get every available typeface we could. Now we cast type from Monotype mats, Ludlow mats, Linotype and custom-made foundry mats--almost any mat available we could cast from. And the only large remaining foundry in San Francisco--they cast from Monotype mats, and that's it. [phone rings; tape recorder turned off]

SKIPPER: You were talking about the different kinds of mats that you had. All the way back in the fifties, did you have all these varieties that you were mentioning?

WINTER: Pretty much so, yes. We had cast from Ludlow mats previous to that. We started casting from Linotype mats probably sometime in the late forties,

early fifties. At one time both the Linotype and Intertype companies, as well as the Ludlow Company, would not sell you mats unless you had their equipment.

SKIPPER: Do the Linotype mats work on the Thompson typecaster, for example?

WINTER: Yes, you can take an individual mat, and you have steel walls on each side, and we have a special height mold. Fact is, our biggest-selling typeface, Park Avenue, is made from Linotype mats. We can't seem to make enough. We only have three sizes that run on that particular machine, and by the time we finish one size, we need to make another one. Every once in a while we get caught up, and we can put a few others, because we have, oh, probably forty different fonts of Lino mats that we run. Some of them only need to be made once every few years; sandwich one in now and then.

SKIPPER: Are the Lino mats made in the United States, primarily?

WINTER: Yes. I assume that they are; by now, some may be made overseas. Previously they had all been made here. So many things are made overseas now, you don't realize it.

SKIPPER: Are the Monotype mats the same in the Monotype composing machine as . . . how to phrase this . . . are there different kinds of Monotype mats?

WINTER: Yes, there are. What they call a cellular mat is a little square matrix, one-tenth of an inch square; these are what run in the composing machines. A Monotype display mat is just a flat matrix about an eighth of an inch thick measures maybe three-quarters of an inch by an inch and a quarter. Monotype also produced mats for the Giant caster which are slightly different configurations--still sort of flat, but the drive is deeper. Now, this is the distance that the punch goes into the matrix--in the composition mats or the cellular mats, that's thirty-thousandths; the regular Monotype display mat is fifty-thousandths; and on the Giant, it's sixty-five-thousandths. And, of course, they also made mats for the material-making machines for the rules and the borders, which is another different style of mat altogether.

SKIPPER: Within these different kinds of mats, would they have the same faces, and would they be exactly the same?

WINTER: You mean the cellular mat going on up to the display sizes?

SKIPPER: Yes.

WINTER: The face is the same face. Say, six through twelve point you would have on the cellular mat, and of course the same face. Fourteen point and on up through thirty-six would be a Monotype display mat, and

forty-eight, sixty, and seventy-two would be for the Giant caster.

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SKIPPER: We were still talking about the different kinds of mats. Can you explain about the Baskerville face?

WINTER: Each type founder in the old days drew their own designs. They had the lettering artist draw them. As to Baskerville, Monotype produced a Baskerville which is entirely different from the Baskerville of Stevenson Blake or American Type Founders. One of the first noticeable characteristics is that Monotype serifs are rather blunt and rounded, whereas the ATF Stevenson and Blake have very sharp, pointed serifs. If you saw the two side by side, you wouldn't relate them at all. It's true not only of Baskerville, but there're a number of other faces that had been done that way. Where one founder would use the same name, basically, and [yet] have a different design. Can't think of any at the moment, but there are other examples.

SKIPPER: How does this difference occur, do you know? Do they redesign them themselves?

WINTER: Well, possibly. Since Baskerville was probably taken from some hundred-year-old original drawing, anyway, they may have decided to update it a little bit, change it so that it'd be more pleasing to their

eye, although the user of the original probably would have different ideas. Beauty being in the eye of the beholder is, in type, like anything else: one man thinks it's a very beautiful face; one man can't stand it.

SKIPPER: Did various customers have strong preferences for one or the other? Would they make a real point of it?

WINTER: Well, the most demanding people are art directors, mostly in the advertising business. Now, they want something that's exactly so. Many years ago there was a face that was very much in vogue called Grotesque Number Nine, and its italic, and really the only thing that set this apart was the lowercase r. Everything hinged on that. There were a number of other typefaces that looked almost exactly like it, but it didn't have the lowercase r where the tail turned down quite a ways toward the face. And we sold many thousands of dollars' worth of this Grotesque just because of this one little quirk. And there was another face with the same sort of design. Let's see if that's in our book today [looks through book] . . . Aurora. Now, one of the biggest things that sold Aurora was the same, you can see how the lowercase r turns way down.

SKIPPER: Yes, it really does.

WINTER: Most other lowercase r's in other typefaces

don't do that. They just stick out a little to the right. But of course, various customers have their own preferences, anyway. We have, or did have, a greeting card manufacturer, and he was sort of in love with three or four faces, and he used a great deal of them. Some of them were ours, and some were purchased out of Germany. Progress caught up with him. He couldn't get what he needed from Germany. The foundries went out of business. He bought up all the stock that was in the United States and could get no more. So this was the thing that forced him into the decision to go phototypesetting, because he could get almost anything he wanted--unlimited supply.

SKIPPER: What was the nature of the German types that made them so desirable?

WINTER: Well, one thing was the massive publicity campaign that they put on over here, a much better campaign than any other type founders had done. There was a sales agency called Amsterdam Continental and they sold the product of about thirteen different European type founders. Their campaigns were aimed, not at the printer, but at the advertising man. (Once again, we go back to the art director.) They printed up beautiful pieces of literature and brochures. They had salesmen calling on the art people, and they created a

demand for their types. A lot of the types are quite beautiful--not that other available types here weren't quite as beautiful, but they created the demand for this specific thing, and that's what sold.

SKIPPER: Would the art directors come directly to you at the foundry, or would they be going to printers, and the printers consequently making the demand on the foundry?

WINTER: Well, the art directors dealt with typographers. Since we had never gotten into that area of typography, we never dealt with them at all. But they would send the layout to the typographer, would specifiy exactly what they wanted--which they still do.

SKIPPER: In the fifties, or that general span of years, were there more private printers and hobbyists developing in L.A., can you recall?

WINTER: I can't really recall. I rather think there are more today.

SKIPPER: I know you'd mentioned that Saul Marks was a customer to a small degree. Was he continuing all through those years?

WINTER: Yes, gradually diminishing. They were pretty self-sufficient there at Plantin Press: they had their own Monotype, and all they would buy from us was probably some rules and spacing materials and occasional fonts of type that they wanted. But basically they did all

their own work. They did a great deal of hand-setting; they would set whole books by hand. Somewhere in my archives at home I've got one that Saul did. Set every piece of that himself.

SKIPPER: Do you recall which one it is?

WINTER: No. I don't know whether I could even find it now. It was not a large book--probably something in the nature of fifty, sixty pages--rather abbreviated pages--but it would take a long, long time to set. And he was the sort of man [who] would set it up, and as he proofread it, he would mark where he would want a little space taken out here, or a little more there, until to his eye it was typographically perfect. I don't suppose he ever made any money on these jobs. I think it was sort of a work of love.

SKIPPER: Do you have an appreciation yourself for that kind of fine typography?

WINTER: No.

I do hate to pick up a book and find that it's all in typewriting, or something done on one of the cheaper strike-on things like the VariTyper or the early varitype, where the product looks terrible to the practiced eye. Utility--there's nothing wrong with that or with the product off the typewriter. It's perfectly readable.

SKIPPER: So there were no other private printers that

you can recall back in the fifties that were coming to you then?

WINTER: Well, there were . . . you mean, private printers as opposed to someone doing more commercial work?

SKIPPER: Yes.

WINTER: Oh, I'm sure there were others, but I think most of the people that we dealt with were commercial printers. There's always been the hobbyist. Great many printing hobbyists how. I think that that segment has probably grown a great deal. I have the mailing lists of three of the larger organizations, and, oh, I suppose each organization numbers--since they are sort of national in scope--four, five, six hundred members each. Of course, they have their local chapters.

We have one man who visits us about once a week who is the district manager for the Saab automobiles, but he's a hobby printer. Every time he gets to Los Angeles, he stops in here and usually buys a little something or else just talks. And he knows the people up at MacKenzie and Harris very well. He said he started his hobby when he was only fifteen. We have in our old matrices a lot of things we could never cast in the way of ornaments, and I think he's the only man I ever let look at these. He went through and he found a number he was interested in, and when we get a chance, we're going

to make some for him. But he wants the pin mark on the type, and we only have one machine that will put a pin mark, which is a mark in the side of the type. The one we have says, "Type Founders, Phoenix," because that's where it came from--the Type Founders of Phoenix plant--when we bought it.

SKIPPER: Why does he want the pin mark?

WINTER: Aesthetic reasons, I guess. So he knows where it came from and that it was cast on a genuine old foundry machine, or something.

SKIPPER: Well, did you tend to have regular customers through those years, or did it really fluctuate a great deal?

WINTER: No, actually, our business was basically with a bunch of regular customers locally. I don't know just when we started to advertise and, you know, pick up customers from around the country, but it's many, many years ago. And it's still a nice adjunct to our business. But our main income is still local, in the supplies that we sell other than things connected with the foundry. All of the composition on the Linotype, of course, is local. We don't do anything on the Monotype anymore. When we did, it was almost all local.

SKIPPER: In the fifties, were you still working in the Monotype fairly regularly?

WINTER: Me personally?

SKIPPER: You personally, as well as the business in general.

WINTER: Oh, yes. In the fifties, they were all going all the time. We ran two shifts in here for many, many years. I think we never had more than three men on a night shift, and when I was working nights, I worked alone for a while; then there was another fellow came in, and there were two of us on the night shift for that year. Then when I got off of it, we still continued the night shift of two men for a while, and then, like I say, it sort of dropped off. Then we maintained just one man on, nights, in the strip material department. When that came to an end, we went back to one-shift operation.

SKIPPER: What hours did the night shift cover?

WINTER: Well, when I started nights I worked from ten at night till eight in the morning. And the man in the daytime worked from eight in the morning until ten at night.

WINTER: Later on, we switched it, and we started in about, say, five o'clock and worked until about one.

SKIPPER: Hadn't anybody heard of the eight-hour working day at that time?

WINTER: Heard about it, but I didn't believe it. No, for the first number of years that I worked here, I don't suppose I ever put in much less than sixty hours

a week. I was much younger then; [it] didn't bother me a bit.

SKIPPER: Why would customers choose, for example, to have work done on the Monotype as compared to the Linotype?

WINTER: The fit of the letter supposedly is nicer. [With the] Linotype, since most mats have two letters on a mat, say, the roman and the italic together, or a roman and a bold on the mat, there has to be a compromise in the fit or design of the letter. They may have to design the a a bit wider, whereas you don't have those restrictions on the Monotype. Although the roman and the italic or the bold may run together in the mat case, you're not bound by the same width; the lowercase a and the italic could be half the size of the roman. And you have a variety of spacing available to you that you don't have on the Linotype. You can vary the word spacing within the line; whereas the Linotype is just a set of wedges, and they're all going to be the same.

SKIPPER: Would people be concerned also about the ability to change individual letters in the Monotype line, to perfect the typography, as compared to the Linotype?

WINTER: Well, I think that's probably a minor consideration. If somebody is in a hurry, that's fine; we can quickly change it. Whereas with the Linotype, if you don't have

your own, you've got to go back to the typesetter to get the slugs set over. But like I say, I think that was sort of a minor consideration. The other reason for setting on Monotype is that they did have--do have--a number of faces that were never made on the Linotype machine. Now, the faces that we have set in recent years back there are [used] probably only because they don't exist on Linotype. Faces like the English faces Bembo, Perpetua, Joanna, Waverly--although we don't set much Waverly now. With the advent of phototypesetting, of course, even all of these are usually available. So our machines back there now are almost wholly concerned with making fonts, and such. I don't think we've set a job back there now in six months or more.

SKIPPER: After the war, when the business started really growing, I remember you mentioned that at first you could drive a car into the back, there was so much room. How did the space start filling up?

WINTER: Well, each time we would put in a new typeface, we had to have more type cabinets, since we always put all of our products into the typecases from which the customers set type. [Having] fonts in the stock room required an ever larger stock room and even more storage space for the cases. And during that time we were also acquiring more machinery. So, between the machinery and

the cases and the stock room, it just kind of spread out and filled.

SKIPPER: What machinery did you acquire at first?

WINTER: Well, when we moved to this location, we only had seven or eight machines. We had one material-making machine. I think we had two or three composing machines. One Thompson, I don't know what else, maybe a couple of what we call type-and-rule casters, which are stripped-down Monotype machines. They make display type only. They don't do composition. It's [the] same basic machine, with a lot of the parts not applied to the machine.

SKIPPER: Did you have the Elrod strip caster then?

WINTER: No, we got our first Elrod, I'm sure, after we moved here. And, like I say, all of the Thompsons that we have, but one, have been purchased since we moved here. Most of them were acquired in those days, in the fifties. Our last Thompson was purchased probably about 1963 or '64. It was a British-made Thompson. They had quit manufacturing here and shipped the plants over there. Built similar, but it's a different machine. But in the fifties, the business was growing, and we continually needed more production. We really bought more machinery than necessary, in that we were almost always a one-shift operation. If it had been run as a round-the-clock operation, we could have produced the same amount of material on fewer machines;

just add more people. But I think Mr. Gebhard was of the opinion that if you were running four machines, [then] if you got one more, you'd run five. That if he slipped in another one, eventually you'd be running six. And I did many times run six machines. That really keeps you hopping.

SKIPPER: I think that might be a little bit dangerous, too.

WINTER: Well, it could be. Because you can't pay that much attention, you know, and you do make errors. We've all had our share of squirts and splashes from the metal.

SKIPPER: You mentioned earlier producing your own catalogs here. Was that Linotype?

WINTER: No, the catalogs have always been hand-set in Monotype. We never did the printing, but we did everything right up to it. Made up our own pages. We still do, although there's not that much to it, now. Now it's a matter of just changing the type that's worn out. All of our catalogs used to have prices, and we'd bring out a new catalog every year. We'd have to go through and reset the whole thing with all of the prices, and it became quite a burden. And some years back, of course, it became impossible, because you couldn't print a catalog, and six months later . . . you knew prices had to go up, and you have to stamp every catalog, add this to it. We were kind of a last holdout there--everyone else had

quit printing the prices years before we did--till we finally made the decision to do like everyone else and put a catalog out that you could use for years, and just print a price list separately. At that time, it was kind of a decision as to what price category to put each particular face [in], and we ended up with, I think, just five price schedules on our price list. Ninety percent fits into Schedule I. In the beginnings of type founding, the most valuable part of the font was the metal itself, and our prices were based upon weight. Of course, in later years, that no longer held true. Labor by far overshadowed the value of the metal; so that had to be taken into account. Whether a man buys a font now that weighs three pounds or thirteen pounds, he pays the same price, because it takes just about as long to produce one as it does the other.

SKIPPER: When people come in, and they select individual pieces of type and buy them that way, are they charged by weight, or how does that work?

WINTER: Yes, we charge by weight. Presently, it's five dollars a pound for anything they set. If we set it for them, we charge them a great deal more. We charge by the inch. We make it almost prohibitive because we don't want to do it. Still, we get customers. A lot of people out of town, out in the Valley, if they need a line of

type, by the time they send a man in here to set it and go back, they'll spend more money then they will if we do it. So in that case, of course, we do set it. Now we don't mind those kind of sales when we have the time. But sometimes you're short of time, and the man wants this line set up and sent out today. And occasionally we forget one, we get so busy, and the man doesn't get it.

SKIPPER: So you still remain, after all the years of working here, very dexterous in hand-setting?

WINTER: Oh, I think I'm still pretty good, yes. I don't practice it that often, but I think it's like riding a bicycle: once learned, you don't forget. I might not be quite as good at spacing the page out as I used to be, because that you can forget.

SKIPPER: In the earlier years, when you were printing a catalog each year, did you save the set forms of type year to year?

WINTER: Oh, no. The forms are still stored at the printer. He has a whole galley rack with our forms in there. So when we want to make a change or reprint, we pick them all up, do them all over, and send them back. The same printer has been doing them now for over fifteen years.

SKIPPER: What printer is that?

WINTER: Bradshaw Brothers--they're just a few blocks from us. I haven't talked to Don over there recently, but the

last time that the subject came up might have been a year or two ago, and they're strictly in letterpress yet. They still haven't any offset. Our cover is printed offset because they can't print it letterpress. They couldn't print a screen on the rough texture. So they sent the cover out. The cover, by the way, was designed by Richard Hoffman. Our first cover that we used before this one was designed by Saul Marks.

SKIPPER: Was Mr. Hoffman a very steady customer here in any capacity?

WINTER: More of a friend and acquaintance than a customer. I met him when he was at L.A. City College. He and Walt got along first-class, you know, and I suppose Walt consulted him on typographic matters a lot, too, because he was pretty well known in his field by then. And later he went to--what do they call it--L.A. State? East L.A.?--anyway, and just recently retired. Well, I guess he'd been physically retired for about a year, but he just formally retired a few months ago. Now he's going to do a little printing at home.

SKIPPER: Did you know him very well through the years?

WINTER: Oh, yes. He and I have been members of the Craftsman Club all through the years, and I would see him at most of the meetings. I've been inactive for the last few years, but he comes in occasionally. He was in a month

ago. He wanted to set up some typographic border, and he didn't have enough. Came down to get some. It was an item we no longer show, but we did have a stock of it.

SKIPPER: When did you first become involved in the Craftsman Club?

WINTER: Well, I first got in in 1946. And in those days it seemed like it was more of a hell-raising club. Everybody drank--half of them would never get from the bar to the meeting. It was then, too, more of an organization of employers, and I was still a working stiff. I didn't feel like I fit in; so I dropped it.

SKIPPER: What was the intent of the club?

WINTER: It's motto was "share your knowledge"--where craftsmen would get together, discuss aspects of the printing trade. Of course, in those days it was all letterpress. It's still, I think, kind of geared that way because they have a litho club, and, if you had a problem, supposedly you could go to another member and he'd help you out. You know, say I'm having trouble with this particular piece of equipment or my printing is not turning out right--"can you help me?" And they would. This is in theory. Now, I don't know whether it worked out in practice or not. I think probably so, because it was a friendly group.

I was coerced into going back again about '62 or '63, shortly after I became manager [by] a man named Herbert Mitchell,

who used to be the area representative for Graphic Arts Monthly (we were his account because we advertised in it, yes). Also, being a member of the Craftsman Club, I got to know him pretty well. So we were in here talking one day and he said, you know, [that] I really ought to join, [that] they'd like to have me in the club. Didn't know what he had in mind, but he was looking for an officer. He got me in the club, and sure enough, the next year they put me on the slate. Most of these organizations, they find it hard to get someone to run the club, and once you accept the lowest position on the board of directors, you're expected, then, to continue on up. But I didn't. I served a year as vice-president and then I begged off, because I'm too shy to get up in front of a group of people, and maybe I only know ten or twelve of them. I felt there was no way I could conduct a meeting.

SKIPPER: What kinds of problems did they deal with?

WINTER: Well, most every meeting you would have a speech by someone who was more or less an expert in his line. It might be ink, it might be color printing, might be die cutting--all the various aspects of printing. Very seldom did they have anything on typesetting, maybe once every other year. And they tried to have two or three plant tours a year. I went through the computer center of California Bank once, which was a little out of our line,

but [where] checks were printed. I went through Jeffries Banknote [Company]--a very interesting tour. We went through one of the fiberboard companies that make six-pack cartons. Not only that, but they make the paper there too--recycled. They take all the old cardboard cartons and put them in this tremendous vat. Then, just like a giant mixer, it mixes up the pulp and then it's bleached. I suppose all papermaking machines are tremendous pieces, but it looked really tremendous to me. And out of the other end, of course, came the finished paper, and they moved it from there right onto their presses, where they printed it, and from there, right to the die cutters. Nobody had to handle anything. It was just automatically fed.

SKIPPER: So the interest of the club was to see the automatic printing processes?

WINTER: Well, that was one of them. [Another time] we went through the Kodak facility, which is somewhere out east of here in San Gabriel, El Monte. It's not a production facility, unfortunately; that I would have been more interested in. But this gives a man a chance to see how the other half lives. You know, a man, say, prints on a little platen press, and he's never seen any of the other methods of doing [it]. We even went through Western Gear and watched them manufacturing presses.

SKIPPER: Were these tours you are talking about in the

sixties, or back in the forties?

WINTER: Well, they still continue on today. It was in the sixties and early seventies, because I became kind of inactive about 1971. I purchased a small business, and it seems that family ties kept me at home--except Wednesday night, and that's when the Craftsman meetings are. I missed a great many of them since then.

SKIPPER: Back in '46, do you recall about how many people belonged to that club?

WINTER: Oh, I would say the club probably had four hundred members. Maybe a hundred would show up at a meeting. You'd never get the full membership out. I don't think any organization does. A lot of them keep their membership up; why, I don't know. I should probably drop mine, the same thing. If I'm not active in the club in any way, there's really little reason to keep it up.

SKIPPER: Were there very many private printers who belonged to it?

WINTER: I think they're mostly commercial printers. Saul Marks, for instance, never belonged, probably a little beneath him. Some very fine printers who are recognized for their work are members. The club now includes anyone interested in any form of the graphic arts, and not-- Although I suppose the bulk of the membership is still in owners and managers, there're just some plain craftsmen in

there, too. Fact is, the secretary (who's been the secretary for a good many years) is just a compositor, works up in Pasadena. It used to be an all-male organization, too. They resisted the women. They had a women's auxiliary. The women's auxilary was almost all social. But beginning a few years back, they accepted the first female member. They've had a female president by now.

SKIPPER: They started doing that in the seventies or late sixties--can you recall?

WINTER: Very late sixties. I think about the time I quit they inducted the first one in. I was still there when they inducted the first female member. And I don't know whether [she] was the first [member], but one of the ladies [was someone] I had known for a good many years. We were both young together, although we didn't know each other that well. She used to come into the shop once in a while, you know, and I hadn't seen her for fifteen or twenty years. Kind of hard to recognize her. But she in the meantime had inherited a business.

SKIPPER: Were there any other organizations that you belonged to?

WINTER: Not for any length of time. I joined the Ad Club [Advertising Club of Los Angeles]. That was more for fun because once a week it allowed me to go out and have a long martini lunch. They usually had some well-known speakers.

Once a year they had the Dodger Baseball Club representatives up there; they would have maybe half a dozen of the players or a manager.

SKIPPER: What was the Ad Club all about?

WINTER: Well, it was really for the people in the advertising business--not necessarily in the typographic end, either, [but] in any form of advertising--billboards, magazines, and so on. Very few of the people I came in contact [with] even knew what I did. Well, I went with a typographer friend. He was the one that got me interested, since originally I just used up Walt's unused membership. He was a member and he never went, either. But once again, it didn't seem to offer me anything after a while, except the free lunch; so I dropped out of that.

SKIPPER: Back in the late forties, when Walt got the Linotype and Intertype machines, was that a conscious effort to develop a larger trade composition aspect of the business?

WINTER: Oh, I'm sure it was. I guess he felt he was doing whatever he could for the foundry; so here was another lucrative field that was related, and we might just as well get into it.

SKIPPER: Along that same line, did you have a proof press at that time?

WINTER: We had always had a proof press--not a repro proof press.

SKIPPER: What's the difference?

WINTER: Well, a proof press is--how shall I put it--they sometimes call them galley proof presses. It's really just to take a proof so you can read it and make your corrections. It didn't take a real good print, not the quality that would be required by a lithographer. So when we went into it with the Linotype machines, they bought a repro press. Eventually they bought two. We still have two. One of them is not maintained to the degree that the other one is. Now, it's only used for reading proofs on rough stock. The other press is maintained, and we make all the repros on it.

SKIPPER: So the basic difference is that the repro proof makes a much better quality?

WINTER: Yes, quality is the name of the game when you're selling to a lithographer, because he wants something that's as near perfect as he can get. Because he has to put this on the film, and from film to the plate. And each time you go through anything, you lose just a little bit, you know. It doesn't reproduce exactly. And I think one reason phototypesetting has grown the way it has is not only the speed, but the clarity of the image, since the image is much more perfect than you can get from ink and type. You can look at those under a microscope, and you've got nice clean edges. If there's high enough power on an ink image,

you see there where the ink is squeezed out. [If] magnification is high enough, you wouldn't believe it's really that rough.

SKIPPER: On the repro proofs, did it require any kind of special skills to run that particular press?

WINTER: Only a good eye, really.

SKIPPER: Did you have to get involved in getting new kinds of ink or anything of that nature?

WINTER: Well, yes. We still use today a heat-set ink [that] stays open on the press pretty much all day. Then you put it under infrared and it dries very quickly. We experimented with papers, special repro paper. The one we used originally was called Kromekote, but they developed some much better papers later on. Now we're using one called Apco. There are a number of brands. A typographer will pick one: he thinks this one does a better job than the other. As long as it's nice and white, and a nice and smooth surface with not too much shine, you know, it's satisfactory.

SKIPPER: In our last session, you mentioned that the development of offset was starting to affect the business in various ways. [Was this] in the fifties?

WINTER: I think in the late fifties was about when it first started. It was hardly noticeable, you know, but it was there. When you take, say, twenty years, that's a

pretty slow process. Gives you time to change if you've got the imagination and the foresight. We did and we didn't. We tried a few things [that] didn't work out too well. We went into offset supply.

SKIPPER: When was this?

WINTER: Oh, that was right after Walt died in '62. It was actually started in '62. But we took on various lines of printing plates, and film, and, oh, many other small items used by the lithographer. I guess we did it, oh, a dozen years, anyway. We had three salesmen at the time, and the letterpress business was beginning to show its decline about, say, the very late sixties, seventies, somewhere in there. And two of the salesmen just couldn't seem to make the transition. We knew that our old customers were changing to offset, but they couldn't seem to hack it. But one did, so we eventually had to let two of the salesmen go. The third one stayed, and he had pretty much of a free hand in inventory; whatever he wanted.

SKIPPER: These were salesmen employed just by the foundry?

WINTER: Yes.

SKIPPER: When did you start having salesmen?

WINTER: Well, we had salesmen on and off, right from, really, the beginning, even before World War II. Walt would have someone in, and none of them seemed to work out too well.

SKIPPER: Why was that?

WINTER: I think because most everyone was acquainted with us already. You can't really go and sell a man a font of type unless he needs it. If he needs it, he's going to call you anyway. You know, it's not like we had competition and there were founders all over the place. There weren't that many of us. And in those days we were selling everything we could produce anyway. But like I say, there were eight or ten salesmen, whose names I've forgotten by now. They were in and out usually for short periods, [a] month, two months, six months, and then they were gone.

SKIPPER: Would they try to be salesmen for the foundry on a full-time basis?

WINTER: Yes. What we really needed, of course, was someone on a part-time basis. Someone retired, working strictly on commission, would have been fine.

SKIPPER: Did they usually travel just in the local area, or did you try to get people going out of state?

WINTER: Well, the one salesman who remained with us the longest traveled from San Diego to Fresno, dealing mainly with newspapers--not the big dailies, but the small dailies and the weeklies. In those days they were all hot metal, and we did a tremendous business with them. For the first few years he worked for us, he drove a two-ton truck. And

he would load it up with material, then, just like the itinerant peddler, he'd stop at all these places and sell along the way, and hopefully come back with an empty truck. And he was fairly successful at it. As we lost all of these to offset, the one area [where] we noticed [the loss] more than anything else was the small newspapers. In a very short period of years, they all went that way. So he was able to make the switch to offset supplies. But it cost us a great deal to have him: we provided him with a car, paid all his expenses, and bought all his liquor, and bought all the Christmas presents for his clients at Christmastime. And although the volume was great, we didn't really have a handle on what it was costing us. There were too many other things going on. We weren't sure how much money we were losing in the composing room, if we were or not. Our bookkeeping is not set up that fine, where we could separate all of these costs. But eventually the salesman left us, too, for greener pastures. We hadn't grown large enough to suit him. We were having to buy too many things from other dealers on just a split commission basis. He had a basic salary plus a commission on all the items that were sold. So he was looking to the future; he didn't think we had much of a future, so he left.

SKIPPER: Can you recall about what year that was?

WINTER: Yes, that was about 1974, '75, I think.

SKIPPER: That recently.

WINTER: But it seemed that once he left, things picked up. Our sales took a big drop, but so did our costs.

SKIPPER: So you weren't feeling the effects of the developments in offset back in the fifties, at all? That's much too early, then?

WINTER: No, the effects were so minimal, I think we thought it would go away.

SKIPPER: Really? Was that pretty much the attitude people had, say, in the fifties and early sixties--that changes weren't ever going to be that serious?

WINTER: I think so. I know that I myself didn't think that the change would come. Well, back in those days, I didn't think much of it, but a little later, I didn't think it would happen as fast: what I thought would take ten years took about four. Not that I would have done anything differently. We used to have so-called sales meetings--me, and a bookkeeper we had in those days, and the salesman, and our owner--to figure out how we were going to increase our sales. What can we do? Nothing really concrete ever came [of it].

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SKIPPER: I want to ask about the circumstances of your becoming manager. I believe that was in the early sixties, wasn't it?

WINTER: Yes, it was 1962. That was because our late owner passed away. I think it was on New Year's Day of that year. We floundered around with no one in charge for a few weeks or so.

SKIPPER: Was his passing on a surprise to everyone? Had he been ill at all?

WINTER: No, he had been in the hospital for what would be not too dangerous an operation. It was a bladder operation. But because of his size: he was exceedingly fat, he drank a great deal.

SKIPPER: How heavy was he, do you recall?

WINTER: Oh, I think he must have been about maybe 245 pounds and not that tall. He was maybe about five [foot] ten or eleven. But the doctor told me that in another man, the operation would have been rather simple, but they had all of this fat to go through. And even when I visited him in the hospital, [he was] having a terrible time breathing. They later told us that he had cancer and wouldn't have lived more than another year, anyway. As far as we knew, he had no indications of having had cancer.

But then he was drunk so often, I guess it might mask some of the symptoms.

SKIPPER: Was his drinking any problem as far as working at the foundry was concerned?

WINTER: Only that he'd sometimes make himself a little obnoxious. He drank locally just a block or so away from here. Usually most of us had gone home by the time he got back, but we had one man on the night shift, and I guess he gave him a bad time sometimes because he'd come staggering in. How he found his way home so many times without [an] accident was amazing. The few accidents he had, he always seemed to get out of it. And it was, like I say, some weeks or a month or so after his passing that his widow approached me about running the shop.

SKIPPER: Was this Betty at this time?

WINTER: Betty. I gave her some sort of a noncommittal answer because I didn't really know whether I wanted to or not. I took a few days to make up my mind before I agreed to give it a try, because I had never done anything in management in my life before. But there was no one else in the shop who had the experience I had at the time. I had seen more phases of the business; the only one I hadn't really stuck my nose into was the accounting end.

SKIPPER: Had you had much contact with Mrs. Gebhard before this?

WINTER: Not a great deal, no.

SKIPPER: Was she involved in the foundry in any way?

WINTER: No. Met her socially since Walt and I were friends, and she would come down to the shop with him once in a while. But I didn't really know her that well. She didn't know me that well--only from what Walt had told her. Since I was his oldest employee and he liked me, I guess he spoke well of me now and again.

SKIPPER: Right when he died, did production stop in the foundry--what was the impact?

WINTER: Oh, no. The shop was more or less self-operating, to some extent. Especially the men in production--they all knew their job. They knew what type to make and how much. Walt never did get involved much in that, in his later years anyway.

SKIPPER: Who was more in charge of that end of the business?

WINTER: There was really no one in charge. At that time we considered ourselves to have three separate small departments. I was in the display-type end, and although it carried no title, I was more or less in charge of that. At the time Walt passed away, I think there were only three of us in there.

SKIPPER: In the display department?

WINTER: Yes.

SKIPPER: What were the other departments?

WINTER: Well, the strip-casting department had three people. They had two on days and one on nights. And the composition end had, let's see, I think there were only two on the day shift at that time.

SKIPPER: Was this mostly Linotype composition?

WINTER: No, this was Monotype composition. Linotype composition at that time was a much larger department. We all considered that separate. They were newcomers. And, oh, I guess they had eight or nine people involved. It was a one-shift operation, but they had three operators and a foreman and a couple of men on the floor, compositors and deliverymen. Like the rest of the business, it gradually died on the vine, too, till we ended up with zero employees. We lease it out now. It was about a year and a half ago. It'd been losing money; so I decided to close it down and offered one of the operators that I had to let go a lease on it if he wanted to run it all himself. We offered to do the billing and collect the money. We still do run it through our books as though it was a part of our operation. But only the equipment is ours now. So we don't have to worry whether he's busy or not. We deduct our lease payment every month from his total sales and then turn over the balance to him.

SKIPPER: What's the nature of most of the business he has

on the Linotype?

WINTER: I'll be darned if I know. He does some for greeting-card people, but that's sort of seasonal. He has a couple of people in the clothing industry; they make labels. He does quite a bit for a couple of them. And then the others are just general printers, I guess.

SKIPPER: Did you miss working on the Monotype machine?

WINTER: Yes, I did.

SKIPPER: Would you have preferred to be in that department rather than working on the display?

WINTER: As far as that goes, I didn't mind that. It was just that when I got out of production, I didn't really care that much for it. I enjoyed working on the machines, any of the machines. And that I missed. Then I felt like a fish out of water in management, anyway.

SKIPPER: When Mr. Gebhard died, was that a distressing situation for people at the foundry, or did things move on fairly well?

WINTER: Well, they moved on fairly well, except financially we had an executor that Walt had appointed in his will. He was also the lawyer for the estate, and he made himself pretty obnoxious.

SKIPPER: The executor?

WINTER: Yes.

SKIPPER: Was he aware of the business concerns at all, or

was he just a lawyer?

WINTER: He was just a lawyer. I don't think he had seen the inside of the place. And he would make some suggestions. Very few had any validity, but when we wanted to spend a little money for this or that, naturally we had to go to him--had to justify almost every expense. That's why we started leasing cars. Betty wanted for me to have a company car, but if we'd have asked him to put his name on the check for a down payment, he might have refused. So we just went ahead and leased a car. And he had so many checks to sign, when he came in he just never did notice. [laughter]

SKIPPER: What kind of suggestions did he make that weren't valid?

WINTER: I can't even remember any of them now, [they] went in one ear and out the other, I guess. But we were a long time getting rid of him, because he drew $1,000 a month out as salary--which really wasn't that bad because it was offset against his fee (at that time it went through the probate court, anyway). So he'd already received some, I think it was, $22,000 from us, which was offset against the fee. To pay the inheritance and estate taxes, we had to borrow money from the bank; we had to mortgage the plant. Because the only way we could settle the estate was to pay the government their share.

SKIPPER: Had the foundry and all the property involved

gone to Mrs. Gebhard?

WINTER: No, it was held in trust for her, with a residual trust for his two nephews when she passes away. It's still in that form, still an estate; but she is now trustee of the estate. The bank was trustee for a number of years, and of course they charged us a yearly fee. And as far as we could see, they did nothing but make a report through the lawyer, and the lawyer did the work and charged the estate--which came directly back to us since there was no money in the estate. There was nothing in the estate except this business. So we figured that [the cost of] his death, over and above what we would have had [to pay if he had] lived, was something like $120,000. So we were lucky to survive. It was good that it happened at a time when a lot of type was being purchased.

SKIPPER: When Betty asked if you wanted to become manager, were there any other considerations in your mind other than not being sure that you were ready for that kind of role?

WINTER: No, that was just about it. That--and would I like it, or how would the employees who I had just been pals with accept me as boss? When you inherit these people, it's a little different than if you'd hired them yourself. But it worked out pretty good. Most people were quite cooperative. I had a couple fighting me, but eventually they disappeared--quit. The bookkeeper at the

time did give me a bad time, because she thought that our salesman should have had the position. He was an outside salesman. He had no more business training than I did, and actually it was better that he stayed in sales.

SKIPPER: Had he been a salesman for a long time here?

WINTER: Well, he'd been with us at that time about, oh, I guess six years or so.

SKIPPER: What was his name?

WINTER: Jim Whiting. Yes, he left us about, oh, I guess about three-and-a-half years ago. That was at the time we were involved in the offset sales.

SKIPPER: Had he been interested in becoming the manager?

WINTER: I really don't know. I think that he, too, probably thought he was in line for it, and maybe it would have worked out fine if he had. Who knows?

SKIPPER: Were there any other changes in organization entailed?

WINTER: Not really. Walt had sort of a leg man, I guess you would call him. He was supposedly more or less a manager right under Walt, but he had no managerial training. He was at one time one of our salesmen, too, and of course he wanted the job. Betty didn't offer it to him. I guess she had heard enough from her late husband Walt that she didn't think that was a safe bet--because he didn't really think that highly of him, I guess, or his ability. But

[Walt] liked to have him around, because he'd say, "Go over here and do this, or do this for me."

SKIPPER: How long had he been here?

WINTER: I don't know how long he'd been with us. Once again, it could be looked up. But I'd say maybe seven, eight years, maybe less.

SKIPPER: Do you recall his name?

WINTER: Yes, his name was Bob Jaeke.

SKIPPER: Well, when you assumed managership, was it something that changed right away, or did you just continue working as you had been previously?

WINTER: Well, of course I became involved with another area. I still would oversee all the production, but like I say, that didn't take too much time. I became concerned with collecting money, for one thing, which I had never done. Our accounts receivable were in rather poor shape. Too much outstanding.

SKIPPER: Why had that occurred?

WINTER: Well, Walt was rather lax about that. When things would get tough, then he'd get on the phone, and he'd get the bookkeeper on the phone, and they would all make calls all day long trying to get some of this back money. Of course, nothing had been done, really, for a couple of months after his death. We did then, and still do, carry on an exchange business. We take a man's metal, cast it

into a product, and just charge him for that service. And we had something like sixty tons of metal owing to us, and we owed the metal company $60,000. We were way behind. So that was one of the first things I had to do. Get money in and get that metal in, so we wouldn't continually purchase from someone to whom we owed our shirt already. They were very nice. I'm sure they could have closed the plant if they wanted because if they'd demanded their money, there was no way we could have paid it. So we paid it off bit by bit. If we bought $2,000 worth this month, we would then try to give them $4,000--keep current with the bills and pick up on the old ones. I have no idea--it probably took us a year to a year and a half to get that bill caught up. At the same time, all the money was going out to the executor that we hadn't planned on.

SKIPPER: Were you doing casting for these other people in any other form than type?

WINTER: Well, the exchange business is all on strip material--spacing and rules and strip borders. And although our volume on that is rather low, at one time I guess we did about thirty tons a month, at least.

SKIPPER: I recall reading in one of the older catalogs that you would buy metal from people in the form of the foundry type, Monotype, and also stereo plates--or stereotypes, rather.

WINTER: Oh, yes, we would buy almost anything--

SKIPPER: But the major bulk of it was coming from the metal company?

WINTER: At that time it was, yes. From that time forward, the bulk of it came from outside purchases. That was about the time a great many more plants were going into offset--getting rid of their letterpress, getting rid of their metal. So that was also a big help. We were able to purchase this metal at scrap prices.

SKIPPER: Toward the end of our last session, you were talking about sales meetings that you would have, and trying to come to grips with the changing market, and that type of thing. Can you tell me more about that?

WINTER: Not too much ever came of the meetings, to be truthful. We'd kick around a few ideas, although I can't recall. The idea of going into the offset business, of course, was one of those we all thought would be a good idea.

SKIPPER: Had Walt thought of that before he passed away?

WINTER: I don't think so. Because he never concerned himself with it at all. He had got into a number of letterpress supplies but hadn't got into offset at all.

SKIPPER: I recall reading that before he died he purchased a library of mats, and also something about an antique foundry in Arizona.

WINTER: That happened after he died. No, he had purchased,

oh, some years before his death, a bunch of new Monotype mats, sight unseen. There were a lot of duplicates of what we had, and there were a few faces in there that we didn't have.

SKIPPER: Who would he purchase them from?

WINTER: I don't know. That was while I was still concerned with the machines. We still have a great many of them now, brand new, but they're not the sort of things we need for backup. They're typefaces that don't sell. The mats that we have are in good shape, naturally. He was going to buy the English Monotype series, Univers, and he changed his mind right there in the hospital when I was visiting him. I had talked to him over the phone. I was preparing a new catalog, and I had all the proofs. I took them up, but he was really in no condition to look at them.

He thumbed through it, you know, and said, "What do you think about those Univers mats?"

I said, "Well, it's a lot of money."

"Ah," he says, "let's forget it."

And that was the last converstion I had with him. I called up and canceled the order, which is just as well. I don't think we could have paid for that on top of everything else.

SKIPPER: But that face subsequently became a pretty good seller, didn't it?

WINTER: Yes, it did.

SKIPPER: A sans serif kind of face.

WINTER: Yes. There was only one foundry that put it all in, Mackenzie and Harris in San Francisco. If we had put it in, the available business would have been cut in two, and we probably would have got the lion's share of it because we've always been a larger foundry. But since they were the only ones that had it at that time, I assume they did very well with it, once they got the mats paid for.

SKIPPER: Did you have much contact with the people at Mackenzie and Harris?

WINTER: Not until after Walt's death. Then, when we thought Univers was going to be a good face, we went up there and made arrangements to buy it from them at a discount. And we still do. We don't sell much. I'm sure they don't sell that much, either, these days. It sort of fell into disfavor because it's too widely spaced and the vogue is, and has been for a long time, tight letter fit. That's why Helvetica still is king.

SKIPPER: Even today?

WINTER: Even today. You know, if any typeface is [king], as far as our sales [go], the real kind, the big seller, is Park Avenue. [It's a] very poor edition of Park Avenue since it is made from Linotype mats, but neverthless, it's

our biggest seller and has been for fifteen years or more. It's the only series of type, now, that we will make thirty to forty fonts of at a time. Next best, we would probably make twenty of something.

SKIPPER: How are the people at MacKenzie and Harris to deal with?

WINTER: They were very nice: Les Lloyd, who is vice-president, and Helen Lee, who was the girl who took care of all the office work connected with the foundry. They were a typographic house along with being a foundry. Typography and booksetting was about 75 percent of their business, and the foundry was the smaller end. Colonel Harris, the owner, I had only met a couple of times; had lunch with him and someone else once. But most of my dealings were with Les Lloyd and Helen Lee. They had both been purchasing into the business for any number of years. It's unfortunate that they lost everything they had when MacKenzie and Harris went on the block.

SKIPPER: When was this that they went on the block?

WINTER: Not too long ago--about three or four years back. No one except Colonel Harris knew their financial position, which was unfortunate. And when he dies, it soon came to light. I guess the bank demanded payment on their note, and [they] couldn't handle it. I don't know, I don't think it went to an auction. I think it was a court sale of some

kind, or court-ordered sale. And Peters Typesetting in San Francisco bought it.

SKIPPER: But it's still called MacKenzie and Harris?

WINTER: Still called MacKenzie and Harris.

SKIPPER: Has the nature of the business changed drastically as a result of the sale?

WINTER: I don't know. All I know is I talk to Helen Lee occasionally, and they had a number of magazines. They had, oh, let's see, one she mentioned I think it was Hot Rod magazine, which was one of theirs. She said that the composition is still their primary interest and that they run the foundry machines as time permits. Although when I order Univers from them, mostly they seem to have it in stock. So I guess they're doing all right.

SKIPPER: How would you compare the extent of their foundry with L.A. Type?

WINTER: Well, judging on the amount of equipment, I can't really judge since Peters took over because I haven't been up there. But before that, I suppose as far as the foundry was concerned, they would probably maybe do 25 percent of the volume we did at that time.

SKIPPER: Do you attract clientele from the Northern California area because of the larger holding here in different faces?

WINTER: I think it's the variety of our faces that brings

most of our customers from out of town. MacKenzie and Harris have a free catalog that they offer, too. But, like I say, I really don't know what their sales volume is, but I'm sure we do better. And we both advertised a free catalog in national graphic arts magazines, small ads. We both used to run larger ones at one time--quarter pages. Now we're down to one-inch ads, which is the best thing. We used to shotgun-mail our catalogs, too. Normally we mailed out 20,000 to lists supplied by Graphic Arts magazine, and an awful lot were wasted.

SKIPPER: Where is Graphic Arts magazine published?

WINTER: I don't really know. Somewhere in the East.

SKIPPER: In the East.

WINTER: We don't advertise in it anymore. We're in what used to be called Inland Printer [now called Western Lithographer]. I understand they have just had a name change. And I don't know which one it is that MacKenzie and Harris is in. I haven't looked in any of them to see our ad or theirs for a long time.

SKIPPER: When you were talking about these various sales meetings, you mentioned someone had been involved in Amsterdam Continental?

WINTER: Oh, yes; his name was John Meola. Cast Craft Industries of Chicago is their present name, but they used to be just Cast Craft Printing Supply. [They] decided to

get into making the European styles of type like Helvetica, Optimum, Melior--those that had been in wide use and advertised in the typography business. There had been an Amsterdam Continental dealer in Chicago for a number of years, and Amsterdam Continental cut them off and opened their own office. So I talked to the president at that time, Dave [Kreiter] (he passed away a couple, three years ago).

He says, "I'm not going to let them get away with it." He says, "I'm going to run them out of business." And he eventually did.

He brought the machines and the craftsmen from Europe, and he had the mats made. And I made a deal with him that whatever he made, I would immediately take three fonts and put [them] on the shelf.

SKIPPER: Is he still located in--

WINTER: They're still in Chicago. John Meola left Amsterdam Continental. He had approached me about a job a year or so before but once we had a stock of these Chicago fonts on the shelf, I don't remember just how it came about, but I hired him. Because he knew all of the typographers and, better than that, he knew the agency people, where the brunt of the selling was done. You don't sell to the typographer; you sell to the ad agency and create the demand. So I put him on for that, and I think he helped us get established and get the business away from Amsterdam

Continental. Amsterdam Continental eventually closed their doors out here.

SKIPPER: They had an office nearby here?

WINTER: In Burbank. And then it was purchased by Bauer. Whether Bauer Type Foundry in Germany had any interest in it or not, I don't know, but Amsterdam Continental had of course sold all of the Bauer faces. And Stempel--of course, Stempel is really the only one over there doing much, I think, because they're the ones that make the original Helvetica.

SKIPPER: Is the machinery they brought over of much better quality?

WINTER: Yes, it makes better type. They can use a bit harder metal--although I don't think they do. But it makes a beautiful face on the type by additional heat and pressure. But they can't use a mat like we use, made out of hard copper or magnesium. They have to have either nickel or steel mats on account of that pressure. Chicago [Cast Craft Industries] had a tremendous investment, many millions of dollars over a period of time. They couldn't cut everything at once; they would cut two or three and get those produced and out, and eventually they got everything.

SKIPPER: You couldn't adapt your production here to use those mats, could you?

WINTER: No, well, we might use the mats, but it would

be to no advantage. We decided to put Helvetica in a couple of the very best selling sizes. We had the mats made in Japan. And after two of them, the runaway inflation in Japan caught up and sort of priced it right out of our market. Chicago, of course, has dealers throughout the world and the country, and what few dealers we had wouldn't have done us much good. So we stayed with those two. We still make those two since they're sort of the--well, they were until a year or so ago--the heart of it. Now, the best sizes of Helvetica as far as our sales are concerned, are the larger sizes. It's all going to the sign industry; department stores.

But getting back to John Meola, we also had an opportunity to get into the film font business. An acquaintance or ours who had been a printer and a typographer had gone into phototypography with the phototypositor. When they first came out he got one, and he was running a pretty good business with two of the machines.

SKIPPER: Had he had a metal foundry business before?

WINTER: No. But he knew a great deal about phototypography, and he saw Visual Graphics, who make the typositor, and all these films they were selling: say, an eight-, ten-foot strip of film they were getting at that time. It was only twenty dollars; that's a lot of money for a piece of film when you can turn them out so

cheap. So we had this gentleman's agreement with him that he would produce them, and we would do all the advertising and selling because it was a ready market.

SKIPPER: About when was this?

WINTER: Maybe '65, '66. I could be wrong. But it was working out very well because, as a typographer, he had collected a lot of designs that were strictly his: his own art work, art work he had purchased from lettering artists and put on his own film. And so he figured that he'd had it with that business. He wanted something new. He was making a good living at it, so he decided that the best way, of course, was to start out with the designs of his own that he knew everybody in town wanted, because they were having to buy it from him now. In other words, the typographer had a call for this face, and the only way he could go would be to Bob Trogman to get it set. So like I say, that did pretty good. We turned Johnny Meola loose on that. And we had our sales: Well, I think we were up to around $5,000 or $6,000 a week in film fonts when we had the rug pulled out. Bob Trogman hired Johnny Meola away, made him sales manager of his organization, and of course figured to take all of our customers, too. And of course he did take quite a few.

SKIPPER: What was the name of his organization?

WINTER: Called himself the Agency Alphabet at that time.

SKIPPER: Was he in L.A.?

WINTER: Yes. And he sold the fonts under the name of Facsimile Fonts. Still does, although he's located in La Puente, or something, now. So when that happened, during this time, Chicago had been after us to get into the film font business, too, and we had made them a subdealer. Well, we could only sort of split a discount with them, and they felt that wasn't enough. So they went directly to Trogman and wanted to become a direct dealer for Trogman, and he refused.

SKIPPER: Now, who was this in Chicago?

WINTER: This was Cast Craft Industries again, the same ones who were making the metal type. So they set out to beat him. They, I presume, surrounded themselves with knowledgeable people, had equipment built, and started turning out film fonts. And since we'd been cut off, we became their Los Angeles dealer.

SKIPPER: When Mr. Meola was working through L.A. Type here, did he have different equipment that you had to purchase, and make an investment in?

WINTER: No, he was just sales. As far as the film fonts, all we did was sell them. It was mostly bookwork. In fact, a lot of them were shipped directly from the plant, which was then on Wilshire Boulevard. So we didn't make the investment. If we'd been a little bigger, a little more

knowledgeable, we probably should have gotten into it.

SKIPPER: Was it something you thought about at the time?

WINTER: Oh, we thought about it, but we didn't see any feasible way. We hadn't been in the photographic end of the business. We didn't know anyone who could handle it, and so we thought the best way to go for us was just to handle someone else's product. We still do. We don't sell a great many film fonts, but occasionally a customer will call up and order one or two. A dozen is a big order for us now. A couple of months ago, we even had an order for a hundred, which was a little unusual.

SKIPPER: Now, what exactly does this involve?

WINTER: With us, we just take the order and call it in to Chicago or mail it in, bill the customer, and that's it. It's nice and clean, no inventory. We did inventory the fonts for a while. Chicago had set up someone here in Los Angeles to sell the fonts as a dealer, and he had purchased the stock. He was a typographer, too, and he was in direct competition with Facsimile Fonts. And I guess they tried it for a year or so and just couldn't make a go of it. They wanted out. So we took their stock on consignment, and we sold from that stock for a while. But it wasn't long before all the saleable fonts were sold, and all that was left was a bunch there was no call for. I think there were about six hundred of them left. We eventually shipped those back to Chicago.

SKIPPER: What form are they sold in?

WINTER: It's on a two-inch strip of film--two inches wide by as long as is necessary for the font. You have every letter in there with space between each one, naturally, because you expose them one at a time in the phototypositor. It's visual spacing. It works under a safe light, you know. Once you get it positioned where you want, then you expose the character. That was one thing that helped sell the typositor. You didn't need a darkroom for it; you could just set it up in subdued light somewhere.

SKIPPER: Well, you were talking earlier also about going into offset supplies. Now, this was previous to getting involved in selling the film, wasn't it?

WINTER: Yes, it was; well, not really previous. They were working together, but mostly during the same time period, I would say.

SKIPPER: So it sounds like things were kind of in flux there for a while.

WINTER: Yes, they were. Like I say, when Johnny Meola came to work for us, that made three salesmen; we had had two when Walt died. And as far as selling type and strip materials--strip materials is what they had come to us to sell in the first place. Walt had hired them to sell strip material. Jimmy Whiting would take a truck and load it up with material and make a trip up to maybe as far as Fresno, stop at all

the print shops and the small newspapers in between and sell right from the truck like an itinerant peddler. And the other man was operating the same way here in town with a smaller truck. But that eventually died off, and we had to find some other use for them. We thought offset would be it. Mr. Whiting was by far the better salesman. He adapted, and he seemed to be able to sell the offset supplies to former hot-metal customers.

SKIPPER: You mentioned you sold film and--

WINTER: --sold offset plates.

SKIPPER: Yes.

WINTER: Mostly the plates. Aluminum printing plates, offset plates. Yes, we dealt with the S. D. Warren Company. We had tried to get 3M, the big one, but they wouldn't talk to us.

SKIPPER: In terms of making the plates for you to sell?

WINTER: No, in terms of becoming one of their dealers. So we had to go to one of the lesser-known manufacturers who was willing to have another dealer in the area. They were just getting started in this, too. They hadn't been in it too long, and they had a lot of trouble with the plates in the beginning--bad plates. It was a tough way to get going. You know, bad enough going into a new business when you have a good product to sell. Had a kind of a so-so product, I'm afraid. Later on they improved it, and they

had some very good plates, and their prices were much better than 3M, for instance, or Poly Chrome, or some of the other big names.

SKIPPER: Had you considered adapting the foundry to produce the plates, or would that have entailed too much change?

WINTER: That would be a complete change. There used to be a factory up in El Monte making some plates. I don't know what brand it was. I went through that. A lot of big equipment, specialized equipment, and you'd need a million dollars to set one up, at least in those days. But it was a shame that we really didn't have enough money to go into offset and offset machinery in a big way. You know, with our limited capital, we could only go so far. And it's really hard.

Jim had a good account or two that he'd work up, and they'd get to a nice big volume, and one of the other dealers would come in and cut the price and say, "Well, you know you're paying a dollar a plate; we'll sell them to you for ninety cents." They would do this, and since they had all the other lines, they could sort of make a package deal with a customer. You know, you buy your film from us, and we'll cut the cost of your plates down to a bare minimum. That's kind of hard for a man to refuse. Even if the salesman is a friend, friendship's only so much when it

counts. So we lost a few of the big ones that way.

SKIPPER: Was it ever a profitable aspect of the business?

WINTER: We didn't have enough handle on it to really know. We thought it was, but apparently it wasn't. Maybe we had a profitable era, but at the end, it certainly wasn't.

SKIPPER: All you were involved in, regarding offset, pretty much was just selling the products and distributing them?

WINTER: That's it, yes. We had a dealership from Nu Arc, who makes photomechanical equipment for the printers, light tables, plate burners, cameras, and so on. And with Dico, who make all sorts of things for the offset line. In fact, their catalog is about an inch thick. They handle almost everything in the reusable supply end. But there were certain areas that I thought we could get into that we couldn't. Ink, for instance: We were never able to sell ink.

SKIPPER: Why was that?

WINTER: Well, I really don't know. I guess there wasn't that much difference in price, and I think a lot of offset people feel like, "I've got a brand of ink that's doing a good job. I don't want to play around."

Because if you get a problem with ink, you've got a problem with the whole printing process in offset, much worse than letterpress. [tape recorder turned off]

SKIPPER: Did Mr. Whiting know a lot about offset from the start? Or is it something he took it upon himself to start learning about?

WINTER: He learned. He learned from the customers mostly, I believe.

SKIPPER: Did you have to get involved in that also?

WINTER: Only to the extent I had to learn the generalities of it. [I] went and took a one-day course in camera operation. Of course, when we went into the plate business, I went on a lot of plate demonstrations, just watching to see how it was done. Not that I would necessarily have had to, but I thought it certainly couldn't hurt to know. I might have to answer some questions on the phone; it would be a big help. Because there are a lot of printers who don't really know what they are doing if they're getting into offset or if they're just trying out a new product; and it's doing this, doing that, and they call up the person they bought it from [with], "What do I do now?"

SKIPPER: I recall reading about different workshops and organizations that were teaching groups about developing offset techniques. Was that something very common that people were getting involved in then?

WINTER: I think so. Nu Arc over here, they gave regular demonstrations and seminars which we could attend. And there were a lot of private ones, of course. But mostly

the manufacturers--plate manufacturers--held these and all the trade shows. You could go and take a demonstration, and they would show you their plate and how it was developed, how well it ran once it was on the press. A lot of them had presses set up. I imagine this still goes on, although I haven't been to one of these trade shows for some time.

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SKIPPER: We were just talking about the different ways people could learn about the offset process, different workshops and that type of thing.

WINTER: And it's still going on today. The Printing Industries Association--we've been a member for years and years--I know they seem to run a lot of these too; They have workshops for all phases of printing. They are going on all year in various parts of the country; just look for what you want, and go.

SKIPPER: Is this a national association?

WINTER: Yes.

SKIPPER: What's involved in belonging to that?

WINTER: Just paying the dues.

SKIPPER: Do they have publications or any other meetings?

WINTER: Yes, they have all sorts of publications to help you. It's great for someone just getting into the printing business. For instance, even if you want to set up an accounting system tailored for printing, or tailored for typesetting, they've got it. All you have to do is use their model and maybe make a few changes. And they have leasing programs which we haven't gone into. They have an insurance program. We have insurance; Betty and myself are insured through them, since it's a group policy. We originally

carried our package policy, not really through them, but they had a man who was doing all the work for most of the PIA [Printing Industries Association] members, and we got a good price out of it and got the coverage we wanted. We're still with them. They have another insurance broker, now, that they're recommending. Our anniversary of our policy, which comes in December--everyone in the insurance business knows when these things are up--they have a master file somewhere; so we get a few people coming in that would like to write our insurance. We show them what we have and what it's costing us, and if you can save us money, come ahead. Allstate came; they couldn't do it. So as a result we stay with them. You know, you wonder sometimes, when the insurance costs are escalating, if you are getting the best deal. We shop around and find out.

SKIPPER: During this time period when you were getting involved in offset supply sales and the Linofilm mats--it wasn't Linofilm; it was just film setting.

WINTER: Film fonts.

SKIPPER: Film fonts, that's right; that must have been pretty complicated as far as your bookwork was concerned. Did you have the same bookkeeper that you'd had previously when Mr. Gebhard was still here?

WINTER: Yes. He had hired her probably less than a year before he died; so she stayed with us for a number of years.

It didn't really require much difference in the bookkeeping; the only thing it did that was a little extra was setting up salesmen's commissions, which--they'd always worked for a salary before. And we provided them with a car or a truck, and the expenses connected with it. So there were maybe a few more accounts they had to put on the books, and they had to figure out the commissions. But it wasn't that much extra work: a few hours a month is all the extra time it would have taken.

SKIPPER: You mentioned having a little bit of difficulty with her when you assumed managership. Did that continue at all?

WINTER: Well, on the surface we got along pretty well, but there was always this undercurrent. I just waited. Eventually she decided she would go and find a better job somewhere, perhaps saw that there was no place she could go here.

That's the reason Mr. Whiting gave for leaving. He said he didn't think that we had much of a future, and in his words, he says, "I'm fifty years old," he says, "I got to work a number of years yet; so if other opportunities come along, I'm going to have to take them." And I think he's done well, because he's still with them. But here was an offset supply company--a large one, Bell Industries --who have everything. No longer did he have this narrow

line that he was forced to sell. He could go in and whatever they were using, his company carries. So it's merely a matter of price and winning them over now--salesmanship.

SKIPPER: Did many other foundries do the same kind of adaptation, going into different kinds of supplies when offest developed?

WINTER: Not that I know of. There's a small foundry here in town, Bell Type and Rule--of course they never went into anything. MacKenzie and Harris I don't think ever tried anything different, not to my knowledge.

SKIPPER: There was also Franklin.

WINTER: Franklin? No, Franklin was owned by a man who had all the money he needed. He was an inventor, and he had residuals coming in from a lot of things. He was the owner of the Curlesaw, which was an attachment for a Linotype machine that brought in plenty. Fact is, he closed his foundry before he died; just decided to get out of it and go strictly back to his machinery and inventing.

SKIPPER: Do you recall about when that was?

WINTER: No, I don't. It was quite some years back, though--maybe fourteen, fifteen years ago. He's been gone for a long time. Man that worked for us up on the front desk had previously worked for him until he closed the business, and then we put him on in the foundry for a little while. Then things got slow, had to lay him off, and I

gave him the opportunity of working up front until he could find something else. Never did find anything else. Maybe he was happy enough there. At a reduced salary, of course. He left the union, and he stayed with us till his death, just before Christmas. There are other foundries now. There's one in Chicago, Acme, who were into a few other things. They make some plastic type cases; they're into rubber-stamp business, probably a lot more heavily than we are. And, of course, Cast Craft, who was a foundry who have gone into all sorts of things.

SKIPPER: What kinds of things?

WINTER: Things that I don't even know about. Well, they opened an art-supply store, for one thing. Of course they went into the film font business and the manufacture of the European types, and they've gone into rubdown letters.

SKIPPER: What are those?

WINTER: Well, it's like a font of type printed on a carrier sheet, and you just position it on your layout and rub it with a stylus, and the letter transfers to the paper. You've probably seen them; all art stores sell them. Fact is, even Thrifty Drugstore sells them. They went into that, although I don't know if they are doing anything much with it. And what else are they into? There are a number of items they sell related to the phototypesetting business. Their art store, I guess, is the farthest they've gone from it. And why they got into that, I don't know.

SKIPPER: Were the other foundries in Los Angeles having difficulties, starting in the early sixties, with their business in general?

WINTER: I presume they must have. That's why they quit--or disappeared.

SKIPPER: Was the profitability of L.A. Type going downhill steadily? Is is hard to say?

WINTER: I'm sure it was. Of course, Walt always claimed he wasn't making any money all during the years, but he made plenty of money--enough, I will say, that he didn't keep a great deal of it. He put it all back in the business buying more machinery and more mats, you know, things like that. But he had to be making money to expand his business that way, too. And when he died, we were making money or we wouldn't have been able to pay all those expenses connected with his death.

SKIPPER: Did you change any of the policies of the business at all? Or the patterns?

WINTER: Not really, I don't think. I may have without realizing it, but no drastic changes, no.

SKIPPER: You still have that basic philosophy of being a large foundry. You wanted the widest diversity of faces?

WINTER: We have no choice. We can't expand in that direction anymore. No faces are available, and of course you're selling to a diminishing market all the time, anyway.

SKIPPER: Can you pinpoint pretty much when it was that faces started becoming no longer available?

WINTER: Well, yes. I would say that with us, we bought a lot of Linotype and Ludlow mats to expand our line that had actually been in their line for some time already. It's just that they were new to us. Park Avenue, for instance, they had had for a long time. Previous to this, of course, Monotype company was producing a lot of new faces, and when they started dying off, why then, Walt started looking in another direction for something new to present all the time. So Linotype and Ludlow were the only two that were producing mats that we could use on our machines. Although I guess it must have been close to twenty years ago when Lanston Monotype quit bringing out new faces. Ludlow probably hasn't produced a new face, either, for the last fifteen years, and I don't think Linotype has introduced anything else since they got into making Helvetica--at least we haven't seen anything. Everything that we have from them is what we've had for a long time. No, the cost of manufacturing matrices is tremendous. You know, you have to have a big market for them, and there are more Linotype machines in junkyards than there are operating--junkyards, and in used-printing-equipment dealers and warehouses. Well, all the newspapers had them. Now, none of the newspapers have them. Of course, newspapers were the big users

of Linotype machines. I remember going up to the Times and seeing a big bank of them up there. They had fifty machines, sixty machines, easily.

SKIPPER: What about when the American Type foundry closed down?

WINTER: Well, American Type [Founders] didn't close down. They're still going.

SKIPPER: You mentioned the local office they had here . . .

WINTER: Oh, yes. Well, the local office they had . . . they weren't selling type, anyway, at that time. Even when they had the office, they were just connected with their equipment sales. They make one of the most popular of the small presses. The Chief 15 and Chief 17 are extremely popular small presses. And why they closed, I don't know. I guess they figured that the one or two dealers they had in town could do the same thing they were doing there. Because I don't think they had any repair facilities or anything. I think it was just strictly a sales office. I don't know how long Steward Company had been selling their type; long time--maybe thirty years. ATF was selling their type in their own office when I first came to work in '37. I don't know how long they continued. It was a little out of my line, really.

SKIPPER: And Steward Company finally closed down?

WINTER: No, Steward Company is still going. As far as their

type sales [go], I'm sure it's such a small part of their business, they don't really care whether they've got it or not. That's my opinion. Because I think it was--yes, I think Dick Hoffman told me he'd been out there. He said, if you wanted to pick that up, all you'd have to do is buy their inventory. He said they'd like to get out. I didn't want it. [laughter] You know, you'd be buying a dead inventory just to get the dealership, which doesn't amount to that much these days. Because what we still have to offer is service and availability. Whereas if you want to get a font of ATF type and you go to Steward, chances are they don't have it, and they tell you they'll get it for you in two weeks. When they come here, they can get it right off the shelf, usually. Maybe we get it for them the next day if we have to set one out of the case. We do that a great deal now.

SKIPPER: Do you have any mail-order business to any extent?

WINTER: Oh, yes. I would say probably as much type is sold by mail order as is purchased otherwise.

SKIPPER: Has this always been the case, or has it been shifting?

WINTER: Yes, for a long time. Because, like I say, we used to shotgun mail our catalogs all over the country. And of course, even though a lot were wasted, a lot ended up in the right hands. We still ship type to all parts of the

country. It's not a great deal in volume, but everyday we mail out, oh, I'd say our average is probably fifteen to eighteen packages a day, and two-thirds of them are out of town.

SKIPPER: What area geographically is most of your mail-order business concentrated in?

WINTER: Really, I don't think there is any.

SKIPPER: No? You get orders from back east?

WINTER: Yes.

SKIPPER: Even in spite of the cost of mailing something so heavy?

WINTER: People don't seem to worry much about money. I think that held us back years and years ago, but people are buying it nowadays because they want this particular face and it's not available locally. There're not many foundries locally anywhere, now. If you're in New York or in New Jersey or in Ohio, there're no foundries located there. You got to send somewhere for it, anyway. Whether you send it to California or Chicago, it doesn't make that much difference.

SKIPPER: Is there any more exchange of mats going on, on a real small-scale basis, among the local people at all?

WINTER: It'd have to be very small since nobody's using them anymore. Like with Bell--we occasionally lend Bell something that he doesn't have. Or like this lowercase t

mat that burned out--we're going to borrow his t, because by the time we buy another one, weeks and weeks have gone by. It's a shame, Linotype mats we used to buy for, say, thirty or forty cents apiece, now you have to buy a minimum of three, even though we only need one. And I think they're running about ten dollars each. An ordinary Linotype mat is still not that expensive, but things like the Park Avenue, they're a particular class of mats that the price is up pretty high.

SKIPPER: I noticed, going through your older catalogs, too, that you had wood and plastic type as well. Do you still have that?

WINTER: No. We sell wood type made by American Wood Type Company. But no longer do we manufacture it. We didn't exactly manufacture it. The man was self-employed, but we purchased all of everything he made. And he worked--more or less, he worked for us. He wasn't on our payroll. That was very convenient, because [if] somebody wanted something and he didn't have it, we could have it in a day or so because he was out in West Covina; although his quality wasn't really top-notch, partly due to the fact that he couldn't get the real fine grades of wood.

SKIPPER: I was going to ask what kind of wood did they use?

WINTER: The best wood type is end-grain. He got a stock of end-grain maple at one time, and it made beautiful type,

even for him. Like I say, his workmanship was a little below par, but it looked good. But most of the time he had to be satisfied with something like alder, which is passable but not really that good. And then we got the idea of making type out of this hard plastic, solid phenolic plastic, in the days when newspapers were still letterpress, and they rolled mats from the form. And we sold a moderate amount. It was an extremely good product--almost never wears out. And then in some of the larger sizes of wood type, when we couldn't get end-grain material, we used a plastic-coated wood--can't think of what the name was. It was used mostly in the printing industry for, say, varnishing, where they put it on the press and run varnish instead of ink, you know, make a slick overprint on the job. But we supplied the engraver with that, and he'd cut it up into type. Printed beautifully, but it was only good for larger sizes because of the density of the wood. It was pretty soft. And if you got something like a one-inch type and you'd run it on the press, pretty soon it would be below type high and wouldn't print well. But we used it on type three inches and larger.

SKIPPER: About how long would it last?

WINTER: Well, with care, I suppose it would last darn near forever.

SKIPPER: Was the major advantage of the wood and plastic type just the large--

WINTER: Yes. The fact was that you couldn't get that type in metal. And American Type Founders today produce maybe only two designs in metal type larger than one inch. They had one, a ninety-six point, which is--I don't know what that is, an inch, an inch-and-a-third, possibly. And you wait forever to get it, too. Because they let orders pile up until they have enough to put it on. They don't stock it anymore.

SKIPPER: Did you ever have much of a business in selling the wood and plastic type?

WINTER: Well, it was a nice adjunct. Our bill with Stan Hurse, who was the engraver, I think averaged about between $500 and $600 a month. And we got 40 percent off. So you mark that up, it was a nice little part of the business. If he were still around today, he certainly couldn't make a living on it. He was semiretired anyway, and I think he was getting at that time, probably, social security, so this little extra allowed him to live fairly well.

SKIPPER: Is it used at all anymore?

WINTER: Oh, yes, it's still used. We still occasionally sell fonts of wood type. It has become a kind of collector's item, especially if it's old and covered with ink. In fact, you can buy a new font cheaper than you can buy a used one. Because, like I say, anything that's come up, it's all ended [up] in art shops and various places--people have two or

three pieces at home. Fact is, the man that bought the engraving equipment from Mrs. Hurse through us, he would cut pieces of wood type and then rub them with lampblack. He's in Old Town in San Diego, and he put a price of seventy-five cents, or a dollar, or two dollars on these pieces and sells them.

SKIPPER: I'll be darned--really?

WINTER: He told me, "It's the only time I've ever been able to sell my mistakes for a profit." If the cutter slipped, or it wasn't perfect, it didn't matter.

SKIPPER: Does he sell the wood type to anybody who's using it for serious purposes?

WINTER: No, he bought it strictly for fun. He had a collection of wood type fonts--I think he told me he had 600 of them. A lot of them had missing characters. He was just going to fill out with this to fill up all of these fonts he had. Some of them, I suppose, were so antique, he probably would have to just figure in his own mind what that missing letter was supposed to look like. I don't think he uses it much. He had been, I haven't seen him for probably a year. He's involved in all sorts of projects--community projects--down there, and of course he runs this antique newspaper in Old Town. He ran a yearly barbeque down there and had so many irons in the fire. He used to sell old typecases before they became collector's items, too. He'd

come up here and buy all of ours and take them down there and sell them.

SKIPPER: They're really expensive, now, in those antique stores.

WINTER: Oh, it's terrible. We like to get them reasonably priced so we can sell them to our customers. It's almost impossible to find now. If anybody's got a hint of where they can sell them to an antique store, why, we don't get a look.

SKIPPER: If somebody came to you and wanted fonts of wood type that you can provide, what would be the source of getting more made for the commercial market?

WINTER: You mean a design that wasn't commercially available?

SKIPPER: If, for example, you completely ran out. Regardless of design, who would be equipped to make up more fonts?

WINTER: Well, American Wood Type still are producing.

SKIPPER: Oh, they still are.

WINTER: And the Hamilton Manufacturing Company still is producing it. A lot of wood type is used in sign shops, department-store sign shops. If I had to guess, I'd say that 90 percent of the output is probably ending up there rather than in the hands of a printer. I see it around here on the telephone poles. All the posters are usually printed from wood type. You can tell when you come up

close, because it looks so terrible. They're using very old type; they don't match some of the letters.

SKIPPER: I noticed also, looking at your older catalogs, that you used to sell small presses [like] the Adana press.

WINTER: Yes, we did pretty well with that Adana, the horizontal, and we bought some of their small upright presses, too. But they raised the price too high, and we just gave up on them. We were selling the last Adanas we had for $210. We had started selling them at eighty dollars when we first got them, and over the years the price went up. Then they doubled it on us. So we gave up.

SKIPPER: All at one time?

WINTER: Yes. Well, what they did--in a roundabout way, they doubled it. They said that from now on, you'll have to get your presses through--it's a school-supply business--I can't think of what--not Craft, Craft Tool Company. We inquired at Craft Tool what the price of the press would be, and they said, well, the price to you-- I think it was something like $395 that we would have to mark up. We didn't think there would be any use in continuing. There was a little sales resistance even at $210, and at that kind of price, you could put a few more dollars with it, and you can get a good C & P [Chandler and Price] Press. Whether Craft Tool is still selling them or not, I don't know. Since when they sell to a school a package of

something, a small printing outfit, of course the price of the press is lost amidst everything else. We still sell the Craftsmen line, although we don't sell too many. I've got one or two coming in now we're going to put on display. We haven't had any on display for some time. You can't really sell anything unless you can put it right in a man's hands so he can try it and look at it. So we're putting some of those in. We're putting some hot-stamping machines in. We had been selling rubber-stamp machines. We're keeping two of those on display all the time now.

SKIPPER: When people buy rubber-stamping supplies from you, does that get involved in your type at all, or is it just the rubber-stamping machines?

WINTER: Well, that's how we come across them. They come to buy type from us. A lot of people, for instance, will buy a Warner press, which is sold by mail order through --oh, you see it in a lot of the--what do they call-- Popular Mechanics, Popular Science and some of those magazines. You know, "Get into the rubber-stamp business-- fifteen cents' worth of material, two-dollar, three-dollar stamp." The press is apparently small and not that great. They come to buy their type from us once they find we're in existence. They're looking for a bigger and better press, and all the ones we sell are not really big, [but] they are well built. That's usually the people we sell them to,

rather than someone who hasn't been in it at all. We did sell one a couple weeks ago. A man retired, and he just didn't know what to do with his time and thought he'd make rubber stamps. He came in and bought the outfit.

SKIPPER: I'd imagine they wouldn't buy very much type, would they?

WINTER: Oh, yes, because, whereas if you print with type, it lasts a good long time, when you're making rubber stamps, it doesn't last too long at all. It's subjected to heat and pressure constantly. If you want to get a nice clean impression, you don't want to use the type too long, and you don't want to mix it with new type, either, because it will lose in height. So what most of them do [is] use it until it doesn't look quite as good as they think it should, and then they dump it and they buy new. Since ours is rather reasonably priced in comparison to anything else they could get-- You know, they can get zinc type, brass type, steel type, which would last forever but the cost is so tremendous. Steel type running around three dollars a character; brass running at least one dollar a character; and even the zinc's running about forty cents a character. And in the zinc type, of course--well, in any of them, you don't have the selection of typefaces that you do in ordinary foundry type.

SKIPPER: Do you sell any of the zinc type here? And the brass?

WINTER: Oh, we sell anything in the way of type that anyone wants. We got a dealership from the Schaefer Company, that makes the zinc type, about maybe four years ago, and we've been dealing with the Worcester Stamp Company, who makes brass and steel types, for maybe fifteen years, maybe a little bit longer. We don't sell a great deal of brass type, but when we do, it's a big sale, usually.

SKIPPER: What kind of people do you sell it to, mostly?

WINTER: Mostly, once again, people who are making signs. But they're not stamping these signs onto a hard plastic, where our type won't stand up at all. Ours is fine for hot-stamping paper, soft vinyls, leather, and things like that. But you get it up against some hard acrylic plastic and do that about three times, and it's gone. So they have to buy the brass. We have a client in San Francisco, and they buy some larger fonts from us where each character costs twelve dollars, and buy a whole font. So, you know, that's a big investment, but I'm certain that they get it back.

SKIPPER: Does MacKenzie and Harris sell any of them?

WINTER: I don't think so, no. Brass type and zinc type, steel type, are sold mostly through printers' supply houses. Here in town you could probably get it from Steward Company if you wanted, or Leach, or Printers Supply Corporation I know you could, even though they don't normally deal in

type. Printers Supply probably sells more than we do because they are the major supplier of hot-stamp machines in town--both hand and automatic. They do big business with that, and they sell the foils. And as a result, they usually sell a great deal more of the brass type.

SKIPPER: When did the rubber-stamping business become important enough for you to be carrying the supplies here?

WINTER: Not too long ago. It was just about a couple of years ago, I think, we made the decision to put in an inventory because we had so many rubber-stamp people coming in to buy type. We thought, well, why don't we sell them something else as long as they're here. It hasn't built up that far yet, but it will eventually, I think, if we figure a way to cut our price down. Trouble is, with most of the supplies, if a man uses any amount at all, he can go to the same people we do and get [a] 40 percent discount because they don't have any large minimums or buying requirements. They do have a sliding scale. The more you buy, the better your discount is. Their basic discount, I think, is 40 percent--then 40 and 5, 40 and 10, 40 and 20, if you buy enough. So most of the people who've been buying the supplies other than type are pretty small in the rubber-stamp business. Of course, we've been supplying all the gum rubber to the Los Angeles schools for about a year or so now.

SKIPPER: The rubber itself?

WINTER: Well, we came across that by accident, really. I used to talk to the buyer up there, and he says, "Do you know where I can get gum rubber for rubber stamps?" I say, "Yeah, we sell it."

We had already started selling them.

He says, "You know, I haven't been able to find anybody. Our supplier told us he didn't want to do business with us anymore. He says, it takes us too long to pay our bills, and he didn't--he wasn't interested."

So I gave him the price, and they started buying it all from us. And they still are.

SKIPPER: Is there any other area of supply that you are involved in?

WINTER: Well, most everything is kind of minor and takes a back seat to type and rule. But another thing that provides us with a little income--we are dealing for the Howarine Company, who make--I guess you'd call them--bookbinding adhesives. The major product is one for snap-out forms: It's a two-part solution,and we sell 90 percent of their product in these two paired items called Inercote and Superflex. For instance, if you have a three-part form, you have just plain paper or you have, say, a carbon in between. You coat the center sheets with solution number one, so to speak--the inner coat and after you've

collated and put the whole job together, then you brush number two on the edges. Then when it's dry, each set is an individual set. It's not like a pad where you have to tear a set off a pad. Each set of three is loose by itself, but as a set it is glued together. We came across that by accident, too, at a trade show. We saw that and wondered about it. And I'll have to give Jim Whiting credit for that because he said, "I think we could sell this." So he had one of his printing friends come over to the show, and they demonstrated what it would do.

"Yeah," he says, "I like that." He says, "You handle it and I'll take some of that." Of course, he was never a big buyer, and the fact is, he bought hardly anything.

But we put it in, and they cooperated by making mailings with our name on as dealer for the western states. And that was really where we picked up most of our business, through them, and not by any effort of our own--except local. And our big user is local, although we do ship some away. Three or four customers in Phoenix. Diamond International, up in Exeter, is a big company, but they must have a small department for snap-out because somebody dealing in wholesale lots wouldn't buy from us. There're other adhesives on the market that are more adaptable to machine methods. This is a hand method.

SKIPPER: I noticed in your catalog, too, that when you

sell rules, they are hand-finished. Is that something that still occurs?

WINTER: Yes; we don't sell too much. Those are the larger size of solid printing rules, like six-point solid face or an eighteen-point solid face. We still do that. I don't know really what they use most of them for. A lot of them are probably used for bearers on proof presses or maybe as a bearer for a rubber stamp-making mold. Few of them printed from, no doubt. [laughter]

SKIPPER: We were talking earlier, too, about the clientele that you have here who are Spanish-speaking people, and that made me remember that in your catalogs all the way back to '59 you have many, many fonts of type available with the accents.

WINTER: Yes. We're lucky in that respect, that very few foundries still in existence have accents available. MacKenzie and Harris have accents available, but since they were interested only in bookwork, almost all of their accents are twelve point or smaller. But Walt invested in a lot of accents, and then we purchased the California Type Foundry many years ago in San Francisco. In fact, this goes back to maybe 1949, 1950, and they had a lot of accented mats. We got their mats and their machinery. We bought everything they had of their stock of type. It was a small place. We went and loaded it all up in one truck and brought it home.

SKIPPER: What kind of business did they have?

WINTER: It was a small type foundry, just like ours. But it was a--

SKIPPER: Was it any competition for MacKenzie and Harris, for example?

WINTER: I don't think so. MacKenzie probably didn't even know they were there. They were two fellows, and one of them was a drunkard. Fact is, when we went up there to pick this stuff up, he and Walt come staggering down the street, oh, ten o'clock in the morning, I guess; really gone. They were no help. I had known one of the men for a long time. He was a representative of Lanston Monotype Company when I first started to work in 1937. And I forget just when he left them and went in on this type foundry business. When he sold that, he became a seagoing printer. He worked on the cruise ships. In those days, they all had their own little printshop, they printed a little daily paper and printed news of the passengers and [of] this and that, I guess. He did that for many years. I lost track of him sometime back, but he used to stop in here once every year or so, when the ship was in port, and say hello. I'm sure he knew everyone at MacKenzie and Harris since he'd been with Lanston. He sold us our first new machine, which I think was a Thompson. Fact is, he showed me how to run it. The Thompson's a rather simple machine. I learned

the basics in the one day that he was there. Never had to call on him again.

SKIPPER: Were the materials and equipment that you bought from that California foundry useful to you here?

WINTER: Yes. There was a Thompson caster which we needed because we needed more equipment. A great many of the mats, I'm sure, were mats that we didn't have. And of course the accents; although at the time the accents weren't the big reason for buying it. They were very helpful later on. Still are today.

One reason we can do so much business with our Mexican friends is because they can get accents in so many of the faces. Yes, I don't think there's a day goes by that we don't get someone in here who doesn't speak English, from Mexico, come in and buy a font or two of type, a dozen fonts.

SKIPPER: You mentioned that one lady who came in was involved in the rubber-stamp business; but do you have other people coming in involved in other businesses, aspects of printing, that need the type?

WINTER: Well, we had a lot of just ordinary printers. More of those than there are rubber-stamp people, I guess. I lot of the rubber-stamp business we do, you might call it mail order. We don't see them. They don't come in. San Diego, Vista, Escondido--they just call in and order,

or they'll send in an order. They buy a font or two at a time, you know, three or four times a month. They're nice and regular, anyway.

SKIPPER: Are the accents on separate pieces of type?

WINTER: No, that's too time-consuming to try and put that over the letter, because, usually, you have to cut the top of the lowercase letter off to fit the accent in. No, these are mats with the letter and the accent in one piece. They have either been produced that way, or sometimes they just take a regular letter and engrave the accent over it, which amounts to the same thing. We have a few of those. The accent is not truly designed into the letter like most of them, you know. It just flows and fits very well because some thought's gone into it. But we have a few where they've just engraved it on there just to have an accent. Maybe it's a little too thin. Usually it's a little too thin rather than a little too heavy. We have piece accents that we sell, but we don't sell many--it's sort of a stopgap. There're a lot of our fonts [for which] accents are not available. And if a man wants these, and he really wants to put the accents on it, why, he buys this little Hand-i-font of piece accents and he can put them on there. I say it's time-consuming when you're setting the job up.

SKIPPER: When you were talking about engraving the accent on, is this into mats that you would have for casting type,

or was it actually onto the individual pieces of type?

WINTER: No, into the mats themselves.

SKIPPER: Is that something you would do here?

WINTER: No. We had to send them away, or, like I say, a lot of them we bought new from Monotype, and the accent was designed as a part of the type. Some we sent away to New York and had accents engraved on them. Of course, it was sort of so-so, but, you know, it's good enough. Most of them fit well, are designed well, most of the things that we do have.

We have a lot stashed away that we don't sell much. We've got accents. They've been there for years and years, but even the Spanish-speaking people don't buy them. But it's no use throwing them away. If we get really short of metal, we know one place to look. Well, there's a lot of dead type in our stock room--may never sell it--but until we actually need the metal, we'll just leave it wrapped up. Once it's wrapped, twenty-five, thirty years later, you couldn't tell it from some that was made from some that was made a few weeks ago. Sealed from the air, still bright and shiny.

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FEBRUARY 16, 1979

SKIPPER: I do want to ask a couple of more personal questions. I assume by this time you've already a family of your own. Could you tell me a little bit about that?

WINTER: Yes. Well, I was married in 1956 and my wife already had a child, a five-year-old girl named Diane. And in 1957 our first son was born, and he lived to be five. Then a daughter was born in 1960--that's Katherine and my boy was born in 1963--yes '63. Our older daughter, of course, has since married, and I have two grandchildren.

SKIPPER: Where was Mrs. [Beverly Jessee] Winter from?

WINTER: From the Los Angeles area. She was born in Spokane, but she and her mother [Mary Jessee] had been living here for some time before I met her. Her family--that is, her father [Ira Jessee]--had mostly done farm work. He had done a number of things, but during the last few years of his life, when she was, say, from ten to thirteen (when he died), she remembers mostly moving from farm to farm, living in tents and--sort of Grapes of Wrath sort of thing. And her father died very unexpectedly of a heart attack.

SKIPPER: Had she been working with her father?

WINTER: Well, from time to time, of course, the kids would

go out--she has a sister--they'd go out and help dad in the fields a little bit, but it was more for fun, not on a steady basis. He had worked as, I think, a stationary engineer. He had worked at some sort of a job on the railroad at one time, and, I guess, just fell on hard times and went into farm work. They survived. Of course they didn't have much.

SKIPPER: It must have been pretty difficult.

WINTER: That's one reason that she didn't go camping with the rest of the family later on. She'd had enough of tents.

SKIPPER: What were the circumstances of your meeting?

WINTER: I had a friend I used to hunt and fish with, and he suggested that we go fishing out at Lake Irvine, and he'd get a girlfriend and a blind date for me. So my present wife was his girlfriend. It was, I guess, sort of a friend relationship--not girlfriend in the sense of sweetheart, you know. They were both of them going around with any number of people of playing the field, and we met a couple of times, went to dances, you know, and eventually she gave me her phone number and we started dating. I guess you'd call it a whirlwind courtship. I think about three months later we married.

SKIPPER: Has she ever had any interest in the foundry?

WINTER: Not really, no. She'd been down here a number of times, but I don't think she's got much interest in it.

SKIPPER: Was having a family to support any influence at the time when Mrs. Gebhard asked that you become manager of the foundry, or was that not really a consideration?
WINTER: No, not really. I was making good money already, and that was sufficient to support the family. I think that probably the main reason was that after I thought about it, I felt more secure having the reins myself than having someone else who didn't have as much experience in the business as I did--sort of self-preservation, more than anything else. Because I always enjoyed working on the machines--the matter of an increase in salary didn't really enter my head. Probably didn't even get an increase for a month or so. It wasn't even discussed.

SKIPPER: Do any of your children enjoy working in the environment of the foundry at all, or are they still in their own interests?
WINTER: Only as a means to an end. I have them down here--or did, anyway--once in a while to come out on a Saturday. Or maybe there was a free school day, and I'd bring them down here and [have them] help font type. I wouldn't allow them to work on the machinery, not even the saw. I think it's a sort of law, anyway, that even if you have the youngster working, they have to be over eighteen to work any power equipment.

SKIPPER: Did Mr. Gebhard have any children?

WINTER: No.

SKIPPER: Oh, there's another point I wanted to return to before going on. At some point, there was a foundry purchased in Arizona. Can you tell me more about that?

WINTER: Yes, it was known as the Type Founders of Phoenix. It was a one-man operation, and he [the owner, Mr. Broad] had devoted this operation to the making of types that were reproductions of types that were popular mostly during the 1890s, which was a very flowery period of design for types. He would take an original font of type in good condition and have a font of mats made from that. And he had a number of dealers throughout the country that would help themselves, besides his own sales; we were one; American Printing Equipment in New York, another; Cast Craft was another. And, oh, he had a couple of other dealers on the list that we acquired with the foundry, but none of them were active to any extent.

SKIPPER: So he was selling you the fonts of type.

WINTER: Yes. We were buying the same thing we are making now from those mats. I believe our discount was about 40 percent. We always included them in our catalog, and we kept a stock on hand all the time.

SKIPPER: Where did he find the original type that he had the fonts made from?

WINTER: Oh, I guess he must have had a lot of feelers out. He knew a lot of people in the printing business, and he probably scouted auctions and old printshops. He also collected old type catalogs. He had quite a collection of those, which we didn't acquire. Those were sold to someone else.

But when he passed away--he was in Japan, I believe, and he was flown to Australia, where he passed away. He had leukemia. And his daughter and son-in-law ran it for a number of years. His son-in-law was either a baker or a chef, I don't know which. He was in the culinary trade. And his daughter kept house. They had five children. But it reached a point, I guess, where it was just too much work, you know, having a full-time job, the five children, and the foundry besides, and so they offered it to us. I can't remember what the price was. I think the original asking price was $10,000. She proposed this to Cast Craft in Chicago, and they weren't interested, either. And we weren't at that price.

Occasionally I would go to Phoenix, for typographers conventions every so often, and I had a friend in Phoenix, I would visit. I'd usually visit them, too, and finally they made another offer. They would go down to, I think it was--$7,500 was the price. So I talked to our auditor and gave him all the information I had--the amount of stock

that they had, the amount of business they'd been doing--and we figured out that it would be a good deal for us to acquire. We could depreciate the cost of the machinery, and I figured we could sell a good deal of the inventory--which we did. We sold, I think it was, three fonts of everything in there, both to Chicago and to New York. Of course we offered them a little incentive. I think we paid for it within two years or less, anyway.

SKIPPER: What was the extent of the machinery that they had?

WINTER: Actually, we weren't really so much interested in the machinery as the mats, since we had all the necessary machinery, anyway. But they had two machines: they had this Japanese Kioke caster that we have now, and they had a Thompson that had been rebuilt in Japan. It's a Thompson base and a Japanese-made type, but they had never operated it--and neither have we. It was so designed that it would cast seventy-two points wide, which is about twelve points wider than the Thompson will normally cast. But we found no occasion for it, and it just sits there and rusts away. [laughter]

SKIPPER: Is there still any call for those antique faces?

WINTER: Oh, yes, I would say within the last six months it's been sort of slow, but we've had slow periods before. They it will build up, and it's kind of slow but steady

and you think you have enough fonts on the shelf, and you look there three or four years later, and they're sold. We don't sell a great many of any one of them, normally. We normally only [sell] one at a time to anyone, whereas our other fonts we sell multiples. Maybe a man will order four or five fonts. But in antiques, I suppose they use mostly just a headline or a single line or a letterhead; so a single font is enough. One of the least likely candidates was at one time a very best seller called Sixteenth Century Antique--just like an old Roman face, but rough edges. And we sold a lot of those.

I don't know how many years after--it could possibly be looked up too--we purchased the matrices from the other founder in Florida, John Carroll. His, too, I think, was just more a labor of love and a hobby. I doubt if he made a living at it.

SKIPPER: Can you make just a rough estimate of when the first foundry was purchased and when the other materials were purchased from Florida?

WINTER: That would be really hard, you know.

SKIPPER: Is it in the early or late sixties?

WINTER: No, it would have to be--I would say just about the late sixties somewhere, yes. And the Florida purchase came probably a year later than the other.

SKIPPER: Fine. How did the Florida foundry come to your attention?

WINTER: He [John Carroll] wrote to us and sent us a list and a showing of what he had, and he offered the mats to us at some ridiculous price. We just said okay, and no haggling about it. We took it for what he wanted out of it. [sound interference--tape recorder turned off] I think at the time, regular production mats from the Monotype Company were probably selling for around three-and-a-half to four dollars, and Mr. Carroll offered the mats to us at a price substantially lower than that.

SKIPPER: Was it a particular kind of mats that he had, that you needed?

WINTER: No, it was just in addition--something else that we could offer and [that] would give us a more complete line in the antique reproductions because everything he had was something different than Mr. Broad [of Type Founders of Phoenix] had.

SKIPPER: There are a couple of more technical questions I want to ask you, too, about when you're reproducing the fonts of type, as we were discussing it earlier. The question I have in mind is, if you're reproducing, say, twenty fonts of type, do you do each character all at one time for all twenty fonts, or do you do it font by font?

WINTER: No, on the display machines--the Thompsons the Giant caster, et cetera--we put one mat on, and we do make enough for whatever we're making. If we're making twenty

fonts, we make enough for twenty fonts, and we change and put another matrix on.

SKIPPER: Is it the same for when you're casting the body type?

WINTER: No, those are tape-control lead machines. And the necessary characters for a font are punched in the tape, so we actually cast one font at a time, reroll the tape, and run it through and run another font.

SKIPPER: In the Thompson, for example, is there a counting mechanism that allows you to set how many will be cast at a time?

WINTER: Not as part of the machine, no. No, the operator just watches it, and when he thinks he's got enough, he shuts it off. You usually have an overrun. The first few characters are usually thrown away, because the matrix is cold and the face is usually not perfect. A counter could easily be attached to the machines, but we've never felt it worthwhile. Too many buzzers going off, getting it confused. You can pretty well gauge it, you know: You're stacking, and you see you need thirty more characters, and you look at the machine, and you figure, well, I've got somewhere between thirty and forty, so I'm safe.

SKIPPER: So they could probably keep their eye on more than one machine at a time?

WINTER: Yes, an operator usually runs around three, some-

times four. When I used to operate in there, at one period I ran six, which included the Giant caster. It really kept me hopping, all right.

SKIPPER: I was going to say, you must have moved around pretty quickly.

WINTER: I'd rather be busy. Time goes better that way.

SKIPPER: When you're casting fonts of type with the tape, is that in the same machine that you would do the Monotype composition on, for example?

WINTER: Yes. Whether you're doing text or whether you punch eighteen cap As in a row, it's the same thing. The machine operates in the same manner.

SKIPPER: Is the metal that you use for the casting fonts of type different from the metal that would come out for Monotype composition?

WINTER: It used to be. We used to use standard Monotype metal for both composition and the fonts. We don't do any composition these days, and, for the past three years, we've been using foundry metal in there, too. It makes nice type. The nozzles clog up a little more frequently--it takes a little more care.

SKIPPER: Can you tell about the difference?

WINTER: Well, I don't think you could tell, really, unless you had the metal analyzed. Even the wear qualities between foundry metal, say, cast on our machines and standard Monotype is really not that great.

SKIPPER: The foundry type is supposed to be harder?

WINTER: Right. It has a higher percentage of antimony, usually--oh, about 50 percent more antimony than the Monotype would have.

SKIPPER: What about the quality of tin?

WINTER: There is also a little more tin. Tin, I understand, is put in there so that it flows well. You need a balance. In other words, you can't increase the antimony without increasing the tin, or your casting conditions would change drastically. Not that you couldn't cast that particular metal, but it would probably have much narrower limits. Whereas, [with] a standard metal, you have a lot of plus-and-minuses, especially in your temperature and your speed where you can still get good type.

SKIPPER: Did you have to do any adjustment on the machine, as far as temperature control or anything of that nature?

WINTER: In what relation?

SKIPPER: On the Monotype composing machine, to cast--

WINTER: Oh, the foundry metal?

SKIPPER: The foundry metal, yes.

WINTER: Oh, yes, we have to run them at a higher temperature--about, I would say, an average of fifty or sixty degrees. They all run at a slightly different temperature, which you learn by running the machine. If it doesn't look quite right, you either raise or lower the temperature,

depending on the looks of the type. Once it's set, you hardly ever have to change it on that particular machine. The way we're set up since we run the same size on the same machine--although each machine is capable of running from six to fourteen--we have one machine, we run nothing but six; another one, we run nothing but eight; et cetera. We have a lot more machines than we need now, as you can see; but they have no value on the open market.

SKIPPER: None at all?

WINTER: None at all. No, you'd probably have to call the junkman and pay him to haul them away. You might sell one or two to a hobbyist somewhere, but they have no commercial value. No other type founders are looking for them.

SKIPPER: Can you give a general idea of the number of machines you have that you actually are using for production, and the number you have that are not being used?

WINTER: Yes. We have probably about thirty machines in that room. Five of the Thompsons are used on a regular basis. They may not run everyday, but if this one doesn't run Tuesday, maybe it will run Wednesday. And the other one vice versa, since we use the same procedure; one machine for one size. The composing machines--we have five, and we run five of them, on and off. We have strip-casting machines, which have been off for the past few weeks, but we have--let's see [counts]--we have five of

those. The balance of the machines have been put out of use. Maybe a few have been stripped for some of their parts; some have been disconnected to show the county assessor that we're not using them anymore. They agreed to that some years ago, when we had appealed our tax bill.

SKIPPER: And it was a successful appeal?

WINTER: Yes, it was. We were going to court with it, and two days before the court appearance, they made us an offer we could hardly refuse. It was close enough to what we figured it should be. We're now involved in the same situation. We have appealed again. Yes, the original over-assessment came because our bookkeeper filed our property tax statement too late. Whenever you do that, they make you know it.

SKIPPER: So you mentioned that there was really no trade composition that had gone on for about the last six months, is that correct?

WINTER: That's true.

SKIPPER: Have you done any hand-setting for people at all, in the last year or so?

WINTER: Well, we do a little hand-setting, but it's usually just one or two lines at a time, in the mail-order. If someone from out of town wants a line, they mail us the copy and instructions, and we set it for them. It's no great amount at all. We haven't done any trade composition

in the Monotype--to speak of anyway--in the last half-dozen years or more.

SKIPPER: Had you at any time considered going into making the stereotype plates used?

WINTER: Stereotype? No, stereotypes were used mostly in the newspaper business--completely out of our line. Even thirty years ago we never considered such a thing. Simple flat-cast stereos were something a printer made himself if he had a casting box; and even then, very few of them, except maybe a small newspaper such as the German newspaper upstairs. They had their own casting box, and they'd subscribe to a mat service. And they would cast a few, usually they were photographs. Stereotyping, I guess, is completely gone now.

SKIPPER: What is this mat service that you mentioned in relation to the newspaper?

WINTER: Well, they would take an original, say, a picture of an event, a cartoon, or a particular article, all set in hot metal. The mat was just like a piece of heavy cardboard--that's what it resembled, but it was soft. And they put this mat on top of the form and ran it under a big steel roller and impressed the image onto the mat. Then this mat was put into, like I say, a casting box or, in the case of the newspapers, it was put into a curved casting box. The stereos were curved to fit around the cylinder. And the

larger newspapers would cast more than one if it was a large edition. They may have to change that plate after 50,000 or 60,000 since they were just a lead alloy, too. And some of the other operations--such as the telephone book, for instance--they would plate their stereos with copper to get a long run out of them.

SKIPPER: So that's an area where most foundries probably wouldn't have had much involvement?

WINTER: No.

SKIPPER: Another thing I want to ask about, too, is the making of the reproduction proofs. Is that something that was important to business all the way along, or was there some point where that became more important?

WINTER: Yes. That really wasn't any part of our operation until about maybe around 1950--whenever we bought our Linotype machines, that's when it became necessary to get a reproduction press to go along with it. Because already lithography was being practiced, and some of the clients wanted a reproduction proof rather than the metal. When we first started, I suppose metal was 90-plus percent with repros taking the balance; and gradually it worked the other way. The man who's operating it today still sends out some metal, but it's mostly repro proofs. And of course, typographers around town would supply nothing else because they would never sell their hand-set type--only the reproduction

proof from them. They might sell the metal from their Linotype machines.

SKIPPER: I would guess it's going to be declining even further.

WINTER: Reproduction proofs? Oh, yes. They will disappear, along with type. The newer methods are so much easier, I guess, for the big majority of the work.

SKIPPER: Are orders from foreign countries any help in sustaining the business now?

WINTER: Yes. Not many foreign countries. They're rather limited. We sell quite a bit of type into Mexico, from people dropping in, and we have a couple of people selling for us. We have a man who lives in Chula Vista who sells a little type for us. At one time--I guess it's probably fifteen years ago--he sold a great deal more. He was fresh from Colombia and he'd had his own business. I don't know what business he was in down there, but he wanted to sell our type. He was interested in that. So we made an agreement, and he went across the border, and he did a very good job for us for a number of years. But this, of course, didn't provide him with an adequate living, not what he wanted; so it gradually became a sideline. He went into medical and surgical supplies in Mexico, mostly the border towns. And I guess he still is doing that. We occasionally get an order from him. We have a man in El Paso who opened

up a printing-equipment business about three years ago. He has salesmen going down there, and occasionally he will send us a nice order. But the larger orders we send go to El Salvador, Guatemala--most in El Salvador. Of course, the type that goes to El Salvador may be distributed within Central American countries there, because they're all kind of close. Percentagewise it's not, probably, a whole lot, but we always like to see one come in. Every little bit adds up because it's mostly little bits now, anyway. Gone are the days when a man would call up and order a few thousand dollars' worth of type to stock his shop.

SKIPPER: In other foreign countries, what's the situation with the kind of technology they have? Are they further behind in the development of photocomposition, for example, so they might need the metal type longer?

WINTER: I think in most of these countries, that's probably true, except in the larger cities. Go into Mexico--Mexico City, I'm sure, is just as far advanced in printing as we are. Fact is, for many years they've had a trade magazine for the South American countries that looks all the world like our own national graphic arts magazines, with the same sort of articles in it. I'm sure that most of our products are still sold to the smaller printer down there. They may be a little slower converting completely from the letter press, but any shop worth its salt down there is at least a combination.

SKIPPER: At one point earlier in the conversation, you mentioned knowing the kinds of machinery people had in India. Was that just through an acquaintance?

WINTER: Well, that was from a type founder who was over here on a visit. He came to see us, and I believe we had lunch. We talked for quite a while, and he left me one of his type catalogs. He was telling me that he had these seventy or eighty Monotype machines that he made all his type on; he made his own mats. Fact is, his catalog is a stupendous thing, as far as the variety of typefaces he has--most of them English types, although he does have some Indian types in there, too. But I guess English is used a great deal in India still today.

SKIPPER: Are there any other areas other than Mexico and Central America that you got some orders from?

WINTER: No. We had never sold into any part of Europe. They were, anyway, well supplied with type foundries over there. We've shipped a little type, maybe, into Canada for instance, but the rest of the world, no. Too far away, for one thing. There're so many different languages and alphabets that we couldn't service them, anyway. We've never sent anything to England, even though we use the same language. Rather, we import some from England.

SKIPPER: When you send fonts of type, for example, down to Mexico, is there any problem with them needing additional

letters in greater frequency, or different accents and that type of thing? I know we discussed it before, how you would have to have accents engraved in the mats.

WINTER: Yes. With the accents we supply additional Qs, both capital and lowercase, since it occurs much more frequently in their language than it does in ours. In the smaller fonts that we run off the ribbon, for instance, we have a special Spanish font scheme that we use. The W, for instance, is seldom used in Spanish at all, so they get very few. And there are some differences, but [for] most of the display types, we're content to send them the American fonts scheme with the addition of the Qs and the accents.

SKIPPER: What about the turned question mark? Would that just be a matter of--

WINTER: They just turn it upside down, I think.

SKIPPER: Turn the type.

WINTER: The question comes up a lot of times. They want to buy a font of type we have, but there're no accents for it. Depending on what it is, they may buy it. If it's something that's, say, in all cap letters, they will buy it. Because they don't normally use accents on their caps at all, only in the lowercase. The only cap letter is the tilde, the Ñ, and we supply that even with some of the script faces. There are not many words in Spanish that

start with that $\underset{\sim}{N}$. It usually occurs in the middle of the word. And as long as the mats were available, we got it.

SKIPPER: So it's not too much of a problem.

WINTER: No.

SKIPPER: Well, what would you say in general is the major portion of your business now, as far as [concerns] just the financial health of the foundry? Can that be categorized at all?

WINTER: No, I think it's the small to medium printer, the rubber-stamp manufacturer, and--to a smaller extent--some hot-stamp people. And if I had to guess, I'd say that the printer still takes the lion's share of it. We've never made a study of it, to be truthful. But seeing the orders that go out, you get a pretty good guess.

SKIPPER: How has the financial health of the foundry been over, say, the last five years or so?

WINTER: Well, five years ago we were working right on the line all the time.

SKIPPER: Had that been going on for a while?

WINTER: Been going on almost as long as I can remember. Even when Mr. Gebhard was here, he always complained there was never any money. Of course we knew that he plowed a lot back into the business. But after his death, we were making a fairly decent profit. We had to pay off various expenses that we were talking about last time, and once

those were paid off, we thought, well, now we can see a little profit. But there were about three years that were quite profitable. We set up a profit-sharing plan for the employees, and the first year I think we put in $20,000 and then the next two or three years, I think, we put in $10,000. Then we fell kind of on hard times, and the only thing we could put in was $3,500 to keep the insurance portion alive. But that was illegal, and the IRS said you can't do it. And since we couldn't contribute (you had to contribute at least as much to the plan as you did to the insurance portion), they suggested that we just abandon and distribute the money to the employees. Which is what we did. And I think there were another two or three years where it was sort of hand-to-mouth, and it was hard to pay the bills. And then about two years ago was when it just turned around, mostly from people leaving. We probably had too much help and not spending all of their time productively, although they seemed to be. We had a man on the composing machines: Through no fault of his own, of course, the business had gone down, and [he] seemed to be busy all the time--but you can be busy putting type in the stockroom. If it's not selling, that's certainly not doing you any good.

SKIPPER: Had he been working here for a long time?

WINTER: Oh, yes, He started in 1944, I believe.

SKIPPER: What was his name?

WINTER: His name was Bob Day. He was, I think, sixty-seven when he retired, and we didn't replace him. And his wife always worked here, too, and we didn't replace her.

SKIPPER: What had she done?

WINTER: She did fonting of the type. And so I pretty much took on all those additional duties myself--worked a little harder. I spent less time doing the things I had done before, like trying to keep the accounts receivable in good shape; the bookkeeper kind of took that over for me. I [had] spent a lot of time on that. And I got help from a number of people in the foundry--spread ourselves a little thinner. But it's been more financially rewarding, anyway.

SKIPPER: Did you ever consider laying people off at any time?

WINTER: Well, during those tough years, I had to. It was the hardest thing I had to do. But I guess over that time, I probably had to lay off four or five people. And Mrs. Gebhard and I would discuss it and put it off and put it off, and finally it was one of those things, you know, we really have to do it, grit your teeth. Because people'd all been here a good, long length of time. We had to let a lady in the office go, but of course she was seventy-five then. We really shouldn't have felt bad about that--but we did. [laughter]

SKIPPER: Had she been helpful to you the last few years she was working?

WINTER: Well, the last couple of years it was, oh, I'd say, helpful, yes, but not necessary. We knew that we could do without her very well. But until we got to hurting, you know, we didn't make the move.

SKIPPER: Have most of your employees been here a long, long time?

WINTER: Oh, yes. Yes, people come and they stay. If we passed out gold watches, there'd be a number of them, I guess. I have one, by the way. I got the gold watch for twenty-five years, and I got a new shotgun for thirty-five. Forty passed without incident. [laughter] No, the only ones that I really had to lay off-- We had four men, and I did finally have to lay two of them off as things went down. I had to lay one salesman off. And I had to lay a lady in the office off. Other than that they left of their own free will. We had one, two--I think we've had three retirements. Like I say, we don't have that much turnover, anyway. This process takes years.

SKIPPER: Well, of the people that you had to lay off, could they find jobs in similar situations? Or what kinds of things--

WINTER: No. The one man that we laid off, he did. He went to another typographer and found a job. The other

fellows, a few years later--and there was just nothing available. We lost track of them. We don't know what kind of work he went into. A salesman's a salesman; he can go most anywhere. And Tilly, the elderly lady in the office, of course, she just went on social security then. She didn't want to go out and look for a job at her age.

SKIPPER: Can you give me a picture of who is employed here now and how long they've been here, and what division of the foundry they are working in?

WINTER: Well--pretty much. Now, Willy, you know, Willy Neelans [has] been here since 1946. Let's see, Eddie--I really can't remember. His dad worked here starting in 1940 and then they worked together for a number of years. His dad retired, and he stayed. If I had to guess, I would say Eddie's probably been here twenty years. Johnny Guzman, who melts our metal, he was here, I think, over twenty years. Our truck driver's new; he's been with us a couple of years. The girl in the office, or the lady in the office, she worked back here with her mother at one time, fonting the type. So I think that she's been here in the vicinity of twenty years. Our bookkeeper has been with us now, I lose track of time there, too, because it's longer than I think--but I think it's seven or eight years. Of course, I've been here forever. [laughter]

SKIPPER: From the beginning. So you just have one sales-person now?

WINTER: No, we don't have any outside salesmen at all.

SKIPPER: Not at all now?

WINTER: No. Jim Whiting was the last one we had. And everybody said, "Aren't you going to replace him?" I don't think it would do any good because the only area that we could use a salesman would be in the newer process, in the litho supplies. It would be pretty hard to fight Mr. Whiting, who had been servicing these accounts for fifteen years or so.

SKIPPER: Has the market cornered? [laughter]

WINTER: Oh, I was approached by a few salesmen who told me how much business they could bring with them. But when we discussed further the narrowness of our line, we never reached an agreement because they all had to have more in their cart to sell from than what we had. They all wanted a complete line. And you can't blame them for that; it's the only way they can make money.

SKIPPER: Through the years, did the unionization ever present any problem among the employees?

WINTER: No, actually, it's run very smooth. In all the years, they only went out on strike once, for about three months. That's about three years ago, and that was sort of employer-caused. We belonged to a member group of the

Printing Industries Association [among] seventeen typographer members, and talks had bogged down. Been going for months and months, [and] no agreement was reached. Typographers all wanted to return to the forty-hour week.

SKIPPER: What had it been?

WINTER: Thirty-five. It is thirty-five now. So we all held a meeting, and we decided to approach the employees and tell them that starting the next day, whatever it was, we were going on a forty-hour week. Their hourly pay would stay the same. All the benefits would be the same. They would be making more money. We would be getting a little more production. L.A. Type wasn't particularly interested, one way or the other. Thirty-five hours was fine with us, but being a member of a group, you go along with them.

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SKIPPER: You were telling me about the strike that occurred.

WINTER: As an agreement between all the typographers, we informed the employees that starting the next day or two days hence--whatever it was--the hours would be forty. They conferred with the union, and they walked out. And they walked a picket line in front for approximately three months. It happened, I think, in November, and went through Christmas into January.

And they wanted to come back, and they wanted me to call the union. So I talked to the union president, and he said, "Well, put them back in, if you put them back in at thirty-five hours." So I said, "Well, I've got to clear it with my own organization, too."

By that time, it had splintered a little, and they decided that anybody that wanted to put the employees back --no contract, but under the conditions of the old contract --could if they wanted, and the rest of the members wouldn't sue or be too unhappy about it. I guess they could see that they weren't going to present too solid a front since a number of people were probably in our shoes after three months. Something was going to have to be done. Either put them back to work or close up the shop. So we did. We agreed to put them back. We still had no contract.

SKIPPER: Thirty-five hour week?

WINTER: Still working thirty-five hours a week. [We pay for] a four-week vacation and, I think, eight other paid holidays; pay their hospitalization insurance; pay their union pension. I guess that's about it. If the contract is ever settled--and I sometimes wonder; it's been in the court for a year now--we may owe them some retroactive. But as a hedge against that, every year we give them an increase approximately what we thought a union agreement might eventually be reached at. So we don't owe them too much. We want to pay them anyway, keep up with inflation. They have it coming--a certain amount, anyway--union or not. They would be probably just as well off without the union. That's entirely up to them--only two of them.

SKIPPER: Only two of your employees are involved in the union?

WINTER: Yes. We had at one time thirteen, but when I closed the composing room [of] the Linotype department, of course there were two in there. And one man went somewhere else, work in a nonunion shop. He may still have his card, because under certain conditions, of course, members are allowed to work in a nonunion shop if they're getting union wages and benefits. The other man, since he's now sort of self-employed, dropped out of the union. Well, there's really three. I'm still a member, but I have a

proprietor's card. I just pay a flat rate. As such, the company also donates health and welfare and pension for me. It would still pay them through a private plan if I weren't a member of the union; [the] cost is the same. But the union hospitalization plan is pretty good. It is better than the Blue Shield, which we have for the other employees. But that, too, is the best that we can afford.

SKIPPER: Does union membership have any stipulations on employment in terms of what they actually do in the shop now?

WINTER: No. The typographical union covers machine operators, hand typesetters--almost anything except press work. Anything to do with the type is covered loosely; they don't really care. It's not like some unions where this is all you can do, and someone else takes over this when you come to this process. Of course, that never really bothered us anyway, since most of the men have spent almost all of their time on the machinery.

SKIPPER: What was it like those three months when the strike was going on? Was production completely stopped?

WINTER: No. It was, as far as they knew. But I worked on the machines. They knew I worked on them. If we hadn't all been friends, they would probably have complained to the union.

SKIPPER: Was there any animosity going on over the issue?

WINTER: No. They came in and had their coffee and their donuts here in the morning, you know--one big happy family, except they weren't working. And they were only getting as union benefits 50 percent of their salaries. So after three months, money got kind of tight. Willy did some work for the Japanese newspaper during the time, to help out. I don't know what the others did. Eddie, being single, probably didn't worry much. He lives at home with his folks--probably got a big bank account. It was kind of hard for me, although I called in help. I had somebody who came in and worked nights for me, unbeknownst to them too. So we did get the necessary production to keep up with the orders, although our inventory fell. In strip material we had a substantial inventory, which helped. And type wasn't really too bad. We did run out of a number of things that we couldn't supply during the period, but it wasn't really of major consequence. Fact is, we fared fairly well, and you know, if the strike had gone on for another couple, three months, we could have stood it without being hurt. Other shops, of course, stayed out. Three or four of them never went back. Three of them have since decertified.

SKIPPER: Why is that?

WINTER: Well, they had all nonunion members come in when the union members left. They hired nonunion people. And I don't know what the ins and outs are, but, of course, the

newer help, they weren't interested in the union. I think after a certain period of time you can petition the National Labor Relations Board for an election to decertify. And members on strike, I think, have a vote, as well as the new members--the new employees. By this time so many of the older employees who had gone on strike were long gone, unreachable--gone into other businesses, into other towns, and I think that's why decertifying became so simple for them.

SKIPPER: Were there any other organizations that you were involved in other than the PIA [Printing Industries Association], and the Craftsman Club that you mentioned, and the union. Was there any?

WINTER: We were also a member of the Western Typographers Association.

SKIPPER: What was the nature of that association?

WINTER: Well, it's a group of typographers who met semi-annually for conventions and seminars to maybe learn some of the newer processes, learn how another member was making out: Say he had a piece of machinery, and you were thinking of buying that particular phototypesetter, you know, you could get together with him and maybe find out some of the pitfalls or what it had done for him. It was just sort of a mutual-help society. It's still in existence, but we dropped out of it since we're no longer concerned with

typography. And the reason that we were in it for a number of years was that the typographers were always good customers of ours, and by attending the conventions, I got to meet a lot of the people from out of town that I wouldn't have contact with otherwise. Once they all went to photo-typesetting and weren't using our product anymore, there was really no need to continue membership in the organization (unless I'd wanted to for social reasons, and I didn't). I figured I wasn't going to make any more contacts and sell type anymore.

The conventions were fruitful for us: Picked up some new customers and one dealer through it--a typographer who had sold type. We made a deal and gave him a discount. He's in Portland, Oregon, and is still a dealer. Although like us, of course, the volume's down. But the volume was very good at one time. Paid our membership dues for a number of years. [laughter]

SKIPPER: You mentioned at one point that you were thinking of studying accounting?

WINTER: Oh, I did. I took a correspondence course in accounting.

SKIPPER: Was that related to when you became manager?

WINTER: Yes, I felt I needed that training because I had never done any. Here I was, rather closely tied with the office, and I felt I should be speaking their language. It

was very helpful. I studied a lot of things over and above what I will ever use, of course, but, anyway, it was fun. It was a challenge.

SKIPPER: What was the nature of the course that you took?

WINTER: Well, it was from the La Salle Extension University and it covered everything in bookkeeping and accounting, auditing--the whole bit. Theoretically, when you finished the course, if you remember enough, you could go and try for your CPA license--except you had to have two years' experience in the trade and/or a college degree. Lacking the college degree, you have to have practical experience before you can even take the test. Of course, that wasn't my goal, anyway. I wasn't heading to be a CPA. I just wanted to know what it was all about.

SKIPPER: That must have been a pretty in-depth course, then.

WINTER: Well, yes. They go through it very thoroughly. And of course, I suppose it was like a course would be in school, except everything has to be done by mail, so it's a little slower. I could understand most of the course, but there were times I had to write the instructor for clarification of this point or that point.

Some years ago, I took another course in computer electronics. I thought that might be helpful, too, in case we ever get into computerized typesetting, or anything.

Served no practical purpose, but, once again, it was fun. Built a small training computer toward the end of the course, and actually got it working. Quite simple. I was surprised that my boy and his friend could understand that thing almost right off the bat. I described the binary numbering system to them in about five minutes, and they understood it. They're able to work on this little thing. Like I say, it's a very simple computer. You can perform no practical work on it because it has such a small memory, only has sixteen memory words to it.

SKIPPER: That's something that you built yourself?

WINTER: Yes, as part of the course. You built it step by step. You build a circuit board. Then you test the circuit board, and you set it up any number of ways to show you just what this particular circuit is doing, so you will thoroughly understand the whole thing when you get it together.

SKIPPER: Were you thinking seriously about getting involved in the computerized aspect?

WINTER: Well, I didn't know how things were going to go. I started that at a time this business wasn't doing too well. I thought, well, if something does happen and I have to go into something else, it wouldn't hurt to be prepared. I could probably go into troubleshooting in phototypesetters or something similar. At that time, outside of the manufacturers, you had nowhere to go if something went wrong

with your machine. I'm sure by now that there have been people set up in this area. Just in the hot-metal days, there were a number of Linotype repairmen. You had something wrong with your Linotype, you could call him up and he'd come over and fix it for you. Monotypes were different. They never had anyone--only a factory man. Of course you'd have to pay his flight fare out here, and his room and board while he was here, plus so much a day. So they weren't called upon much.

SKIPPER: So you learned to do it yourself? During the time since you've been manager, have there been any major difficulties or rough spots along the way that you've had to deal with?

WINTER: Well, like I say, it's rough financial sledding there for a little while. Just before Mr. Whiting left was one of the rough spots. We'd been buying printing plates from the S. D. Warren company and we couldn't pay our bill up to date within thirty days. [We] were sixty days with them, and they wouldn't go along with sixty days. They flat-out told us we had to be current, and that was hard--scraping enough money to get them current. And then, just about the time we got current, Mr. Whiting left and it didn't matter anymore. We would have had to pay the bill, anyway, but had we not wanted further supplies, we wouldn't have been that anxious. We'd have taken a little more time to pay it.

SKIPPER: You mentioned that in the last couple of years, things have been looking up a little bit. Is that something that you think might continue?

WINTER: I think so. Couldn't say for how long. I should think this year would probably be pretty good. We really have nowhere to go but down if we stay in this business. And we have no plans to go into anything else.

Actually, the owner of the business could get along pretty well without it, I think. You know, she's married. Her husband has an income, she has investments and got money in the bank. So she'd get along all right. She could draw social security. She wouldn't live anywhere near as well as she does now, probably have to sell her Mercedes Benz. But I think that the decline's going to be kind of gradual.

I don't foresee any big drop now because there's a kind of a revived interest in letterpress, too. A lot of the quick-print shops started up over the past number of years. You know, one hundred copies while you wait, $3.95. But there's a lot of work that they can't handle. Most of them aren't equipped for numbering or perforating or some of these odd things, and they send it out. And quite a number of them have found [they] can buy a used letterpress, put it in [their] shop [and] I don't have to send it out. [They've] got control over the job now, as well as doing

it less expensively. And there's an awful lot of hobbyists. They grow all of the time.

SKIPPER: I want to ask you, too, about any fine printers that have been customers here at all.

WINTER: Well, I'm sure most of them have. I can't really categorize anyone as a fine printer.

SKIPPER: Private printers.

WINTER: There are names I have heard bandied about, like Grant Dahlstrom and the Castle Press in Pasadena; and of course, Plantin Press and Saul Marks; and at one time, I think, Anderson, Ritchie, and Simon, who are no longer in existence. I was trying to think of some others before, but I couldn't call them to mind.

SKIPPER: Did Cheney ever come in at all?

WINTER: Who?

SKIPPER: [Will] Cheney?

WINTER: Cheney? I don't think I'm acquainted with him.

SKIPPER: What kind of dealings did you have with Grant Dahlstrom, for example?

WINTER: We just supplied them type rules. They still buy a little type from us. Never been over there. I don't know what their operation is.

SKIPPER: What kind of person is he to deal with?

WINTER: I don't know that, either. Just take the orders, and most of the time I don't even take the order. The only

one I really knew among the celebrated printers was Saul Marks, and, of course, I've know him from about the time I was seventeen.

SKIPPER: What's your impression of him? What was it at the time?

WINTER: Well, he was very fussy. Very fussy, and I think he was that way about his printing, you know. It all had to be just so, and I think that's where he got his reputation. I'm sure he's very skilled in layout and design and typography. He was certainly a success at what he did, even though I'm sure he was never wealthy.

SKIPPER: Did he display this kind of fussiness, or fastidiousness, when he was selecting material?

WINTER: Oh, yes. He would buy type, and he'd look at it with a fine glass, and everything had to be just perfect.

SKIPPER: Did he have the glass here with him?

WINTER: No, I never saw him with it; but I'm sure he had one when he got back there. Oh, he would drop in, in the later years of his life before he passed away. He wasn't an old man. [He'd] come in and talk. Maybe he'd want to borrow a set of mats for the Monotype machine, or just talk about things in general. He wasn't working too hard. I guess he at least took time out to visit, go here and there. Actually, I think he died on a return from a vacation trip.

SKIPPER: Does his wife [Lillian Marks] ever come at all?
WINTER: No. I talk to her occasionally. She still borrows a few mats. And they had one set that I borrowed maybe every five or six years, [to] make a few fonts. Our equipment is not completely compatible since they have an English, I think they've got a sixteen-seventeen, a little more versatile machine than ours, and the matrix lay-out [is] different, seventeen rows of matrices wide by fifteen deep, with the capability of casting a character in one unit row with the width value of the next row. It holds more mats than ours does. They can run ours on that, but we can't run hers on ours because we can't bring up the positions. Right now she's not operating. She called me and said she was going to close down for a while and relax. So she sent back the mats of ours that she had. But I guess if I wanted to borrow anything from her, she's still around.
SKIPPER: What about Richard Hoffman. Didn't he at one time design one of the covers for the catalog?
WINTER: He's designed the one that we are still using. We haven't changed it from that time. The only thing he did--the main line, the big word that says type--that we haven't changed. We made a cut of that from his artwork, and that remained. We changed the type where the phone numbers and our names is, and we changed the size of the screen to agree with the type of printing we were going to have done.

But the design is basically still the same, very simple.

SKIPPER: He designed the graphics of the actual letters that are used?

WINTER: No, he just blew up from actual type that word, type--which is Caslon, by the way, which we don't have.

SKIPPER: It was pretty widely used at one time, wasn't it?

WINTER: Oh, yes. It was--a very, very long time ago. Because I've been in the business over forty years, and it never was much of an item with us. But of course, Caslon is a two hundred year old face.

SKIPPER: Well, it looks nice on the catalog, anyway.

WINTER: Yes. Actually, [the] Caslon typeface itself is still very nice. We did some work, oh, about a year ago, I think, probably for Vernon Simpson, the typographer, in Caslon. Mats were covered with dust; cleaned them off. It's a nice text face even now. And the Caslon that we have is about as close to the original-design Caslon as you come. It's not a recut one. It's had some minor changes, I guess, to fit it onto the machine from the original.

SKIPPER: What kind of business did Mr. Simpson have?

WINTER: Oh, he's a typographer. He hand-sets most of his stuff. He has no machine of his own. He has no photo-typesetting, still a hundred-percent hot metal. He may have some phototypesetting that he farms out, has someone else do for him, but the last number of jobs we set for him

were mostly record jackets. They put a lot of money into a record jacket.

SKIPPER: Well, does Mr. Hoffman still come in from time to time?

WINTER: Well, not too often, no. He was in about maybe six weeks ago. He was doing something at home and he needed a particular ornament. He had some, but he didn't have enough. It didn't show in our catalog anymore, and he wanted to know if we still had it. We had a shelf full of them, all that he needed.

SKIPPER: Does he show the same kind of particularity that Saul Marks showed about the type?

WINTER: He probably does, but I never worked that closely with him. You know, whenever we talked, it was always in more general terms, or sometimes relating to type--what have you done. Fact is, he was instrumental in getting us a job of casting. Going back probably thirty years or more, Fred Goudy, the type designer, had designed a font of type for Scripps College in a sixteen point. And he had come here and given us the mats. We did the casting for them and gave them back the mats and, of course, delivered the type. Never heard anymore. Of course, years later, every now and then I wondered what ever happened to that font of mats. I wonder if it's still out there. I tried a couple of times to contact someone out there, but nobody

seemed to know anything. But there's a girl out there--Robin something-or-other--anyway, she got talking to Dick Hoffman. They had taken Goudy's design because they had all his artwork, too, and they had had mats engraved in other sizes than the original sixteen [point] that they had. Once having got them engraved, then they couldn't find a type founder to cast them. They did it the wrong way. They should have consulted a type founder first, but they had mats made that no type founder in this country could accommodate. So they spent a great deal of money unnecessarily.

But anyway--I said, well, bring the mats. She was particularly interested in a twelve point and a fourteen point. I said, bring them in and let me look at them; we'll make a trial casting, because we've got that Japanese machine. So she brought them in, and we made a trial casting, and it looked pretty good. She thought that was real great. So, I said, okay, if you want us to, we will. And I told her what our minimum would be. She agreed to that and got a purchase order, and we cast this type for them. But there were about five characters that would have to be hand-finished. Each character--after we cast it, they would have to hand finish before it would fit. And she said she could live with that.

SKIPPER: What--do they have to be planed down a little bit?

Or just smoothed?

WINTER: Well, it's like an f, for instance, or a double f, or a cap J, where they have to fit onto the body of the type next to it.

SKIPPER: Oh, kerns?

WINTER: Yes. And due to the way they had that engraved, it wouldn't fit. The extra material that was cast would all have to be filed off. That's a lot of filing in a couple of cases of fourteen-point type. But we did conclude the job. It's a very nice looking type, and we may possibly do the twelve-point--although I don't want to. But maybe their budget's used up for a while. And of course all the italics--there's no way they can ever use those mats.

SKIPPER: What kind of face was it?

WINTER: Very reminiscent of Goudy. You could look at it, probably--Anyone who had studied type at all would say, well, that looked like one of Goudy's designs. You know he designed a certain, I forget what it was, one was called Hess, I think. Of course he has Goudy Light, Goudy Old Style, and Goudy Modern, and they all have a kind of a particular look to them. They don't really resemble each other that much. But this face is the same sort of thing.

Mr. Robert Trogman of the film font fame prides himself on knowing every typeface in the world. So I called--I was in contact with him--and I says, "I'm going

to send you a repro proof." And I said, "I'll bet you can't tell me what this one is--you can't put a name to it."

SKIPPER: Did he take you up on it?

WINTER: He said okay. He used to run a contest. He had a little four-sheet paper he mailed to his customers, and he would print a typeface in there. Whoever could recognize that typeface, he'd give them a free film font. So that was why I got to him with this one. And sure enough, he couldn't [identify] it--because unless you had had some dealings with the Scripps College out there and had seen some of their printing, you wouldn't know what it was.

SKIPPER: Well, what was the occasion of them having that face designed?

WINTER: I don't know. They must have had some money. Or maybe they just wanted to have something that was particularly theirs--you know, a prestige item, I'd imagine.

SKIPPER: I assume they have presses out there, handpresses.

WINTER: Yes. It's all hand-set and handpresses, and I don't know just what they print--small work, brochures, probably pretty much like they do out there at UCLA.

SKIPPER: Did you have any dealing with Goudy himself?

WINTER: Not really, only when he brought the mats in. I had met him at a Craftsman Club meeting a few years before that.

SKIPPER: What was your impression of him?

WINTER: A very nice looking man, nice speaking. He seemed like a gentleman, is about all I can say. Not very colorful--although if you knew him better, maybe he was. Can't really say that much in one small meeting like that because as I was near him, I was only part of a group, you know, that were talking around. Mostly, I'm sure, I kept my mouth shut and listened.

SKIPPER: Were they discussing various aspects of type design and that kind of thing?

WINTER: Probably. It was so far back, I couldn't remember what the conversation was about. But being as how he was who he was, I'm sure that must have been the subject. Because type was a more interesting subject to everyone in those days; They were all using it, all the Craftsman. The Craftsman [Club] has always been sort of a letter press organization, anyway, even in its later years. Even now, possibly, it still has that connotation.

SKIPPER: Do you agree with the concept that people have, that the photocomposition is just not as nice looking as letterpress? That's a reason of concern that people have.

WINTER: Well, in certain works, of course, I don't think that photocomp can match what you would get by actually impressing a letter into a certain textured paper, for instance. As far as clarity [goes], photocomp is so clear, you can take a six-point letter and blow it up to six

inches, and it's still just clear and sharp. And I'm sure that their designs and their letter fit and everything else is very fine. I've seen a lot of good work come off of those. Like I say, there would be very few things that they wouldn't be able to match--more in the interest of hobbyists or someone like Mr. Saul Marks, printing in the traditional manner. I'm sure they could come very close, too. They can print a dollar bill that you and I can't tell from the real ones.

SKIPPER: What about the design of new faces for the photo-comp? You were telling me earlier about Mr. Trogman and the different ways that he got onto new faces.

WINTER: Well those, of course, are photolettering as opposed to photocomposition. The most popular of the photo lettering machines is the Phototypositor. It's visual setting, just as though you were setting by hand. You watch the position of the letter and you place it where you want before you expose it onto the paper or film. And of course, there, it's all up to who's doing it, how nice it's going to look. But in photocomp, of course, that's all built into the machine.

Most of the designs originally, of course, came from hot metal. The design was there, the letter fit was there, and all they had to do was adopt it. Outside of a few revivals, I haven't really seen anything set the world on

fire with new designs in text faces. One of the most popular, Souvenir, is really an old one they dredged up from American Type Founders, who'd probably discontinued it in the 1920s. But what they did, they added weights and italics that had never existed before, to make a complete family out of it. But for the past couple of years, I've been sort of getting away from the photocomposition. Whereas before that, I did a lot of reading about it; At the WTA meetings you would see a lot, and it was just--

SKIPPER: What does WTA stand for?

WINTER: Western Typographers Association.

SKIPPER: Oh, that's right. Well, is it true, as you were telling me before, that most of the faces, like for photo-lettering, that are being developed are just taken off of metal type design or just taken off of other people's designs?

WINTER: They copied the hot-metal types, because that was what was in demand. The rest were all artists' conceptions. There're still a lot of those, these wild and weird alphabets that come out.

SKIPPER: What about the pirating that you were talking about before?

WINTER: Well, a man will draw a design. He may spend months designing this and feel that he has a beautiful alphabet. Then he sells it to someone, and they start

producing these, and the other manufacturer buys one and copies it.

SKIPPER: Just a complete copy?

WINTER: Yes, you don't have to change it one iota. When Mr. Trogman started in, he didn't change anything; he took the films just exactly as they were and copied them, except for the name. He and L.A. Type were sued by Visual Graphics for the copyright infringement--or trademark infringement. Anyway, they couldn't make it stand up, but it made us go to the expense of getting a lawyer. Never came to court. Our lawyer talked with their lawyer and finally agreed nothing could be done. We and Mr. Trogman together, when we brought these out and copied something that already existed, they would have a name for a face--say they called it Baker's Signet. So we brought it out under the name of Signature and would put "similar to Baker's Signet." They said we couldn't do that, but we could. Everybody's been doing it ever since. Cast Craft in Chicago, they'd been taken to court by everyone possible. Alphabet Innovations did it. Visual Graphics did it. Robert Trogman did it. Couldn't touch them. They've been trying to get the copyright law changed, and they haven't been able to do it.

SKIPPER: Do you think there's any chance that they could?

WINTER: I don't think so. I think the way the law reads

is pretty good. You know, the alphabet is in the public domain, and just because you ornament the thing a little differently, it's not, what would you say, such an original thing that it should be issued a copyright. I believe that, too. If they had the copyright on all these things, they'd have a terrible mess.

SKIPPER: You'd have a lot of law cases going all the time, anyways.

WINTER: But of course the trademark law is valid. We could not have used their name in relation to that particular font. Now we could, if we wanted, have taken that name and used it on another font; they couldn't do a thing. That's the reason, too, that we call the typeface Twentieth Century, and the original name, the original type by Bauer, is Futura. But when it was brought out by Monotype, they just changed the name. Now we, in our earlier catalogs, had always called it Futura. Especially when at war with Germany, what did we care whether they liked us calling it Futura or not? But a few years after World War II ended, we had a communication from them that we weren't allowed to use the name Futura. So Walt says, okay, no big deal, we'll go back to the original name again, Twentieth Century, which is what Monotype called it. All we did [was] put Futura in parentheses behind it. I don't think we even do that now.

SKIPPER: Well, what do you think the plight of the private printers is going to be, if and when type founding finally disappears?

WINTER: Well, in another couple of generations, I suppose type is going to get kind of scarce. For the next ten to twenty years, they'll be able to get a supply of type; even if it's not new, there will be a lot of used type around. I've had people come in here even now [and ask]: "What am I going to do if you close up?" Do what we do if we close up: look for something else.

SKIPPER: Are there a lot of people that express that feeling of "What's going to happen?"?

WINTER: A few of the smaller printers come in, yes, and hobbyists; those are the only ones that are concerned at all. And, like I say, we're doing well. Cast Craft's doing well. Barco and Acme are both doing well. Those are about the major founders. MacKenzie and Harris--I don't know what their situation is, since they're a combination shop anyway and don't rely on their foundry. And there are some smaller foundries in the East. There's Detroit Type Foundry, which is part of a typographer's shop, but one man runs the type end. They have a catalog out. And there's one other--can't think of the name now. But I was talking to the man there at Detroit, and he says business is good. So there's still a great interest in type, apparently--for the few people that are left.

SKIPPER: They're starting some craft organizations, too, back East. I was just reading about the Hill and Dale Foundry, and they had a meeting this fall and established the American Typecasting Fellowship. It's mostly for smaller type businesses. And I was glad to hear about that.

WINTER: I know there are a few private founders around, and they cast a few fonts each year.

SKIPPER: I think there's an Out of Sorts letter foundry, or something like that. I'll have to find out more about it.

WINTER: I suppose type will live for a long time under those circumstances too.

SKIPPER: Do you suppose when type becomes scarce, it's going to change the nature of the exchange i.e., people paying higher prices for used type or anything of that nature?

WINTER: I think as it becomes scarce, it probably will. Like I say, I can't see it in the near future at all, but it will probably do just exactly what wood type did. Now, wood type's still being manufactured. But if you want a nice old beat-up font of wood type with a lot of ink on it, and maybe an older design, you will pay more for that--if you can find it--than a brand-new one.

Yes, used wood type has almost disappeared from the scene out here. Except every art studio's got a bunch of it on their wall. They've all made plaques and montages, or whatever you call them, with type and especially [with] big old block letters, wood letters. And you know, there must be thousands of fonts that ended up that way . . . and in coffee tables. I sold, some years ago, some odds and ends; A girl was making a coffee table and she was filling it with type--wood type, metal type and cuts--and then she was going to pour this casting resin all around it, you know, and up and above it, and it was going to be a coffee table. I would like to have seen the finished product. I'll bet it was attractive.

SKIPPER: Do you have any particular feelings or more predictions about the future of the foundry, or of type founding in general?

WINTER: No, I don't. I'm just sort of going with the tide, you know. I think it will be around for a while yet. But I would hate to predict in what volume, what might happen to it, because I've been wrong too many times. I've mentioned before, we reached a plateau many years before I thought we would in the drop-in sales.

SKIPPER: Is the small business that you've got on the side related to your feelings that the foundry business was going down?

WINTER: Oh, yes. I knew when I got that, it had no particular future in it.

SKIPPER: Yes. That was--what--'71?

WINTER: In '70. Still got it, but I may be put out of business soon, since the paper strike has closed down the manufacturer of my raw material, and he can't get paper for making it.

SKIPPER: What was the nature of that business again?

WINTER: It's plastic furniture, which is just large-size spacing material used for locking up forms on the press.

SKIPPER: Is that something you can make here at the foundry?

WINTER: No, it's a specialized machinery. Not too special-ized: it's saws and a planer with side mill attached, and various gauges to set the sizes and check the sizes. And almost the entire product is used only by bank-check printers now. Of course, it was originally used by printers, but since not too many of them are left and a font of this lasts a lifetime, sales to letterpress printers are few. But the bank-check printers use a lot. Most of your personal checks are printed in small quantities of 200, and they're printed by the billions; All of the major check-printing companies are printing these, or imprinting them--letter-press. The background is litho, of course, but your name and your number and everything else on there is letterpress.

SKIPPER: Do you sell any of those materials through the foundry?

WINTER: No, we're not in contact with any of those people. You know, we sell a little bit here at L.A. Type, some odds and ends. We sold a font here last week, but that is sort of unusual. The plastic furniture business is fairly constant, but rising rent and the short supply of raw material, together with my having become somewhat bored with it, also, may prompt my decision to close down in the not-too-distant future.

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